

Democracy and Development

A Cultural Perspective

Saneh Chamarik



COVER PAINTING

Painting: The Sun and Moon Orbiting
above a Confused and Complex World

Technic: Acrylic Color and Gold Leaf

Artist: Isara Thayahatai, Sueb Thai
Group

*...When men dwell not in Dhamma
The World is in disorder
When the world is in disorder
The sun and the moon are confused
When the sun and the moon are confused
The seasons are confused
When the seasons are confused
Men are short-lived
Their complexion withered
Their strength weakened
Their ills many...*

A Sutta from the Tripitaka

This Painting reflects the chaotic state of the universe, a result of complex development of the material world. This "development" has led to the destruction of the environment and the moral of men. Nature and the environment are thus caught in imminent degradation.

The disorder of the universe is illustrated in the misplace of the sun and the moon. The sun normally on the right, appears on the left while the moon normally on the left, is placed on the right. The sun and the moon are, moreover, in the same circle which reflects a further state of chaos.

The human world is burning like a huge bonfire. All beings are disfigured. The poor and the rich both perish. The whole world is covered with toxic environ.

Translated by Dr.Suwanna Satha-Anand



Democracy and Development : A Cultural Perspective



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Foreword by *Chaiwat Satha-Anan*



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Foreword

As the book title indicates, this collection of papers takes up the issue of democracy and development as the key to understanding the nature of current human crisis. Although presented on a variety of occasions and subject matters, together they can be said to represent a learning process that goes on from one's teaching career to being concerned with rural and environmental problems. It is not meant to advocate anything of its own. The main purpose is to clarify and call for a reexamination of what has been going on around us. On top of the subject matters related to specific issues at hand, they all run through one common theme. That is to try to come to grips with the real motivating and driving force of misguided development that has been going on for so long. If there appears to be any suggestion at all in this presentation of the idea of alternative to our present predicaments, that certainly is not to opt for another ready-made or pre-determined set of solution. Humanity has already been suffering enough at the hand of deterministic approach to development, both under Capitalism and Communism. The purpose here, again, is simply to inform

and, if possible, to invite further dialogue so that we common people can judge and decide for our own selves as to what to do with life in society.

To today's common knowledge, development is always associated with industry. This is quite natural and desirable, in view of great technological advance and modern spirit of enterprise. It is a fact of life and we all should intelligently make full use of it. However, there are always both quantitative and qualitative sides to it. In view of all the sufferings and hardships human-kind has been undergoing, especially in the Third World, it just can no longer be taken for granted. Neither can we afford to remain complacent with neo-classical alibi about the "trade-off", whereby some people's interest and livelihood must be sacrificed for the sake of economic and material progress. Even the term "progress" itself needs to be carefully examined here. Human life, as well as nature, cannot simply be reduced to that kind of commodity transaction. The economics jargon is in actual fact only part of an ideology that mistakenly sees in humanity, and the universe for that matter, as something divisible into separate parts, and steadfastly stands for the maximum growth of one part, i.e., the industrial sector, at the others' expenses. It clearly does not represent any valid scientific knowledge or reality, or something inevitable as economists are so fond of making it out to be. After all, industry and its accompanying technology is only a means or instrument. It is a matter

of humanity's, certainly not any one particular sector's, own choice and action to determine how to make creative or destructive use of it. How, then, does the choice come about? Here, according to Buddhist line of explanation, as referred to in one following essay on "Buddhism and Human Rights":

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is found on our thoughts and made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, suffering follows him as a wheel follows the hoof of the beast that draws the cart

...If a man speaks or acts with a good thought, happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves him.

This is how human mind and action interacts and works. At social and collective level, it is subject to what Thomas Khun terms "paradigm", that is to say, a constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques, etc. It could just as well serve as models or examples, as the world becomes increasingly interdependent. Under predominant culture, it is something predetermined by the way we are made to learn about life and then formulated as a body or programme of knowledge in our thought and belief. Knowledge thus only represents *ways* of perceiving reality. In this sense, it is relative with respect to a specific epoch and thus changeable according to a

change of paradigms. It is precisely the industrialism, as currently predominant paradigm, that has come to be prevailing ever since after the two great revolutions in the West over two centuries ago: the Scientific Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. As a body of knowledge, this brand of science, both physical and social, is to stand or fall with its premises that include, among other things, the view of the universe as fragmented and mechanical elements, the view of life in society as competitive struggle for existence, the idea of mastery over nature, and the belief in unlimited material growth, and so on. And all this is claimed to be scientifically objective, neutral and value-free.

The fact is that all these premises themselves as a system of belief have been clearly proved false, at the same time that, because of it, great damages have been done, and still doing so, to both humanity and nature. So in the absence of moral and scientific justification, what actually remains of today's industrialism is purely a matter of power and interest, though under the new guise of so-called "New International Economic Order" and its required system of law and order among and within nations. If there is to be any rationality left, it is merely self-proclaimed one of lopsided gain and domination. Moreover, if need be, force and violence could be resorted to, with of course a high sense of self-righteousness. This is the crux of the whole matter. Fundamentally at issue here is the question of the existing

paradigm or world view that is underlying the current knowledge or way of perceiving reality. Far from representing ultimate reality with a view to freedom and progress, it is now open to question.

As indicative of the conceptual approach to the whole inquiry, therefore, the series is being arranged to begin with a short essay on "Social Science in a Non-Western Milieu". Of course, the paper of itself does not treat the subject matter in any elaborative way. Nonetheless, it is at least suggestive of a certain attempt to initiate dialogue in a more cross-cultural forum. Similar attempts had already been made within one's own academic community, but to no avail. Apathy is indeed beyond belief. Be that as it may, such an intellectual undertaking is absolutely essential if we can hope to overcome cultural stumbling block that stands in the way of reality and its path towards human freedom and progress. It would serve the purpose well enough if readers would care to join in and expand the theme even further. It is in this common spirit of epistemological inquiry that underlies all the other papers that follow. On related points, they even share sources of references and passages with one another.

In essence, all this is concerned with the fundamental problem of change and relationships. Change is of course inherent in reality of life that runs through the whole gamut of human history. But while change, *anicca* (impermanence) in Buddhist terminology, is to be recog-

nized and readily accepted as something real and inevitable, there always remains the question of how it should go about and as to what end. It is precisely the question of how change ought to be that is to have a great bearing on that of relationships: that is, relationships in the encompassing sense between man and man as well as of man with nature. Here, as earlier mentioned, human knowledge and choice plays a most vital part. It could either lay the path to freedom and progress, or else brings about domination/subordination relationships of mankind. This is what the issue of democracy and development is all about.

As social context most familiar to this writer, Thailand is naturally the focal point of reference on the related issues under discussion. But the Thai case could very well serve as a vivid reflection of what has been happening to the Third World societies in general. The main issues involved are actually global in character, as they all share the same cultural source of industrialism being forced upon them, all in the name of modernization and development. It is a matter of "White Man's Burden", so to speak. On top of that, as earlier mentioned, it is also equipped with a certain scientific doctrine that sustains a deep sense of self-righteousness, to the point of sanctity, in its relation to the rest of mankind. And, it is precisely the same state of mind and world view that has been transmitted on, through "modern education" system and other socializing agencies to the corps of national

and local elites, in both public and private sectors, serving as agent of change and modernization. Similar to the phenomenon of *compradores* of the colonial era, there now emerges the "private sector" with full political backing from the modern corps of technocrats within the state bureaucracy.

In Thailand, similarly, it all began with Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat's October 1958 coup d'etat establishing a brand-new military dictatorship, officially dubbed "Revolutionary Regime", that subsequently launched the first national economic development plan in 1961. Interestingly, the early 60s was also the time when industrial development was made to start off in earnest in other major Asian countries. From then on, the term "development", "patana" in Thai, comes to be very much in vogue. All of a sudden, the prospects for national progress and prosperity looked so great and brought forth so much enthusiasm among the general public. Democracy was hardly, if at all, at issue then, as the country had just gone through a full decade of fierce political battle and subsequent reign of police terror under the previous dictatorship. In the circumstances, the Sarit "Revolutionary Regime" could in a sense be seen as a saviour bringing along a ray of hope for political liberation as well as opening a new era of national progress.

It was not to be that positive, however. The reign of terror soon resumed itself and turned even harsher and more systematically oppressive under Sarit's own "Des-

potic Paternalism", to borrow Dr.Thak Chaloemtiarana's phrase in his dissertation title. On the economic side, it was this very despotism that, willy-nilly, became instrumental for economic reform in shifting away from economic statism to "economic liberalism" and laizzer-faire as prescribed by the World Bank and along with it of course the industrial power. All of which meant in effect further forced integration of Thai economy into the world market economy. Operation-wise, it was indeed the workmanship of the newly-bred technocracy on its rise to power in the nation's decision-making process. Inherent in its ingrained economic and development thinking under the spell of industrialism, the industrial sector was to be promoted as the exclusive engine of growth and thus to take precedence over all the rest of society. Thus globally comes full circle what set out over two centuries before as the Industrial Revolution in the West with an eye to setting up the "free" market mechanism under its hegemony.

This is how the growth-centred and unbalanced development comes about, with so much adverse social consequences. It is also how the "private sector" has been patronized by the state power to grow economically and eventually penetrate into political power, while the overwhelming majority of people, especially in the rural sector, remain marginalized in practically all respects: economic, social, cultural, and political. All this explains how institution building has been developing along

under the dictate of industrialism, national and global. It is against such lopsided and authoritarian background that nominally liberal and democratic institutions come into play: parliament, political parties, elections, and so on, including the rule of law and formal guarantee of human rights. All these institutional and legal instruments can easily be imported or imitated. By themselves, they only function as the tools of power which could either be dictatorial or democratic, authoritarian or liberal. In actual practice, under current industrialism with its predetermined structural setup, they only play hostage to those monolithic and powerful few with the sole control over the capital and market force, and thus make a sham out of democracy and the so-called political rights and liberties.

All this is not at all new. The predicaments and contradictions have been going on for decades. Only that they were, and still are, obscured by the ideological conflict and confrontation between Communism and the "Free World". The conflict and confrontation is more apparent than real, however. For all the warlike tensions and propaganda against one another, both adversaries hold on basically to the same world view of industrialism, though for different reasons and in different perspectives of socio-political relationships. In fact, it is the one that begets the other, and there is basically intellectual linkage and mutual interest between the two. The difference is only a matter of style and method of economic

management. For this very reason, socialism by its own inner logic just cannot present itself as alternative and solution to the current crisis.

It is against this background and dilemma that the whole series of papers is being presented in this volume. Again, as earlier emphasized, all this is part of learning process. It is in response to the lively literature and exchange in international fora on the one hand, and on the other hand to the concrete problems on the home front. All this greatly helps in clarifying and synthesizing things. They all obviously are interconnected whichever aspects of the crisis we are addressing: politics, economics, religion, education, or even science and technology, etc. Of more significance still, practically all the discussions point to the real need for rectifying our current state of knowledge and corresponding perception of reality which is born out of a most unecological and self-destructive culture. Short of this fundamental rethinking and restructuring our thought and worldview, it is impossible to foresee how the whole talk of freedom and progress as well as sustainability can ever be realized.

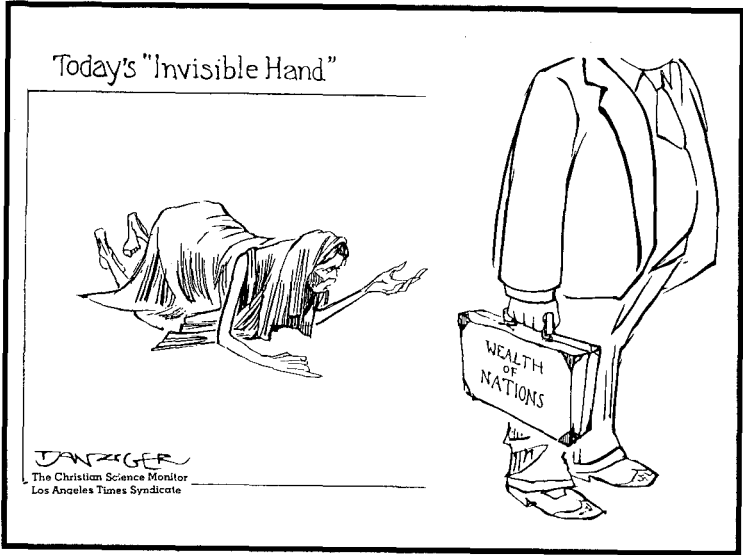
As can readily be seen, no matter what aspects of the crisis we are looking at, all boil down to the basic question of human self-determination and development. In the final analysis, it is the common people themselves, as against current elitism and its authoritarianism, that is to provide the clue to the answer. But first and foremost the people need to be sufficiently informed, especially

as to what kind of predicaments they find themselves in. The short "Address to the People's Forum 1991" represents one small attempt along this line. It is then followed up by more elaborative analysis of various components deemed relevant to the issue of democracy and development. That of human rights of course is implicit throughout and therefore requires a specific attention as related to its economic and socio-cultural dimensions in the Third World context.

One final word. For all its negative and critical view of what has been going on, the whole treatment is by no means attempted out of pessimism and despair. On the contrary, it is being revived and presented with a strong conviction that we human beings are still capable of self-correction, not only at the technical and professional level, but also in the realm of spiritual value. With this in mind, Buddhism is being introduced as one alternative way of explaining reality of life and the path towards self-liberation. But again, one must not fall into the traps of mono-cultural style of thought like industrialism we are now trying to do away with. That is only to end up with another brand of authoritarianism and domination, and thus crisis, on and on in the same vicious circle. Genuine freedom and progress requires that all thought and belief systems learn to co-exist with one another. It is in short a unifying sense of purpose and value in the real and sustainable world of diversity. It is in this spirit of searching for true knowledge and reality

that this whole series of papers hopes to make a contribution, even though from the specific viewpoint of Thai society and culture.

Saneh Chamarik
Local Development Institute
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Introduction

On Balance and Emancipation

*I*t is usually an honor when asked by someone to write an introduction to his or her book. But when Prof. Saneh Chamarik invited me to write an introduction to his book: ***Democracy and Development: A Cultural Perspective***. I found myself caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, this is indeed one of the greatest honors in my academic life to be asked to contribute an introduction to a book of my beloved and respected Professor. On the other hand, this opportunity brings home all my limitations and genuine realization that there is much more to learn in the fields of social and human sciences. Nevertheless, to do justice to this important volume and its author, instead of writing a summary of each chapter in this introduction, I will first delineate the patterns of essays collected here. Then the volume will be critically discussed in the light of two basic concepts which seem to unify all the collected papers: balance and emancipation.



Except "Technological Development and Cultural Freedom" which was written as a chapter in a book published by the United Nations University Press in 1990. all other essays which constitute this volume were Prof. Saneh's addresses to different fora during the past decade. While all of them were delivered before international audiences, only 4 were given outside Thailand. Interestingly enough, all these 4 were delivered in three Asian cities, Jakarta, New Delhi and Tokyo (twice). Although Prof.Saneh maintains that Thailand "is naturally the focal point of reference" in the volume, and indeed it does, there are only two chapters with the word "Thai" in the titles. They are the chapters on "Thai 'National' Education" and "Problems of Development in Thai Political Setting." If the chapters are rearranged chronologically, it can be seen that the earliest work included in this volume, "Buddhism and Human Rights", was written in 1979 and his latest which appears here is "Democracy: Form versus Substance?" written in December 1992. Five essays in this volume were written from 1990 onwards while four were written from 1979 to 1981. There seems to be a gap in this volume because from 1982 to 1989, only "Science and Technology for Modernization: An Asian View" written in May 1987 is included. The fact that he had to give two public lectures on democracy in 1992 was no accident since the year marked the 60th anniversary of the June 24th revolution which put an end to absolute monarchy in Thailand.

Chronologically then, it seems that his focus has shifted from a visible emphasis on human rights in the essays written in the early part of the decade to an emphasis on people-centered development as a critique of formalistic democracy with a strong accent on cultural freedom and self reliance.

The organizers of the fora which invited Prof. Saneh to deliver his insightful lectures include ASAIHL, People's Forum, ASEAN Editors, Core University Program between Thammasat and Kyoto Universities, The Siam Society, Sophia/United Nations Universities/World Conference on Religion and Peace, UNESCO, World Congress of the World Federalist Movement and the International Conference of Thai Studies. Judging from these varied organization, it is safe to assume that his audience include academics, non-government organization intellectuals, journalists and visionaries, among others. This raises a question concerning his message which is conveyed to people of such diversified interests.



Prof. Saneh's diagnosis of modern day human predicament is that the world is in a state of imbalance. Developing countries are suffering from the disease generated by pathological development. This is because the notion of development as accepted in mainstream thinking, especially the dangerous victory of forced in-

dustrialization, contributes much to imbalances in the fields of ecology, economics, cultural freedom, politics and spirituality. This imbalance has a mesmerizing effect which curtails the potentials of most planners, policy makers, politicians, businessmen, the middle class and academics from seeing that the prime purpose of development and democracy is for the good of human beings in society. This blindness is, in some ways, a result of their failure to appreciate the purpose and reality of social science, science and technology which are themselves products of socio-historical contexts. As a result, they are not "something of absolute value" and "cannot be an end in itself". Neither are they "politically and ethically neutral and free from any untoward influences." (p.177)

To regain the lost "balance", "human rights" needs to be reconsidered. While there needs to be a balance between civil and political rights on the one hand and social and political rights on the other, the focus of attention should be on the "human" side of the concept itself. For in the final analysis, it is human beings who are the end point of social analysis, policy recommendations and policy makings. It is human beings who have been suffering from short-sighted, sectarian and cruel policies supported by the violence which characterized the nature of the state (Weber 1969: 78). Therefore human beings must be reintroduced and recontextualized as a focal point of social analysis. This needs to be carried out

against all kinds of arrogant elitist approaches because human beings can choose. With due attention paid to local traditions and age-old collective wisdom, a balanced relationship between the local and the global, the traditional and the modern, the human/social and the natural worlds can be creatively constructed.

In focussing on the balance between human beings and their rights, the other unifying concept which runs through the volume is freedom or emancipation. Relying heavily on W.F.Wertheim's *Evolution and Revolution*, emancipation means freedom from human domination which needs to go hand in hand with emancipation from the forces of nature. The concept of progress, which, according to Wertheim is synonymous with evolution (Wertheim 1974: 35), could be understood as a general trend towards emancipation which cannot be separated from "an increasing human capacity to cooperate" (Wertheim 1974: 40). In his more recent article, Wertheim categorically states that emancipation is not an ideology but "a highly important, maybe even basic, historical and sociological phenomenon". In fact, it is first and foremost "action based and always occurs in terms of a struggle. Emancipation starts from that which people themselves are yearning and struggling for- whatever they view as liberation" (Wertheim 1992: 259).

There are two points worth pondering here. First, given Prof. Sanehûs current work in the field of community forestry and ecology, the emancipation of

human beings from the force of nature a la Wertheim's might need some modifications. In fact, relying on traditional cosmology, human beings may not need to emancipate themselves from the force of nature. Instead, they need to learn and acquire the wisdom of a harmonious way of living with nature. More importantly, the new emancipation may mean a struggle by community-based groups to defend nature against man-made catastrophe in the name of forced industrialization or development.

Second, in the process of current struggle to defend nature, local groups often found themselves at odds with state power. It should be noted that, according to Wertheim, the state may serve as a motor or a hindrance of emancipation depending on the historical context. He argues, for example, that the strong state power built in Russia and China in order to protect the emancipatory movements from outside enemies also had the potential to curtail the realization of emancipatory ideals from within (Wertheim 1992: 267).

Perhaps, the reason why Prof. Saneh chooses to think through Buddhism and human rights is because for him the essence of Buddhism is freedom (p.112) and it is presented as a "science of living" so that one can learn to live "one's life with objective understanding and the intelligence in knowing" (p.112).



While reading Prof. Saneh's *Democracy and Development: A Cultural Perspective*, I can't help but think of two important volumes written in the seventies on the subject of development. They are Denis Goulet's *The Cruel Choice* and Peter Berger's *Pyramids of Sacrifice*. Berger invokes the powerful image of the great pyramid at Cholula in Mexico as a vision of the close relationship between priests and warriors, between those who constructed the theories and those who built empires. But it is the common people who "carried the stones,...piled them on top of the other,...sweated in the hot sun. If they were unlucky, they ended up as victims on the sacrificial platform. And they were silent" (Berger 1976: 3). In the present world, priests and warriors are replaced by academics and policy makers who work for development. Critical of the term development itself for its masked asymmetrical power relationship, Goulet discusses the term "liberation" as a substitute. Liberation implies "the suppression of elitism by a populace which assumes control over its own change processes" which will lead to Paulo Freire's idea of "cultural action for freedom" (Goulet 1977: xv).

It is therefore not accidental that the subtitle of this volume is "A Cultural Perspective". But the term "Cultural" is not unproblematic. Neither is the way in which it is used as a "Perspective". Prof. Saneh does not elaborate his "cultural perspective" in this volume. But it seems that the notion of culture used here is an

expanded one because there are times when it is seen as a perspective as well as a context of other ideas or phenomena. The expanded character of culture is useful because it is able to capture the different ways and levels in which it works. Ali Mazrui has outlined at least seven functions of culture (1990: 7-8). Two of them are most relevant here. First, it serves as lenses of perception and cognition because how people view the world is normally conditioned by one or more cultural paradigms to which they been exposed. Second, it provides criteria of evaluation because what is considered good or bad, beautiful or ugly, moral or immoral, desirable or repulsive is more or less a child of culture. From such a cultural perspective, the volume's critical stance to mainstream thinking and policy is quite evident.

The notion of perspective used in this volume is not explained either. But since the title of chapter 3 is "Democracy in Development Perspective", then at least two conclusions can be arrived at. First, development can be used as a perspective and there are at least three views of development: economic growth, economic growth+social change, and ethical values (Goulet 1977: xiii-xiv). Second, development perspective is similar to cultural perspective. This second point is much more important because development is cultural. As a result, to critically assess this cultural phenomenon, knowledge and cultural action are crucial.

His paradigm of knowledge permits the existence of

objectivity, divides form from substance and uses interdisciplinary approach. The volume is silent on the existing alternative paradigm where objectivity has recently been questioned in social and human sciences. But his notion of objectivity is less epistemological than social and cultural. For example, to "objectively" appreciate science and technology means they should be considered properly as social phenomena in their socio-historical contexts (p.183).

Normally in accepting the duality of form and substance, the latter is considered more important, real and hence superior to the former. But new trends in human and social sciences point toward a blurring of such a demarcation. In fact, some theorists who belong to the postmodern persuasion suggest that only form counts and there is no such things as "substance".

The interdisciplinary character of his inquiry, in my view, is less epistemological than a result of the nature of the issues he examines. A holistic approach to the question of democracy or human rights, for example, cannot but be interdisciplinary since the center of gravity lies in human beings as a subject. To paraphrase Rousseau, in his view human beings are in chain, and need to be free.



Prof. Saneh's work is that cultural act for freedom

which Paulo Freire thinks about. It is that voice of reasons for the silent ones who are victims of inhuman theories and cold policies. Moreover, it is a voice from the periphery responding to the center in the language of the center. While this is rare for Thai scholarship where a contribution is internationally made, not on the subject of Thai studies, but on democracy and development at the theoretical levels grounded in empirical experiences, the work is consistent with a much larger tradition where the exchange of knowledge between the old worlds, here I mean-Asia, and Europe both before and immediately after the voyages of discovery proved to be an important factor in the development of science (Goonatilake 1992 (?): 241). The world needs to be occasionally reminded that Vasco da Gama's navigator across the Indian Ocean to Calicut was either an Arab or an Indian (Lach 1977: 149). Approaching the twenty first century, Prof. Saneh's voice and caution admonition should be heeded if participatory democracy and human-centered development are to be creatively and constructively realized.

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Social Science in a Non-Western Milieu *

*T*he main purpose here is to draw attention to some of the basic issues concerning the role of social science and higher education in Southeast Asia. Because of the speaker's obviously limited experience, all the views and interpretations have to be drawn somewhat from a Thai situation and perspective. It is only hoped that the line of discussion could in a general way be of some relevance to that of the region as a whole. The term "social science" is to be used in singular number throughout this paper, for reason to be clarified in the course of discussion.

First of all, something needs to be said about the state of social science itself. The position taken in this paper is that, in the realm of scientific knowledge and endeavor

* Paper presented at the seminar on "Western Ideas and Higher Education in Southeast Asia", organized by ASAIHL, Jakarta, Indonesia, 26-28 June, 1980, and published by Social Science Association of Thailand.

our, it is hardly plausible to distinguish between Western and non-Western, or whatever categorization. The main task of social science in trying to understand the social phenomena is, according to Friedrich Hayek and Karl Popper, "to discover the laws by which societies develop and, on the basis of these laws of historical development, to make predictions about the future (Miller 1972 : 797)." In this very transcultural sense, despite all the historical and cultural diversities social science is to address itself to, there is indeed a unity of purpose and value in all scientific pursuits: physical or social, Western or non-Western alike.

Historically and on the basis of professional achievement, the West must be fully recognized as the source of both intellectual inspiration and substantive matters. This is a matter of historical fact. Nevertheless, by its very nature, science cannot be said to belong exclusively to any geographical or cultural groups of people. This line of reasoning is not meant to convey nationalistic or anti-Western chauvinism of any sort. Quite the contrary. The point at issue here is that what actually involved amounts to a great deal more than simply identifying or selecting "Western" ideas and then finding ways and means for their adaptation to the Southeast Asian context, as seems to be the theme of this seminar. As a profession and to be true to the spirit

of scientific endeavour, there is a real need, among indigenous but Western-trained social scientists especially, for a radical change in academic outlook as well as for conceptual innovation that is particularly responsive to the needs and problems of their own societies. Eugene F. Miller's view on political science is very instructive in this respect:

A political science worthy of the name will reconceptualize the world and act to implement its new visions. It will serve as an irritant, as an opponent of established systems and verities. Political science, thus practiced, will serve both to increase our knowledge by disclosing the potentialities and limits of political life and to humanize the political sphere by enlarging the scope for creative action . (Miller 1972 : 815)

These words reflect part of the current issues involved in an epistemological debate among Western scholars on the nature of political inquiry of the post-behavioural age. Much of what is referred to political science can also be said of the science of society in general. Putting aside the activistic aspect of the problem which may be found rather out of tune with this present forum, one can discern the very meaning and purpose of

social inquiry which, fortunately, has just been passing beyond the stage of simplistic behaviouralism of the 1960's with an over emphasis on empirical data. This, again, is not to minimize the importance and valuable contribution of the Positivistic/Empirical approach to social studies. It will certainly have its place in our academic interest. After all, theoretical perspectives have to be tested against observation and experiment, all of which constitute science. Moreover, there always lies the danger of a theory or generalization that has no basis in fact. (Cotgrave 1979 : 8)

In social science, approach and methodology are not just a matter of technique and expertise, but essentially represent an attitude of mind, that is to say, a kind of moral proposition. Behaviouralism, for all its claims of scientific objectivity, is no exception. In its simplistic form, as has already been observed,

... (A)ssumptions about man and society that guide behavioural research have been drawn from the prevailing political ideology. Consequently, the goodness or normality of the established system is presupposed in research and theorizing alike.
(Miller 1972 : 809)

It is not too difficult to see that this is basically a

static and fatalistic view of life which, according to Wolin, offers "no significant choice or critical analysis of the quality, direction, or fate of public life (Miller 1972 : 809)." The flaw and dilemma of behaviouralism needs to be stressed here if only for the fact that it is still very much in vogue for many a social scientist who, for lack of anything better, loves to see things almost entirely in terms of certain methodologies and conceptual frameworks for their own sake. It is mental outlook such as this that makes social studies rather unfruitful and sterile. It would be even more so in traditional environments of Southeast Asia.

On the other hand, there is inherently a historical dimension to be taken into account. Hwa Yol Jung, notably, speaks of social existence as the life-world, i.e., the world of lived experience which is to serve as the foundation of any explicit act of conceptualization in philosophy or science. That also means the socialized world wherein exist "complex living relationships of man to man in culture, in society, in history, and in politics." Furthermore, the life-world is by nature "dynamic and changing, which means that it is historical. As there are different cultures, moreover, there are different versions of the life-world (Miller 1972 : 812-814)." A grasp of the historical dimension, therefore, is essential for an objective perspective on social reality and

inquiry. The strength of the historical relationship, as Donald G. MacRae rightly asserts, is such that to be required and expected of social science:

(E)very contribution to social science is at once a document of and a clue to the structural and cultural situation of its time and place,... (and that) discoveries, original work in social science, assume new values in new situations. It is never safe to assume that we have exhausted or even fully incorporated the endeavour and insight of the past by our own work. (MacRae 1969 : 12-13 ; Miller 1972 : 797)

All these considerations should form the basis upon which to judge the academic value of social studies. But then the possibility and potentiality of scientific pursuit assumes, in actual fact, much beyond individuals' intellectual effort and energy. Social science is certainly not born or exists in a vacuum, but no less than natural science, has its intellectual roots in a certain social and cultural value. In this regard, mention must be made of the disparate social backgrounds of modern Western society and tradition-bound cultures of Southeast Asia. In a comparative study of the concepts of freedom and equality, C.G. Weeramantry, former Supreme Court

judge of Sri Lanka, indeed makes a point in referring to the radical transformation of Western society following the Reformation and the Renaissance, whereby:

The questioning of authority, however sacred or well-entrenched, the stimulus of sudden impact with ancient cultures, the opening up of new world which unleashed both mind and society from their traditional moorings- all these had in Europe broken up the ancient form of social ordering, released the individual from the group and sent forth the concept of individual freedom and equality as the legacy of that age to all others.
(Weeramantry 1976 : 13)

The spiritual link of these historic movements to both philosophical and scientific regeneration in the West is obvious. Thus followed the age of Enlightenment, of Rationalism. And like those of the classical Greek, human mind came round in earnest to question and inquire into the nature and problem of man and society.

Clearly, Southeast Asian societies have experienced no such social and cultural upheaval. In spite of colonialism and accompanying modernization, there still remains a strong sense of continuity with the "traditional moorings" of the past. Social science, if the term may be

used at all in such a context, came in chiefly as part of the modernizing efforts on the part of political elites. There has been little, if any, social and cultural basis for scientific outlook and attitude necessary for rational inquiry. This top-down process of development has a peculiar bearing on the state and problem of social "science" of today. As a matter of fact, the state of social science in Southeast Asia has been closely linked with that of higher education whose primary function it is to promote technical training as well as transmitting traditional heritage and value. Thai higher education is one notable case in point. Emphasis is always on the practical use of knowledge introduced, or imported rather, and presented in a ready-made fashion. One suspects that similar thing also applies to elsewhere in Southeast Asia. In Thailand, for example, higher education can be said to have started with the establishment of the Civil Service College after the abolition of the Royal Page School in 1910, and then elevated to the status of Chulalongkorn University six years later. The main course of study was concerned with public administration, with a little bit of economics and public finance, etc., to accommodate the training of personnel for various tasks in the government service (Chatthip Nartsupha 1974 : 22-23, 68-69). All in all, the primary purpose of university education remained basically the

same as in the old Royal Page School days, that is to say, to produce government officials, but only on a larger scale and with more variety of technical skills. Government service may not be the sole objective of higher education nowadays with the proliferation of tasks and technical know-how required both in the public and private sectors. But the traditional concern with the technical and practical remains fundamentally unchanged, albeit in the changing environment. The situation is not much helped, but may be to become even worsening, with the increasing so-called specialization and thus compartmentalization of social reality into various "disciplines", a symptom of misguided educational modernization especially as far as the undergraduate programmes of study are concerned. Of this more to be discussed later.

Such a state of affairs raises yet another basic question as to the role of higher education particularly in the context of the developmental problem facing southeast Asian societies. The real task of the university as generally understood, not necessarily in the Western but strictly in the academic sense, is the advancement and dissemination of knowledge. But then there is always the problem of what kind of knowledge to focus upon so as to make it relevant for creative action. (Cotgrave 1979 : 43) The approach to and expectation of education, as described above, may have fulfilled some of

the needs arising at the most initial stage of nation building. As social and political life and relationships become increasingly complex and new critical problems emerge, however, there is bound to arise the new demand for quite a different type of educated manpower. Which also means a completely new orientation in social studies among the Southeast Asian institutions of higher learning, if they ever wish to be able to grasp a true perspective of their changing social realities. For, as L.A. Coser would like to remind all of us:

...If the mind is chained to the immediate demands of the practicalities of the hour, it loses that autonomy without which it becomes a simple machine for "doing things". (Cotgrave 1979 : 43)

This is the crux of the matter. Without that autonomy of mind, any talk of social science worthy of the name is just nothing but a wishful thinking. One may indeed wonder if this could not also be said of natural science and humanities. That is how the issue of academic freedom comes into the picture. For the purpose of this discussion, we are concerned here, not so much with intellectual self-satisfaction of those in the teaching profession, as with those crucial and fateful undergraduate years of study which generations after genera-

tions of our potential leaders in various fields have to undergo, but in the process of which the mind is left so unprepared for any meaningful search for objective knowledge. The two sides of the problem, the teaching and the learning, are of course closely related. Both are required, for an objective perception and understanding of social reality, to first and foremost identify their "inherited opinions" which form part of the existing body of knowledge about society and then subject them to critical scrutiny. (Miller 1972 : 861) On the teaching side, there seems to be everywhere no lack of exertion for academic freedom in this specially creative sense. Perhaps this is phenomenal of the modern age in which scholars all over the world have become more or less exposed to the scientific way of thinking. Social science in the sense of critical studies thus becomes a fact of life, a sort of counter-culture phenomenon, whether one likes it or not. Thai intellectual community, again, illustrates the similar trend of development. Although still in its embryonic stage, the phenomenon also points significantly to the cultural and historical nature inherent in the field of social studies, as mentioned above. While the current modes of inquiry in the popular "disciplines" like economics and political science, still rest complacent, and thus bogged down, with all kinds of jargons and platitudes, there clearly emerges an

intellectual movement, even if sporadic, which aims at raising the whole question of historiographic validity in all aspects: social, political, and economic. Here one can refer to the examples of both Thai and Western scholars in this new stream of academic activities. (Anderson 1978 ; Nidhi Iawsriwong 1978)

Such liberal and critical approach is indispensable if a society ever seriously hopes to emancipate itself from the past errors. But of more importance is the crucial question of turning the emerging scientific outlook and alertness into the academic programmes of study. The point is to allow ample room for dialogue with an eye towards reality, in place of docile acceptance of "inherited opinions" which, as Bertrand Russell notes of almost all education, are prompted and formulated a political motive, whereby:

Hardly anything is done to foster the inward growth of mind and spirit; in fact, those who have had most education are very often atrophied in their mental and spiritual life, devoid of impulse, and possessing only certain mechanical aptitudes which take the place of living thought. (Russell 1954 : 103)

The problem of moral lapse is no doubt even more real in the field of social studies, which is particularly

susceptible to political sensitivity and sanction. With such built-in educational background and without the dynamics of the Reformation and the Renaissance to fall back on, the task of social scientists in promoting critical reexamination of "inherited opinions" is bound to run counter to overwhelming odds in the somewhat anti-intellectual climate of Southeast Asia, be it political, or cultural, or simply habit of mind. This inevitably gives rise to divergent senses of academic purpose and expectation. It is in a way symptomatic of identity crisis, as partly reflected in the curriculum orientations, lines of approach, and teaching strategies.

Whatever cultural and political constraints, however, all the confusions and discrepancies are in no small measure attributable to the lack of vision on the part of the academic communities themselves. Most, if not all, come under quite another sort of constraint, i.e., specialization syndrome. One cannot be certain if this is due to blind following of the Western way or part of the current state of knowledge itself, as succinctly commented upon by J. Robert Oppenheimer:

If we look at what is known, the proportion that known by specialized groups is very large, and the proportion that gets back into the common knowledge of man is very small ... We have, then, a

predominance of novelty on the present scene, and also an absence of common knowledge, or at least a growth of specialized and available knowledge, but not vital, living knowledge. (Oppenheimer 1967 : 258)

As a result, not only the science of society comes to be artificially divided into various disciplines, but within each there appear increasing proliferation and subdivision of courses of study. Each discipline or each course is treated as an end in itself with little, if any, effort to relate or refer to anything outside. Undergraduates in increasing number are left, willy-nilly, to their own resources to find out about the world if they happen to care to. But what supposed to concern them most are to be not much more than the tests and examinations, as well as available jobs ahead. With the rapid expansion of higher education, the undergraduate teaching programmes become increasingly unmanageable and are left much weaker than before. The general tendency is to turn more attention to post-graduate levels as a most convenient way out of the whole issue of higher education. But this only leads to even narrower specialization for lack of broadness in intellectual outlook that should have gained from undergraduate training in the first place.

All these are familiar enough. But the point is that such academic value and orientation fails to live up to the actual and chronic needs and problems of rural societies of Southeast Asia. For this, social science has a clear role to play and this calls for innovation of ideas and approach to be able to cope with our own predicaments. In fact, the needs and problems of Southeast Asian societies were fully recognized over ten years ago in a UNESCO report, especially concerning the problem of social change and urban-rural disparities (Oppenheimer 1967 : 95-97), which have been kept even widening as one full decade has now gone by. The nature of the problems has particular implication for study and teaching programmes. And this is well in line with the liberal and critical approach mentioned above. A critical scrutiny of "inherited opinions" again, is not an end in itself, but to serve conceptually as the path towards more objective understanding of social reality. There is also, one might add, a philosophical perspective in that, in the process of inquiry into the past and present, one can learn to sense some direction of change for the future (Nettl 1969 : 13). Not only as liberal studies, but even as professional training, social science can also fulfil the need for more relevant manpower in creating a body of administrators and social workers capable of appreciating the social foundation of development such as

the concept of social justice (UNESCO and the International Association of Universities 1967 : 207). Institutions of higher learning cannot remain forever indifferent to the phenomenon of social and economic disparities. But to be able to contribute to creative resolution of the social and cultural problems, they have to revitalize and redirect their academic sense of purpose, now so disintegrated, and then to reorganize the study programmes accordingly. Present divisions of the subject matter may provide some heuristic or administrative convenience. But they must be readjusted and kept within bound enough to preserve the fact of unified social science that sees social life and problems, not as compartmentalized living, but as a totality. (UNESCO and other 1967 : 220-221; Anderson 1978 : 58-59 ; Wallenstein 1980 : xi)

One final point of caution. Emphasis on historical and cultural dimension is certainly not to advocate parochialism or inward-looking type of education. That would defeat the whole purpose of what has been said all along. The essence of social science is to promote scientific attitude and capacity for rational inquiry. But this is not to make social studies purely liberal and intellectual vocation either. No society in Southeast Asia can afford such a luxury. The need for the technical and practical subject for "doing things" still has its place. Only that we need to give closer and more intensive

attention to historical and cultural insights and at the same time to attach primary importance, to start with, to questioning things rather than answering questions in the process of learning. Only in this way can a foundation really be prepared for making any original and creative contribution to the pool of knowledge which otherwise would remain lopsided and consequently politically biased one way or another. The main thing is to make the academic truly academic and therefore truly positive.





Address to the People's Forum 1991 *

It is indeed a great pleasure and honour for me, on behalf of the Thai NGO-Coordinating Committee on Rural Development (NGO-CORD), Centre for Social Development Studies of the Faculty of Political Science, and Political Economy Centre of the Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University, to extend a very warm welcome to you all in this "People's Forum '91". May I also express my deep appreciation of your keen interest and participation which, I am sure, is to greatly instil in all of us moral strength and solidarity to cope with human crisis of our time.

Now that the "Thai Forum" has been concluded, let us go on with the "International Forum" in the very same spirit of making the voices of common people effectively heard. As we are all aware, the two fora are closely interrelated. What have been articulated in the "Thai Forum" are to be even more stressed in this "International

* Opening Remarks as Chairman, NGO-Coordinating Committee on Rural Development (NGO-CORD), 13 October, 1991, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Forum", but on a much larger scale and with much broader perspective. This is certainly not a mere redundancy. It only reflects the fact and reality of life that common people everywhere are being confronted with basically the same problems and fates, be it local, national or global. All of which come practically from the same source of hegemonic and disruptive style of industrial development. To anyone in the right mind, this fact by itself should naturally bring forth a sense of togetherness in dealing with the matter.

So with this common task in mind, before getting on with our discussion on specific topics as scheduled for the next four days, it may well be in order here to take a hard look once again at what has actually been going on around us in today's world of hectic change and development. Let me just begin with a humorous, but ominous, side of the story. I beg to refer to a cartoon by Dan Wasserman in The Washington Star some years ago, caricaturing a US lady representative at the UN. She was portrayed as being quizzed and offering a poignant reply as follows:

Question: *"What is the difference between totalitarian and authoritarian?"*

Answer: *"Well, a totalitarian government arrests, tortures and murders. An authoritarian government, on the other hand, leaves many of these functions to the private sector."*

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN TOTALITARIAN
AND AUTHORITARIAN?



WELL, A TOTALITARIAN
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AN AUTHORITARIAN
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This indeed has particular relevance to what has been happening to the Third World's common people - all in the name of modernization and industrialization. Quite instructively, in Thai official vocabulary, "private sector" simply means those tiny and prosperous minorities in the modern conclave: namely, industry, commerce, and banking, all of which revolving around the concept and sole objective of unlimited industrial growth. It is this exclusive "private sector" that is to be looked upon, willy-nilly, as the engine of growth and progress. Translated into democratic jargon, if there is to be any development at all, it would read something like development of the "private sector", by the "private sector", and for "the private sector". Actually, this is also the way the so-called democracy in most, if not all, developing countries has been operating. Somehow in a predetermined way, the "private sector" has to be on top with the rest being put aside and subordinated. The "development" gains, according to one celebrated academic ruling, may have to be so concentrated in a few hands, but nevertheless would presumably be trickled down to the satisfaction of all.

Unfortunately, as we all know, the idea of trickling-down has been proved not to be the case. And it will never be, as witnessed by the widespread and chronic poverty and widening income disparities the world over. All of which, by the way, is in stark contrast to economic prom-

ise as acclaimed by the World Bank/IMF! In any case, the self-proclaimed tricking-down effects will never materialize, simply because of the economic logic inherent in the current industrial culture itself. Why? Because, in its scheme of things, man and nature are to count as nothing much more than commodities to be put on sale like any other commodities. That is how man is being equated with labour, and nature with raw materials. And both need to be at the service of the modern production system for the sole purpose of the "private sector" 's profit maximization. It is within such a self-centred frame of mind that industrial growth and development is to be carried out. That is consequently how the so-called economic growth is being measured for the whole nation when in fact it is only sectoral. And finally, with the rise of what John H. Kautsky calls "modernizing aristocracy", both governmental and non-governmental, the whole state machinery transforms itself from the function of governing into business administration, accommodating changes, or "structural adjustments" in the World Bank/IMF's vocabulary, as dictated from outside, aptly called international economic order!

All this should help explain why and how the Third World's seemingly national governments look to the external forces for guidance in their business transactions, while increasingly turning blind eyes to their own people,

particularly those overwhelming majority who cannot quite keep up with the wind of changes. It obviously explains how the two-pronged development policy has come about: liberalism for the "private sector" in contrast with authoritarianism toward the rest. It is no wonder that the state machinery has always been a great and forceful helping hand in facilitating cheap and trainable labour and convenient access to natural resources, as well as other infrastructural services. That is why poverty and natural degradation inevitably goes hand in hand with sectoral prosperity. They all constitute the built-in mechanism for the industry's profit maximization and thus accelerated and continuing growth, with of course "stability". Hence all the fuss about planning on and on, ad nauseum!

I have dwelt a bit long-winded on the current state of affairs just to bring into relief the true nature of the so-called "free economy" and "free market" system. So much talked about with so much pride is "free competition" and "competitiveness". Only that it is all one-sided. And this very brand of economic sectarianism and one-sidedness is all the more accentuated in **closed** societies, like ours, where the "private sector" reigns supreme with the state machinery being somehow "privatized" in conformity with its needs and demands. In a large sense, then, "economic" growth needs to be implemented through authoritarian means, and by force

and violence if need be. And this suffering and hardship has become daily life for the poor people everywhere, as the Thai Forum has succinctly demonstrated. All this has been a well-established order under the current "market economy" hierarchy from the global down to national and local levels. As a result, politics in underdeveloped and developing countries alike have to be taken care of and law and order established. In actuality, it means politics is something prohibitive and submerged into purely economic and technical decisions. That is why professional economists, including those of the World Bank/IMF's, are quite happy to do away with any social and political judgments and decisions. For they are all predetermined, the same way those Bank-supported projects and technical advice have been predetermined in accordance with the mainstream economic order. It also explains why most public projects have been shrouded in secrecy. It looks to them like politics and economics becoming worlds apart. But they only call it professional neutrality and objectivity!

Obviously, all this fits in very well with all the authoritarian regimes. So everywhere, one witnesses "economic liberalism" turning against common people's rights and freedom, and thus against democracy itself. This is, mind you, not ironical or contradictory at all. It is only perfectly logical and rational under the current industrial culture, where domination-subordination

relationships are the norm, both within and without developing nations.

In light of the above analysis, the common task before us in this People's Forum is quite clear. Beyond case studies in which the common people's predicaments and potentiality are being brought up for further discussion, it means at least two most important and inter-related things. One is to point to the real need for shifting away from current growth-centred development, whereby the great many come under domination of the few, to people-centred one with due respect to man and nature as focus of development and where human rights and freedom constitute the norm. The point has already been extensively discussed and emphasized in the Thai Forum. Hopefully, this International Forum would further elucidate the theme in terms of regional and global common front. Ways and means should then be found to bring about people's networking, so that the People's Forum could be effectively sustained. It needs indeed to be sustained if our efforts are to mean anything at all.

And finally, along with the people-centred development, the People's Forum would further mean a groping and progress towards true democracy, where people at the grassroots are enabled to attain self-reliance and actively participate in the decision-making process. As everyone knows, it is simply a matter of basic right to human dignity and development, but only arbitrarily

being denied to people under the current economic order, national and international. And this is not just a question of poverty reduction and people's survival either, as claimed by professional economists and of course by the World Bank/IMF. That would only help prolong the current hegemonic relationships that are the root cause of all the troubles. Significantly, it means stopping and safeguarding man and nature from further encroachment and destruction for mere commercial and industrial purposes. And it must be done **by democratic means**, that is to say, by the people themselves.

Now that, natural degradation has become so globally threatening that it becomes fashionable to express concern about environmental problems. But, then, it tends to be regarded as just technical matters to be answered by technological solutions. It is so conceived of within powerful and professional quarters, and popularized among the public at large. That also implies separation between man and nature, which has been underlying exploitative relationships all along between man and man and between man and nature. The world of today is indeed in bad need for a hard rethinking, in order that ways and means could be found for all to join together in freedom, creativity, and harmonious way of life and peaceful coexistence.





Democracy in Development Perspective *

Let me first express my deep gratitude for being given an opportunity and privilege of addressing this very distinguished forum. As the one with a certain interest in Southeast Asian affairs, I should also like to congratulate this particular ASEAN initiative in bringing together leading journalists of the region to engage in a dialogue of common concern, that is to say, freedom of the press and democratic development. One would indeed hope that it could be to represent a positive step further, if not quite a departure, from conventional and negative concern with a mere security matter. Now that ideological and military rivalries are becoming things of the past with the collapse of Communist regimes, a fresh rethinking is really needed so that we can have a pretty clear idea of our own future. In our topsy-turvy world, so much damage has been done in the name of freedom

* Keynote Speech: The Fifth ASEAN Editors' Conference, January 19-25, 1992, Pattaya, Thailand.

and democracy. It is now about time to realize that all this is not to serve as its own end, but as a means to larger fulfilment of human progress.

As you all are well aware, democracy is not just a matter of form or any ready-made and static formula. So I deem it appropriate here to entitle my presentation "Democracy in Development Perspective".

Freedom and progress

With this end in view and to begin with, I beg you to share with me in what Professor W.F. Wertheim calls "emancipation principle", that is to say,

Emancipation from the forces of nature and emancipation from domination by privileged individuals or groups ... go hand in hand to mark human progress (Wertheim 1974 : 47)

The term "emancipation" is very instructive here. And it is not only confined to Western society and culture. It was curiously acknowledged even within the Thai ruling circle in the time of absolutism. To illustrate the point, let me just quote from the words of His Royal Highness, the Minister of Interior and concurrently President of the Privy Council, one of the most powerful figures of his days, some five years before the 1932 Revo-

lution that overthrew the absolute monarchy in Thailand:

*... Although it is as yet necessary to maintain the **form of government** with absolute power, that absolute power needs to be very **liberal** in order to preserve itself. But as time has gone by, there will be increasing number of educated people. We have therefore to get prepared to cope with the demand for **emancipation** (sic) that will keep arising (Thai National Archive, R.7 RL 6/3, Minutes of the Privy Council Meeting, 11 April, B.E. 2470 (1927))*

Quite apart from political foresight, the observation about human yearning for emancipation has its own relevance here. The fact is that growth and development of human rights and thus democracy has its roots in human nature itself, Western or non-Western. Human aspiration for freedom is indeed part and parcel of social and political life. It is certainly not for nothing when great philosophers like John Locke and J.J. Rousseau, some three centuries ago, found it vitally important to assert that men were born and by nature free, equal, and independent. The same insight is being repeated, as you all know, in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with interesting elaboration:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

This U.N. stipulation is interesting in both its expression of universality and of hope. As universal value, it could be articulated and acted upon in quite a variety of ways and at various levels: individual, community, or national. At the individual level, we have already been witnessing well-known cases like Benigno Aquino in the Philippines, or Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Sakharov in the former Soviet Union, to name just a few. At the national level, we have just gone through modern phenomenon of "people's power" starting, again, with the Philippines, and most recently across the whole Eastern Europe and then right within the citadel of power of the former Soviet Union itself. At the community and grass-root level, we have read a good deal about protest movements and even armed rebellions among minority or local groups in their efforts to exert their customary rights of livelihood. The last category is, as I see it, to assume increasing importance and scope, particularly among the Third World peoples in the face of the onslaught of industrialism. In the post-Cold War, there still indeed remain pertinent issues of human rights and freedom, and thus democracy, as to be presently looked

into.

On the question of hope, that in itself brings into relief another element in social and political life, i.e., power. It is the power element that makes the struggle for human freedom an inherent and continuing process in human history. It looks like human society conducting unending dialogue with own self. So it is the nature of power relationships that stands in the way of people acting towards one another "in a spirit of brotherhood", as called for in the Universal Declaration. Both, power and freedom, indeed constitute two opposite sides of the same coin. The truth is that freedom is not necessarily on the winning side. Wertheim's "emancipation principle", as earlier referred to, is not in any way meant to be equated with the actual course of human history, but to serve as a measure applied to evaluate the course of certain events in terms of progress, stagnation or retrogression (Wertheim 1974 : 47). So you see, we are all quite vulnerable to making ourselves backward, despite all the modernity we so much take pride of.

Capitalism and democracy

Needless to say, we are all on the side of freedom and progress. Hopefully, I am not assuming too much of you here. I for one would not dare to suggest what should or is to be done to achieve it. Certainly not to you as

journalists, anyway. But I am pretty sure that with right understanding or objectivity, it should not be beyond human intelligence and power of reasoning to get to right thinking and action. Life of course will never be without problems and sufferings, as the Lord Buddha says. Only that quite a lot of troubles and sufferings have been brought about simply because we, human beings, tend to take things so much for granted. As a result, human assets turn out to be liabilities. They are all man-made. These include things like science and technology and so many others which are the products of human creativity and innovation. And incidentally for that matter, freedom of the press is of no exception. The adverse consequences could be even more so, as we are entering the information age which makes the "privileged individuals or groups" all the more powerful over all the others.

A certain historical perspective may well be in order here for understanding how we all have come to be where we are today, and what lies ahead. As Rousseau so succinctly observes in his *Social Contract*: "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains". The social and political "chains" have taken various forms in human historical experiences ever since the ancient to modern time. It is the Industrial Revolution some two and a half centuries ago that opens the way for globalization of power relationships. It all started with colonialism, and

then Capitalism versus Communism rivalry after World War II. With the breakdown of Communism, it looks as though we are being left with Capitalism as the only alternative. And yet, it is not difficult for us to see and feel hardships and sufferings, both human and environmental, all around us in the midst of so-called economic growth and prosperity. Again, we are all at the crossroad of how to make heads or tails out of the new situation. Do we as human beings have any choices left at all, or do we have to put up with whatever is to be offered under the remaining Capitalism, dubiously dubbed the "Free World" in its struggle against Communism?

My thesis is that one has to make extremely careful distinction between democracy and Capitalism. The former is concerned with political institution, while the latter with economic organization and management. Politics and economics are of course inter-related, and one cannot do without the other. Only that one needs to be clear as to how they are inter-related. What Capitalism is actually opposed to is socialism, while democracy to dictatorship. We have already been witnessing Capitalism thriving on a good number of dictatorships. There is no need to name the countries in question here. Obviously, as journalists, you are much better informed of what has been going on. "People's power" has been provoked everywhere just because of that. Mind you, on principle, Capitalism is not necessarily opposed to de-

mocracy. But neither are they equated with or interdependent on one another, as our experiences have so well demonstrated. It all depends on what kind of capitalism we are talking about. The alliance between Capitalism and dictatorships in the Third World countries may be excused as a convenient strategy to win over developing nations in its struggle against Communism. But, as will be seen, it is the *industrial* Capitalism itself that is inherently authoritarian and therefore an anathema to human freedom and progress.

I guess some of you may be somewhat disturbed or even shocked to hear all this nonsensical comment on a system of economic management which is supposedly based on the philosophy and principle of economic liberalism. But I am not making any personal accusations or judging things out of my own subjective feelings. I am talking about hard historical facts and about what has been currently and actually practised the world over. Let us first listen to what Pope John Paul II has to say on the subject of the disintegration of Communism in his latest social encyclical (Pope John Paul II : 82,69,78):

The Marxist solution has failed, but the realities of marginalization and exploitation remain in the world, especially the Third World, as does the reality of human alienation, especially in the more

advanced countries.

And of Capitalism itself:

We have seen that it is unacceptable to say that the defeat of so-called "real socialism" leaves capitalism as the only model of economic organization...

Certainly the mechanisms of the market offer secure advantages ... Nevertheless, these mechanisms carry the risk of an idolatry of the market.

Idolatry of the so-called "free market" is the key to objective understanding of Capitalism. To be more precise, it is actually a built-in logic of industrialism itself which serves as cultural and operational framework of current Capitalism. Ironically, Capitalism and Communism, with the latter's statism and collectivism in contrast to the former's private enterprise doctrine, share the same source of economic and technological inspiration, and both act as the agents of industrialism which forms the core of what Alvin Toffler aptly entitles "Second Wave" civilization (Toffler 1981 : 99-102). This common brand of industrial culture can be traced back in its long history of Western civilization to the 18th-century Age of Rationalism and Enlightenment. Rationalism gave rise to doctrinal belief in the supremacy of man over

nature. And then technological advance after the Industrial Revolution brought about newfound confidence in unlimited material growth. And along with unlimited material growth, progress could presumably be made in all aspects for humanity as a whole: social and cultural as well as moral. All these were to be achieved exclusively through modern science, technology, and of course industry. (Rapp 1982 : 361 ; Furtado 1977 : 628-629)

Under the impact of technological revolution, mercantilism of the Middle Ages, an older form of capitalism, was thus transformed into modern industrial capitalism. The middle class spirit of enterprise then came so timely to be submerged in Darwinism with its celebrated evolutionary theory of "survival of the fittest". This is how the so-called free market and economic competition has been translated into practice, and, significantly, into contemporary economics textbooks. Unbridled individualism and capitalism and, along with it, cut-throat competition and rivalry, thereby becomes the order of the day. That was also how industry historically came, and still does, to present itself as the exclusive engine of growth and development. Under this economic logic and development framework, everything else is to be subordinated to it. The obvious victim is agriculture and, along with it, rural communities which include both people and nature. All this explains why the Industrial Revolution and

subsequent process of industrialization that began in the West was inevitably wrought with the ruthless disintegration of rural communities and people. (Polanyi 1957 : 33-42 ; Cohen 1982 : 62)

From the foregoing, it should not be difficult to see that, with the passing of pre-war colonialism, precisely the same pattern and model is right now being enforced upon the Third World's industrialization in the name of New International Economic Order. The operational pattern is not just incidental. It is inherent in the very logic of industrialism itself. First, it is bound up with the idea of unlimited growth and thus globalization of economy. In short, another form of economic imperialism. Secondly, the Third World's human and natural abundance fits perfectly well with industry's unlimited need for cheap labour and raw materials. After all, in its scheme of things, man and nature are to count as nothing much more than commodities to be put on sale like any other commodities. This is how man is being equated with labour, and nature with raw materials. And both man and nature must perforce be put at the service of the modern production system for the sole purpose of industry's profit maximization. It is of course to be left understood that profit maximization would be to equip industry with resources for further and unlimited growth. And so on and so forth.

"Liberalism" problematique

And then, finally and most pertinent to the issues of democracy and development in the Third World including ASEAN, the New International Economic Order as alternative to anachronistic colonialism can accommodate itself well with the national elites. With the rise of what John H. Kautsky calls "modernizing aristocracy" (Kautsky 1972 : 66-72), both governmental and non-governmental, the state machineries in most of the Third World have now been transforming themselves from the function of governing into economic and business management, accommodating changes, or "structural adjustments" in the World Bank/IMF's terminology, as dictated from outside. In the circumstances, the Third World's seemingly national governments are more often than not bound to look to the external forces for policy guidance in their business transactions, while increasingly turning blind eyes to their own people, particularly those overwhelming majority who cannot quite keep up with the wind of changes. All this helps explain why and how the two-pronged development policy and strategy has come about: that is, liberalism for the exclusive "private sector" (namely, industry, business, and banking) in contrast to authoritarianism towards the rest. It is no wonder that the state machinery has always been a great helping hand in facilitating cheap and trainable labour and

convenient access to natural resources. It also explains why and how poverty and natural degradation inevitably goes hand in hand with so-called economic growth and prosperity.

I have dwelt quite a bit on the current state of development just to bring into relief the true nature of what is inadvertently called "economic liberalism" and "free market" system we are undergoing. So much talked about with so much pride is "free competition" and "competitiveness". Only that it is all one-sided. And this very brand of economic sectarianism and one-sidedness is all the more accentuated in *closed* societies like ours, where the "private sector" reigns supreme with the state and political machinery becoming somehow "privatized" in conformity with its needs and demands. In a large sense, then, economic, or rather sectoral, growth needs to be implemented through authoritarian means, and even by force and violence if need be. And all this is being a well-established order under the current "market economy" hierarchy from the global down to national and local levels.

As earlier pointed out, Capitalism is not necessarily related to democracy. In fact, as we have seen, it has its own built-in authoritarianism in dealing with people outside the industrial complex. Even in open societies of the West, it exhibits structural constraints which clearly stand in the way of democratic development. Again, in

Pope John Paul's II words:

Certain demands which arise within (democratic) society are sometimes not examined in accordance with criteria of justice and morality, but rather on the basis of the electoral or financial power of the groups promoting them. (Pope John Paul II : 91-92)

So also are the types and forms of democracy currently imposed and even enforced upon the Third World peoples. Most, if not all, are centred on money politics that simply works to the great advantage of a tiny minority in the mainstream politico-economic forces. And this obviously makes "economic liberalism" turn against common people's rights and freedom, and thus against democracy itself. From the point of view of human progress as referred to earlier on, this is a cause for grave concern indeed. For it means not only deepening polarization and divisiveness within our societies, but also widening commercialization of human and natural resources just to satisfy the never-ending demand for unlimited growth and expansion. And all this for the sole purpose of the few's profit maximization against the many, and the haves against the haves-not. What then is to remain of democracy we are talking about?

This is a most pertinent question that is laying claim

to our attention. At this point, I think it might be of some positive value if we take another look at the collapse of Communism. How can we make sense out of it in order to understand our own selves in the cause of human rights and freedom? More often than not, we have been brought up to see in Capitalism and Communism as opposite ideological and political camps on the world stage. Collapse or failure of one only means victory of another. We have already gone through the basic and structural shortcomings of industrial capitalism with regard to the issues of human freedom and progress, and thus to democracy. Obviously, Communism could be no answer with its totalitarianism. So neither Capitalism nor Communism could be alternative to one another, as both contain within themselves negative and deterministic creeds against human freedom and self-determination. And yet both involve a good deal of positive values in the course of historical development.

So I would propose that Capitalism and Communism be seen as part of historical process. In actual fact, socialism and then Communism, with capital letter, following the Bolshevik Revolution was a natural reaction and response to the adverse social and cultural consequences of Capitalism. Both managed to emerge victorious from World War II, thus bringing about ideological and military confrontation. During the Cold War, both championed different sets of human rights, but then were obliged to

compromise by including both civil and political rights on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights on the other hand, in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Some eighteen years later in 1966, they failed to have both sets of human rights reconciled at the level of international covenant which was to have legal sanction. Hence two separate bodies of human rights: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

From the Cold War experiences, we should have learned that, in terms of human freedom and progress, one set of human rights cannot do without the other. Both Capitalism and Communism have been destructive in their own ways. That is the reason why one cannot serve as alternative to another. With the breakdown of Communism, as Pope John Paul II warns us:

The Western countries ... run the risk of seeing this collapse as a one-sided victory of their own economic system, and thereby failing to make necessary corrections in that system...

It is necessary to break down the barriers and monopolies which leave so many countries on the margins of development, and to provide all individuals and nations with the basic conditions which will enable them to share in development. (Pope John Paul II : 106,96)

This is indeed time for a hard rethinking. Human history has its both positive and negatives aspects, as the issues of human rights and freedom have amply demonstrated. We have been undergoing great losses in ideological warfare, not to say of military adventures involved. Compromise could at best produce the Cold War only at the expense of human value and freedom on both sides. What would then be solution to "necessary corrections" mentioned above? Maybe what is really needed is not just an artificial compromise, but a kind of synthesis starting with capitalism without capital letter. Lately, there has been so much talk about humanistic capitalism which, in contrast to current industrialism, would take care of both human freedom and natural sustainability. Above all, one must not forget that real solution and answer lies with people themselves. It is the question as to how a synthesis, not separation, of political and economic rights can be made, in order that right to development and self-determination could ultimately materialize.





Democracy : Form versus Substance? *

This international symposium is to be congratulated in managing to accommodate a forum for fellow Southeast Asians to discuss one most vital issue of common concern: viz, democracy. One only wishes there could be more of this, and better still, further developed into a continuing process of dialogue. Of course, each one of us would have one's own agenda and specific cases to be presented. Nonetheless, in spite of great physical and cultural diversity characteristic of the region, there is a good deal more in common, as we all should beware, that is critically involved in the problems at hand. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent, it is all the more pertinent and urgent for all of us with a sense of

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right and wrong to pool our heads together to carefully learn from our experiences, so as to be our own selves and make our societies and peoples truly democratic.

What is democracy all about?

For such common endeavour, I am indeed honoured and gratified in being given opportunity to participate and share some thoughts with you in this forum. On my part, I fully share Professor W.F. Wertheim's long-established thesis of what he terms "emancipation principle", according to which human progress is to be measured not only in terms of emancipation from the forces of nature, but also emancipation from domination by privileged individuals or groups. The concept of progress is thus intertwined with that of democracy. But whether our evolutionary path is to be in line with progress or not, is an open question that needs to be empirically looked into. It could in actual fact turn out to be stagnation, or even retrogression (Wertheim 1974 : 47). So you see, we are all quite vulnerable to making ourselves backward, despite all the modernity and material achievements we so much take pride of.

Therefore, to set in proper perspective what is the main theme of this symposium - democratic experiences - two observations are in order here. First, a clear distinction needs to be made between democracy as an ideal,

and the one as a process and tool of power struggle. As an ideal, democracy takes on the broad and general principle of people's power as the basis for institutional set-up, checks and balances, and public accountability. Everyone fully agrees with Lincoln's celebrated formula "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people". But, then, question and ambivalence arise with democracy as a process and tool of power struggle. It is in this practical and operational sense that the real and actual power relationships are to be empirically inquired into. And this is the crux of any meaningful assessment of our "democratic experiences" we are going to talk about. For, after all, democracy is not just a form or ready-made formula of governance that, of itself or by itself, is to give real and effective political power to the people.

Thailand presents one most recent good example in this kind of intellectual dilemma. Just some six months ago and shortly before the May Tragedy (17-20 May, 1992), there was public outcry against military dictatorship and consequent demand for "elected prime minister". The military regime was then overthrown, opening the way to the general election and formation of the civilian government with "elected prime minister", as we all know. But, then again, it all now ends up with this very elected government itself resorting to the Constitutional Tribunal established by the previous military regime to determine the legal status of those involved in suppressive measures

and actions against the common people. As a result, all the culprits are thereby being acquitted and due process of law being flagrantly compromised.

Furthermore, the entire economic policy under the current elected government is being left in the hands of those few powerful technocrats and financiers now being invited to join in the cabinet. This is on the ground that economic and financial matters are too technical and complicated to be left to politicians. Only those supposedly neutral professionals would fit in with the jobs. But, alas, it is of no secret that it is these few powerfals who have played active and decisive role in formulating the country's development policy and planning, as well as implementation. All of which culminates in impoverishment and marginalization of the overwhelming majority of people, especially in the rural and agricultural part of society. The issue of economic development is bound to have a great bearing on that of democracy, as to be shortly touched upon.

So, it should not be too difficult to see that the elected government, and for that matter elected prime minister, hardly makes much difference actually. Saying all this is certainly not to find fault with electoral or parliamentary system and process as such. Only that one has to be fairly clear about what is just a mere form as distinguished from substance of democracy. Is democracy to mean anything at all if the elected government

and parties concerned do not serve as eyes and ears as well as aspirations and potentials of the common people? In particular, how and when emancipation of the many from domination of the privileged few could be attained under the so-called representative system of government?

Democracy versus development?

All such basic questions bring to mind my further observation which is concerned with common people themselves: that is to say, the ruled as against the ruling. Understanding of democracy can never be complete without due regard to another side of the whole story: that is, human yearning for emancipation. The fact is that growth and development of human rights and freedom, and thus democracy, has its roots in human nature itself, Western or non-Western. Human aspiration for freedom is indeed part and parcel of social and political life process. Both power and freedom constitute therefore the two opposite sides of the same coin. That is why social and political life is full of contradictions, and it goes on as if carrying on dialogue within its own self.

In the modern and contemporary context, such contradictions are being expressed in the dichotomy between democracy and development. Let us just look at one most recent controversy provoked by none other

than the former prime minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, addressing an annual conference organized by the Philippines Business Council in Manila some two weeks ago:

The exuberance of democracy leads to undisciplined and disorderly conditions which are inimical to development. (The Nation, 21 November 1992)

To which, by the way, President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines responded quite instructively, despite his long-established military background and career:

Without democracy, we cannot truly win development ... Yet some of us, impatient for a quick fix for all of our problems, would throw away our hard-won gains in the political sphere in exchange for ease in decision-making. (The Nation, 21 November 1992)

This, as you may all agree, is a most interesting and yet quite intriguing exchange. The one sees only in democracy and development as opposing forces, while the other looks towards potentially symbiotic and creative relationships between the two. It is in the final analysis a matter of human value, perception, and choice. And this has a good deal to do with the way our so-called "democratic experiences" are to be conceived of and put into

practice in terms of policy and action. The point here is that whatever choice one is to make, as statesman or scholar, one needs to have a fairly clear understanding of the nature of things involved, with respect to both democracy and development.

There is yet another, somewhat surprising, way of expression in regard to the same issue. This is articulated by Dr. Douglas Lummis of Tsuda College in Tokyo in the People's Plan 21 Forum on Sustaining Democracy and Development which is being held right here in Bangkok at the same time as this symposium. According to him, democracy and development simply do not compliment each other, because:

In the name of economic development, cultures have been destroyed, people's livelihoods shattered and families driven from their homes - presumably for economic necessity. People should be able to decide if a forest should be cut down or if a dam should be built. People opposed to development are not considered by the government ... (And) for the majority of people in the Third World, conditions have not improved and the percentage of poverty stricken people is increasing. The natural environment is being destroyed before our eyes in the name of development. (The Nation, 28 November 1992)

In all this destructive sense, we may of course fully agree with Professor Lummis that development is indeed anti-democratic. But one can hardly go along with his suggestion that if we want development, then we need to forget about democracy. That would be tantamount to playing into the hands of authoritarianism which is so well entrenched among our Southeast Asian elites and political leaders. But then Professor Lummis, again, is quite correct in reminding us that if you want democracy, then it is necessary to think carefully about development. It is indeed the task before all of us, as freedom and peace-loving citizens, to turn development into creative and constructive force. For the moment, we might just as well take a close look at the current brand of development to see if it is actually for or against human freedom and progress.

Development in cultural straitjacket

The term "development" increasingly becomes pejorative now that sufferings and hardships have been so widespread around the globe. The International Fund for Agricultural Development has just come up with the latest report and statistics indicating a rapid increase of poverty in 114 developing countries under study. And all of which, according to the Fund President, shows the failure of most past development theories (The Nation,

24 November 1992). In a large sense, then, the current use of the term "development" seems to be somewhat lacking in terms of democracy and human progress. Nevertheless, for short of a better word, we might just as well make do with it for a while. Our immediate task is to inquire into what such development theories are actually all about.

For this purpose, a little bit of historical perspective may be of some relevance here: first with regard to the plights and predicaments of Southeast Asia itself, and then to the reality of current and ongoing modernization and development that the whole region has been undergoing. Whereby one may find out the reason as to why "development" can hardly, if at all, go along well with democracy that only "leads to undisciplined and disorderly conditions which are inimical to development", as earlier alluded to. Of even more importance, our "democratic experiences" could thereby be properly assessed and an idea of genuine democracy be suggested in the context of agrarian and traditional Southeast Asia. The point to be recognized here is that tradition is not necessarily an anathema to progress, and that there exists within tradition itself a source and body of endogenous knowledge and learning that could very well be upgraded with modern scientific one, if appropriately applied.

But then modernity did come over to Southeast Asia, as to other parts of the Third World, in a most antagonistic

manner. It all started with colonialism by mid-nineteenth century. This is well recorded in all textbooks. So there is no need to elaborate any further, except to stress some of the points that are to have pertinent bearing on development process and thus on the issue of democracy. Here, notwithstanding great diversity among Southeast Asian countries, a significant regional and global perspective common to all is to be noted. Thailand, then Siam, may be able to have maintained formal independence. But in the economic sphere, there was striking similarity in the way the Southeast Asian economies were evolving. In particular, there was great expansion and growth in production for export of primary commodities, and along with this an equally dramatic increase in imports of both capital and consumer goods, thus bringing about decline of indigenous handicraft and cottage industry in each of these countries. In short, the whole Southeast Asia was being forcefully opened up as a source of market outlet and abundant raw materials supply for the industrialized world (Brown 1988 : 2-3), its diversifying economies thereby being integrated into the global market economy.

With the massive nationalist movements and gaining of political independence after World War II, there was high hope that the new-found ideology of national self-determination could have served as concrete and effective counter-forces against any encroachments

upon national sovereignty, and hence paved the way towards democratic development. But it was to be of no avail, as it then only succumbed to external domination all the same, albeit under a new guise of the so-called New International Economic Order. And this was to have so adverse an impact on the chance for genuine and grassroot democracy to grow on its own terms. Thailand was in no better position in this respect. As part of strategic Southeast Asia, this country was even posed as frontline state in the struggle, along with the others, against Communism. In the process, democratic aspirations in this part of developing world were suppressed, and the US-led Western democracy wholeheartedly allied itself all along with dictatorships, all in the name of the Free World!

Now, let us go one step further to examine the true nature of Western-styled development as has been transplanted onto the Third World. In actual fact, the self-styled New International Economic Order is simply a continuation of the pre-war economic imperialism. Both are derived from the same cultural source of inspiration. This can be traced back in its long history of Western civilization to the 18th century Age of Rationalism and Enlightenment. Rationalism gave rise to doctrinal belief in the supremacy of man over nature. Then technological advance after the Industrial Revolution brought forth new confidence in unlimited material growth. And

material growth would by itself entail progress in all aspects for humanity as a whole: social and cultural as well as moral. All these were to be achieved exclusively through modern science, technology, and surely enough through industry.

All this is the way mercantilism of the Middle Ages was transformed into modern industrial capitalism. The middle class spirit of enterprise then came so timely to be submerged in social Darwinism with its celebrated evolutionary theory of "survival of the fittest". This is precisely how the so-called free market and economic competition has been translated into practice, and, significantly, into contemporary economic theories and textbooks. Unbridled individualism and "radical capitalistic ideology", to use Pope John Paul II's terminology (Pope John Paul II : 82), and along with it cut-throat competition and rivalry, thereby become ever since the order of the day. That was also how industry historically came, and still does, to pose itself the exclusive engine of growth and development. Under such economic logic and development framework, everything else is to be subordinate to it. The obvious victim is agriculture and along with it rural communities. All this explains why the Industrial Revolution and subsequent process of industrialization that began in the West was inevitably wrought with the ruthless disintegration of rural communities and people. (Polanyi 1957 : 33-42)

From the foregoing, it should not be difficult to see that, with the passing of pre-war colonialism, exactly the same pattern and model is right now being enforced upon the Third World's industrialization in the name of New International Economic Order, as earlier referred to. The operational pattern is not just incidental. It is inherent in the very logic of industrialism itself. First, it is bound up with the idea of unlimited growth and globalization of economy. In short, another form of imperialism. Second, the Third World's rich human and natural resources fit perfectly well with industry's unlimited need and demand for cheap labour and raw materials. After all, in its scheme of things, both man and nature are to count as nothing much more than commodities to be put on sale like any other commodities. This is how man is being equated with labour, and nature with raw materials (Polanyi 1957 : 33-42). And both man and nature must perforce be put at the service of the modern production system for the sole purpose of industry's profit maximization. It is of course to be left understood that profit maximization is a matter, again, of economic necessity and legitimate in order to equip industry with ample resources for further and unlimited growth.

Authoritarianism in the making

Finally and most pertinent to the issue of democracy

is the way the Third World nations respond to the external changing scenarios. Here, with the rise of what John Kautsky aptly calls "modernizing aristocracy" (Kautsky 1972 : 66-72), something needs to be said of the character of the national elites themselves. In the past, as earlier mentioned, colonial and semi-colonial countries and peoples were conquered and exploited as sources of raw materials and markets for manufactured goods. In the process, their traditional values and knowledge systems were transformed into a colonial culture that could not be much more than dependent and imitative (Goonatilake 1984 : 91-114). With the passing of colonialism, there comes a new prototype of colonial culture, especially among the national elites, which looks to foreign capital and its accompanying science and technology as the agent of change and modernization. This type of modernization syndrome in turn serves as the dominant culture of the new ruling classes within the developing countries, thereby transforming these countries into dependent economies. History thus again comes full circle to the very same logic of industrialization and development as some three centuries before, though in a new economic and political context. The difference is only that, in place of direct or indirect colonial rule, industrial capitalism has transformed itself into transnational corporations, with the Third World national elites serving as the point of contact in a context of

dependent economic and cultural relationships. The hegemonic and exploitative structure of relationships remains basically the same, but is given an appearance of national identity and legitimate national aspirations and interests. Notwithstanding all the nationalistic claims, therefore, these national elites' aspirations and goals are closely bound up with and strongly inclined towards the Western master culture. (Rahman 1981 : 508-518)

Following the Western footsteps in industrialization and development, then, society is being made to be sharply divided into antagonistic dichotomies : industry/agriculture, urban/rural, formal/informal, etc. All of which amounting to clear-cut sectorlization between rich and poor, haves and haves-not, powerful and powerless, domination and subordination. As a result, the majority is being left marginalized, not only economically, but also socially and politically. The neo-classical approach to the equity issue is to the effect that you need to allow the industrial sector, as the sole engine of growth, to grow first and the development benefits would then of itself trickle down to the whole population. Of course, all of us know full well that this has not been true and will never be true in the future. In any case, the assumption of one tiny sector of society to be the sole engine of growth only means in practical terms that the majority is to be deprived of their productive potentials and, most significantly, right to development. Thereby jeopardizing all demo-

cratic aspirations and political participation in the process.

Hopefully, from the above analysis, we can quite reasonably gather how we have been faring through our "democratic experiences". We have often heard of the world's greatest democracy expressing its concern for human rights and democratic development in the Third World like ours. But one has a serious doubt as to what that really is meant to be. Is it just a matter of form and actually authoritarianism in substance and spirit.? Again, Thailand is a clear example here. For, if you look at the composition of the current cabinet and its policy statement, not to say of innumerable legislative measures for implementation thereof, it is certainly a clear case of being democratic in form, but authoritarian in substance and spirit. And all this, in spite of all the electoral and parliamentary procedures involved. What kind of democracy can one expect, then, when it is only made to serve as the tool for domination of the few over the overwhelming majority?

Also increasingly open to serious question is the role and function of the State, now that national governance and economic policy are reduced to a mere business management where only those in the "formal sector" really count. In the circumstances, one often hears the magic phrase of "free market", as if we were all living under a new secular God! Of course, the establishment

of market economy is the ultimate purpose of all the changes ever since after the Industrial Revolution. Mind you, there is nothing wrong with the market mechanism itself. It is after all quite a natural thing to happen when societies and the world at large come to be interdependent. What is really wrong with market economy is a blind and absolute belief in the idea of a self-regulating market (Polanyi 1957 : 40), especially among those very few who are in absolute control of the market mechanisms. This is precisely what Pope John Paul II speaks of "radical capitalistic ideology" which tends to make market mechanisms the only point of reference for social life, and which "blindly entrusts their solution (of the problems) to the free development of market forces". (Pope John Paul II : 39,82)

All this is how economics and politics go hand in hand to make today's democracy what it is, where the great majority is being excluded from the process of decision making, and for that matter from the political process in general. That means in effect that the concept of civil and political liberties including voting rights, so much championed and advocated in the West, are only a sham in the context of agrarian Southeast Asia. The very same civil and political liberties could very well be so abused, as has been the case, as to become a tool for trampling upon economic, social and cultural rights of the hapless poor. Now that industrialization has ad-

vanced to the stage where export and global competitiveness become predominant in the affairs of the State, the self-proclaimed economic necessity of encroaching upon the people's basic rights to their own livelihood and management of their environmental resources, is to be all the more immediate and even more violent. As a matter of fact, violence now is not by any means an unusual state of everyday life for the poor, both urban and rural. Worse still, there are all sorts of discrepancy between legal provisions for serving the industrial purpose on one hand and social reality on the other hand, that very often lead to conflicts and violence. That is an obvious indicator of authoritarianism in the face of democratic aspirations at the grassroots. The chronic issue of forestry is a case in point. And the best expression of the issue comes from no lesser person than H.M. the King, which deserves to be cited at length here:

In forest designated and delineated by the authorities as reserved or restricted, there were people there already at the time of delineation. It seems rather odd for us to enforce the reserved forest law on the people in the forest which became reserved only subsequently by the mere drawing of lines on pieces of paper. The problem arises in as much as, with the delineation done, these people became violators of the law. From the viewpoint of law, it is a violation,

because the law was duly enacted, but according to natural law (sic.) the violator of the law is he who drew the lines, because the people who had been in the forest previously possessed the rights of man, meaning that the authorities had encroached upon the individuals and not individuals transgressing the law of the land. (H.M.King's Speech, 27 June 1973)

One can very well extend this to other cases of natural and environmental resources like land and water, which constitute the basic livelihood of local people and communities. It is fundamentally concerned with basic natural rights that historically have their roots in Western civilization itself. They even come to be asserted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and yet somehow being ignored and discarded in the name of modernization and development.

Looking ahead

By now, it should be clear for all of us to see that the current pattern and direction of economic development simply cannot be sustainable, whether with respect to human or natural and environmental resources. Inherent in the industrial culture is the built-in hegemonic and oppressive ideology and mechanism that goes all the way

for the sole purpose of unilinear and unlimited growth. In all this, the industrial Capitalism is not much different from the collapsing Communism in its radical and absolute belief in historical necessity and inevitability. Both, despite their ideological differences and conflicts, share basically the same brand of industrialism together with political objective of global hegemony. Both, in short, are anathema to human freedom and democracy. And yet both present themselves as champions of human freedom and democracy, either in the form of representative government or democratic centralism. Both end up practically with the same negative impact, as Pope John Paul, again, succinctly reminds us of the realities of marginalization and exploitation in the Third World as well as the reality of human alienation in the more advanced countries. (Pope John Paul II : 39,82)

So there is a dire need to look for alternative, that is, alternative to the current growth-centred model of development. In terms of human freedom and democracy, it needs to go far beyond the conventional libertarian or egalitarian approach to the problematiques of human and social relations. Under the circumstances, we cannot afford just to hold on to one or the other set of human rights, as exclusively advocated by the West or the East. Both civil and political liberties on the one hand, and economic, social, and cultural rights on the other hand, have to be synthesized with a view to giving due recog-

nition to the people's right to development. And this, again, goes much beyond the mere question of the individual's right to "enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application" (International Covenant on Economic, social, and Cultural Rights, article 15 (16)). It means in essence right to self-reliance and self-development. As against industrial hegemony, in particular, it is basically concerned with the issue of cultural identity and dynamism of the whole rural and traditional communities that have been undergoing adverse social change and transformation. This is by no means in defense of traditionalism for its own sake. But neither is there any valid reason in allowing the current trend for hegemonic industrial culture to go on unabated in oppressing fellow human beings and degrading natural environments. The real and most obvious course of action is to let endogenous sources of development and creativity be revitalized as the basis upon which grassroot democracy and development go hand in hand to make for genuine human progress.

As things stand, practically the whole human and social life comes under the monolithic industrial culture, notwithstanding the post-war multilateral forms of international and economic relationships. This cultural strait-jacket is not just confined to the rural sector, but has also considerable impact on the urban way of life. The consequent consumerism is one other form of authoritarianism, which is even getting worse and worse as we are all

entering the information age. That is the way industrialism works in its vicious circle: that is, unlimited growth leading to consumerism, and the whole process in turn necessitating unlimited exploitation of natural and environmental resources. All this obviously needs a strong counter balance from the people's power, especially at the grassroots. That is how sustainable development is closely bound up with democracy, not in the conventional Western sense, but fundamentally with relevance to indigenous cultural roots. As we all know, Southeast Asian societies have great potential for creativity in this respect. It all depends on us to make our own choices: either in the way of dependence and subjection, or the path towards self-reliance and freedom.





*Thai "National" Education **

As to be seen in the course of discussion, this paper is not just about something unique to Thailand, as the title might suggest. It is concerned basically with modern education as a cross-cultural and global phenomenon under contemporary industrial culture. For this reason, two inter-related aspects of Thai education are brought to attention here. On top of the operational system or education proper, one also needs to take into account its cultural and epistemological frame of reference which is inherent in modern education in general. Education of course functions as a sub-system in society and therefore is to serve social purposes. But, by its very nature, it is also concerned with human self-development and creativity. The key question about education, therefore, is how to balance between the two and to get the best out of both. This educational perspective is all the

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more pertinent as the issue of environment is now becoming critical. But it is also imperative that environmental problems be perceived in both human and natural terms, both of which form the essence of this paper.

This Symposium is indeed to be congratulated in its efforts to bring together in this dialogue the two most fundamental issues of our time: culture and environment. Both are closely inter-related, and indeed constitute one and the same life process on earth. This simple fact should be obvious enough, and yet it is not always well recognized. The point has particular relevance to our current state of the world, where industrial culture is reigning supreme. We as urbanites, including myself, are all fascinated by great technological advance and enjoy modern facilities of life. However, it is also extremely important for us to get to know where we actually are, not just for our own sake, but in relation to nature and other fellow-beings all around us.

Here, by the way, it is interesting to note the phrase "with Emphasis on Urban issues" as attached to the main title of this Symposium on "Environment and Culture". A pertinent question could very well be raised as to in what perspective it is being conceived of in this forum. Could it be one towards self-reexamination, or quite another along the line of unlimited industrial growth and accompanying consumerism that have been habitually going on within urban communities? Whatever path is chosen,

it certainly has deep implication for the fundamental question of relationships between man and nature as well as among human beings themselves, as to be presently touched upon.

Modern education in a cultural fix

With the same spirit of appreciation and concern, it is also my further wish that what is being termed as "cultural approach" to environment is not just to confine us to specific and immediate problems at hand. It should enable us to see and act upon much further beyond that. In saying this, I am of course fully aware of the enormity of current environmental problems that we are now confronting and that need to be urgently solved. Nevertheless, to be able to work towards environmental sustainability which I am sure is our common objective here, our own cultural orientation needs to be put in proper perspective. Otherwise, the value of environment itself would be reduced to a mere technical matter.

The example of such an attitude of mind is not very farfetched. We can find one among our incumbent cabinet of technocrats under Anand Panyarachun's premiership who would love to insist all along, with all the self-proclaimed integrity and sense of fairness of course, that pollutions are something to be paid for and thereby compensated by those industrial and business

enterprises concerned. All this sounds nice as far as it goes. By its very implication, then, the environmental issues are being treated as simply economic and technical things, and for which financial and technological solutions can always be found. On technical grounds, I would rather leave the question of feasibility to the experts. But it clearly means that, given ongoing and unending industrial expansion, natural degradation is presumed to go on as usual, and environmental problems are only to be taken care of by technical and financial means. And then all would be fine, according to our top and well-educated economists.

But where such a theory and practice of unlimited industrial growth would lead us to, is only a matter of conjecture. This intellectual perversion is not just the problem of individuals, but basically symptomatic of social malady in our world of industrialism, itself a form of cultural hegemony and aggrandizement against both nature and common people (Polanyi 1957 : 32-42 ; Goonatilake 1984 : 91-114 ; Cohen 1982 : 63-64). As a matter of fact, the economic and technical approach to environmental problems is not without its own cultural substance and orientation. It is inherent in the current industrial culture itself, which is always an underlying force in neo-classical style of decision making. The point is that the cultural perspective and approach itself needs to be specifically identified and reexamined, with a view

to its being positive or negative bearing on man's attitude towards nature. This is how the question of education and learning process comes to be intertwined with cultural setting and environment.

Now, it is this industrialism that has a great bearing on modern education including that in Thailand. The year 1993 marks the centennial anniversary of the Ministry of Education, in fact of many other things related to King Rama V's social and political reforms. It is century old and so well established that things are just taken for granted. It may have served certain positive purposes, especially in the field of technical and vocational training. But in the present context of change and development, it also gives rise to serious epistemological and cultural constraints that need to be looked into. For this purpose, a little glance at its historical source may well be in order here.

The introduction of modern education, or schooling system in Thai terminology, marked an abrupt departure from traditional pattern of learning. This point is to be kept in mind, as it is to have major implication for the concept and development of knowledge itself. Curiously, contemporary Thai educators and educationists alike call this traditional learning "ancient". There is a subtle bias in this usage. More often than not, it would mean something to be discarded, or at best to be preserved in a museum. In the old days, quite a part from exclusive education for the royalties and functionaries

in the art of ruling and governing, there were also vocational learning by way of apprenticeships among common people's households themselves. As the then His Royal Highness Krom Mun Wachirayan-waroros reminded us, these traditional learnings might have their shortcomings and inconsistencies depending on improvisation on the part of individual teachers and trainers, but they were to be regarded as education all the same (Thai national Archive, R5, S2/5, note to H.M. the King from Krom Mun Wachirayanwaroros expressing view concerning education, January 2, R.S. 124 (B.E. 2448 or 1950). The implication was that, instead of being disregarded as something backward and irrelevant, all these traditional learnings should be taken care of and further developed along with the new mainstream of education. This point is to be later touched upon.

But, unfortunately enough, it was not to be, as the whole nation was in the process of undergoing structural changes under external pressure. The then Siam was indeed one classic case of what John H. Kautsky calls modernization from without, where emerged the "modernizing aristocracy" as alternative to colonialism and also as the agent of change (Kautsky 1972 : 66-72). It is now being accentuated even further in contemporary Thailand under accelerated industrialization.

As we all know, part of modernization was, and still is, of course the importation of Western education system.

And along with it, the industrial culture that sets the pace and direction of national development, of which education forms a part. The industrial culture needs to be briefly explained here for the purpose of objective understanding of "modern" education. My thesis is that, to have a clear idea about Thai education, one needs to look into not only its operational system or education system proper, but also the cultural and intellectual frame of reference. Both are always interwoven, with the latter functioning as determining factor. As Bertrand Russell well observes:

Almost all education has a political motive: it aims at strengthening some group, national or religious or even social, in the competition with other groups. It is this motive, in the main, which determines the subjects taught, the knowledge offered and the knowledge withheld, and also decides what mental habits the pupils are expected to acquire.
(Russell 1954 : 103)

It is of course through the modernizing elites, both governmental and non-governmental, that the Western industrial culture has come to play a dominant role in Thai society. The cultural and intellectual source can be traced back in its long history of Western civilization to the 18th-century Age of Rationalism and Enlightenment.

Rationalism gave rise to doctrinal belief in the supremacy of man over nature. Then technological advance after the Industrial Revolution brought about newfound confidence in unlimited material growth. And along with unlimited material growth, progress could presumably be made in all aspects for the benefit of humanity as a whole: social and cultural as well as moral. All these were to be achieved exclusively through modern science, technology, and of course industry.

But this optimism was soon dissipated, as the middle class spirit of enterprise, fully equipped with modern industrial technology, came so timely to be submerged in social Darwinism with its celebrated evolutionary theory of "survival of the fittest". This is how the so-called economic liberalism and free market has been translated into practice, and, significantly, into contemporary economics and other academic textbooks. Hence the current state of knowledge and learning with regard to development planning and management, and with public decisions being left solely to the tiny groups of modernizing aristocracy.

The cultural and intellectual impact of Western knowledge and learning could be gathered from Johan Galtung's observation with regard to technology, as follows:

(Technology) carries with it a code of structures

- economic, social, cultural, and also cognitive. The economic code that inheres in Western technology demands that industries be capital-intensive, research-intensive, organization-intensive and labour-extensive. On the social plane, the code creates a "centre" and a "periphery", thus perpetuating a structure of inequality. In the cultural arena, it sees the West as entrusted by destiny with the mission of casting the rest of the world in its own mould. In the cognitive field, it sees man as the master of nature, the vertical and individualistic relations between human beings as the normal and natural, and history as a linear movement of progress... (Galtung 1980 : 4)

All this indeed serves as the model for the Third World's, including Thai, national elites to follow all along. With the passing of pre-war colonialism, there emerges this new prototype of colonial culture that looks to foreign capital and its accompanying science and technology as the agent of change and modernization. This type of modernization syndrome in turn serves as the dominant culture of the new ruling classes within the developing countries, thereby transforming their own countries into dependent economies.

That explains how Thai society historically became dichotomized into industry/agriculture and urban/rural

in the course of modernization, and also how the industrial "sector" came, and still does, to be presented as the exclusive engine of growth and development. Under this very economic logic and development framework, everything else is to be subordinated to it. In the circumstances, the obvious victim is to be none other than the agricultural sector and, along with it, rural communities which include both people and nature. All this already has its historical precedent in the Industrial Revolution and subsequent process of industrialization in the West itself, that was inevitably wrought with the ruthless disintegration of rural communities and people.

Precisely the same pattern and model of industrialization is right now being forced upon everywhere including Thai society, in the name of New International Economic Order. The operational pattern is not just incidental. It is inherent in the very logic of industrialism itself. First, it is bound up with the idea of unlimited industrial growth and thus globalization of all national economies on earth. Secondly, the Third World's human and natural abundance fits perfectly well with industry's unlimited need for cheap labour and raw materials. After all, in its scheme of free market mechanism, man and nature are to count as nothing much more than commodities to be put on sale like any other commodities. This is how man is being equated with labour, and nature with raw materials. And both man and nature must perforce be put at the

service of the modern production system for the sole purpose of industry's profit maximization. It is of course to be left understood that profit maximization would be to equip the industrial sector with resources, both human and natural, for further and unending growth.

From the foregoing, it should not be difficult to see all the implication for the "urban issues" which are our main focus here in dealing with the current problems of culture and environment now facing us. I am afraid I have been a bit long-winded on the cultural question. This is simply because it has been so overlooked and ignored. Even worse, every time structural issues are raised, there always comes fastidious defence to the point of idolatry of the system. Neo-classical and bureaucratic reactions to critical comments in the TDRI's recent year-end conference on education is a good illustration. All this may not be of great surprise. But it also means professionally that education is to blindly or inadvertently follow economics and politics of the day. This is a cause for grave concern indeed, as education is intimately concerned with human beings that have values, self-respect, and creative potentials far beyond being mistreated as mere production factors. However, given cultural frame of reference and "political motive", Thai education, like any other modern education, is reduced to just a matter of technical management, as it has been the case today.

Loss and wastefulness

So the mainstream economic development and education system go hand in hand in the process of modernization. It results in accelerated economic growth, but with adverse social impact and consequences. So let us now turn to the question of education proper that has been operating for over a century. As earlier pointed out, Western-styled industrial development with its accompanying education system is inherently and socially divisive in nature. With the result that human society becomes qualitatively divided. In the context of market economy, education itself functions as a commodity to compete for, and access to it serves as prerequisite for anyone to benefit from the changes brought along in the process of modernization. In short, to be able to participate in the ever-growing modern sector, one needs to be equipped with the new brand of education. One consolation in this competitive market is the universal and State-proclaimed principle and policy of "equal access to education". However idealistic it may sound, its quantitative meaning is to be noted. As such, the objective of "education for all" is bound to be most unlikely, as all too well demonstrated in current human and natural predicaments. "Right to education" and "equal access to education" would remain empty words as long as the current brand of national education goes on dominating the scene, thereby brush-

ing aside those majorities in agrarian Thailand.

Importation of Western education system and its socio-cultural impact on Thai society could very well be summed up in W. Feinberg's words:

*The development of technological, scientific and managerial skills require large outlays of capital and cannot be taught without a **formal vertical structure** of schools. In addition to the selection and training of scientific, technological and managerial talent, it is also recognized that the development of industry entails **expanded urban centers**, changing patterns of work, and a **subsequent decline of the traditional socializing agencies** ... (Duggan 1991 : 147)*

This clearly reaffirms what has been going on throughout Thailand's history of modernization, with particular emphasis on the period of accelerated industrialization in the past three decades. In this respect, Thailand is certainly not an exceptional case. The phenomenon is basically true elsewhere. Its structural nature and constraint is particularly to be noted. What should be further observed is that the structural constraint is not simply technical or incidental. In the same way that "the development of industry entails expanded urban centers ... and a subsequent decline of the traditional socializing

agencies", imported Western education system also entails the same set of political economy of learning that has been heavily in favour of expanded urban elitism as against rural counterpart.

This is not an argument for or against industrial development and expanded urban centres as such. Transition from agricultural to industrial society could be seen as inevitable, according to Alvin Toffler's Second Wave analysis. But it is also the question of how, and need not be that disruptive and exploitative. Neither does one have to acquire dependency theory to be able to grasp reality and meaning of what science and technology, and for that matter, education, is all about. It is simply a matter of historical fact and patterns of human behaviour. Above all, it is all man-made, which needs to be open to scrutiny and rectification.

So explained the structural nature of "modern" education. It is within this structural framework of political economy that modern education has been planted on to underdeveloped and developing countries like Thailand. This explains why the administration and management of "national education" has always couched in terms of generating "manpower" as required by the modern sector. The case of Thailand is a good illustration with a long history of exposure to Western socio-cultural and economic penetration. Here, educational reform started with formal schooling to recruit manpower into expanding burea

ucracy, both civilian and military. Compulsory education was soon launched presumably to open up educational opportunities to all, but then end up all the same as part of screening process for those capable of going up the ladder to higher schooling. Then comes the current period of accelerated industrialization, and the very same educational task has been extended to and heavily concentrated on the modern private sector's manpower needs. At this point, the structural relationships are all the more obvious, both in economy and education, national and global.

There should of course be nothing wrong with such structural relationships, if not for structural barrier inherent in the system against the major part of population. Again, the adverse incidence comes specifically and heavily down on the rural sector. And this is a most pertinent issue of human development. To illustrate the point, let us imagine a pyramidal structure box that is universally used for education administration and management at national and international levels. In Thailand, the schooling process would go something like this: the success story would begin with the primary level with attendance point of over 95%, from then on the pyramid would abruptly narrow down to some 35% at lower secondary level, 25% at upper secondary level, and finally 14% at tertiary level which also includes two open universities.

All this serves as structural framework for modern education system: that is to say, selecting and generating manpower principally in response to the modern sector's needs. It has long been established, and the only major concern is how to widen the gate to accommodate increasing demands generated both by industrial expansion and the public's rising expectation. All in all, it is merely a matter of counting number as to how many places could be enrolled into formal schooling. That is the reason why the system is quantitative in its human and social orientation, in spite of all its great advancement made in terms of technical and professional qualities. That also explains why the proclaimed concept of "equal access to education" turns out to be a gross contradiction and illusion in the present context. It is in truth a closed system which is inherently tied up to the market economy as forcefully defined and imposed from the global down to and within the nations. Lately, the Ministry of Education has come up with the ruling to extend compulsory education from 6 to 9 years. The reason is not farfetched, and of course a most convenient and respectable one at that. That is to say, in conformity with a neo-classical research finding to the effect that the extension is needed to make the Thai labour more trainable, and that the demand for low-wage but trainable labour is one vital part of Thailand's current achievement, especially in promoting competitiveness of Thai indus-

trial products in the world market. (Myers and Chalongphob Susangkorn 1989 : 1-9, 22-23)

So it should not be difficult to see that what is supposed to serve as *national* education, actually is only sectoral in its objective and scope. In fact, economic growth which is claimed to be the nation's achievement, actually is only sectoral with the industrial sector being promoted as the sole agent of growth and change, and therefore taking precedence over all the others. This is where the national leaders stand in the era of global market system and New International Economic Order. Educators and educationists, alas, are in the same state of mind and inclination.

Now let us see what are the consequences of this sectarian approach to education. In the first place, the system itself breeds a great deal of human losses. This is simple mathematics. Under the current system, the educators' concern is almost exclusively with those climbing the schooling ladders within the pyramidal hierarchy mentioned above. The question is what to do with those majorities who fall on the wayside? Naturally enough, there cannot be any effective answer from the system. There have been attempts of course to do something, like setting up non-formal programmes or department, for instance, to cope with the situation. But then, maybe because of built-in bureaucratic inclination, the whole non-formal programmes turn out to be nothing much

more than another passage to formal equivalence. In any case, non-formal education has so little, if any, relevance to local communities' way of life, in which a great majority of population live. This point obviously has a significant implication for the problem of how education should be organized and managed, as far as ***pluralistic community learning process*** is concerned. It certainly cannot be the same or standardized as in formal schooling and training. There is nothing against formal schooling and training here. Only that it needs to be made relevant and related to what has been going on in rural community life and environment.

Secondly, alongside the human losses, the system also manages to spread around a lot of human wastefulness. Why? Because the whole formal schooling is elitist in orientation right from the bottom upwards. In Thai, there is a popular phrase, "Stars' ladders". Whatever are put in the curriculum and taught, the most significant learning objective is a matter of how to climb up further to the top. All this has long become a habit of mind, a way of belief. And it instils a kind of value system among the youngsters. Education only means opportunities to get to higher rungs of society with better income and social recognition. If the value of work is to be accounted for at all, one is obliged to see it in terms of being employed in the employment market, not work in the sense of self-development. This attitude of mind is again to the benefit

of the industry-dominated market system. And all this, despite the fact that the self-employed constitute some 75% of Thailand's working population! Of even more significance, it also means that what these majorities, peasants and others in the informal sector, have learned from formal schooling actually is not of much help in their earning a living, as the learning is mostly, if not all, being geared to the purpose of employment in the modern sector. That is why formal schooling, not **education** as such, has not been much valued among rural population. And that is also why it has to be made compulsory!

Finally, on top of the losses and wastefulness in human resources, there is also a most pertinent question of indigenous knowledge and scholarship. This has particular relevance to rural communities which have been neglected, even oppressed, throughout the process of modernization. The fact is that no agrarian societies have ever been existing without acquiring knowledge and inventiveness. They have their own traditional means of learning and skills, as well as technological adaptation and innovation. These traditional values and body of knowledge certainly do not exist in a vacuum. Underlying them is local and endogenous wisdom and creative learning process that has been accumulated from generation to generation. For all their seemingly non-scientific attributes, they are directly related to people's real and relevant needs and organizational and environmental

conditions (Goonatilake 1984 : 114-116). And, above all, they are expressed through free will and with a rationale of their own. Besides, for all their tradition-bound nature, the peasants themselves are empirically quite receptive to new and modern ideas and technologies introduced from outside whenever they are relevant and feasible and demonstrated to be so in practice. This clearly points to the value and dynamism of traditional knowledge and creativity. Only that, under the existing dualistic structure brought about in the course of modernization, they are being left behind and allowed no chance of gaining the benefits of modern knowledge and learning.

The observations made concerning the structural nature and constraint of modern education by no means suggest an objection to things Western. Nor do they advocate a policy which opposes modern scientific knowledge and its application. Neither, again, do they imply a need or desirability to fall back on the traditional past and to keep away from the realities of the contemporary world. All that would be tantamount to compromising one's own cultural and creative potential for contributing to progress - a prerequisite for the quality of life and freedom as well as creativity. Besides, life in today's world obviously involves ever-increasing interdependence. In any case, interrelationships in society, both national and international, are becoming ever more frequent, more intensive and more penetrating. On its part,

modern knowledge and learning has definitely come to stay, whether one likes it or not, and it is to stay as world knowledge and learning. Significantly, too, it should be made both accessible and available for creative and positive use. All this is a fact of life that one can ignore only to one's own detriment.

Summing up

All the above considerations point to the basic principle of right to education and self-development. Under the existing national education system, the rural population have been deprived of their natural and equal rights. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to education is broadly defined as full development of human personality and a sense of dignity. But the actual process and objectives of "modern" education are by and large imposed in conformity with "national" requirements that are in effect elitist-oriented in spirit and drawn heavily, if not entirely, from exogenous and hegemonic sources. It is not only irrelevant to basic needs in rural environments, but also deprives the whole rural communities of their own human resources and therefore their potential for self-sustained growth and development. The right to education is not just the right to any kind of education. It is fundamentally a question of appropriate education and learning. The adverse impact

of miseducation on both individuals and rural communities indeed points to a serious shortcoming in the current scheme of industrial development that looks at education merely as a means to production of manpower like any other commodities.

The whole point is that the educational system, among other things, badly needs to be reformed as the infrastructure for advancement toward rural self-reliance and cultural freedom and creativity. This is basically a question of giving due respect and recognition to cultural pluralism and dynamism. The rural sector too is in need of its own educated and scientifically innovative manpower, no less than the urban and industrial sector. The need is all the more so in that the rural sector has been subordinated and exploited in the long process of deliberate, unbalanced economic growth. The urban-rural dichotomy does not necessarily mean that each should go its own way, or that the rural sector has to remain agricultural forever. With appropriate education and learning, it could even go industrialized in the long run. Only that the rural sector should be enabled to proceed with development on its own terms and on the basis of its free will.

This is what education with human-centred development is all about. It means that there should be no inherent incompatibility between modern and traditional knowledge and learning. The contradiction, or even antagonism, has only been man-made, historically speak-

ing, and the path of future development can be changed and rectified for the better by human intervention. In development terms, traditional learning needs to be upgraded to modernized appropriate one. In this perspective, it should be in a symbiotic relationship with exogenous sources of knowledge and learning. Modern scientific knowledge and learning therefore has always a great role to play, not to supplant or suppress, but to supplement indigenous knowledge and scholarship. In short, modernization and accompanying education system of developing nations could and should take their own respective routes, instead of being subordinated to the external centre, as has been the case up to now.





Science and Technology for Modernization: An Asian View *

Catching-up syndrome

As the world is moving closer toward the year 2000, expectation has been running high with regard to scientific and technological great leap forward. While the developed nations are heading toward the post-industrial stage into electronics and information age, the underdeveloped and developing ones are bent on following their footsteps and stages of modernization. Modernization thus comes to be associated with as well as bound to Westernization. And this has a significant socio-cultural implication, as to be later touched upon. All in all, the West's historical achievement has been and still is being looked upon as model and inspiration, political and spiritual, for practically all the Third World leaders. It is

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indeed western-styled science and technology as well as industrialization that would hold the key to the future. For some grand scheme of things, moreover, it could even pave the way to catching up with the West itself, if possible also by the year 2000.

So the world is approaching the twenty-first century with a sense of optimism not dissimilar to that in Europe some two centuries before. Then, after the massive scientific explosion, came the Age of Enlightenment and a new vision of progress as expressed in the subsequent biological and social theories of evolution. That indeed was the age full of high and rising expectation of unlimited material growth. Furthermore, on the evolutionary ground, it was also to be followed up with social, cultural, and moral progress for mankind. All of which was obviously to be achieved by means of science, technology, and of course industry (Rapp 1982 : 361 ; Furtado 1977 : 628-629). And indeed, after the Industrial Revolution, Europe and the Western world as a whole has come a very long way out of feudalism and primitive way of life. In contemporary Asia itself, scientific and technological achievements have already been so clearly demonstrated in the case of Japan, as well as the emerging newly-industrialized countries. Here, apparently, is the proven ground for even more optimism and strong belief prevailing among the Third World's elites that western science, technology, and hence modernization could all be brought

within one's range of feasibility and possibility. That is to say, if only is one to follow the steps and stages of growth that have historically been treaded across before.

There of course can be no denying the fact that modern science and technology greatly contributes to material growth and benefits. That, however, is only part of the whole story. Even in material terms, its negative effects are so evident now as one can feel and see all around the pollution and dissipation of natural resources and environments, particularly in the Third World regions. And all this, not to say of all the military and destructive technologies that have gone into armament industry, for the specific purpose of which most of the major and institutionalized R&D resources have been used up and then turned against humankind itself in the name of national interest and strategic security.

Of more pertinence to the question of values which is the specific focus of this forum, are the adverse impacts on human and social well-being and progress which was supposedly to be advanced in the course of scientific and technological growth and development. Here on this human and moral side, modern science and technology so far only demonstrates its dismal failure. Within Western society itself, the historical pattern and process of industrialization was taking place at the expense of rural dislocation and hardships (Cohen 1982 : 63-64). But then what was a ctually the loss in terms of rural human

cost came to be upheld as the material gain with a view to proletarianization and cheap labour for the benefit of the emerging urban industrial forces. All, again, in the name of scientific and technological progress. It should not be difficult to see that this was just one alienated materialistic and acquisitive value historically being imposed on the entire human society. Unfortunately, it has since become the established order of the modern age and thus laying the cultural and intellectual foundation of the so-called value-free scientific knowledge, both physical and social.

Obviously the same strategy of growth has now come to be applied with no less zealously to the Third World's developing countries. Hence, right after the passing of colonialism, the 1960s were ushered in as the development decade with major capital and technological inputs from the advanced industrial nations. Almost three decades have since passed leaving a dichotomy of success and failure somewhat parallel to what historically had happened in the Western society. It has been successful in creating the conclaves of modernity and prosperity among the very few, but only at the expense of marginalization and poverty of the rural majority. Economic and technological growth thus turns out to be oppressive and exploitative in favour of the few against the many. Within the developing countries, as a result, there occurs widespread inequality, poverty, and unemployment, as well as indebtedness in relation to the

advanced industrial nations. But even at such huge human and social costs in the process of accelerated industrialization, the developing nations still have got nowhere within the range of possible technological growth. Here lies also the basic division and unequal relationship between the developed and developing nations. That is to say, between the one as centre domineering over the other as periphery whose experiences in the field of science and technology have so far been made to remain merely imitative and dependent. (Goonatilake 1984 : 109-114)

Question of value

All these perverse phenomena inevitably raise a number of vital issues concerning the future of mankind. This is beyond the humanitarian question of use and abuse of science and technology. Of course the matter of individual or personal conscience certainly counts a great deal in the current problems of relations between the haves and the haves-not. Fundamentally, however, it poses the whole *question of cultural values* that need to be reexamined and reconstructed. The point is to turn negative scientific value into positive and creative one, so that science and technology could truly hold a promise for the future of mankind as an integrated whole, not of any particular nations, classes, or sectors. In the final

analysis, the solution would of course rest with the nature of socio-political structures within and among nations. But this, again, is primarily based on human perception of knowledge concerning both physical and social reality. It is this perception of knowledge, in the midst of socio-economic forces, that constitutes a set of cultural values and consequently a value structure determining the norms and patterns of social behaviour and relations in society.

Needless to say, this is also how science and technology is to be conceived of and acted upon accordingly. After all, scientific technology is not just a piece of device or invention, or purely applied science, and therefore something politically neutral and value-free. It is essentially part and parcel of a social system and process. So it is only against the value-structure background that science and technology can be objectively assessed, both on positive and negative sides. And here the cultural values of both modern science of the West and traditional science of Asia have to be brought into the picture in search for a synthesis appropriate to human needs and problems. Modern science, because of its great potential for creative growth and development; as for traditional science, because of its spiritual perspective and potential channel for grassroots participation and hence cultural freedom. (de Lauwe 1986 : 108-110)

So freedom and progress are to be presented here as the twin key elements of the proposed synthesis. The

two are closely related; one indeed cannot do without the other. On the part of modern science, both elements can in a large sense be referred to their original scientific tradition. As mentioned earlier on, modern science historically emerged with the notion and rising expectation of both material growth and moral progress. This means in effect that modern science and technology is to be seen as liberating factor of human and social life. Here both the concept of progress and the socio-cultural function of science and technology need to be clarified. At least from the traditional evolutionary standpoint, the criterion of progress is to be measured not only in terms of scientific and technological achievements by means of which man emancipates himself from the forces of nature, but also in terms of emancipation from domination of man by man (Wertheim 1974 : 35-48). So historically a thin line has to be drawn here between this progressive scientific tradition and that of mercantile and industrial culture that later on developed out of hegemonic economic forces. This is not just an intellectual exercise for its own sake. The point is that the hegemonic scientific culture as currently predominant is not necessarily inherent in the nature of modern science and technology. It is only man-made and therefore should be susceptible to positive change against the background of moral and creative tradition of its own. Indeed, scientifically advanced countries themselves also must find a way out of their own predica-

ments.

At any rate, the evolutionary conception of progress remains basically materialistic in approach, and thus vulnerable to the interplay of economic and political forces in society. What is really needed is a certain spiritual perspective that can live up to the cultural requirement of modern science itself. It would be a gross mistake to reject or turn away from modern science simply because of its perverse effects under the current hegemonic industrial regimes. To be realistic, one has to confront it positively with creative cultural value, in order that all the wrong could eventually be rectified, and that modern science could be made to serve as liberating force for the ultimate purpose of human freedom and progress.

Spiritual way-out

In this respect and insofar as the cultural traditions of Asia are concerned, a substantial contribution could potentially be made. Buddhism is one notable example. Here this speaker can only refer to this great religious tradition, not as an authority, but from his own learning experience. Besides, he is pretty sure that the answer could also be found from within the other religious traditions in Asia and the world over. This is particularly important, because the essence of human freedom and progress cannot be otherwise than respect for cultural

pluralism and dynamism (de lauwe 1986 :105-107). And this is precisely what expressed through various religious traditions within society and around the world. What is wrong with the current scientific industrial culture, apart from all the injuries and hardships inflicted on fellow human-beings, is that it imposes its own criterion and pattern of change and development on the Third World peoples, first by means of colonialism and now through the national elites as the agents of change and modernization. This is how modernization has come to be identified with Westernization or whatever dominating forces. Such a scientific culture, while allegedly serving as material incentives for scientific and technological advancement, has brought about stultifying effects on those of the peripheral non-western countries. All this is strictly in line with the capitalistic concept of unilinear change and movement of history that has been operating for so long. Modern science and technology, unfortunately, has come to be in its service and made inroads on the traditional cultures and freedom which have been set aside and oppressed in the process.

In this sense, then, Buddhism may be regarded here as expression of one stream of thought and cultural tradition, although it obviously has a universal character attached to it. At the individual level, Buddhism may be said to be concerned with other worldliness. But, in truth, concern for social and ethical value is fundamental

throughout the Buddha's teaching, as clearly asserted by one Thai Buddhist authority, Phra Rajavaramuni:

Buddha-dhamma (The Buddha's Teaching) looks into man's inner life in relation to the external, i.e., social, value as well, and takes these twin values as inter-related, inseparable, and being in such harmony as to be one and the same. (Phra Srivisudhimolee 1971 : 187)

So Buddhism indeed comprises the two main aspects: one concerning the truth about the nature of life process and problems arising from it, and the other dealing with the problems of ethics, i.e., the application of the knowledge thereof to everyday affairs.⁸ Both aspects could be summed up into three conceptual and practical elements. First and foremost is the teaching on The Four Noble Truths expounding the full range of inquiries into the human situation and the remedy: the nature of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and finally the way or path leading to the cessation of suffering. Secondly, The Noble Eightfold Path consists of Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. And thirdly, the threefold self-training: *sila* (training in higher morality), *samadhi* (training in higher mentality or concentration), and *panya* (training in

higher wisdom) - all in that order to serve as the framework of self-conduct within which one carries one's own way of life toward the realization of ultimate goal, that is to say, the true self.

Out of all this elaborate conceptual and practical line of approach, emerges a distinct theory of knowledge that could provide the basis upon which modern science and technology is to be conceptualized and practised. Here is the distinction and choice between holistic and partial knowledge confronting the contemporary scientific thinking, both physical and social. In other words, between humanistic science vis-a-vis value-free science. One is to give priority to humanity over the matter, and the other, vice versa. The focus here is on the question of relationship between mind and action, which has, more often than not, been problematic for modern science in relation to spiritual value. Instead of relying on the external control on behaviour which is characteristic of the Western scientific approach to the problem of human conflict, Buddhism puts great emphasis on the need for the development of capacity for internal self-control (Heinze 1977 : 41). Freedom and self-reliance is the essence of Buddhist teaching. But then the essence of freedom lies in one's own inner self and capacity for self-awakening to the ultimate truth and knowledge. Freedom in Buddhist precept does not simply mean just a "thing" or matter like life, health, liberties, and property, etc. All these material

things are not unimportant, but need to be conditioned by one's inner self equipped with knowledge and wisdom.

Freedom and pursuit of knowledge then constitute one and the same thing. It is essentially the cognitive life process that continuously keeps broadening one's spiritual horizon. Here is the way and process of pursuit of knowledge, scientific or otherwise, whereby spiritual value and perspective of man's concrete life plays the most prominent role.

Finally, beyond the macro level of consideration, no less serious attention should also be given to those underprivileged people who, as already mentioned, have been so far falling prey to modern science and technology, especially those in the traditional rural and agricultural sector. Naturally the same conceptual and spiritual perspective need to be applied. As a matter of fact, they should be given top priority, in view of extensive cultural damages that have been made. Of even more importance, any meaningful technological growth needs a cultural basis upon which modern science and technology can be effectively implanted, not imposed and forced upon as has been the case up to now. The fact is that every human society naturally has its own tradition of science as understood in a broad cultural sense of accumulation of knowledge about nature, at least to satisfy minimum needs for survival. In a large sense, then, traditional communities can be said to possess a measure of self-

reliance, autonomy, and cultural identity. It may be problematic as to if and how a better quality of life could be further promoted in traditional context. But at the very least, it forms a rational basis of people's existence, which certainly is not entirely unscientific. The peasantry themselves are quite susceptible to technological innovations introduced from outside, whenever proved appropriate and relevant to their needs. The only problematique to be solved is the question of access and opportunity for modern and traditional sciences to meet and merge into even more advanced and humanistic science truly in the service of mankind.





Buddhism and Human Rights *

I t is important for those of us who love freedom to realize that love of freedom alone is not enough; that freedom may well depend on our capacity to realize a multiplicity of conflicting values simultaneously, in a socio-economic and political setting that makes this possible, and that the single-minded pursuit of a single value, or a single goal, is the greatest enemy of freedom. This struggle (for freedom) requires from...the single individuals who are not only willing to stand up for their own rights, but also for those of their neighbors, a great deal of courage and tenacity, but above all the intelligence in knowing how to wage the struggle for freedom without destroying it in the process...

Soedjatmoko, *Development and Freedom*
Ishizaka Memorial Lectures, 1979.

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Introduction

The ideal of human rights, like that of democracy and many other socio-political nomenclatures, has now become a beleaguered concept. It is subject to conflicting interpretations and practices that have brought about confrontations around the world. The phenomenon is one of those human ironies that seem to be so much taken for granted and, worse still, with resignation. It has become even an acceptable rule of thumb for one--individual, class, or nation--to preach human rights and then act against human rights. And this, out of strong but rigid and sectarian sense of self-righteousness on all sides. Underlying such contradictions in human behaviour are worldwide conflicting ideologies and class and national interests. Their threat to human life and dignity cannot be overemphasized. It looms large in the forms of economic and political rivalries and oppressions, militarism, and armaments, all of which put humanity as a whole in jeopardy. The world today is indeed at a most critical crossroad.

Soedjatmoko's words quoted above should very well serve as an ominous warning to all those earnestly, perhaps too earnestly, concerned with the issues of human rights. They are articulated at a time that is in great need of a hard rethinking, which is already long overdue, on the concept of human rights itself. The issues and

contradictions cannot be settled by a mere compiling of lists, however comprehensive, of human rights, such as illustrated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and that of Civil and Political Rights. While all these may be said to have been motivated by well-meaning efforts to accommodate those specific issues and problems that did empirically arise, they seem to be lacking in some kind of a holistic worldview that need be investigated. In the face of hard reality of today's power politics, within and among nations, it would of course take a long, long time indeed for the major conflicts of views and interests to possibly come to terms with one another. But before that to come about at all and prior to any meaningful social and institutional innovations, there must be a starting point, that is to say, a fresh look at the moral and spiritual basis of the principle and practice of human rights. Perhaps it is no mere coincidence that serious doubts have now been raised, both in the East and the West, as to the validity of the liberal conception of human rights. C.G. Weeramantry, former Supreme Court judge of Sri Lanka, is one notable example, who touching on the problem of "the inappropriateness of Western concepts". sees the issue of inequality most relevant to the Third World's real needs and problems, and thus stresses the need to "seek view of equality which means more than the perpetuation of inequality--a view of equal-

ity more substantial than one which means the equal right to remain unequal" (Weeramantry 1976 : 10). This, incidentally, only reminds one of what John Strachey some time ago observed in Capitalism which has been the historical moving force of liberalism, "innate tendency to extreme and ever growing inequality" (Bottomore 1964 : 34). Also Fouad Ajami of Princeton University, while questioning the impartiality or "completeness" of the concept of liberalism, strongly and significantly, points to the dire need for "the politics of love and compassion" as against the conventional but now discredited politics of "realism". (Ajami 1978 : 2-41)

Taken together with Soedjatmoko's line of approach to the problem of development and freedom, all this really strikes one with a deep sense of relief and intellectual uplift. It certainly is not just an exercise in futility to think and act in terms of "the politics of love and compassion" and "the intelligence in knowing how to wage the struggle for freedom without destroying it in the process". By the standard of today's politics of realism so-called, one can imagine how revolutionary it would be if ever love, compassion, and "intelligence" come to serve as a guide to social and political behaviour and action. But this is the crux of the whole matter. The sad truth is that human mind is not always filled with love, compassion, and intelligence. Whether one likes it or not, the mind always has priority over the matter in the sense

that all human behaviour and action are basically derived from it, as the Buddha is so fully aware in His moral precept:

*Cease to do evil;
Learn to do Good;
Cleanse your own heart;
This is the teaching of the
Buddha* (Humphreys 1979 : 42)

And this is because:

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts and made up of our thoughts. If a man speak or act with an evil thought, suffering follows him as a wheel follows the hoof of the beast that draws the cart

... If a man speak or act with a good thought, happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves him. (Humphreys 1979 : 45-46)

So also with the concept and practice of human rights, which is no less susceptible to do good or to do evil according to the states of mind on the part of particular individuals, class, and nations. And, as with the human heart, the concept of human rights no less needs to be cleansed of all the parochialism and sectarian prejudices

so as to be able to cease to do evil and to learn to do good - the most basic problem with which Buddhism is concerned.

Contrary to what the title of this paper might suggest, there is no need at all to search for a place of human rights in the Buddhist tradition. Freedom is indeed the essence of Buddhism, as will be seen in the process of discussion. Neither is Buddhism to be presented here as another alternative ism or supplement to the current schools of thought--Liberalism, Socialism, and even Fascism in one form or another--all engaged in the crude struggle in the name of democracy and human rights. To do so would merely add fuel to the conflicts and contradictions already vastly harmful to the cause of human rights. But amidst the uncompromising ideologies and forces, Buddhism could serve for positive purposes as conceptual synthesis drawing upon all the positive values of both libertarian and egalitarian traditions, with moral and spiritual contribution of its own. This, in Christmas Humphreys' view, "is no weak compromise, but a sweet reasonableness which avoids fanaticism and laziness with equal care, and marches onward without that haste which brings its own reaction, but without ceasing" (Humphreys 1979 : 21). In this sense, too, Buddhism is to be presented not so much in terms of religious doctrine, but rather as a science of living whereby one can learn to live one's life with objective understanding and the intelligence in knowing. (Humphreys 1979 : 80)

On Social Purpose and Progress

However, since Buddhism, even as a science of living, tends more often than not to be popularly prescribed and practiced with the sole concern for one's own salvation or *Nirvana*, a preliminary explanation seems to be well in order here by way of trying to examine and fathom the social and cultural meaning of Buddhism. This is necessary for one to get a true perspective of the Buddhist thought. It goes without saying of course that this writer can claim to be no authority on this great religion. Systematic and elaborate treatment of specific points must be referred to scholarly sources elsewhere. As a student of social and political affairs, the author ventures the task, through somewhat rudimentary readings and reflection on the subject mainly out of a growing concern for today's practical problems, especially those problems associated with social change. Change, whether one likes it or not, is part and parcel of our life. Life itself breeds suffering and therefore problems: the critical point is whether change could be made for better or for worse, for more or less suffering. Historically, religion could play a very crucial role in this respect. Christianity notably demonstrated its positive and innovative power in the great Reformation Movement. If we are to believe in social progress, to be later touched upon, as the criterion of human evolution leading towards a better society

and life with freedom and justice(Wertheim 1974 : 17-120 ; Tawney 1948), Buddhism, to this writer's mind, truly points the way.

Setting out as a social reform movement, it has its own dynamic attitude towards life and great innovative potential. On the other hand, Buddhism, as an institution, could also be vulnerable, again like Christianity in the Middle Ages, to a relapse into a mere dogma incapable of living up to the new challenge, that is , the crisis of change. There will then be a danger in that it would tend to serve the status quo and the powers that be, instead of humankind which is the central purpose of Buddhism. Then, again, there will be further danger in that it could even degenerate into becoming a coercive and oppressive instrument, instead of promoting the Path towards human liberation which is the ultimate goal of Buddhism. If such is the case, Buddhism, like any other religions, would need its own transformation to be of true service to mankind. Many will no doubt frown upon this sort of concern. But the observation, to be sure, is in full accord with a good Buddhist's own norm of non-neglect of mindfulness, and seems not too far off the mark in view of the actual situation nowadays. Such a gap between ideal and practice, if left unbridgeable, cannot but help bring about disintegrative effects on social and human life.

Furthermore, we are living in a world of rapid tech-

nological change and increasingly complex social and economic relations. In this new environmental context, it is essential to develop a more positive social orientation of Buddhism and translate this into practice. We have been taught enough about how to behave ourselves morally. There is of course no denying the fact that morally right acts and conduct are desirable and beneficial. On closer examination, however, there is a vast difference between doing morally good things from an individual and personal standpoint, and from a social perspective. The two are to an extent interacting. But if, as has been observed, in the course of historical development, Theravada Buddhism under which many including this writer are living, has become too oriented towards individual, personal definition of man's ideal rather than socio-cultural preference as stressed in Mahayana (Guenther 1972 : 49-50), then one needs to rise above the past and superficial division in order to search out the essence and the true purpose. In any case, fortunately, the distinction here is more apparent than real. In truth, concern for social and ethical value is fundamental throughout the Buddha's teaching, as Phra Srivisudhimolee (presently Phra Rajavoramunee) asserts:

Buddha-dhamma (The Buddha's Teaching) looks into man's inner life in relation to external, i.e., social, value as well, and takes these twin values as

interrelated, inseparable and being in such harmony as to be one and the same. (Phra Srivisudhimolee 1971 : 187)

Finally, in the field of social studies such as human rights and perhaps many others, one can also find in the Buddhist system of thought a most objective and relevant conceptual framework that, regrettably, tends to be overlooked. It starts from a plain and simple premise as a pragmatic approach close to everyday problems and presents an intellectual outlook that could serve as an empirical basis for rational inquiries. In the words of another leading Buddhist scholar:

Man has been the central problem of Buddhist philosophy. Metaphysical speculation concerning problems not related to human activities and the attainment of Enlightenment--such as whether the world is infinite or finite, whether the soul and the body are identical or different from each other, or whether a perfect person exists after his death--is discouraged.

Admitting the transitoriness of everything, the Buddha did not want to assume the existence of any metaphysical substance. This attitude was logically derived from his fundamental standpoint. The Buddha reduced things, substances and souls, to

forces, movements, functions, and processes, and adopted a dynamic conception of reality. Life is nothing but a series of manifestations of generation and extinction. It is a stream of becoming and change. (Nakamura 1976 : 3,8 ; Lewis and Slater 1966 : 70-71,172-173)

Of course one must beware against stretching the concept too far into the field of social inquiries. Leaving aside the *lokuttara* (supramundane) dimension of human problems, which is the transcendently ultimate goal of Buddhism as religion and which is at any rate beyond the reach both of natural and social science researches, one can gain from its conceptual approach very instructive insights into the nature and problems of human relations. For our purpose here, it is important to look more closely and objectively into the actual forces and processes of becoming and change. Current modes of social studies have been focusing quite extensively and intensively on technological, social and other environmental factors. There is also no lack of scientific endeavours in modern psycho-analysis to gain increasing insight into man's inner world of experience. But Buddhism gives a sense of purpose adding to more understanding of the concept of progress in human evolution. Evolutionary theory stresses technological advances as the key factor that increasingly frees mankind from the forces of

nature. And yet, it is the same technological knowledge and skills that, in the course of development, can make or unmake the domination of by man. From an evolutionary point of view, "Emancipation from the forces of nature and emancipation from domination by privileged individuals and groups, therefore, go hand in hand to mark human progress." (Wertheim 1974 : 47, 35-48)

The emancipation principle is clearly in line with Buddhist thinking. Only that Buddhism goes further beyond the evolutionary theory by tracing to the root causes of all human suffering and problems that are inherent in the nature of life. For, even more fundamental than the social restrictions, life itself is subject to the physical vicissitudes of its own creation : from birth, decay, disease, and death. Buddhism sees the two aspects, individual and social, constantly interwoven in the ongoing processes of becoming and change, and sees, above all else, in man the true and ultimate answer to the problems. Genuine emancipation and freedom, in short, is that which originates within man and is in relation with his fellow beings. The Buddha himself is definitely clear in his social purpose:

*Even as a mother, as long as she doth live,
watches over her child, her only child,-even so
should one practise an all- embracing mind unto all
beings.*

And let a man practise a boundless good-will for all the world, above, below, across, in every way, good unhampered, without ill-feeling or enmity.
(Humphreys 1979 : 90)

On the Nature and Value of Man

The specific emphasis on man also tends to be mistaken for individualism pure and simple - and this leads to many a practice and behaviour contrary to Buddhist norms of conduct even in self-styled Buddhist communities. In Buddhist terminology, as will be seen, man is never an end in himself. Neither is man the measure of all things, but the one to be measured. This attitude is derived from a conception of man and ultimate reality that looks to the nature and problems of human emancipation and freedom in a fundamentally different light from the standpoint of natural law, the school of thought regarded as the historical and inspirational source of today's ideal and practice of human rights (Levin 1978 : 1). This is not meant to pass judgement as to which is superior or inferior. It is certainly un-Buddhist to entertain such a vainglorious conviction. One feels, rightly or wrongly, even reluctant to speak of the one as Western and of the other as Eastern. In terms of human progress as described above, Buddhism and the concept of natural law, although poles apart conceptually, could be seen in

their functionally positive relationship. On the one hand, the achievement and impact, both historical and intellectual, of the concept of natural law cannot be underestimated. Indeed, it has come such a long way since its inception as the 17th-18th Century ideas opposing political absolutism and arbitrary rule, and replacing divine right with common man as the basis of political authority. On the other hand, the concept of natural law is concerned principally with the question of domination of man by man which simply calls for the external and institutional guarantees and checks and balances. There can be no denying the enormous significance of the natural law theory in this regard. Witness the historic accomplishments such as the American Declaration of Independence, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, and internationally, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - all drew inspirations from it. Nonetheless, all that the natural law concept implies could give only a partial answer, that is, with respect to the external dimension of human emancipation and freedom. There still remains the other side of the question that has been left unanswered. For this, it is strongly believed, one may turn to Buddhism for clarification.

Conceptions of man are not born in a vacuum, but, in a general scheme of social and political thought, are drawn upon and related to concrete human experiences and problems. The notion of natural law is a case in

point. As well represented by its prominent thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, it is based on an assumption of perfect freedom and equality of men in the state of nature. This is summed up very well in Article I of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Originally, it should be noted, these postulates were not quite universal as they sounded. Actually, they tended to be circumstantially motivated. For Hobbes, for example, with his extremely base view of human nature, men's action and behaviour were solely prompted by fear and insecurity, so much so that they would only try to destroy or subdue one another. And this gave rise to inordinate concern for law and order and a constant need for "a common power to keep them all in awe" (Hobbes 1952 : 96). Or for Locke, Father of modern Liberalism, freedom simply meant being free to do what one liked; but then his liberal ideas seemed in the last analysis preoccupied with the security and protection of property rights (Locke 1953 : 119, 129-141), with the rising of the middle class of his time.

There is no need for further elaboration of this point

as it would go beyond the scope of this paper. It is briefly pointed out here in order to emphasize the detachment and universal character of the Buddhist way of thinking. The natural law notion may have something in common with Buddhism in doing away with supra-natural beings and placing faith in man. But that is about all. Rousseau seems to have come a little closer when he observed that, "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains" (Rousseau 1948 : 240). But then, according to Buddhist view, what really obstructs the attainment of freedom is not so much the social and conventional "chains" or restrictions, as one's own ego and the three poisons: lust, hatred, and delusion. Thus, contrary to what is popularly assumed, man is indeed far from being born free. Not only is man born into the world of suffering and the sorrows of birth, decay, diseases, and death: he is also subject to egoism which is part of mankind's *kamma* (law of causation) and deeply rooted in the essential nature of man. Neither are men born so equal in the faculties of body and mind, as Hobbes would have us believe. For men may or may not be equally capable of learning and rising above their own respective selves in order to be free.

Such is the universal reality of the human condition described as the Three Characteristics of Existence or the Law of Change: *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering), *anatta* (non-self). Life is by nature suffering

because it is hemmed in by all things that are transient. Human existence itself is not permanent, but only a composite of the five aggregates and therefore,

Everything is non-self or anatta ...Everything is impermanent :body, feeling, perceptions, dispositions, and consciousness; all these are suffering. They are all "non-self". Nothing of them is substantial. They are all appearances empty of substantiality or reality. There can be no individuality without putting together components. And this is always a process of becoming: there can be no becoming without a becoming different, there can be no becoming different without a dissolution, a passing away or decay, which sooner or later will inevitably come about. (Nakamura 1967 : 8 ; Phra Srivisudhimolee 1971 : 13-18, 31-32)

In the light of this universal truth about life, the concept of natural law and natural rights seems to be concerned by and large with things within the confines of or, at best, not much beyond self: that is to say, life, health, physical and material interests. These things, in terms of utility value, are obviously not unimportant. In this sense, there is in the main a quantitative connotation with little, if any, qualitative consideration attached to it. It is not difficult to see the social and political dilemma of this

rather lopsided notion, as so well illustrated in the historical development of *laissez-faire* brand of liberalism which succeeded only too well, and still does, in bringing about increasing human exploitation and domination even on a global scale. It could be argued that the phenomenon merely represents an abused form of liberalism. But the dilemma is already there and, unfortunately, there seems to be no end to it. Within Western democracies themselves, cases of discrimination against the minorities and other disadvantaged people abound. All these certainly demonstrate the dark side of what has been valued as "the comparative advantage of the liberal West" (Ajami 1978 : 5). So quite contrary to what has been expected, human beings seem actually far from being endowed with "reason and conscience" and do not always act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. This phenomenon cannot simply be dismissed as historical accident. Nor is it to be granted as historical inevitability as both Capitalism and Marxism would happily embrace. It all depends on how and to what end human intelligence and "reason" is to be directed.

The truth is that the notion of freedom and human rights thus far comes to nothing much more than serving what, by Buddhist definition, is exactly the freedom and right to the craving and scrambling for things transient and illusory. In consequence, self-styled rights and freedom could only be directed by an acquisitive and posses-

sive instinct and hence misguided reason for the mere purpose of self preservation (Rousseau), or doing what and disposing of one's possessions as one likes (Locke), or coming to the worst, destroying or subduing one another (Hobbes).

Buddhism is neither fatalistic nor negative about life. Far from it. The Buddha's *dhamma* is full of moral and intellectual vitality. It does not content itself simply with the "nature" of man as it appears to be, but searches for the intrinsic value of man free from self and *tanha* (ignorant craving). And this is the crux of the matter. Buddhism does not entirely deny the significance of the self. Only that,

"the self cannot be identified with anything existing in the outside. We cannot grasp the self as something concrete or existing in the outer world. The self can be realized only when we act according to universal norms of human existence. When we act morally, the true self becomes manifest.."
(Nakamura 1976 : 11)

Without going further into an elaborate discussion on the theory of non-self or *anatta* which is quite beyond the grasp of the man in the street including this writer, suffice it to stress at this point the value and meaning of knowledge as the principle of problem solving. Buddhism is in no sense a philosophy of despair or nihilism, with its

never-ceasing faith in man's aptitude for goodness and compassion. Virtue is knowledge wherein lies the Path to the true self and value of man; that is to say, knowledge or awakening as to the truth of non-self or transitoriness of everything including life itself. Self-awakening is the first and foremost step that paves the way for a man to depart from the self or ego. Only in this way can a man live a free life, i.e., life of knowledge and wisdom, without being subject to *tanha* and delusion. Only in this way can a man learn to gain pure and objective reason as against egoistic one. (Phra Srivisudhimolee 1971 : 24-25, 49, 195)

Comprehending thus, the aryan disciple turns away from the he body, from the sensations, from perceptions, from the mental tendencies and conditions, from consciousness. Being thus detached, he is free from desire-attachment is he liberated, and he experiences the freedom of liberation. (Humphreys 1979 : 78)

And finally, only in this way can individual rights and liberties be channelled into a truly positive and creative direction leading towards human liberation, progress, justice, and peace.

On Individuality, Freedom, and Common Interest

In dealing with the question of the self and knowledge, the Buddha, unlike Plato, does not conceive of it in terms of division into a superior part and an inferior one, whereby for a man to be his own master, the one must come under control of the other. The distinction is not just a matter of semantic, but a most significant one in regard to the question of the value and place of the individual in society. Plato of course uses the nature and problems of the individual as an analogy and model in search of a just or ideal state. But his postulate on human nature raises a number of basic issues that seem relevant to the subject matter under discussion. In particular, Plato has this to say which is worth citing at length here:

... within the man himself, in the soul, there is a better part and a worse; that he is his own master when the part which is better by nature has the worse under its control. It is certainly a term of praise; whereas it is considered a disgrace, when, through bad breeding or bad company, the better part is overwhelmed by the worse, like a small force outnumbered by a multitude. A man in that condition is called a slave to himself and intemperate.

and further on,

It is also true that the great mass of multifarious appetites and pleasures and pains will be found to occur chiefly in children and women and slaves, and, among freemen so-called, in the inferior multitude; whereas the simple and moderate desires which, with the aid of reason and right belief, are guided by reflection, you will find only in a few, and those with the inborn disposition and the best educated.

Do you see that this state of things will exist in your commonwealth, where the desires of the inferior multitude will be controlled by the desires and wisdom of the superior few? Hence if any society can be called master of itself and in control of pleasures and desires it will be ours. (Plato 1951 : 121-122)

The statement indeed has quite a familiar ring and its authoritarian flavour has been too well echoed in all ages of human history. Thus far we have been concerned with the flaws and shortcoming of liberalism as derived from the concept of natural law and natural rights which, admirable as it is, has culminated in unbridled individualism which, in turn, goes on and on magnifying and enlarging the areas and scale for the loss of human freedom with no clear solution in sight. The line of approach such as

Plato's presents quite a different sort of problem. On the face of it, it represents an attitude of mind and long-time prejudice which can hardly stand the test of reason, although its influence still remains strong and cannot be underestimated. On more subtle ground, the superior-inferior thesis can also claim to serve as the champion of freedom. Only that it is the case of losing one's freedom in exchange for a "new" one or for a "final" destination in a distant future. It is a matter of "natural" or "historical" necessity of submitting oneself to one's superior group "who knows better", in order to be one's own master. Or, in Rousseau's language, it is a matter of necessity for one "to be forced to be free". All in the name of "reason and right belief". The trouble we are facing today, and may be far into the future, is that this very superior-inferior complex has long become the habit of mind for both the "superior few" and the "inferior multitude", and, curiously enough, among both reactionaries and revolutionaries alike. By Buddhist definition, however, this is precisely part of individual and social restrictions and thus suffering of which man is to rid himself.

Be that as it may, this superior-inferior postulate raises the question of ends and means which has significant implication regarding the individual value as well as the meaning of freedom. In contrast with Plato's and Rousseau's conceptions, Buddhism puts great and unqualified faith in man's perfectibility with no distinction

as to class, race, and sex. Buddhism, as well, values the virtue of temperance and moderation --the Middle Way as is well known --but definitely does not conceive of it in terms of one part of the self (soul, ego) mastering or controlling another. It aims fundamentally at the cessation of suffering and departing entirely from the self which is in the last analysis only transient and therefore unreal. And of more importance still, the deliverance from the self to the true self can be accomplished and achieved solely through the individual's own endeavour and *kamma*, which needs no external command or control, or, for that matter, Plato's Philosophic Rulers or Rousseau's General Will as against the individual's will. At best, a man may simply need, if ever need be, intellectual guidance, the Path which then serves no more than as a way to find his own spiritual development (Lewis and Slter 1966 : 67-69,75 ; Heinze 1977 : 42-46). Dogma in any form is anathema to Buddhism. Even the Buddha's own teaching is not to be taken at face value, but must be probed with one's own effort in the light of reason. This is made clear in his address to the Kalamas:

Now look you, Kalamas. Do not be misled by report or tradition or hearsay. Do not be misled by proficiency in the Collections (of Scriptures), nor by mere logic and inference, nor after considering reasons, nor after reflection on some view and approval

of it, nor because it fits becoming, nor because the recluse (who holds it) is your teacher. But when you know for yourselves: These things are censured by the intelligent, these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to loss and sorrow - then do you reject them. (Humphreys 1979 : 71)

In short, the principle of relying on oneself is the essence of each individual's virtue, as the Buddha emphatically asserts in his last sermon:

I have taught the Dhamma without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the norm, Ananda, the Tathagata has no such thing as the closed fist of those teachers who hold back certain things ...

Be islands unto yourselves, Ananda: Be a refuge to yourselves; do not take to yourselves any other refuge. See Truth as an island, See Truth as a refuge. Do not seek refuge in anyone but yourselves.

...Work out your own salvation, with diligence. (Mahaparinibbana Sutta quoted in Humphreys 1979 : 93-94 ; Phra Srivisudhimolee 1971 : 95 ; Nakamura 1976 : 11 ; Heinze 1977 : 46)

In the Buddhist view, then, the individual is not merely a means. One can sense a subtle meaning of

equality here. Although men may not be born "free", they are equal in dignity and rights, that is to say, dignity and rights to their own salvation or freedom. Only in this perspective, can one make full sense out of the first paragraph of the Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which reads:

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace of the world.

And yet neither is the individual an end in himself. The emphasis on the virtue of self-reliance and the law of *kamma* does not make it so. As Phra Srivisudhimolee so aptly puts it, Buddhism may be said to comprise two main aspects: one concerning the truth about the nature of life process and problems arising from it, and the other dealing with the problems of ethics, that is, the application of the knowledge thereof to everyday affairs (Phra Srivisudhimolee 1971: 11, 94-95). Both aspects are summed up in the Buddha's teaching on the Four Noble Truths expanding the full range of inquiries into the human situation and the remedy: the nature of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and finally the way or Path leading to the cessation of suffering. The Path, called the Noble Eightfold Path

consists of Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentrations. All these are concerned basically with human conduct and, together with meticulous rules of the threefold training: *sila* (training in higher morality), *samadhi* (training in higher mentality or concentration), *panna* (training in higher wisdom). All in that order are to serve as the framework within which each one conducts one's own way of life directed towards the realization of the goal, i.e., the true self.

Here we come to the clue to the problem of the relationship between mind and action, as mentioned earlier on. Instead of relying on the external control on behaviour which is currently characteristic of both libertarian and egalitarian lines of approach, Buddhism puts great emphasis on the need for the development of internal control mechanisms (Heinze 1977 : 41). Capacity for internal self-control is indeed an essential prerequisite to any effective external and institutional innovations that may be required. In a profound sense, then, freedom is not just a "thing" (life, health, liberties, possessions, etc.), but the cognitive life process that continuously keeps broadening the individual's spiritual horizon. It is the way the Buddha advises his disciples:

I, monks, do not say that attainment of profound knowledge comes straightaway; nevertheless it comes

*by a gradual (doing of) what is to be done, a gradual course. In this connection, one having faith draws near, he comes close, he lends ears, he hears Dhamma and learns it by heart, examines the import of the things so learnt, is in an ecstasy of delight over them; strong desire rises in him, he is emboldened, he weighs it all, he strives; being self-resolute, by means of body he realizes the highest truth itself, and penetrating it by means of wisdom, sees it.** (Humphreys 1979 : 89 ; Guenther 1972 : 42,175-176)

Now it is as the Path with which to work out one's way of life towards the above goal that Buddhism assumes the quality of ethics. (Guenther 1972 : 42 ; Kitagawa and Reynolds 1976 : 47) It is the principle of human conduct inherent in the essential meaning of the law of *kamma*. In contrast to what tends to be popularly mistaken as a matter of purely and simply individual affairs and salvation,

* For an excellent elucidation of the Threefold Training as identified with the Middle Path, see Phra Srivisudhimolee (1971 : 125-205). According to Ruth-Inge Heinze, the Threefold Training is equivalent to the three basic steps or stages comprising theory, practice, and realization (1977 : 52).

Essentially the "Path" is a means to attain a goal. When we talk of goals, aims, ends, or ideals, we are but stating in another way the principle of teleological action, which in Buddhism, is acquired in the course of living with others and is internally determined by learning. The aim towards which an individual strives is defined both individually or personally, and socially or culturally. Both ways of definition interact because the former does not develop in a vacuum or without reference to social interaction and the latter is made of interacting individuals...(Guenther 1972 : 49)

On the one hand, Buddhism stresses as a matter of principle the individual's responsibility for all his deeds and actions, even though taken out of the transient self which does not quite amount to absolute nothingness as assumed in some religious quarters. In *lokiya* (worldly) terms,

... the anatta doctrine does not amount to a denial of personality; it is simply a denial of "soul theory".

... What is extinguished is not life itself but the craving and vain attachments which indeed must be destroyed in nirvana, the goal of Buddhist aspiration is to be attained. (Lewis and Slather 1966 : 73)

On the other hand, it also takes into full account the interrelationship among the deeds and actions of all individuals, classes and nations, all of which are bound to be mutually affected. As Christmas Humphreys admirably puts it,

All things, all men and all events are interrelated and "interdiffused". All life is one, though its perishable forms are innumerable. Whether this "life" be viewed as Suchness, or the Void or as the Essence of Mind, it is a factor common to all forms. It follows that all these forms are intimately interrelated, whether the links be seen as cause-effect, in that every cause must affect every other form, or as compassion, the twin of Wisdom in Buddhist thought, which springs from that flame of the Wisdom in each heart which knows all life as one and acts accordingly... (Humphreys 1979 : 20-21; 1969 :91)

A clear social and political implication can be drawn from this. The law of *kamma* is not only confined to the matter of cause and effect of one particular individual, but also brings repercussions to bear on other fellow-beings, classes, and nations; in other word, affecting humanity as a whole, Actions breed reactions. Similarly, exploitations and oppressions breed revolts and revolutions. Marxism, like Liberalism before it, was not born in

a vacuum either. And Marxism-Leninism in turn brings in "the new class" in the name of "the dictatorship of the proletariat", trampling upon civil and political liberties in the name of equality. And so on and so forth. Hence the polarization between libertarianism and egalitarianism. And hence the encroachment upon human rights and freedom on both sides the world over.

The unifying and universal nature of human relationship is explicitly recognized in Buddhist scheme of thinking between the individual's inner life process and the social value in the course of working out his own way towards the realization of the true self. What to be expected is by no means just a passive kind of attitude and behaviour, but truly active outlook and contribution to the common good. The practice of Right Mindfulness, for example, also has a clear positive and social purpose, as the Buddha expresses to the disciples:

Monks. Taking care of oneself means as well taking care of others. Taking care of others means as well taking care of oneself.

How is it that taking care of oneself means as well taking care of others? It is by diligent practice, by love for the dhamma, by magnanimity. That is how taking care of oneself means as well taking care of others.

How is it that taking care of others means as well

taking care of oneself? It is by tolerance, by non-harming, by love, by compassion. That is how taking care of others means as well taking care of oneself.

Monks. When thinking that "We shall take care of ourselves", we also ought to exercise Right Mindfulness. When thinking that "We shall take care of others", we also ought to exercise Right Mindfulness. Taking care of oneself means as well taking care of others. Taking care of others means as well taking care of oneself. (Mahavagga-Sangyutta Nikaya quoted in Phra Srivisudhimolee 1971 : 187)

Thus, the ideal goal "to know the self" is by no means a one-sided affair. It always involves the two sides of the same coin: one's own life and place and those of others, always bearing in mind that all are neither permanent nor absolutely impermanent. It means much further beyond the Utilitarian type of "The greatest happiness of the greatest number" concept which is based on the sole consideration of "individuals" transient likes or dislikes, i.e., pleasures and pains. The Buddhist ideal always looks to a pattern of social relations based on a type of morality that is none other than "the outcome and corollary of knowledge grounded in freedom" (Guenther 1972 : 50). Underlying this unique morality is the mutually positive and creative attitude of mind, in inter-personal relationship, described as the Four *Brahmaviharas*

(Sublime states of Consciousness: *metta* (loving kindness), *karuna* (compassion, forbearance), *mudita* (sympathetic joy), and *upekkha* (equanimity). Indeed, it is the intellect and moral ability to know and perceive through the whole truth of human existence that determines an individual's true deliverance and his shared value in society. In his last analysis, again, the Buddha makes it clear :

*Monks. A dhamma, whenever born into the world, must needs be for the benefit of the majority of people, for the sake of needs, interest, and happiness of the majority of people. **

Epilogue

We have gone through the subject of freedom and human rights against the background of the evolutionary concept of human progress and emancipation. It is suggested that the emancipation principle is conceptually in line with Buddhism's ultimate goal. Buddhists do not conceive of human value merely in terms of survival for survival's own sake which by itself hardly makes human beings much different from other beings. But both give a positive and creative sense of purpose in human evolu-

* *Itavattaka*, cited in a Thai monk's sermon, author's own translation.

tion, that is, progress and freedom. The difference between the two is rather in degree than in kind but which is nevertheless fundamentally significant. The emancipation principle is concerned with human liberation from the forces of nature and, like Buddhism, from human domination. Only that the concept of social evolution sees the problem of human domination in terms of conflicts between individuals, groups, classes, races, states, nations, etc. And this is also the general state and outlook of modern social sciences at present. Buddhism goes further and deeper into the inner world of man himself: that is, the problem of deliverance from the transient self to the true self. A suggestion has also been made that the basic approach of Buddhism could well be introduced and integrated into the conceptual framework in our social inquiries.

This paper has further dealt with some main streams of thought in connection with the question of freedom and human rights: natural law and Plato's prototype of the notion of master or ruling class. It is observed that these lines of approach succeed only too well in bringing about further exploitation and domination of man by man. The school of natural law seems to be in alliance with Buddhism in its belief and faith in man as individual, but then it starts with only a partial truth about human nature. It is again pointed out that Buddhism could fill the gap and, in particular, that Buddhism has as well a clear social pur-

pose and morality based, not simply on the acquisitive and destructive instinct of man as taken for granted in the school of natural law, but essentially on man's altruistic outlook and attitude that is the result of his own deliverance through knowledge. (Nakamura 1976 : 26 ; Lewis and Slater 1966 : 171-175)

At this point, a question may arise in the readers' mind: Are people actually talking about the same thing, the same definition of freedom and human rights? The answer seems to be both yes and no. No, because different schools of thought conceive of the problem at different levels and in different lights. Some simply, as has been observed of the school of natural law, see man and his behaviour such as it appears to be and then take it as reality. Current social "scientists" also fall into this category. It is basically a static view of human nature and problems, as exemplified for instance by the structural-functional approach. It has already been harmful in countries with "liberal" tradition. When naively transferred to the Third World countries, it only serves as retrogressive intellectual force and outlook. But it is a most easy and convenient way out for "empirical" and "behavioural" methods so-called. Still many others belonging to the school of master class complex of both extreme Right and extreme Left, claim a brand of the dynamic conception of man and history and look to the question of human freedom in terms of the bright sun-

shine far into the future. But then, knowingly or unknowingly, they turn out to be the outstanding force of total subjugation of mankind.

The answer could also be yes, if it is admitted that various views represent only various parts of the whole story. It is like blind men in the Buddha's familiar parable, being asked to touch an elephant to tell what it would be like.

And to one man he presented the head of the elephant, to another the ear, to another a tusk, the trunk, the foot, back, tail, and tuft of the tail; saying to each one that was the elephant...

Then they began to quarrel, shouting "yes, it is!" "No, it isn't!"

An elephant isn't that!" "Yes, it is like that", and so on, till they came to fistcuffs about the matter.

Just so are those sectarians who are wanderers, blind, unseeing, knowing not the truth, but each maintaining it is thus and thus. (Humphreys 1979 : 83)

Just so are those sectarian views on freedom and human rights of today. Indeed the ideal of human rights has too long been suffering from all kinds of parochialism and sectarianism, not to say of those diehard opponents who set themselves against human progress and dignity. Buddhism offers an attempt at conceptualization and

approach in order to see the whole truth, and to show the path accordingly. Far from being fatalistic about life, it looks beyond what appears to be man's nature and inclinations, and into creative and constructive potential within man from first to last stages of human solution. All of which constitute the scope and meaning of human liberation and human rights.

With this perspective in mind, this paper represents one modest attempt, under the limitation both of space and scholarship, to inquire into the true meaning and purpose of Buddhism from the standpoint of universal humanity, as distinguished from institutional Buddhism as state religion. The presentation is no mere eulogy of this great religion (Why should it need one, by the way?), conceived of here as a path, rather than doctrinal postulate that tend to blind faiths and superstitions as well as nationalistic chauvinism, at the expense of truth, knowledge, wisdom, and enlightenment. Human liberation and peace and hence progress is at the heart of Buddhism throughout. In the last analysis, however, it is deliberately left to man's own choice: either man will elect, with fortitude and perseverance, to take the path of reason and dignity; or he will deviate to that of ignorance and blind interests. The freedom of choice here may be regarded as both strength and weakness of Buddhism. But there lies also both strength and weakness inherent in human nature itself which has been so aggravated by misguided

modernization and development from the historical past. At any rate, and in spite of it, Buddhism perseveringly takes to an optimistic view of man for his aptitude for goodness and hence for compassion which would incline him to the right path. In fact this sense of optimism seems to be shared by a growing number of those who struggle for freedom. But, to make the struggle truly meaningful and constructive, that is, "with the intelligence in knowing how to wage the struggle for freedom without destroying it in the process", the choice will have to be made. And this first and foremost calls for the sovereignty of mankind; instead of material things which by and large come to be enslaving human mind and action in the present industrial and technological age.

Mankind! What a majestic word, so ambiguous and so much abused! It all depends on how one sees and defines it. Is it just to be seen in terms of a quantitative entity, as tends more often than not to be referred to as the aggregate of various races or peoples? This kind of mental outlook will forever justify the continuing division and discrimination between "the superior few" and "the inferior multitude" in the Platonic sense and therefore the continuing domination of man by man. Unfortunately, in the same industrial and technological age, that also means conflicts, unrest, and violence. Either way is endangering human and social existence. There is thus a great need for a more objective conception of mankind, as well clarified

by Professor Masao Abe of Nara University of Education, Kyoto:

What is of paramount importance today, is to internalize and grasp "mankind" as a qualitative concept. We must grasp it as a single, living, self-aware entity. For without doing so, we can never overcome the conflicts between nations which we are facing, and we cannot bring true peace to the world. Without doing so, we cannot build a profound and rich human society which is permeated by individual freedom and special characteristics of races and cultures, and wherein all men live in harmony with each other. (Abe : 2-3)

Indeed, this is typical of Buddhist way of appealing to reason. The task of internalizing and grasping "mankind" as a qualitative concept is of course no easy matter. Abe's philosophical appeal may have the same kind of weakness as Schumacher's concept of Buddhist economics which "suffers from the fact that it is based more upon his interpretation of Buddhist ideals than upon a knowledge of actual experiences of followers of Buddhism who have to adapt these ideals to practical actions" (Keyes 1979 : 19). This may be so. But, historically it was, and still is, the same dilemma with any ideals that have anything to do with the problem of social transformation required for

restoring and promoting respect for human dignity and human rights. The fact is also that at least its intellectual and spiritual forces are emerging and growing. And, in the face of the widening gaps and disparities, conflicts and violence, such spiritual pleas could well serve notice to the privileged and the haves how to initiate the moves along the line of reason and progress. In particular they are in a good position to make the farsighted call for the "truce on inequality" (Weeramantry 1976 : 10-11) peacefully come true. This, again, is a matter of human choice. But, in addition to thinking and actions on economic and political fronts, the real and long-term solution towards internalizing and grasping mankind as a qualitative concept and the intelligence in knowing how to wage the struggle for freedom without destroying it in the process, certainly points to the primacy of education. This is well expressed in the Kyoto Declaration recently adopted by the First Conference of Scientists and Religious Leaders on the Shaping of the Future of Mankind, which reads in part:

4. Basic changes in the present educational system are necessary to make the children more responsible for future. To this end we urge that education should be based upon true values that emphasize the dignity and equality of human beings, reverence for life and nature, and the interdependence

*of all things. Religious values should be included in the teaching where possible. ** (International Conference of Scientists and Religious Leaders 1979 : 1)

To such creative and objective educational and cultural purposes, Buddhism can certainly make a great contribution. In this connection, however, one final point should be made clear. Buddhism, as a science of living, always aims at expounding the universal truth about human life and existence and problems with a view to liberation and progress. But true to its spirit of freedom and tolerance, Buddhism never lends itself to a claim for being a super or all-embracing religion. And this presentation is not meant to do so either. To be also true to the spirit of Buddhism, one must guard against turning oneself into another kind of "sectarian, wanderer, blind, unseeing, knowing not the truth". In short, Buddhism basically points to the middle way between unity and diversity which constitutes true humanity, and which must be recognized. As Joseph M. Kitagawa reminds us thus:

* Also similar emphasis on education in the Gotemba Declaration, adopted by The First Pacific Regional Conference of Amnesty International, Tozanso, Japan, 2-5 June 1976; and in the Declaration adopted by the Seminar for Human Rights Working Groups, Asia Forum for Human Rights, Hong Kong, 23-30 April 1978.

... Basically, all religions address themselves to human existence, and as such they share a concern with universal humanity. And yet, religions must address themselves not to human existence in abstract but to man-in-a-particular- society-and-culture, with the firm conviction that one humanity has within it infinite possibilities which can be actualized in various historic forms of societies and cultures, all of which must be taken seriously. Moreover, all religions, however universalistic their orientations may be, have their own social bases, i.e., religious communities, each with its own particularities. (Kitagawa 1976 : 84-85)

And again, it is to this very spirit of freedom and tolerance that this presentation is specifically addressed.





Some Thoughts on Human Rights Promotion and Protection *

In making the following presentation, I am quite aware that it may not contribute much that is novel to this international-minded forum already so well familiar with such a thing as human rights promotion and protection. Almost everything can be taken for granted here, especially among those who have the privilege of being brought up in free and open society. But believe me, the problems are being, and will remain to be, for a long long time to come extremely critical in the Third World context. So I beg for your patience to bear with me a little in trying to understand and appreciate them, at

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least in terms of what need to be done, internally and internationally, in the light of the actual situation. After so much of the high-sounding policies and lines of action eloquently expressed and advocated during these past few days, here comes the time I propose you may have to come down to earth along with me for a moment, that is, from the global level of thinking and strategy to what may seem somewhat elementary to you, but nonetheless real and looms very large at the grassroot level. This is precisely part of what Mr. Gordon Feller referred to the other day as the "software dimension" (I myself would rather look at it as the software foundation in this context) of a desirable international order, i.e., the problem of political imagination and psychological reality, though within the framework of present-day state authority. And, all this in turn will inevitably have a considerable bearing on various aspects of the "new" international order we have been talking about. In this connection, Professor Novuya Banba has indeed made a very good point in stressing the correlation of global peace and human rights. It is the latter element that I shall now turn to.

Upon reflection, it is fairly safe to say that the growth and development of human rights has its roots in human nature itself. Whether or not human beings are born free and equal- a not unquestionable proposition by the way -all have aspiration one way or another depending on

their own predicaments. The difference is just a matter of degree. To say this is certainly not to indulge in a mere platitude or tautology. For, even the plain truth such as this, unfortunately, is not always sufficiently well recognized. Worse still, in the world of power politics, within or among nations, it is all too often dismissed as something so negative and destructive as to be got rid of, by any means and at whatever costs. Human aspiration for freedom is part and parcel of social and political life process. It is only the question of how to respond to it that gives the meaning and measure of a political system and authority. Perhaps a view drawn from a Thai experience may help illustrate our point here.

In this Reign (King Rama V), it is known for sure that His Majesty the King is highly liberal-minded. He used to be talking about the form of government even before coming to the throne. His Majesty is therefore fully aware of the fact that a good form of government is one that is most suitable for the country at the time. Although it is as yet necessary to maintain the form of government with absolute power, that absolute power needs to be very liberal in order to preserve itself. But as time has gone by, there will be increasing number of educated people. We have therefore to get prepared to cope with the (demand for) emancipation that will keep arising. (Thai

National Archive, R.7 RL 6/3, Minutes of the Privy Council Meeting, 11 April B.E. 2470 (1927) [Author's own translation])

That was the line of thinking from His Royal Highness Minister of Interior and concurrently President of the Privy Council, one of the most powerful in his days, just five years before the 1932 Revolution that overthrew the absolute monarchy. Compared to the government reaction to the demand for political freedom elsewhere, the one cited above sounded very gentle and quite benevolent, so to speak. It was also insightful of what was going on outside the citadel of power. Nevertheless, its conservatism was typical enough, which gave rise to all kinds of conflicts and complications to the issue of human rights and freedom. The choice of word "emancipation" in this historical context was not entirely incidental, but in a significant sense an instinctive reflection on the nature of things to come. Which vividly reminds one of Professor Wertheim's theoretical observation about human evolution, that is to say, the innate tendency to strive for emancipation, not only from the forces of nature, but also from domination by privileged individuals and groups, all of which constitute human progress. (Wertheim 1974 : 35-48)

Third World predicaments

Human aspiration for freedom, then, is not just a matter of philosophical imagination or speculation, but actually an empirical phenomenon, a fact of life. While this is so, however, human progress in this evolutionary and qualitative sense has so often been looked upon, by reactionary right and revolutionary left alike, with so much misgiving. Even the liberal West, so-called, is no exception, as Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Attorney General, courageously spoke of the long-standing fact about the U.S.:

We (the U.S.) preached democracy at home and supported a despot abroad,...we spoke of freedom and sat in silence while thousands were tortured and brutalized. (Newsweek·30 June 1980 : 52 ; weeramantry 1976 : 67-68)

It looks as though conflict and change, as motivating forces for social progress, have first to be equated with and treated like alien and deadly sin, while the so-called establishment seeks to remain in power despite proof that its own actions are exploitative and oppressive, unjust and inhuman -leading eventually to violence and suffering on all sides. In current academic jargon, one can also sense a certain sociological and psychological bias,

knowingly or unknowingly, when conflict and change tends to be fashionably conceptualized in terms of "radical anti-thesis" as against "conservative thesis", a synonym for the status quo (Lenski 1966 : 5-14). The point is that the reverse could in fact be equally true, at least from the evolutionary standpoint. For those concerned with education for peace and a new international order, something must be done about such a state of knowledge in the field of human conflict and social change.

This brings us to the more practical question as to how human rights could be promoted to a system capable of their safeguard and protection. In this regard, attention will be focused, in a general way, on the problems of Third World countries. The reason is simple enough, as they all seem to be facing the same dilemma of being torn between the two main streams of ideological confrontation of the First and the Second Worlds, and yet, hopefully, there may still be room for more creative and relevant alternatives of their own. But first there is a real need for more objective understanding of the environmental factors involved in order to guard against either a tendency to get emotional about the issue or a temptation towards ready-made solution. Here it may be worthwhile pondering for a moment over the words of precaution from J.F. Lalive, then Secretary General of the International Commission of Jurists:

It is only too easy to consider the concept of human rights and fundamental freedom and the closely related problem of the Rule of Law as an abstract and theoretical conception or a mere political formula. In fact we are dealing with practical and living notion charged with meaning and with positive reality and which, by their nature, do affect directly the future as well as our everyday life ..(The Rule of Law in a Free Society,1959 : 52)

What immediately comes to mind about "positive reality" is the historical and cultural background that gives rise to the "practical and living notions" of human rights in the West - in contrast to the tradition-bound cultures in non-Western societies. This is well recognized. But here again one must be careful not to allow this consideration to blind one's own perception of the actual state of human affairs. For one thing, lack of the "liberal" tradition, as seen from concrete historical experience, does not prevent fellow-beings, Western or non-Western, from being keenly aware of and struggling for their self respect and dignity against both internal and external oppressions. It does not mean, above all, that along with the absence of the similar cultural background, there would remain no basis upon which human rights and freedom could be fostered and developed, the view also still adhered to in many an academic quarter. To be

objective, one has to clearly distinguish between the concept and principle of human rights as universal phenomenon and as operative value. As universal and empirical phenomenon, we all have been witnessing a wide range of articulation and persistent struggle for rights and liberties, as represented for instance by Benigno Aquino in the Philippines, or Alexander Solzhenitzn and Andrei Sakharov in the former USSR. While, as operative value, the one adhered to and practised in the West and by the West has certainly not been without serious shortcomings, both conceptually and operationally. (in this volume : Buddhism and Human Rights : 121-122 ; Pollis and Schwab 1979 : 15)

For all its limited applicability, however, the historical experience and cultural pattern of the West could still have a good deal to contribute to our understanding of the process of growth and development of human rights. It could serve as one way of learning something more about the Third World conditions, albeit in reverse comparison. The point is succinctly emphasized by C.G. Weeramantry, former Supreme Court judge of Sri Lanka, of the historic transformation of Western society following the Reformation and the Renaissance, whereby:

The questioning of authority, however sacred or well-entrenched, the stimulus of sudden impact with ancient cultures, the opening up of new worlds which

unleashed both mind and society from their traditional moorings - all these had in Europe broken up the ancient form of social ordering, released the individual from the group and sent forth the concept of individual freedom and equality as the legacy of that age to all others. (Weeramantry 1976 : 13 ; Pollis and Schwab 1979 : 2-3)

Spiritual and cultural break with feudalism, thus, paved the way for the philosophic and ideological revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In place of the divine right, came the new notion of natural law and natural rights which put the sole emphasis on common men and individual freedom and consent as the source and basis of political authority. The impact of this radical transformation of Western society needs no further elaboration here except to point to the consequent meaning and place of constitutionalism in the Western political system, as compared to that in the Third World context. A.V. Dicey's classic analysis of the English constitution is quite instructive as he shrewdly observed that:

...(T)he (English) constitution is pervaded by the rule of law on the ground that the general principles of the constitution (as for example the right to personal liberty, or the right of public meeting) are with us the result of judicial decisions determining

the rights of private persons in particular cases brought before the court; whereas under many foreign constitutions the security (such as it is) given to the rights of individuals results ... from the general principles of the constitution. (Dicey 1952 : 195-196)

The implication is clear as to the status of human rights and freedom vis-a-vis state authority. Unlike in the liberal West where rights and liberties are held to be inherent in human nature and inalienable, thus forming the basis for *raison d'être* of the constitution and governmental authority, rights and liberties in the non-Western states are just the things granted by the ruling to the ruled. In the West, "...these rights and freedom are indispensable to a dignified human existence and remain wholly intact from derogation upon ground of crisis. In terms of our basic postulation, it can never be necessary to encroach upon these rights and freedom, even in times of emergency" (Pollis and Schwab 1979 : 3). Outside the West, by contrast, these same rights are invariably subordinated to martial law and emergency rules, whatever the degrees of leniency in particular regimes. (Beer 1979 : 15-16)

Issue of negative and positive liberty

In practical terms this means that constitutionalism

in most, if not all, Third World countries is subject to arbitrary rule against which the whole concept and essence of human rights and freedom has been all about. The rationale is substantially the same, though under different guises. Only that, in place of the divine right of the ancient days, the justification for modern authoritarianism is exerted in the name of national sovereignty and unity. The main lines of argument sound familiar enough. They all point to the irrelevance and impracticality of the Western notion of human rights and liberties. That is of course true to a certain extent, but that very extent demands a more critical scrutiny than it has received so far, in order to come to terms with a more objective probability towards human self-respect and progress along the path of reason and compassion.

One such justificatory argument is concerned with the problem of nation state building. The risks and danger of unrestrained political dissension are quite understandable for the initial stage after achieving independence. These new states, especially pluralistic ones, are indeed in great need of mobilizing all the forces available under one unifying banner so as to fight against the colonial past. The independence movements have for the most part been successful simply because they are believed to be serving the cause of human freedom and dignity. This is also true of political revolutions carried out in the name of freedom and democracy. But the irony is such that

these very movements, even after being long-established, more often than not turn against freedom and democracy itself in their subsequent social and political arrangements. Hence all the claims on the part of ruling elites for one-party state system (Handerson 1977 : 276-292), or, failing that, for emergency powers and corresponding suspension of rights and liberties. There is of course no lack of attempts to have all such expediencies built into the legal and constitutional code and practice, some of which, paradoxically enough, are being referred back to "legal" precedents of the good old colonial days (Hashim 1979 : 128-139 ; Fernando 1979 : 140-178). As far as the common man in the street is concerned, it is nothing much more than just a shift from being under one type of colonial master to another. There comes a time, however, when such a state of affairs is open to question as to what exactly these elites and self-proclaimed national unity and interest actually stand for: that is to say, for their own privilege of permanent rule, or for freedom and benefit of the majority of people? This fundamental question has also something to do with the problem of institution building, which will be later touched upon.

Another aspect of the argument should be of particular interest at this point, though it is also related to the problem of elitist approach to politics, mentioned above. This is concerned, or rather is made out to be, with the question of choice between civil and political rights on

the one hand, and social and economic rights on the other. This writer's position would be that the problem of choice here is actually more apparent than real, and that the two sets of human rights are in truth so inter-related as to form one and the same thing. It is indeed questionable how human freedom and dignity can be promoted and protected without both. In taking this viewpoint, one is of course fully aware of the profound difference between the liberal West and the Communist standpoint. The inclusion of the two sets of rights, as a gesture of diplomatic compromise, in the 1949 Universal Declaration of Human Rights solved practically nothing (Granston 1962 : 36-42). Almost three decades had since elapsed before the United Nations could manage to get through the "second stage" of the Bill of Rights, not in integrated form, but with the two separate international instruments in 1976: i.e., The International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This is a matter of current international politics, however, and there is no logical reason to perceive of it as incompatibility between these two sets of rights. The difference is in fact an historical legacy of the past failure of the ancient regimes as well as, in a large sense, that of the Western brand of liberalism which has been so apt as to turn its blind eyes to the bread and butter problems and hardship of common people.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that serious doubts have now been raised as to the validity and practicality of the Western concept of human rights. C.G. Weeramantry, again, in his comparative study of the concepts of liberty and equality, stresses the "inappropriateness of Western concepts" and takes the issue of inequality as most relevant to the Third World's real needs and problems. With the magnitude and political sensitivity of the situation, there is a dire need to "seek view of equality which means more than the perpetuation of inequality - a view of equality more substantial than one which means the equal right to remain unequal" (Weeramantry 1976 : 10). Also in similar vein, Fouad Ajami of Princeton University, while questioning the impartiality or "completeness" of the concept of Western liberalism, significantly expresses his yearning for "the politics of love and compassion" in opposition to the prevailing politics of "realism" (Ajami 1978 : 2-4), where power struggle for its own sake reigns supreme.

In view of the chronic and widespread poverty and urban-rural disparities in the Third World, it is quite natural that social and economic rights should be thought of as first and even exclusive priority. By contrast, civil and political ones would look too much of a luxury and irrelevance in the face of stark inequality and starvation. This is indeed a hard reality of contemporary world. Nonetheless, disillusion with Western liberalism should

not also blind us to moral and political trap. It is very necessary to look at human nature and the problem of political relationship in a proper perspective, in order that we shall not fall into either extreme of unbridled *laisser-faire* or of totalitarianism. For both are in the last analysis repressive of human freedom and dignity.

It is all very well, of course, for a government to promote social and economic welfare of its own people. There is nothing wrong with that. After all, material well being is not merely desirable, but also essential as positive liberty for human growth and betterment. But even for this seemingly simple matter, there is a vast difference between two divergent ways of seeing people. People may be seen as purposive beings desirous and capable of living for their own purposes. Or, they could be seen as mere dependents who must be taken care of and brought into line with one "true and only" way of living. The latter suggests a sort of teleological and architectonic visions of politics, which seem to fit only too well with paternalistic mentality among the Third World elites. It also fits in very well with their modernization and development goals which are understood primarily in terms of economic development. Hence all the fuss about development planning and administration - all dictated and controlled exclusively from the bureaucratic and technocratic centre. All this, to be sure, does not lose sight of the need to correct those social imbalances and injustice. Yet, as

Isaiah Berlin would like to remind all of us, we must also be careful, despite all the obvious benefits as claimed of altruism, of the reasons that move us to do thing for others as well as to protect them from social injustice. (Kocis 1980 : 45)

In a profound sense, then, the need for social and economic rights is concerned not just with satisfying material needs, but also with the fundamental question as to how a governing agency responsible for its implementation shall be set up. Governments could be expected to attempt to undertake many tasks; but the primary question, according to Berlin, is whether those tasks which relate to positive liberty are viewed as the means necessary for effectuating negative liberty or, alternatively, are prized as ends in themselves.

Elitism, Platonic rulership, Communist "vanguard of the proletariat", are all imbued with an arrogance which proclaims that "we know better than you what your true interests are. Each has a built-in tendency to subsume all people under one particular ideal, a single way of life. In this fashion, a doctrine of freedom is vulnerable to perversion into one of coercion and repression. In consequence:

All the diversity, color, and variety of politics would be lost, along with our human dignity, if the positive ideal of liberty were pursued too zealously.

Pursuit of this, or any, ideal as the true good for all would depoliticize our world, reducing political questions to technical questions. (Kocis 1980 : 41)

This objective consideration brings us back again to the question of inter-relationship of negative and positive liberty. The indispensability of civil and political rights certainly does not make them the end of everything. Negative liberty essentially serves as "a basal or foundation value" protective of human freedom and dignity, which is "rooted in the capacity to choose one's goals for oneself..." (Kocis 1980 : 51). Though in constant need of social order, as purposive beings:

We live for a variety of con-flicting purposes, yet we must structure our societies so that we are protected in the choice of these purposes ...

... all that is needed for social life is agreement upon the requirements of civility which constitute the base. (Kocis 1980 : 51)

Problem of institution building

Therefore, given the exploitation, oppression, militarism, and consequent human suffering evident everywhere around us, it is now high time to embark on hard rethinking about the entire complex of human rights is-

sues necessitated by our current global predicaments. What is entailed is the search for a more comprehensive conceptualization and approach, a task to be kept uppermost in our mind during the course of this international dialogue. One could do well to look more closely into the immediate problem of inequality and poverty of the Third World which comprises the vast majority of mankind. But it certainly will not do to focus our attention exclusively on it, at the expense of civil and political rights - without which social and economic rights themselves can hardly be promoted and guaranteed. At the same time, it will not do either simply to aim our effort at answering the Third World's call for solution, as if the West itself had nothing to do with the current state of affairs. The truth is that the traditional Western concept of rights is itself in great need of thorough reexamination and equally hard rethinking. It was the product of its own time and still remains largely so. Economic and social rights were practically unknown to the natural rights thinkers of the eighteenth century because the notion of rights was born, historically and philosophically, as the ideology of the haves and the affluent, that is, the rising middle class.(Cranston 1962 : 38 ; in this volume "Buddhim and Human Rights" : 121-122) Thus the Western brand of liberalism needs to be overhauled, not just because of its original sin of self-aggrandizement in the past and present, but because of the global and interdependent nature of contemporary

problems and solutions. These matters, again, should be dealt with in this distinguished forum.

What is to be briefly proposed here as the final portion of this paper is concerned with the way institutional mechanisms should be developed towards the goal of the promotion and effective protection of human rights. For this purpose, some of the constitutional and political experiences of the West will be brought up to serve as guidelines. Of course political and constitutional practices cannot simply be imported. This is obvious to all. This writer's approach to the matter is, admittedly, partly due to his own limited resources, and yet partly also to a strong belief that certain institutional conditions are absolutely crucial and have to be fulfilled if human freedom and dignity are ever to be truly respected and lawfully enforced. As to the means to achieve these institutional ends, this certainly requires a most innovative effort on the part of everyone concerned, starting by looking into their own indigenous resources, real and potential. Religious values, like those of Buddhism under which this writer lives his life, is one good example (in this volume, *Buddhism and Human Rights* :121-122). This is why the path towards the common objective of human freedom and progress could vary according to differing historical, social and cultural contexts.

Aside from the historical and social background factors discussed thus far, there appear to be at least two

main institutional requisites for the effective and peaceful development of human rights. Although, once again, these are drawn from the Western model of development, they nevertheless provide insight and understanding as to cause and effect.

The first is related to the legal system and law-making process. In this respect, Professor Richard P. Claude's emphasis on a secure and procedurally regularized legal system is particularly instructive. In his own words:

Preliminary to any movement towards human rights development, the framework of an operative legal system must be securely established. Where the security of the legal system does not exist, incipient or actual conditions of violence prevail in which force majeure capriciously and unpredictably sets up an equation between might and right ...where law and the authority of its defenders end, neither security nor freedom is possible. (Claude 1976 : 7-8)

Such is the operational basis for the rule of law as opposed to personal and arbitrary rule of all kinds. However, the security of the legal system does not simply mean "law and order", as is so often asserted by some schools of jurists in the Third World countries. It means, in essence, due process of law, fair and impartial, as a safeguard against arbitrary use of power and favouritism.

It is in this sense that it can be said that "security" is prior to liberty. At the same time, security as such is not meant merely to preserve the status quo, for it must be flexible and capable of adapting to changing circumstances, be these economic, social, or political. This last point brings us to the second aspect of institution building.

The line of approach of this paper is drawn from Dicey's two guiding principles which, in turn, are closely connected in his analysis of English constitutionalism: sovereignty of the Parliament and the rule, or supremacy, of law (Dicey 1952 : 184). Thus, related to the legal and judicial aspect is the political aspect, with the latter concerned with the question of who is the source of the law. The relationship between the legal and the political is not always agreed upon, however, a point made abundantly clear in the following statement by Joseph Raz:

It is also to be insisted that the rule of law is just one of the virtues which a legal system may possess and by which it is to be judged. It is not to be confused with democracy, justice, equality (before the law or otherwise), human rights of any kind or respect for persons or for the dignity of man. A non-democratic legal system, based on the denial of human rights, on extensive poverty, on racial segregation, sexual inequalities and religious persecution may, in principle, conform to the requirements of the

rule of law better than any of the legal systems of the more enlightened Western democracies. This does not mean that it will be better than those Western democracies. It will be an immeasurably worse legal system, but it will excel in one respect: in its conformity to the rule of law. (Raz 1977 : 196)

The principle of the rule of law, evidently, is subject to variable - that is, broader or stricter - interpretation; but perhaps this sort of intellectual controversy is better left to professors of jurisprudence. In any event, so far as the problem of human rights promotion and protection is concerned, it is quite impossible to omit issues of democracy, justice and equality in our present discussion about the rule of law. For, in the last analysis, the security of the legal system and of the judicial process, which are the essence of the rule of law concept, must also depend upon a political process that is in harmony with it.

Furthermore, recent analysis of democratic development points suggestively to one critical phase in this historical process. Here, one particular point must needs be emphasized. That is, the problem of democracy must be seen, not simply in terms of its comprehensive institutional definition as presently conceived of in the West, but as a developmental process., for only in this way can one gain a clearer historical and empirical perspective. Specifically, what is termed, for instance, "the

decision phase" by Dankwart Rustow, or "public contestation" by Robert Dahl, involves the settlement of conflicts among the elites whose compromise results in establishing a number of democratic rules of procedure (Rustow 1970 : 337-364). In Rustow's analysis, his "decision phase" is intermediate between a "preparatory phase" in which opposing elites still engage in protracted and inconclusive struggle (a situation accurately characterizing Third World nations), and the "habituation phase" in which rules of the game for political competition, established among and within the elites, are then extended to include a broader circle of citizen-participants. In this, Rustow's last stage is incomparable to that which Dahl has labelled one of "inclusiveness", by which he means extended participation, in that both of these political scientists' historico-logical analyses of the developmental process posit an earlier period of competitive politics among the elites themselves leading ultimately to system-wide toleration of organized opposition. Put differently, a democratic political culture develops first among the contending elites and then is projected -"outward" and "downward" - on to a successively larger mass public, with political democratization taking place concurrently with socio-economic change.

By contrast, the one characteristic commonly shared by the nations of the Third World is the lack of consensus on the rules of the game in political competition. (The

possible exception to this generalization is India where the ongoing democratic experiment has exhibited ups and several brink-tottering downs.) It may be true that Third World countries are still undergoing the process of state building and therefore "historically" cannot yet come up with - or "be expected to come up with" - the kind of compromise necessary for the peaceful settlement of political conflicts (Pollis and Schwab 1979 : 16). Perhaps, but this at best is only part of the story. For it is one which favours, by omitting the role of, non-Third World powers whose pressures, covert intervention and manipulation have considerable impact on internal political processes within the Third World. However, leaving aside both external and internal constraints, the point to be stressed here regarding the problem of institution building is that the prospect -at least at the present stage of political development of Third World nations - rests largely with the quality of their elites, and not the population at large, as so many academicians have seen fit to claim. To state this is not to contribute anything particularly constructive, of course. Nonetheless, saying it may help to pinpoint where the main obstacles lie and what strategic points are to be tackled. Short of agreement on the fundamentals, that is to say, the legal-political rules, and the democratic spirit of agreeing to disagree, there can be no progress towards constitutionalism on which hinges the possibility of human rights development, in both their negative and

positive aspects.

A postscript

The promotion and protection of human rights indeed involve a wide range of problems. Here in the Third World one also finds a situation of human aspiration for freedom and dignity which is inexorable, although - unlike in the West - without the historical background of radical social transformation. The line of analysis taken in this paper is that democracy is necessary to serve as the basis for human rights and that, even from the more restricted standpoint of national unity and security, democracy within nations makes possible the integration of both leaders and their own people into on social and political entity. On the other hand, there remains a global dimension attached to the problems under discussion, as the world has become increasingly interdependent and practically all nations, large and small, have been drawn into one and the same arena of power politics (Goldthorpe 1975 : 1). In this light, it is all very well to visualize the problems of human rights, as suggested for example in the 1978 Copenhagen Resolution of the World Association of World Federalists, in terms of the broader issues of peace, security and social justice under a world authority (World Association of World Federalists 1978). Yet, as Lucille Mair, Secretary General of the United Nations

Decade for Women, also reminds us:

The international process has its limitations. It has tremendous value in that it can set standards, but a global strategy can be no more than a global strategy. It is not a substitute for a national strategy....Parallel to [this global plan of action] will be national plans of action. We cannot dictate to governments what should be done. (Newsweek 14 July 1980 : 60)

That indeed poses a real challenge for each one of us to think about, though it needs not and should not deter one from pursuing a global ideal of freedom, justice and peace.





Technological Self-Reliance and Cultural Freedom *

Introduction

The main concern of this paper is about the infrastructure and social role of science and technology, with a focus on developing countries in their current efforts toward modernization and industrialization. For all the difference in emphasis and distinctive traits attached to each, science and technology are, on both methodological and epistemological grounds, closely connected and are together related to social and cultural problems. The nature of such inter-relatedness and its social implication should be increasingly clear in the course of further discussion. Thus for analytical purpose, the two are to be treated as a singular and integrated whole. Here its dual functions are to be examined and mutually assessed. First, with respect to the physical world, advancement in

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science and technology can help bring about development in terms of increasing productive capability and greater freedom vis-a-vis the constraints of nature. Secondly, it is also instrumental of societal change and transformation that is to have a significant bearing on the problem of human and social relations. Hence the specific nature in regard to the human and social dimensions of science and technology, which needs to be objectively perceived quite apart from its technical and seemingly universal character.

It is this specific social context that by and large determines the course and pattern of technological development as well as its consequences. Thus the impact of science and technology has to be evaluated on account of both its cause and effect. This is to be all the more pertinent to the developing countries as late-comers in the field, and most, if not all, somehow being bent on following in the footsteps of the West in advancing from agricultural phase into industrial and post-industrial stages. The objective and model of development seems quite clear cut, at least in the eyes of the Third World's modernizing elites. That is to say, to accelerate economic growth through industrialization as the top and foremost priority. All of which is to be achieved by means of riding on the waves of technological change already waded through and established within the socio-cultural context of the West.

In a significant historical sense, this development trend is one reflection of the enigmatic impact of Western development (Rohman 1981 : 508-518 ; Goonatilake 1984). This point of fact adds an international dimension to the problem of relationship between exogenous and endogenous sources of technological capability and creativity. More often than not, the virtue of modern science and technology is simply being taken for granted. It has been looked upon as something of absolute value and thus become, willy-nilly, something of an end in itself, politically and ethically neutral and free from any untoward influences. This is the crux of the whole matter, however. And it is by no means a mere question of use or misuse of science and technology from purely technical standpoints, but basically involves the whole spectrum of socio-cultural complex that underlies technological growth and development.

For, in this continuing "dialectic of specificity and universality" (Cohen 1982 : 63), to use R.S. Cohen's phrase, scientific technology is also fraught with both opportunities to some and dangers to the others, as historically demonstrated in the case of Western societies themselves and currently about to take place in those tied up with the same growth model. In view of human and social costs involved, it certainly will not do by just remaining complacent with the generality about the overall objective of economic growth as has now been the case. It only

represents a partial knowledge of reality that only turns the virtue of science and technology into the weapon against humanity. Indeed to guard against the adverse impact of science and technology, there is real and urgent need to set the whole problematique in proper historical perspective and to deal with the specific problem of human and social relations accordingly. As R.S.Cohen, a noted physicist, again, succinctly reminds us:

..In the attempt to understand the social impact of scientific technology, we must proceed simultaneously in two ways: first, in a far less sweeping and generalizing manner (is technology good, or is technology evil?), and second, in a far more self-critical and sceptical dialectical analysis (science gives life and death). We also should recognize the historical character of our attitude towards the social and human impact of science and technology within our own century: attitudes towards technology will differ depending on whose technology it is, on which specific technological advance we evaluate, or which portion of humankind is speaking or is represented, which class, which race, which tribe, which generation, which sex, at which cultural place the evaluator stands... (Cohen 1982 : 62-63)

Thus, along with technological growth and develop-

ment, also emerges the problematique of rights and obligations. It is in the light of its social and historical paradigm that the status of modern science and technology needs first to be reexamined and evaluated. Then, in the process, the concept of human rights itself, as defined under the brand name of Liberalism, is to be clarified in its historical context. Out of which an objective moral could hopefully be drawn, especially for developing countries at the receiving end of scientific technology. As a matter of fact, the whole issue is not confined to any particular countries or groups of countries, but fundamentally global in character. It thus involves all parties concerned no matter at what stages of scientific and technological development.

Structural nature of modern science and technology

For the purpose of scientific advancement, there is an obvious rationale and indeed a great advantage in learning or even borrowing from the Western precursor. It certainly should not be a question of whether or not western science and technology ought to be made use of, but of how, on what conditions, and for what objective. The answer to all these primary questions is a matter of moral and spiritual values that are bound up in the conception of progress. Here, the functional relationship

between technology and human rights needs to be recognized. Technically, technological advance can be said to serve as liberating humankind from the forces and constraints of nature. And yet, it is precisely the same scientific knowledge and technical skills that can bring about domination of man over man. It all depends on the status of science and technology and its structural relationship within society. Either it could be preserved only as a privilege of the few, or widely shared among the many. This is the way the process and objective of technological advance has been or is to be determined, nationally and internationally. If we are to believe in the evolutionary concept of progress toward a better society and better quality of life with freedom and justice, then the social and human aspect of development must needs be accounted for as prerequisite. According to what W.F. Wertheim terms the emancipation principle, "Emancipation from the forces of nature and emancipation from domination by privileged individuals or groups, therefore, go hand in hand to mark human progress" (Wertheim 1974 : 47, 35-48). Freedom and progress indeed constitute one and the same set of moral and spiritual values of development: human, social, and economic, as well as scientific and technological.

In terms of scientific and technological advancement, all this means that the process and objective of change and development must be shifted from the all-too-

familiar quantitative notion of growth to the qualitative one of freedom and justice. The world has indeed come a very long way from the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries Europe, when an extremely high sense of optimism prevailed in the Age of Enlightenment to be followed by the biological and social theories of evolution. That was the age full of high and rising expectations of unlimited material growth on the one hand, and on the other hand, social, cultural, and moral progress for mankind. And all of which were definitely to be achieved by means of science, technology, and industry (Rapp 1982 : 361 ; Furtado 1977 : 628-629). Obviously, Europe's scientific and technological achievements also served as the moving force for its growing self-confidence and conviction that soon developed into the hegemonic notion of the White Man's Burden. Hence all the expansionism and colonialism that followed, and along with it, all the hardships and alienation for both the displaced people within industrialized European society itself and the subjugated non-western peoples the world over.

So the social and moral consequences of technological achievements were quite in contrast to what optimistically expected before. At any rate, all the perverse phenomena only serve to reveal the true nature and function of science and technology that still needs to be objectively understood. As has been well recognized, technology does not simply mean applied science culminating in an

object or a piece of invention or even mode of production - that is to say, something autonomous and neutral. As Johan Galtung well describes it thus:

(Technology) carries within it a code of structures -economic, social, cultural, and also cognitive. The economic code that inheres in Western Technology demands that industries be capital-intensive, research-intensive, organization-intensive and labour-extensive. On the social plane, the code creates a "centre" and a "periphery", thus perpetuating a structure of inequality. In the cultural arena, it sees the West as entrusted by destiny with the mission of casting the rest of the world in its own mould. In the cognitive field, it sees man as the master of nature, the vertical and individualistic relations between human beings as the normal and natural, and history as a linear movement of progress... (Galtung 1980 : 4)

In simple terms, it is subject to human and political decision with a view to authoritative allocation of values determining who gets what, when, and how. And this structural relationship gives its own peculiar connotation to science and technology as a system of knowledge and its application. In principle of course, science may be universally defined as a search for knowledge for its own

sake. In reality, however, it is also part and parcel of as well as in the service of a particular socio-economic system. The interlocking between science and technology on the one hand, and socio-cultural context on the other, in turn gives rise to what Susantha Goonatilake calls the "cognitive" mapping of physical and social reality. (Goonatilake 1984 : 1-2)

The truth is that even what is being called scientific knowledge itself actually and continuously changes and develops over time. In its search for valid explanations of physical reality, it not only operates under a specific world view that keeps constantly changing within the scientific community, but also interacts with the external socio-economic environment that just as well undergoes constant changes. Scientific knowledge and theory therefore constitutes a development process that is multi-dimensional and bound up with, again in S. Goonatilake's words, "the internal social context within science, the external social context and the mode of production" (Goonatilake 1984 : 1, 80-81). It is even more obviously so with regard to technology functioning as the applied side of science. As a matter of fact, it goes far beyond science to the stage of actual production and social relations. Science and technology has therefore to be conceived of objectively as a social phenomenon in itself. And indeed, historically and empirically, the emergence

and development of scientific technology has been well recognized as an outgrowth of the interplay of extraneous economic, social and political forces (Cohen 1986 : 277-283). As a body of technical and practical knowledge, it is in the final analysis subject to human volition, decision and implementation.

The point to be made here is that all the adverse social and moral effects referred to above, are not just a matter of self-interest or incidental abuse and misuse of technical knowledge. It is fundamentally the question of cultural and epistemological orientation that determines the state of mind and perception of "reality" as expressed in the current state of science and technology, both physical and social. Historically bound up with the rise of Capitalism, modern science and technology has thus developed into an acquisitive and hegemonic scientific culture that sees in itself as the absolute master not only of things, but also over fellow human-beings. Inherent in this cultural value system, needless to say, there is also a keen sense of historical mission to bring "progress" on to the world at large with all its scientific and technological might, by force if necessary. This explains why the Industrial Revolution went by with so much ruthlessness and destructiveness, especially to the rural and traditional community life. And out of these cultural centres, the very same scientific world-view has also been brought on to the non-Western world, where modernization and indus-

trialization has been and still is forced upon with very much the same zealously, both from within and without.

Rethinking "Liberalism"

Recognition of the human and social dimensions of technology can indeed be said to constitute one major step further from the so-called classical model of human rights development (Claude 1976 : 7). The past three centuries have already witnessed the broadening of human rights spectrum from the conventional set of civil and political rights and liberties, to the newly-claimed economic, social and cultural rights. Underlying all these combined negative and positive rights, it is to be noted, is the historical and empirical process of defining the status of man and his relationship to the State. It all started with the eighteenth-century notion of civil liberties whereby the status of the individual was exerted as self-sufficient and self-directing agent who needed so little, if any at all, interference from the Government. Government was then at best a necessary evil. This view was to be followed and modified somewhat in the following century by way of a more positive concept of civil and political rights. Hence the legal guarantees and enforcement on the part of the Government came to be required for equal rights of civic and political participation. Then finally came the demand

for economic and social rights involving the Government's positive programmes of action to provide social welfare and to meet basic human needs, especially for the disadvantaged groups of people in industrial society. (Claude 1976 : 41-42)

Both negative and positive aspects of human rights are obviously inter-related, representing libertarian and egalitarian streams of thought. However, as defined specifically within the framework of industrial capitalism, the libertarian aspect naturally and conventionally takes precedence over the egalitarian side. And this, more often than not, give rise to socio-economic imbalances within the so-called liberal democracy itself. There is indeed, as John Strachey once observed in *Capitalism*, the historical moving force of modern liberalism, "innate tendency to extreme and ever growing inequality" (Bottomora 1964 : 34). In a large sense then, the Western concept and practice of human rights is very far from being comprehensive and universal. As also already noted elsewhere (in this volume, *Buddhism and Human Rights* : 119-125; Weeramantry 1976 : 10 ; Ajami 1978 : 2-4), this conceptual partiality is inherent in the historical notion of natural law itself which serves as the inspirational source of today's ideal and practice of human rights. According to John Locke, Father of liberalism, freedom simply meant being free to do what one liked. Indeed as ideology, the natural law concept had its great historical achievement in

opposing political absolutism and arbitrary rule and replacing divine right with common man as the basis of political authority. But for all its broadening worldview, the then liberal idea was first and foremost preoccupied with the security and protection of property rights (Locke 1953 : 119, 129-141), with the rising of the middle classes of its time. In short, it historically was and still remains the liberalism of the haves that has grown into one against the haves-not.

Within this conceptual framework of liberalism, at least two basic human rights still remain unanswered. First, externally, it is far from being universal with regard to the Third World countries' most pertinent issues and problems of inequality which is inherent in their agrarian socio-economic structure and which has been worsening in the course of modernization and industrialization, as to be later touched upon. And, secondly, it is far from being comprehensive with respect to its own pattern and process of industrialization where the issues and problems of transition from the agricultural phase were simply taken for granted, or ignored. Here the impact of modern scientific technology, among other things, loomed very large in bringing about rural dislocation and disruption (Cohen 1982 : 63 ; Furtado 1977 : 630-631). But then what was the loss in terms of rural human and social costs came to be upheld as the gain in terms of the so-called economic growth, and with a view to proletarianizing the rural

sector for the benefit of cheap labour to the urban and industrial sector. Such was the price to pay for the cause of so-called scientific and technological as well as economic progress. Unfortunately, such is also the predominant trend of thinking and belief among the modernizing elites of most developing countries of today.

For this very reason and insofar as the issues and problems of human rights development are concerned, it is essential to look into the whole process of social change and transformation. It is in this sense that the social impact of technological growth and development needs to be reexamined and assessed. What had gone on in the Industrial Revolution of the West is to be taken as a moral to be learned and critically evaluated, instead of a model to literally follow in the process of modernization of today's developing countries. This is the crux of the whole problematique of economic development that has now been going on in the Third World. And this is precisely where the issues of human rights development and technological growth come to be interwoven. In the eyes of their leaders, the logic of modernization requires accelerated economic development to be associated with industrialization and hence modern Western technology, as if a ready-made solution. On the face of it, this sounds reasonable enough. But then, on account of both the structural nature of Western technology as well as their own social and economic conditions, there are still quite a few ques-

tions to be clarified, particularly as to how industrialization could be brought about in an overwhelmingly agrarian setting; how then modern scientific technology is to be made use of with a minimum human and social costs, if ever need be; and, above all, how technological development could proceed without falling into the pitfall of dependency and subordination. All this involves a technological and thus structural change with direct implication for human rights, which had been historically bypassed in the Western experience, but which today's developing countries are facing.

Human rights implication for developing nations

At this point, the true nature of technological and industrial advance has to be set in a proper perspective of rights and obligations. For, in the name of civil and political rights and liberties, as historically derived from the concept of natural law, Capitalism has made its way on to the pinnacles of status and power. Yet in the course of its development, the economic and social rights of the majority of people have been trampled upon, and thereby jeopardizing the civil and political rights themselves. Here comes a powerful economic and technological force working itself toward domination and inequality. It was first set to work against its own rural people and labour,

and then went on to overseas expansionism, thus making itself prosperous as well as politically powerful and domineering. All this has been perceived, incidentally for both Capitalism and Marxism alike, as part of historical necessity and inevitability, at least insofar as the Industrial Revolution is concerned. At any rate, it is the empirical basis upon which the classical theory of economic growth has been established. The same can obviously be said of modern science and technology as generally conceived of and practised up to the present time.

Of even more importance still to the conception of human rights which is particularly at issue here, is the people's potential and prospect of self-development that has been suppressed and disrupted under the hegemonic and exploitative regimes. The current capitalistic system and, for that matter, modern science and technology, not only breeds fragrant inequality within and among nations. It also sees in the meaning of progress as a unilinear historical movement: that is to say, as proceeding by stages as to be capitalistically and technologically determined. This is not merely a matter of the right to development conceived of in individualistic terms. But it is virtually the far more fundamental question of cultural values and dynamism, through which science and technology can be made to truly contribute to human and social progress along with technological advancement (de Lauwe 1986 : 105-109). In contrast with the hegemonic

and imposed industrial civilization currently being perceived as uniform and universal, this line of approach is to give full recognition to the diversity of cultures and values which, in P.C. de Lauwe's words, "guarantees constant renewal, dialogue, and freedom of expression and is therefore the prerequisite for a truly democratic concept of community life" (de Lauwe 1986 : 107). It is mainly through respect for cultural pluralism and dynamism that the principle of equality and freedom can be secured and promoted along with economic and technological growth and development.

This point of understanding is most pertinent to today's developing nations as late-comers in the field of modern science and technology, but with no tradition of civil and political liberties behind them. Within advanced industrial countries, hegemonic and exploitative relationships have been qualified and restrained somewhat within a democratic framework of civic and political participation. Most of the Third World's developing countries, by contrast, are under authoritarian regimes and traditions, and practically all the public decisions are left to the tiny groups of so-called modernizing elites. In the past, colonial and semi-colonial countries and peoples were conquered and exploited as the source of raw materials and markets for manufactured goods. In the process, all their traditional values and knowledge systems were transformed into a colonial culture that could be nothing much

more than being dependent and imitative (Goonatilake 1984 : 91-114). With the passing of colonialism, now comes along a new prototype of colonial culture, especially among the national elites, which looks to foreign capital and its accompanying science and technology as the agent of change and modernization. This type of modernization syndrome in turn serves as the dominant culture of the new ruling classes within the developing countries, thereby transforming themselves into dependent economies of the periphery. History thus again comes full circle to the very same logic of industrialization and technological growth and development as some three centuries before, though in the new context of political economy. Only that, in place of direct or indirect colonial rules, industrial capitalism has now transformed itself and developed into transnational ones with the Third World's national elites serving as the point of contact in the context of dependent economic and cultural relationships. The hegemonic and exploitative structure of relationships remain basically the same, but given an appearance of national identity and legitimized national aspirations and interests.

Notwithstanding all the nationalistic claims, however, the fact remains that these national elites' aspirations and goals are closely associated with and strongly inclined toward the Western master culture (Rohman 1981 : 520). Here, the cultural impact and influence of Western-

styled education and professional training has to be noted. It has been going on ever since the colonial days and even intensified after World War II with the coming of national independence. Nor is that all. The same style of learning process and knowledge system has also been built into the so-called national education to be imposed upon the population at large. In short, as S. Goonatilake, again, has observed, what emerged and developed as hegemonic scientific culture has been carried over from the Western centres and then assumed to be legitimate for non-Western societies. (Goonatilake 1984 : 91-114)

Now it is through such a socio-cultural process and conditioning that modernization and the required modern scientific technology serves as the transmitter of hegemonic social relations, within and among nations. Hence, modernization and industrialization comes to be associated exclusively with the capitalistic process of growth. Thus emerge the enclaves of modernity initially set out for the purpose of import substitution and manufacturing self-sufficiency, but currently heavily geared to export processing for the so-called free-world market. Either way, capital-intensive technology and attended technical know-how has been and still needs to be imported, thereby bringing about production relations that come to be under external capital and technological as well as market control. All of which is hardly, if at all, in consonance with the rest of domestic economy. And all of this is in the

name of growth, with all the hope that the material benefits thus accrued will somehow trickle down to the common and underprivileged sectors of population at the grassroots. Meanwhile for at least three decades now, out of this unbalanced growth strategy, its "innate tendency to extreme and ever growing inequality" has increasingly expressed itself in the extreme form of glaring and growing poverty and unemployment as well as chronic indebtedness among developing nations. And all this has been going on, ironically, in the midst of manifest affluence not only among the industrially advanced nations, but also the modern sectors within developing countries themselves.

Needless to say, the incidence of all these ill effects is bound to bear heavily on the rural and traditional sector. Underlying the phenomenon of social and economic ills is the state of their economic and technological backwardness vis-a-vis the modern urban sector. In the process, a dualistic and unequal structure has been created within society. It is in this light that the state and prospects of human rights in developing countries are to be understood and assessed. The implication is obviously far beyond the issues between subjective North and South, and certainly involves more than the conventional set of human rights as developed within the cultural context of the industrial West, and fundamentally from the standpoint of the rising mercantile and industrial capitalist

classes. If the Western historical experience is to be of any guide at all, the issues have to be traced further back to the plight and predicaments of those common lots in the rural sectors who were forced to be dislocated and alienated in the process of technological advancement and industrialization. So also are the plight and predicaments of the overwhelming majority in the rural and traditional sectors of today's developing countries. For, on top of the adverse impact on economic and social rights as well as civil and political rights, their traditional cultures and productive capability as a means of self-expression and creativity are being suppressed and disrupted. Not only deprived of the benefits of modern scientific technology, their own cultural potentials for self-development also comes to a standstill and eventually falls into disuse. Under such structural constraints, modern science and technology per se can be no substitute for the common people's cultural deprivation. After all, it only serves and is to be preserved as the elites' exclusive domain for the benefit of their privileged status and power of domination over the rest of society.

Toward self-reliance for cultural freedom and creativity

All that has been observed of the structural nature of modern science and technology by no means suggests an

anti-Western or opposing anything to do with modern scientific knowledge and its application. Neither does it imply a need or desirability to fall back on the traditional past away from what has been going on in the contemporary world. That in itself would be tantamount to compromising one's own cultural and creative potential to contribute to progress which is prerequisite to the quality of life with even more freedom and creativity. Besides, life in today's world is being in the process of ever increasing inter-dependence, and relations in society, both national and international, becoming ever more frequent, more intensive, and more penetrating. On its part, modern science and technology has definitely come to stay, whether one likes it or not, as world science and world technology. Significantly, too, it is more or less available and accessible to creative and positive use. All this is a fact of life that one can avoid only at one's own peril.

The real issue and possible solution confronting the developing countries ought therefore to be of more positive and constructive one. The prospect certainly does not lie in either escapism or aversion to scientific knowledge and technology as such. It is fundamentally the question of how non-colonial science and creativity can be promoted and developed, in order that real human and social progress could be promoted. This only means that ways and means have to be found for modern scientific technology to be made use of, not for dominating, but as

liberating tool and thus transforming the whole productive forces into a balanced and self-sustained process of growth and development.

In development literature, this line of approach has generally been referred to as self-reliance. This is obviously one most logical alternative to the current situation of technological hegemony and dependency. As a matter of principle, it sounds readily acceptable. However, when it comes to actual practice, whether in the realm of public policy or in research conceptualization and methodology, it also tends to fall under another cultural spell of elitism. In such elitist tendency, purely technical aspects loom so large that the concept of self-reliance all too often turns out to be not much more than serving the sole purpose of so-called national and professional aspirations to keep up with whatever is being most advanced in terms of power and prestige. Within such elitist frame of mind, exclusive concern will be directed to the subject matters like high technologies, advanced R&D and manpower, advanced technical training, etc. All of which are being treated as ends in themselves. It should not be difficult to see that this line of approach also spells another form of domination/subordination relationships that one is trying to avoid in the first place.

Of more relevance to the human rights issue under discussion, the elitist tendency also serves as the cultural basis of complementary attitudes on which the process of

technological domination has been operating. As P.C. de Lauwe keenly observes of the existing state of affairs, "On the side of the (dominating), the temptation to use scientific and technological superiority is all the greater inasmuch as it enables them to beat trade competitors and extend their political influence, while at the same time ensuring their national defence. As for the dominated, the loss of initiative, freedom and creation that goes together with over-rapid changes imposed from abroad is made acceptable by the material benefits that modernization brings".(de Lauwe 1986 : 108) This is how technological, economic, and cultural, as well as military, domination has come to be intertwined.

It is therefore important to be sufficiently aware of another level of hegemonic scientific culture in disguise and in the name of nation-building and national progress. Indeed, the world has gone through the stage of national self-determination, only to end up with a new breed of domination and oppression within nations. So if there is going to be any hope for progress at all with respect to human rights, the time should come now to give due recognition to the needs and aspirations of men and women at the grassroots. Mention has earlier been made about the issues and problems of deepening inequality and poverty in the Third World. Again, this is not just a question of providing material well-being or improve the distribution of income or material benefits on the part of

the power that be, despite all the good intentions and benevolence. It is the fundamental problem of lacking appropriate productive capability whereby one can fully develop oneself in society. This lack of productive capability and thus self-reliant development, it is to be strongly emphasized, is to be seen, not simply as individual or incidental phenomenon, but essentially as collective and systemic in character. Here, there can be no denying the fact that, because of the unbalanced process of economic growth imposed by the national elites in compliance with the global powers, industrialization has been forced upon and accelerated to the detriment and disintegration of the rural and agricultural sectors. In consequence, the peasantry of the Third World has become deprived of productive and innovative capability to enable themselves to hold on their own. In short, they are being made to become technologically backward as well as economically and politically subject to domination and manipulation in their everyday life.

Fundamentally, then, the question of self-reliance in science and technology is concerned with that of cultural freedom and creativity that has been lost in the process of forced industrialization. Ironically enough, both Capitalism and Communism, though ideologically poles apart, pose quite a comparable problematique here. In his critique of the spiritual loss during the era of collectivization in the Soviet Union, Andrei Sakharov also expresses the

hopes that the earlier spirit that gave life its inner meaning, "will be regenerated if suitable conditions arise" (Wilhelm 1977 : 84). The same problematique could also be said of the spiritual and cultural values under the current brand of Capitalism. In fact, by the very same logic of technological domination, the two as agents of industrialism under the Second Wave civilization are not much different (Toffler 1981 : 99-102). Each could admittedly be said to represent the consequences of its respective historical factors and conditions. The point is that neither of them is to provide the answer to the question of cultural freedom, if carried to the extreme as has so far been the case.

So in terms of the right to development, specific attention has to be given to the rural and agricultural sector that has been neglected and even oppressed for so long. This line of approach is to be most pertinent to today's developing countries with agrarian background. The fact is that no agrarian societies have ever been without technical knowledge and inventions. They have their own traditional means of learning and technological adaptation and innovation. Moreover, these traditional values and technologies do not exist in a vacuum. Underlying them is the local and endogenous wisdom and creative learning process that has been accumulated generations after generations. For all its seemingly non-scientific qualification, it is directly related to people's real

and relevant needs as well as organizational and environmental conditions (Goonatilake 1984 : 114-116). And most important of all, it is expressed out of free will and with rationale of its own. Besides, for all their tradition-bound nature, the peasants themselves are actually quite receptive to new and modern technologies introduced from outside whenever proved relevant and feasible, as empirically demonstrated. * This clearly points to the value and dynamism of traditional knowledge and creativity. Only that, under the existing dualistic structure, they are simply being left behind and allowed no chance of gaining the benefits of modern science and technology.

All this is not to be taken as purely romantic vision of course. On the contrary, the intellectual limitation and constraint in rural environments have also to be recognized for what they are, especially in the face of the changing world around. That is why there is a real need for their receptivity and adaptability to, but not to be disrupted by, modern scientific knowledge and technology. Again, from the standpoint of human and social

* For instance, Thamrong Prempridi (1986 : 86-90). In Thailand, where this writer is particularly familiar with, it is precisely this aspect of local wisdom and potential creativity that attracts specific attention among NGO volunteers after their long experiences with rural development work. There should no doubt be similar trends of interest in other developing countries.

progress, the modern and the traditional have to be looked and acted upon as complementary to each other, not as poles apart and in adversity as is the case up to now. This criterion of complementarity would naturally pose a question of rights and obligation between the haves and the have-nots in such problem areas as, for instance, the rights of technological choice and of access to technological information, both within and among nations. This in itself would also pose a question of the feasibility and desirability of a new international technological order, so much talked about lately. But more crucial to the issue of technological self-reliance, however, is to be the matter of socio-cultural adjustments within the developing countries themselves.

First of all, the state of endogenous technological knowledge and experiences need to be carefully reviewed and evaluated. Furthermore, to set the countries' comparative advantages in a proper perspective, an extensive investigation and assessment has to be made in regard to basic human and natural resources and endowments within the countries, including the socio-cultural and organizational characteristics involved in both agricultural and industrial sectors. There may be, for example, cases of countries with labour abundance, or those with abundant natural resources. Or, again, some may have mixed physical advantages, and some with more or less advanced industrial bases. All such potential comparative

advantages would constitute an empirical basis upon which to review and set out the overall direction and pattern of technological growth and development.

In any case, the most decisive factor rests in the final analysis with human resource development itself. For all the material and physical nature of technology, technological change and development means in essence modifying and transforming the productive forces in society. In contrast with the existing partial view of growth, the objective and principle of self-reliance takes a holistic view of human and technological development. In terms of human resource development for the purpose of technological self-reliance, this means in effect that rural human resources must be looked upon, not as mere production inputs as many an expert has made it out to be, but essentially as creative beings capable, like any others, of self-reliance and self-development. This is precisely what was spiritually implicit in the concept and principle of natural and equal right of man, but only being set aside under the impact of hegemonic scientific and industrial culture as earlier mentioned.

Conditions for self-reliant development: Asian case studies

Now that self-reliance in science and technology is identified with cultural freedom and progress, and thus

presents itself as alternative to the existing state of domination, dependency and underdevelopment. The further question is how it could be brought about. As earlier emphasized, science and technology is not in itself at issue here. But as part and parcel of the social system and process, it is bound to socio-cultural factors and conditions of its time. The repeated call for a change in attitudes on the part of both the dominating and the dominated (de Lauwe 1986 : 108-109), will most likely come to naught without infrastructural change, or what Sakharov looks forward to as "suitable conditions". It would be beyond this paper's capacity to suggest as to how those conditions could come about, and by whom and what forces. That has to be left to the actual and specific socio-political actors and forces involved. However, a combination of factors and conditions could possibly be identified here as guidelines for action and implementation.

For the purpose, specific reference will be made to a recent study under The United Nations University on "Self-reliance in science and technology for national development" (to be referred to as Self-Reliance Study), involving six selected Asian countries: Philippines, Thailand, India, China, Korea, and Japan.* Here, the

* The six country studies are to be referred to in this paper respectively as *Philippines Report*, *Thailand Report*, *China Report*, *India Report*, *Korea Report*, and *Japan Report*.

focus on infrastructural aspects also serves as the common line of approach. The relationship and interaction between technology and society has first been examined, and then the concept of technological self-reliance broadly defined. The study's main objective is to make empirical inquiries into the socio-cultural factors and conditions that may have relevant bearing on a possibility of promoting self-sustained process of technological growth and development in various specific social contexts. On top of specificity to be expected of each country study, a broader regional perspective of self-reliance is also implicit in the range of variation in terms of stages of development: i.e., from the highly-advanced industrial Japan to the newly-industrialized Korea and India, and then the other developing countries with largely agrarian background.

Obviously, the six selected countries cannot be regarded as representative of the whole Asian region. Besides, those characterized as agrarian and traditional societies of Asia have been undergoing varying degrees and patterns of modernization and industrialization, not to say of the vast differences in geographical, economic, cultural, environmental, and historical backgrounds. Nevertheless, out of all these specificities and diversities, the whole issue of self-reliance and human rights could very well be perceived from a common standpoint of agrarian and traditional societies. In the light of agrarian and traditional past, indeed, Japan can be said to share a

certain Asian perspective. As a matter of fact, in one preceding study on the Japanese Experience, specific attention was clearly given to the infrastructural aspects of technology, "in the context of self-reliant efforts toward development of developing countries". (Hayashi 1984 : 2-3)

On the basis of this shared development perspective, the concept of self-reliance is not to be understood in the negative and simplistic sense aiming at autarky. Its objective is not for each country or nation to seek self-sufficiency exclusive of one another. On the contrary, ways and means should be opened up for international exchange and cooperation in a creative and constructive manner on the basis of egalitarian relationship. Self-reliance in science and technology is thus to be perceived positively in a collective sense of cultural creativity and interdependence (Oteiza and Sercovich 1976 : 666-667 ; Erust 1981 : 476). It also follows that within each country itself, self-reliance needs to be conceived of in holistic and more dynamic terms as social capacity to innovate and adapt existing and new technologies. And this must be understood in a socially integrated sense, not to be confined to any particular sectors of economy and technology (The United Nations University 1985 : 9). Finally, in concrete terms, this criterion of "social capacity" has to be addressed at least to the following three basic requirements:

(a) Optimal use of local resources and the meeting of basic needs;

(b) Development of related indigenous manpower and human resources; and,

(c) Development of grassroot institutions and participation along the path of national development. (Erust 1981 : 476-471)

All these requirements of technological self-reliance are of course inter-related. But the last component has a most pertinent bearing on the issue of human rights here. Mention has earlier on been made of the unbalanced growth strategy and consequent rural underdevelopment and poverty within the developing countries of Asia. During the past decade, increasing attention has been given to rural needs and problems. Within the existing framework of so-called rural development policy, however, it still remains fundamentally top-down in approach. Hence current government concern and attempt to deal with the critical problems of income distribution and social welfare. This is all very well. But it remains benevolent at best, which is very far from the real objective of promoting self-reliance. Industrial and agricultural disparity continues to be taken for granted. Industry remains topmost priority, and any hope of improving rural socio-economic conditions is to hinge on further industrial expansion, or ostensibly "decentralized" from outside. In short, the industrial sector remains the sole

answer as the source of employment and non-farm source of rural income. (The United Nations University (Korea Report) 1985 : 16-25)

In truth, the real solution lies in the technological and productive capability within rural communities themselves. As it happens, the rural sector has been suffering, not merely from maldistribution of the growth benefits. That is just the inevitable consequence of the adverse impact of modern science and technology under the hegemonic industrial culture, whereby the rural manpower and traditional technology as the basis of cultural creativity has been alienated and disrupted. All this is of course man-made and concerned largely with the question of political economy to be shortly touched upon. What needs to be stressed here at this point is the question of reviving and regenerating this potential creativity, not for its own sake, but fundamentally to serve as the basis on which modern scientific technology could possibly be adapted and made use of. And here rural participation in technological growth and development is essential, so that choice and assessment of technology, instead of being imposed or forced upon, can effectively be made within and by the rural communities themselves. The grassroots participation is obviously a most meaningful way of mobilizing endogenous resources in the process of long-term growth and development, and should in the last analysis have significant implications for developing

technological and productive capability and, for that matter, income redistribution.(Erust 1981 : 467)

This is not all, however. Mention has already been made of the peasantry's receptivity to modern innovations. It is also obvious that this receptivity by itself, and no matter how much development services being provided, cannot be really effective unless the peasants themselves are sufficiently equipped with appropriate educational and self-training background relevant to their life careers (de Lauwe 1986 : 109-111). This is indeed essential for a self-sustained process of technological growth and development. Here, the conventional concept of social and cultural right to education, in particular, needs to be briefly reexamined to get a clear perspective of the whole problem.

It is that, under the existing so-called national education in developing countries, the rural population could be said to have been deprived of their natural and equal rights. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to education is broadly defined as full development of human personality and a sense of dignity. But the actual learning process and objective is by and large an imposed one in conformity with the "national" requirements that are in effect elitist-oriented in spirit and drawn heavily, if not entirely, from the exogenous and hegemonic sources. It is not only irrelevant to the basic needs in rural environments, but also

deprives the whole rural community of its own human resources and therefore potential for self-sustained technological growth (Goonatilake 1984 : 97-116). So the right to education is not just for the sake of whatever kind of education. It is also fundamentally the question of appropriate education that would form the basis of developing appropriate technological capability in the process. The adverse impact of miseducation on both individuals and rural communities should indeed point to a serious shortcoming in the current scheme of thought concerning human rights as a whole, thus far taken for granted. It is also to have significant implication to the problematique of self-reliance in a collective sense, as culturally defined.

The point is that the educational system, among other things, needs to be reformed as the infrastructural groundwork for development toward technological self-reliance and thus cultural freedom and creativity. This again is a question of giving due recognition and respect to cultural pluralism and dynamism, as earlier emphasized. The rural sector too is in need of its own educated and scientifically innovative manpower, no less than the urban and industrial part. It is even more so in view of the rural sector having been subordinated and exploited in the long process of deliberate unbalanced economic growth. The urban/rural dichotomy, repeatedly referred to, does not mean that each should go its own way, or

that the rural sector would have to remain agricultural forever. Technological self-reliance should in the long run enable the rural sector itself to go industrialized and even to cope with higher technologies available. But all this, on the basis of its concrete comparative advantages in terms of both physical, human and cultural endowments. In particular, it is to be the process of growth, technological or otherwise, wherein people at the grass-roots are able and willing to participate fully and meaningfully.

But then these basic socio-cultural factors required for technological self-reliance would be next to impossible without favourable political economy conditions. After centuries of dependency and underdevelopment, these conditions also need to be revitalized. The first one is concerned with the lack of autonomy in decision-making process (Erust 1981 : 467). This is a typical case of socio-economic change and transformation being externally forced upon traditional societies of Asia. The importance of restoring full national sovereignty ever since the Meiji era is alluded to in the Japanese Experience. In the Self-Reliance Study referred to above, this particular requirement has been expressed in a variety of ways. India Report, for instance, would point to domestic capital formation as necessary condition for economic and technological self-reliance. Or, China Report would look to historical perspective of "basic completion of socialist

transformation" as prerequisite for launching meaningful planning of self-reliant development. Philippines Report presents a most classic case of modernizing elitism and authoritarianism in traditional societies of Asia. Right after the end of colonial rule, its political economy has come under the domination and control of transnational corporations, backed up by the nation's elites and corruption. This state of affairs has brought about negative effects on the nation's capacity of decision-making and choice of strategy and technology for national development. In other words, along with transnationalization of economic relations, the national leadership has in the process also become trans-nationalized in its value, outlook, and even loyalty.

Closely related to the need for autonomy in decision-making, is the policy concern with what Dieter Ernst terms "key developmental objectives" wherefore, among other things, agriculture plays an essential part (Ernst 1981 : 469). This is logical enough in view of the agriculture-based nature of Asian economies. Again, as earlier mentioned, the policy focus on agricultural development does not bar the rural economies from going industrialized. But there is also a vast difference between industrialization with progress or stagnation of agriculture. Here is the crucial policy choice between balanced as against unbalanced growth, which is also to involve the direction and pattern of technological development. This

is implicit in Thailand Report which gives exclusive focus on the technological problematique of agricultural production, as well as the feasibility of bottom-up strategy of rural development. Indeed, in terms of socio-economic reality of the developing countries, modernization of agriculture has its own feasibility as the main source of food supply, of employment, and, significantly for long-term industrialization, of effective domestic demand for industrial goods. (Gunnarsson 1985 : 198-200)

And finally at the regional and global levels, the objective of human and social progress requires that the existing hegemonic scientific culture has to give way to collaborative relationships. On the part of the advanced nations, there is just as yet to be a change of heart, notwithstanding all the talk about New International Order. As for from the developing countries' standpoint, the need for interdependence should be self-evident. Or, one is most likely doomed to stagnation in the face of changing world around. Even so, there is also good reason to take precaution on the matter. Interestingly enough in the Self-Reliance Study, a possibility has been raised in Japan Report with regard to creating linkage between industrial and agricultural technologies. In the light of a need for collaborative relationship between advanced industrial Japan and the other Asian developing countries, agro-related technologies have been introduced for consideration by all concerned. But then on account of the

long-standing unequal international division of labour and thus dependent relationship, a negative reservation has been strongly voiced (The United Nations University 1985). In a large sense, this represents quite a realistic reaction, in view of the existing state of political economy and corresponding science and technology within those developing countries themselves.

With a feasibility of international interdependence in mind, a good starting point would be in the area of promoting a process of collaboration and exchange of information concerning scientific and technological research and educational and training facilities (Oteiza and Sercorich 1976 : 667). This is easier said than done. In the first place, the developing countries themselves must be sufficiently prepared for the task involved. Again, the importance of strengthening endogenous base of technological growth and development cannot be overemphasized. In the second place, there is the long-standing problem of intellectual property rights that all too often has been allowed to stand in the way of effective cooperation. There is of course a legitimate ground for these rights to be preserved and protected. However, a pertinent question can also be raised as to the distinction of the status of science and technology as a body of knowledge for social benefits, and that for commercial purposes. Should then the intellectual property rights be treated as absolute? If so, that simply means going back to a square

one. That is to say, continuing process of historical movement along the path of old-timed mercantilism and industrialism at a great cost to humanity. It is going to become even increasingly threatening now that the world at large has been moving into the information age. And that poses the critical question for all to answer and choice to be made. But a breakthrough is certainly to open up a new horizon that would go a long way indeed toward ever more enlightened self-interest and therefore creativity and progress as, presumably, originally intended.

Concluding remarks

From the foregoing and insofar as developing countries are concerned, it comes down to one most fundamental question as to if and how self-reliance is to be recognized as a right associated with cultural freedom and capacity to grow as well as develop oneself. Again, implicit in this is equal respect for cultural pluralism and dynamism. This is far beyond the conventional libertarian or egalitarian approach to the problem of human and social relations. It is of course of little use to get stuck in the historical past. But developmental efforts toward self-reliance also involves restoring and regenerating endogenous creativity that has been lost under the impact of industrial scientific culture.

This adds cultural and thus collective dimension to the problem of technological self-reliance. This is, again, beyond the mere question of individual's right to "enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications" (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 15 (b)). It is basically concerned with the problematique of cultural identities of the whole rural and traditional communities that have been undergoing adverse social change and transformation. This is by no means in defence of traditionalism. But neither is there any valid reason to allow the current trend of hegemonic industrial culture to go on oppressing people for its own sake. There is no such thing as historical necessity or inevitability, as underlied by both Capitalism and Marxism. The real and most obvious alternative is to let endogenous source of knowledge and creativity be revitalized and developed as the basis upon which modern scientific technology could be effectively adapted and assimilated.

All this is taken to mean that there should be no inherent incompatibility between modern and traditional technology. Contradiction has only been man-made, historically speaking, and the path of future development can all the same be changed for the better by human intervention. In developmental terms, traditional technology needs to be upgraded to modernized intermediate technology. And in this perspective, it should be in

symbiotic relation with exogenous sources of scientific knowledge and technology. Modern scientific technology therefore has always a great role to play, not to supplant, but to supplement indigenous technology. In short, modernization and even industrialization of developing countries could and should take their own respective routes.

For all its feasibility, technological self-reliance and cultural freedom is in the final analysis a question of political relationships, both within and among nations. Like all the other human rights problematiques, it requires a structural change and transformation. In this very sense, it is likely to remain an open question for quite some time to come; that is, in the absence of, in Fouad Ajami's words, "the politics of love and compassion" as against the current one of "realism" (Ajami 1978 : 2-4) where the sole objective of power is the rule.





Problems of Development in Thai Political Setting *

On the last day of 1980, Prime Minister General Prem Tinsulanonda gave a major policy message which read in part:-

... Our most important and long-term basic problem is that of rural development which must needs be reexamined and set in proper perspective. First of all, we have to accept the reality that ours is an agricultural society ...Therefore the most appropriate and correct objective of our development policy and planning must aim at enhancing the capability of the farmers who constitute the backbone of our nation...

Development in the past 20 years ...has largely benefited the urban sector.... But the majority of the rural population has gained very little, or not at all... Available data indicate that the rural people

* Paper presented at The First International Conference on Thai Studies. New Delhi, February, 25-27, 1981, and at The Siam Society, Bangkok, April 21, 1981. It was later published in B.J. Terwiel, ed., *Development Issues in Thailand*, Gaya : Centre for South-East Asian Studies, 1984.

who are in poverty number more than 10 million ...

...The Government is well aware that rural Thailand is the heart of the nation. If it cannot survive, the nation as a whole cannot too. Therefore this Government regards rural development as the responsibility of all of us, be it in the public or private sector. We have to cooperate to make our efforts strenuously and persistently at least for the next ten years, I am thus hopeful that our new direction of rural development will open up an era of the "Decade of Rural Development" which will guarantee stability and peace for all of us and our beloved nation.(Nation Review, 1 January 1981 : 3)

This is indeed a good time for Thai political leaders to take stock of what has been going on ever since launching the first Development Plan in 1961. Reference to the last 20 years' experience of national development is significant. In simple terms, it admits of past errors and of the urgent need for breaking new ground. This requires a certain resolve and dynamism that, unfortunately, seems questionable in the cumbersome Thai political reality. This negative view is certainly not without empirical justification. Already, a little over 10 years ago, the 1970s were also seen as posing a similar problem of transition from growth to development. The promulgation of the 1968 Constitution gave an air of hope in providing the political and institutional channel through which "eco-

conomic and social issues could be discussed freely from the perspective of different regions and classes" (Stifel 1970 : 13,19). This sense of a promising break soon vanished in the November 1971 coup.

The problem of transition from growth to development remains basically the same for the 1980s, but with at least one advantage. The past two decades may be said to be lacking in a unifying concept of development whereby the authorities are:-

...as yet incapable of clearly setting the scope of social development and of distinguishing between what is the cause (and) what is the effect, what is more important and what is less important.... As a result, economic development causes adverse effects on social development and gives rise to so many undesirable social problems (Sanoh Unakul 1974 : 29)

However, a "unifying concept" is not just a planning technicality, but fundamentally, it is a question of political will, determination, and persistence. Nor is it simply a matter of individual decision and efforts, but of the whole governmental machinery. So, beyond the praise-worthy Prime Minister's New Year resolution cited above, one has to look into the potential nature of the economic and political structure which needs to be assessed from a historical perspective.

Background

The year B.E. 2500 (1957) ushered in at least two important changes on the domestic scene. First, on the political-military front, it was marked by a changeover from Pibul's to Sarit's rule. The power shift did not upset the basic continuity in terms of military supremacy and authoritarianism in Thai political culture. But at the same time there was also a most significant difference in these two leaders' respective intellectual backgrounds, outlooks and styles of leadership. The Pibul regime belonged to the "1932 Promoters" generation, both civilian and military, with educational experiences and political aspirations of the West. For all his inclination for repressive measures against his political adversaries, it could be put on record that Pibul would never rule without a Parliament (Ray 1972 : 14). The usual style of parliamentary system under Pibul was of course one that must needs be conveniently manipulated, while at the same time presenting a certain democratic appearance: i.e. a single-chamber type with two categories of MPs, one appointed and the other popularly elected. This had been, under the 1932 Constitution, originally intended to serve as a transition towards fully-fledged democracy at a later stage of Thai political development. Such a prospect, however, came to naught in the course of personal and ideological conflict and rivalry. In any event, the system must have served Pibul's own purpose so well that he did resort to it again in his

second, and last, rise to power after the 1947 coup against the civilian and constitutional regime.

Sarit's administration, on the other hand, departed from all these democratic gestures. As Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Sarit emerged triumphant from the power manoeuvring which put an end to Pibul's ten-year rule. A little over one year after the September 1957 coup, having been assured of US support (Neuchterlein 1965 : 133-135), he launched a self-styled revolution and himself assumed premiership. This time, not only was the Constitution abolished and political parties banned, but also began the long years of rule by martial law and revolutionary decrees (Suthep Saniwongse na Ayuthya 1978 : 17-21). All opposition groups were repressed and all democratic facades abolished. Instead, absolute power given to the Prime Minister was institutionalized and legalized in order "to forestall or suppress any acts subverting, disturbing, or threatening public order".* In

* Constitution of the Kingdom B.E. 2502 (1959), Article 17:-

During the enforcement of this Constitution, in case the Prime Minister deems it appropriate to forestall or suppress any acts subverting the security of the Kingdom or the Throne, or any acts subverting, disturbing or threatening public order, notwithstanding whether such acts occur within or from outside the Kingdom, the Prime Minister shall, by the resolution of the Council of Ministers, have the authority to make any orders or take any action accordingly, and such orders or action shall be regarded as lawful.

Similar provisions appear in subsequent constitutions created in the wake of the coups of 1971, 1976 and 1977.

place of a partially elected parliament, an appointed Constituent Assembly was set up and assigned with the function of drafting a new constitution and acting as interim legislative body. As is already well known, the new Constitution took full 10 years to be completed in 1968. Meanwhile, both the Cabinet and the Constituent Assembly were entirely dominated by technocrats, both civilian and military, recruited almost exclusively from the all-powerful bureaucracy. Thus Pibul's attempt in his last years in office to build up a popular base of support outside the bureaucracy such as the labour union (Ray 1972 : 214-216) was thwarted. Sarit and his successors, by contrast, turned inward for their effective exercise of power.

This political scenario coincided with the second change mentioned above, a change on the economic front. Towards the end of Pibul's regime, there had been a significant shift of emphasis in development policy. The new line of thinking followed upon the World Bank's Report which was strongly critical of the state industrial enterprises for their obvious inefficiency and mismanagement as well as for being financial burdens on the Treasury. The Government was then urged to encourage private enterprise and investment, and to concentrate on providing social services and such facilities as transport, communication, power, and irrigation (A Public Development Program for Thailand 1956 : 16, 20-21). This

was of course a sharp deviation from the previous practice of active involvement by government in industrial investment and management. From the point of view of the ruling groups, however, this change was perfectly agreeable because already, as Ingram well observes, "an ingenious *modus vivendi* emerged and helped to achieve two important objectives - namely, to reduce the fears of Chinese (and foreign) domination of industry, and to provide a way for certain government officials to share in the profits of new enterprises" (Ingram 1971 : 231). Hence the political practice of appointing influential government officials to the boards of directors of the new firms. Whatever opinion one might have about "the fears of Chinese and foreign domination", the new practice in fact fitted in very well with the patron-client way of conducting state affairs in the Thai political tradition. In the process, the power and influence of the political-cum-bureaucratic elements became inevitably bound up with the interests of business and industry (Riggs 1966 : 242-300) which were to play a most prominent role, albeit under the political-cum-bureaucratic patronage, in the following two decades of national development.

Prior to the start of the first Development Plan in 1961, then, a triangular political-economic base - namely, the military, the technocrats and the businessmen - had already been emerging which was to decisively determine the course of Thailand's development. The prevailing

theme was that of a so-called "growth perspective". The idea was drawn from A.O. Hirschman (1958) expounding the concept of unbalanced growth as different from a balanced one. The implication for Thailand's development strategy and planning was clear, as so well expressed by Dr Amnuay Viravan, than Sarit's economic adviser himself:-

...The actual process of development consists of the advancement of imbalance in one sector of the economy, or of one industry, or of one firm. The imbalance - because of one sector, or one industry, or one firm advancing faster than the others - will be stimulating, pressuring, and leading the other sectors to make efforts to follow suit in order to rectify the imbalances. By this means, the advance in one sector of the economy will spread out to the others ... The process of development is not a smooth one, but consists of imbalances to be followed by continuing efforts to rectify them. (Amnuay Viranan 1972 : 355)

The Growth Syndrome

According to Hirschman (via Amnuay), the main problem for underdeveloped countries, Thailand of course included, is the lack of resolve to develop fast enough. But this first requires a correct understanding of

the developmental process, or "growth perspective" (Amnuay Viravan 1972 : 347-348) The imbalances once created, then, would take care of themselves somehow through a natural mechanism. Again, in Amnuay's own words:-

...The imbalances or lack of balance thus brought about will help market forces (i.e. opportunities for private entrepreneurs to earn profits), and will then give rise to non-market forces (i.e. public opinion, demand, or political pressure). The market forces ... will stimulate and encourage private entrepreneurs to take initiative and expand economic activities, while the non-market forces will stimulate and pressure the government authorities to take measures in order to rectify the imbalances... (Amnuay Viravan 1972 : 356)

Here is the crux of the whole matter. The truth is that such things as countervailing forces are extremely rare phenomena, if they occur at all, in Thai society and politics. Interest groups were not lacking, to be sure, and were to be fast-growing and differentiating in the course of the accelerated development after Sarit's "revolution". This is in the nature of things in an ever-changing world. Thailand is no exception in this respect. What really matters is how and in what capacity the interest groups

function. Generally speaking, either they serve as a mere extension of the government's power under state corporatism, or they act as autonomous and voluntary associations performing functionally specific roles and making demands on the government.

Thai society seems to have been proceeding along somewhere between these two patterns of socio-political relationships. And this has a peculiar bearing on the nature of action and interaction between the market and the non-market forces - in a way quite contrary to what Hirschman or Amnuay assumed to be the case. A few words, therefore, may well be in order here for some clarification on this point. To begin with, as has been correctly observed, "interest groups usually flourish as appendages to the ruling group, and are allowed to grow as long as they are not imagined by the ruling group to pose a direct challenge to itself" (Ray 1972 : 37). It should also be added that this is not only characteristic of the military-dominated regime, but historically a continuation of the etatiste tradition that had been long-established ever since the days of the Absolute Monarchy. In this regard, one Thai writer, Montri Chenvidyakarn, takes note of a historical lack of pluralism as a basis of Thai social organization. His observation is well in line with what Norman Jacobs terms a patrimonial type of society - as distinguished from a feudal one - which, in the absence of autonomously organized groups, has a strong tendency

for centralization of authority and control. This is what underlines the centre-periphery or leader-follower pattern of relationship with its inherent distrust of and ubiquitous policy of central over associational groups. Under such patrimonial domination, interest groups would then become depoliticized and demobilized. (Montri Chenvidyakarn 1979 : 15-22)

Nevertheless, with the shift in approach to development policy and administration since the 1960s, the government's attitude towards interest groups has been somewhat modified. This obviously is an offshoot of the new strategy of national development based upon cooperation between the government and the private sector along the so-called *laissez-faire* line of thinking. That is to say, the State would confine its role mainly to public utilities and those economic activities closely related to the national security; whereas private investment and management, both foreign and domestic, would be encouraged and promoted. This is expressed, for example in Prime Minister Field Marshall Thanom Kitikachorn's Preface to the Second National Economic and Social Development Plan B.E.2510-2514(1967-1971).

In emphasizing the need for private enterprise and economic growth, the problem of equity and concern for unfair practices is by no means overlooked, at least in policy statements. In actual practice, however, this has always been a far cry at best. For, in Thai political pre-

dicaments, it is not difficult to foresee how the so-called "growth perspective" would come into play. Its ideological bind, as has been seen, is that of the double marketplace: economic and political, or market and non-market forces in Hirshman's and Viravan's terminology. Its strategy is that of unbalanced growth with the expectation that the "inequities arising out of the operations of the first in social life can be rectified in the second to produce a moving equilibrium" (Apter 1980 : 272). This has already proved to be a wishful thinking, however. And the finding is not just a matter of hindsight. There is ample reason to suspect that it has in fact been a deliberate policy from the start, of promoting growth at the expense of distribution and equity. How, one might ask, could it be otherwise, in view of the political scenario and shifting power structure described above?

This is borne out by the experience of the past two decades. On the economic or market side, the objectives and development plans have all along been set within the exclusive world of bureaucrats and technocrats, and executed in full force by government agencies and private entrepreneurs. "Opportunities to earn profits", as operative ideal inherent in the growth perspective among "neo-classical" Thai economists, have been energetically taken and have been politically well-protected, and economic activities have been fast expanding especially in the modern sector, namely in industry, trade,

banking, and other services. Agriculture no doubt has also expanded, but mainly in the central plain and other areas susceptible to water control, and with products of course in response to export markets. The traditional sector, in short, is only to serve as a tool to the centre of power and wealth in the capital, the actual master of economic markets both at home and abroad.

On the political or non-market side, by contrast, the forces that "will stimulate and pressure the government authorities to take measures in order to rectify the imbalances", are simply not allowed to grow, and even to be suppressed if possible. So by and large, with regard to those interest groups that are deemed inconsistent with the growth objective, an "ingrained attitude" (Montri chenvidyakarn 1979 : 21-22), so to speak, of distrust of autonomously organized groups still persistently remains with the state authorities. In terms of developmental politics, then, Thailand's current power structure itself presents a most fundamental problem quite similar to those cases where the institutions of social and political participation have lagged behind the carriers of modernization, and whose "triple tendencies of social atomization, centralization of authority and control ...and homogenization of culture have produced various forms of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes" (Tehrani 1980 : 256). All the coups and revolutions have been only symptomatic of social and political immobilism

inherent in the existing power structure, and in themselves provide no long-term solution.

Leaving aside for a moment the problem of institutionalization, it is now clear to everybody that not only unbalanced growth does not give rise to the "non-market" forces that could help rectify the imbalances, it has been in fact a matter of policy to obstruct them. It is under such social and political constraints that development has been going on in Thailand. What actually happens has already been admitted quite frankly among the planners themselves in their preparation of the Fourth Plan (1977-1981):-

In evaluating economic development in the past ten years, it is generally admitted that economic expansion and structural change are so unbalanced as to give rise to the problem of widening economic disparities between various groups of population and various regions. This is because economic expansion, allocation of production, and increase in productivity all take place mainly in the central region, whereas in the others still remains a very backward economic structure ...

...All this brings about problems in (our) social structure, particularly the problem of poverty among the rural population who are still in dire need of social services essential for their livelihood ...The

conditions and standards of living of most people; people in rural areas are deteriorating and they are facing increasing poverty ... At the same time, social services such as education, public health, and nutrition in rural areas are of poor standard and cannot reach those far-away localities. (NESDB 1977 : 31-32)

Imbalances

For all its expressed social awareness, the Fourth Plan leaves a great deal to be desired in terms of setting priorities and concrete measures commensurate with the problems at hand. Of this more to be touched upon shortly. What should be a little more elaborated at this point is the extent to which social and economic imbalances have, willy-nilly, been allowed to grow under all development plans so far. This is first indicated by a discrepancy in the process of structural change. In terms of percentage of gross domestic product, there has been a continuing and rapid decline in importance of the agricultural sector in relation to the rest of the economy (Table 1). And yet the great bulk of the workforce still remains in agriculture, even though decreasing from 82.4% in 1960 to 73.5% in 1978 (Table 2). All the non-agricultural sectors have been expanding at a much faster rate throughout, but they have simply failed to create

employment correspondingly. All of which indicates the built-in shortcomings from the start of the development policy and strategy particularly in regard to the distributional effect (Virapongse Ramangura 1980 : 24-27)

The degree of imbalance between the agricultural sector and all the rest could be gathered from per capita income earned in each sector towards the end of the Third Development Plan (1972-1976). Table 3 shows that agriculture yields per capita income even below the national average and so many times less than the other sectors. The situation has also been aggravated by the fact that the industrial sector is having the highest growth rate and actually concentrated mainly in the capital and surrounding areas.* This is not only a clear indication of the failure of industrialization policy, but of far more significance is that it is bound to produce an adverse effect on the regional distribution of income, as well illustrated in Table 4.

On the basis of the gross provincial product per capita of individual provinces, Bangkok is not the first but the third or fourth on the list. But the top ten out of the 71 provinces were all either in the Central region or in the South. (Oey Meesook 1978 : 81-82) This is well re-

* Industrial investment in Bangkok and the Central region increased in value from 78.8 per cent in 1972 to 82.7 per cent in 1976, while decreasing in all the other regions (Narongchai Akaraserani 1978 : 11,17)

Table 1 Percentage distribution of gross domestic product at current market prices by economic sectors

	1951	1960	1970	1979	%Change 1960-1979
Agriculture	50.1	39.8	28.3	25.8	-14.0
Industry	18.3	26.2	31.6	34.6	+ 8.4
Commerce	18.0	15.2	19.1	20.0	+ 4.8
Services	13.6	18.8	21.0	19.6	+ 0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0

Sources :James C. Ingram, *Economic Change in Thailand*, 1850-1970, California: Stanford University Press, 1971, p. 234; and National Economic and Social Development Bureau (NESDB)

Table 2 Percentage of employment in various sectors

	1960	1970	1978
Agriculture	82.4	79.3	73.5
Industry	3.4	4.1	6.7
Commerce	5.6	5.3	7.5
Services	8.6	11.3	12.3

Source: National Statistical Office

Table 3 Per capita income in various economic sectors (1976: at current market price)

Sectors	Per capita income (baht)	Index
Agriculture	7,113	100.00
Industry	45,215	635.67
Commerce	70,339	988.88
Services	32,665	459.23
Whole Country		7.732

Source:The Fourth Economic and Social Development Plan B.E. 2520-2524 (1977-1981)

Table 4 Distribution of income by regions (1960-1979)

	North	North/ East	South	Central	Bangkok	Whole/ Country
% Population	20.9	34.2	12.4	22.0	10.5	100.0
1. % gross regional product (constant prices)						
1960	15.8	17.0	14.1	29.3	23.8	100.0
1970	15.2	16.0	12.8	27.5	28.5	100.0
1979	14.9	14.7	11.8	31.2	27.4	100.0
2. Per capita income (baht, current prices)						
1960	1,496	1,082	2,700	2,564	5,630	2,106
1970	2,699	1,822	3,858	4,662	11,234	3,849
1979	8,781	4,991	12,683	17,655	30,161	12,067

Sources: NESDB and Ministry of Interior, National Registration Office, 1976.

Table 5 Shares of G.D.P. between Agricultural and Non-agricultural Sectors 1975-1979 (millions baht-current market prices)

Year	G.D.P.	Population (million)	Agricultural sector			Non-agricultural sector		
			Portion of G.D.P.	% of G.D.P.	% of population	Portion of G.D.P.	% of G.D.P.	% of population
1975	298,816	42	94,063	31.48	85	204,753	68.52	15
1976	337,635	43	104,657	31.00	84.9	232,978	69.00	15.1
1977	393,030	44	110,929	28.22	85	282,101	71.78	15
1978	477,341	45	131,167	27.48	84.4	346,174	72.52	15.6
1979	564,431	46	145,616	25.80	85	418,815	74.20	15

Source : Mid-term Evaluation of the Fourth Development Plan B.E. 2520-2524 (1977-1981), NESDB, Statistical Section, p.7.

flected in Table 4 where, in terms of per capita income, the South always comes second to the Central, with the North and the Northeast further down the line. Here ends any meaningful comparison. For the Central region alone, with less than one third of the country's population, has its share of national income rising from well over half by 1960 to nearly 60% by 1979. At the bottom always remains the Northeast with over one-third of its share of population, but which has perforce to make do with a mere 17% slipping down to 14.7%. For all regions other than the

Central, the share of gross regional product continues to decline throughout the period. No wonder that the per capita income gap between the richest in Bangkok and the poorest in the Northeast, keeps pulling apart from 5.2:1 in 1960 to 6:1 by 1979.

All these apparent imbalances between regions, however, should not obscure us from the real and deeper problem. As Oey Meesook has found out in her meticulous survey, "... regional disparities in large part are a reflection of the urban-rural disparity. The more urbanized a changwad (province), the higher its income, the better its standard of living and the better its provision of social services to the population, It would be a mistake, in the attempt to reduce disparities in general, to concentrate on the regional dimensions of the urban-rural one ..." (Oey Meesook 1978 : 90)

Again, using money income as one among many indicators, the urban-rural imbalance may be assessed from at least two sets of problems involved: first, the agricultural sector's share of national income in relation to the non-agricultural one and, secondly, the problem of poverty. In regard to the first, it has been indicated earlier how much per capita earning agriculture yields compared to the other main economic sectors. Table 5 is presented here to give a general picture of the whole situation. The rural share of population remains constant at 85% during the period of 1975-1979, that is, from the mid-Third Plan

through the mid-Fourth Plan periods. But from then on its share of gross domestic product has rapidly declined from 31.5% to only 25.8%. The non-agricultural sectors, on the other hand, with a tiny 15% of population somehow managed to get their share of national earnings to rise from 68.5% to over 74% during the same period. Following this, Table 6 gives a closer look into the rural income situation itself. Overall, rural per capita income is less than half of the National average. This roughly corresponds to the distribution ratio in the better-off regions: Central and South. As for rural per capita between regions, the Central's is almost twice that of the poorest, the Northeast. This in turn suggests a great disparity within the agricul-

Table 6 Rural per capita income by regions (1975-1976)

Regions	Rural income(baht)		Whole Country		
	Family size	Per house/hold	Per capita	1975	1976
Central	5.3	24,432	4,610	10,062	11,368
South	5.3	18,012	3,398	6,560	7,503
North	5.1	15,816	3,101	5,106	5,393
North/east	6.0	15,636	2,606	3,198	3,369
Country	5.5	17,784	3,233	7,077	7,732

Sources : National Statistical Office and NESDB

tural sector itself. During the past three decades, there has been a good deal of government investment in social overhead facilities with a view to agricultural modernization. Irrigation in particular is one such effort. But then it has thus far focused almost exclusively on large-scale projects which naturally has tended to benefit mainly the already better-off regions. By 1978, of the total 122.2 million rai (2.5 rai = 1 acre) of irrigated areas, nearly 60% was in the Central region alone and this 60% constituted more than 44% of all arable land in the region; whereas only a little over 12% is irrigated in the Northeast or less than 6% of arable land (NESDB 1980 : 37). Policy preference such as this, among many others, no doubt helps accentuate even further the regional and urban disparities already far apart.

Next comes the major problem of poverty. A recent World Bank Report records "dramatic reduction" in poverty. Its overall incidence is said to have been reduced from about 57% in the early 1960s to 39% at the end of the same decade and then to 31% by the middle 1970s. In rural areas themselves, it also appears to have been reduced from about 61% to 43% and then to 35% during the same periods (The World Bank 1980 : 11-12). Whatever justification one may read into this assessment - and the criteria involved could very well vary (Kosit Panpiemrasta 1980 : 37) - everybody seems to agree that poverty in Thailand remains largely a rural phenomenon and that it

is concentrated for the most part in the Northeast and parts of the North. It is of course true that the rural sector has also gained from the benefits of growth throughout. However, even based upon World Bank's estimate, there still remains in 1975/1976 at least nearly one third of the

Table 7 Incidence of poverty among rural households in Northeast Thailand (1975-1976)

	Average	poor	Rather Poor	Rather Well-to-do	Well-to-do
% households	100.00	43.32	27.05	22.30	7.34
Income per household per month/baht	1,346	823	1,192	1,768	3,661
Expenditure per house/hold, per/month/baht	1,475	1,162	1,432	1,762	2,680
Income per capita per month/baht	241	120	200	330	810
Expenditure per capita per month/baht	262	170	250	340	610

Source : Adapted from *Poverty in Northeast Thailand*, World Bank.

population or over 13 million who are in poverty, and of these 90% are in rural areas. The situation is to become even more critical in view of the fact that additional land available for continuing expansion of production, which used to be a factor in the past, has now been exhausted (The World Bank 1980 : 5) . So it will become very difficult indeed, if not impossible, to expect a continuing trend of further decrease in poverty. Table 7 helps throw some light on the incidence of poverty in the Northeast. Here rural households are classified into various income statuses: poor (with monthly per capita income less than 165 baht), rather poor (166-220 baht), rather well-to-do (221-330 baht), are well-to-do (331 baht or more). The survey shows that the poor households in the Northeast number more than 43%, plus over 27% for the rather poor group; whereas the well-to-do and rather well-to-do amount to 7.3% and 22.3% respectively.

The seriousness of rural poverty is also reflected in one, among others, paternalistic measure by the government itself, the so-called Deployment Fund for creating rural employment. The idea is simply to put off a potential flow of rural migration into the cities, especially Bangkok, to find jobs in the dry season. It was originated by the Kukrit Administration, the second elected civilian government after the October 1973 popular uprising which toppled the Thanom-Prapas military regime and which, significantly, for the first time opened the way for various

liberal and underprivileged interest groups, workers and farmers, to voice and press for their demands. The deployment Fund measure was taken in the midst of widespread protests and demonstrations. So indeed it was one way of attempting to ward off political crisis in the capital city by means of throwing out the "bones", literally speaking, of contention onto the rural areas where lay the rest of poverty and hence the threat to the government's stability. This is not the place to indulge in arguing for or against the Deployment Fund measure. It certainly did serve its immediate purpose in answering the short-term political problem of rural unemployment. And it has since been used by subsequent administrations including the present one, though under different names. But then, as a matter of policy, and its very use gives an explicit recognition of the problem of chronic rural unemployment which inevitably goes hand in hand with that of rural poverty.

Prospects: the problem of political institutionalization

So we have now a more or less complete picture of what has actually been happening under the development plans during the past two decades. It is time to re-examine the meaning of development itself. Towards the end of the 1960s, a clear distinction had already been

observed by at least one economist between growth and development, a rare insight indeed coming from within so rigorous a discipline! By the middle 1970s, a strong sense of disillusion crept into official circles as manifested in the Fourth Development Plan referred to above. On the basis of empirical evidence, so-called development associated with economic growth, plain and simple, has lost its credibility, even though remaining quite influential still. Its underlying assumption about the relationship between economic or market forces and political or non-market forces - a "basically neo-classical paradigm" (Seers 1979 : 25) - simply does not hold true, as has been proved by hard experiences the world over. In consequence, a new set of criteria, qualitative in nature, has emerged. As Dudley Seers 1979 : 12) so succinctly puts it:-

The questions to ask about a country's development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have become less severe, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result "development", even if per capita income had soared. This applies, of course, to the future too. A "plan"

which conveys no targets for reducing poverty, unemployment and inequality can hardly be considered a "development plan".

Indeed, what has actually been happening should have served as a clear warning as to social and political difficulties ahead. For all the major issues - poverty, unemployment and income inequality - are staring so flagrantly in the face of the all-powerful and affluent Bangkok itself. It looks as if the Buddhist law of causation is performing its job. Bearing witness to this is the well-known but insoluble problem of rural migration into the capital city and other urban centres. To appreciate the extent of its seriousness, one simply looks at the rate of population increase. Thanks to the earnest efforts in family planning, the national average has come down from over 3% to 2.5%, and the trend of decrease is still continuing. But this is not just a game of numbers. In Bangkok, the rate of increase has adversely and persistently been pushed from 5.4% in the period of 1957-1962, 5.7% in 1963-1967, and 5.5% in 1968-1972, up to 8.7% in 1973-1977. The consensus from all studies points to the seeking for jobs as the main motive of migration to the city. What follows is now obvious to all: unemployment, housing shortage, slums, crimes, drugs, prostitutes, and innumerable other problems connected with inadequate social services especially health and education(Apichat

Chamratsarithirong 1979 : 3-5). All of these are on the increase in seriousness with no solution in sight. And all of these are sure indicators of widespread hardship, poor standards of living, and finally poverty and inequalities within the capital city.

In the last analysis, the solution depends on how social and economic problems are to be perceived. Politically speaking, muddling-through may be of course a most convenient and popular way of dealing with the problems without taking the trouble to go into the root causes. The Deployment Fund measure for rural employment generation is, among other things, just one example. It was bold and innovative in a sense, but turned out much more conservative all the same when it came to be acted upon as if it were a long-term plan of action, year by year. And so it is! Here one begins to appreciate the old-time distinction between simple political skill and statesmanship, between instant and creative mind, and between shrewdness and sagacity - in each case it makes a great deal of difference in one's approach to social and national affairs. Underlying the whole government policy and action, on closer examination, is the traditionally paternalistic outlook that tends to keep things and, for that matter, people in line and to look down, albeit benevolently, upon ordinary citizens as objects rather than subjects - that is , something to be taken care of, but definitely not to be accountable to. And this, incidentally,

fits in only too well with, again traditionally, condescending mentality, and attitude among most, if not all, technocrats - economic or otherwise - within the governmental machinery.

The strength of traditionalism has been such that the Thai bureaucracy persistently remains a relatively closed system of patrimonial type. It is by Norman Jacobs' definition (1971 : 9) capable only of quantitative kind of change, that is, "within the limits set by the goals and the fundamental structure (or forms) of the society". The situation contrasts with the feudal or open system like Japan and Western countries, which are capable of qualitative type of change "regardless of any limits currently set by the goals or fundamental structure of the society ... (and) no matter what the consequences might be on existing goals or existing ways of doing things ...".

Norman Jacobs' theoretical observations help suggest a clear implication for development planning and administration in Thailand. As pertinently noted in a recent World Bank Report (The World Bank 1980 : 35-36):

The institutional structure of the Government limits its ability to implement programs to raise rural incomes and productivity or to improve access to social services. The highly centralised character of the public sector interferes with rural development programs and skews the distribution of the benefits

of development. ... The concentration of Government resources and personnel in Bangkok biases public programs and expenditures towards the service of urban needs...

In all fairness, other objectives than economic growth are by no means overlooked. In fact, all the Development Plans ever since the First to the current Fourth Plan have been quite comprehensive in their main purposes: increases in national income and economic stability on one side, and fair distribution of development benefits and social justice on the other. In fact, again, developmental imbalances as to between economic sectors and between regions, and urban-rural disparities as well as those within urban centres - all these have been so well recognised among government planners at least as from the beginning of the Second Plan 1967-1971 (Sanoh Unakul 1969 : 68-69). So that all that has been described in the Fourth Plan actually tells nothing new except simply to stress the deepening seriousness of the problems involved and urgent need to set out systematically, for the first time, ways and means for the purpose of income redistribution and regional and local development" (To this end). various economic policies and measures have to be set and adapted to prepare the way to systematically and urgently solve the said problems, in order to reduce economic gaps and develop the country further in a bal-

anced manner ...which will promote social justice and economic and political stability of the nation in the long run." (NESDB 1977 : 98)

And yet, for all the conceptual shift of emphasis from growth to equity and hence from unbalanced to balanced development, "the commendable intentions of the planners are not matched by an equally commendable plan of action", comments another economist from outside the government planning agency (Oey Meesook 1978 : 1-2). The explanation should be obvious enough. For, after all, development planners have to operate, certainly not in a vacuum, but within a given social and political framework and environment. By the time the Fourth Plan was completed, the liberalization process following the October 1973 popular uprising had come to an abrupt end just three years later with the October 6, 1976 "National Administrative Reform", another military coup claimed to forestall imminent public disorder caused by both the extreme Left and the extreme Right. Under the liberal Constitution of 1974, articles 214-217, provisions were made for the promotion of local self-government which was to have autonomy in determining its own policy, taxation and finance under an elected representative system in both executive and legislative bodies. There was an interim period clause whereby these local self-government provisions were by law to come into effect within two years as from the proclamation of the Constitution on

Table 8 Average Value of Socio-economic Indicators for Provinces Grouped by Level of Gross Provincial Product per Capita, 1976 (baht), after Oey Astra Meesook (1978: Table 2.1.3 and 2.4.2).

No. Provinces

Northeast

North

South

Central-East

Pop. Percentage

1. Income

1.1 Per capita, 1970

1.2 Per capita, 1976

1.3 Provincial growth rate in GDP per capita, 1970-1976

1.4 Government expenditure per capita, 1970

1.5 Government expenditure per capita, 1976

1.6 Provincial growth rate in Government expenditure, 1970-1976

1.7 Provincial expenditure per non-municipal population, 1974/1975

2. Rate of urbanization

2.1 % Population in municipal areas, 1970

2.2 % Households in agriculture, 1970

2.3 % Economically active population in agriculture, 1970

3. Education

3.1 % Literate population, 1970

3.2 % Population aged 6-12 in school, 1970

3.3 % Lower primary school enrolment rate, 1975

3.4 % Upper primary school enrolment rate, 1975

3.5 % Secondary school enrolment rate, 1975

3.6 No. students per teacher, 1973

3.7 Expenditure in primary education per capita, 1975 operation

3.8 Capital expenditure on primary education per capita, 1975 (baht)

3.9 Total expenditure of primary education per capita, 1975 (baht)

4. Public Health

4.1 Population per Public Health Ministry hospital, 1973

4.2 Population per hospital, 1973

4.3 Population per hospital bed, 1973

4.4 Population per provincial hospital bed, 1973

4.5 Population per doctor, 1973

4.6 Population per government doctor, 1973

4.7 Population per nurse, 1973

4.8 Population per first class health centre, 1973

4.9 Population per health centre, 1973

4.10 Expenditure on health per capita, 1977 (baht)

less than 4,000	4,000 5,999	6,000 7,999	8,000 9,999	10,000 or more	Bangkok
16	15	22	8	8	2
13	2	0	0	0	-
2	8	6	0	0	-
1	3	6	1	3	-
0	2	10	7	5	-
34	19	24	7	6	10
<hr/>					
1,747	2,485	3,500	4,097	9,893	12,838
3,119	4,869	6,741	8,587	22,073	19,154
10.1	11.9	11.5	13.1	14.3	6.9
196	275	317	412	324	-
565	712	869	1,119	929	-
19.3	17.2	18.3	18.1	19.2	-
25	34	27	36	40	-
<hr/>					
3.6	6.3	8.4	9.6	13.9	18.1
78.2	69.9	61.6	57.7	41.2	6.5
91.8	85.6	79.7	59.9	59.2	19.9
<hr/>					
82	80	79	83	85	90
28	31	34	33	35	46
116	109	104	109	95	-
29	31	36	41	42	-
14	18	22	24	27	40
32	32	28	28	28	24
513	537	609	621	622	-
105	120	170	194	210	-
618	657	770	815	832	-
<hr/>					
546,345	435,992	273,433	205,090	153,567	374,010
35,826	20,704	15,412	11,297	7,653	2,272
2,075	2,017	1,162	943	358	861
2,378	1,777	1,413	1,090	1,009	579
43,133	27,656	15,515	16,768	8,826	1,863
44,448	30,608	17,907	18,515	9,177	2,033
15,610	9,039	6,396	5,709	2,796	892
188,036	120,365	180,907	149,568	86,642	-
8,416	6,871	6,631	5,631	6,968	-
51	53	68	68	72	-

October 7, 1974. The October 6, 1976 "National Administrative Reform" happened, incidentally, to occur right on the last day of the two-year interim!

Thus, lost one very rare chance for liberalization whereby Thai society could have become capable of a qualitative type of change, however hard and slowly, "regardless of any limits currently set by the goals or fundamental structure of the society ... (and) no matter what the consequences might be on existing goals or existing ways of doing things ..." Thus, again, has Thai society had to fall back on the century-old institutional structure of government, whereby all the development planning and administration is projected onto exclusively right from the centre with strong Bangkok and urban overtones. Symptoms of this traditional top-down way of "doing things" could be read from Table 8 illustrating socio-economic statuses of provinces classified by per capita income. Again the bottom group is concentrated mostly in the Northeast slightly followed by the North, and on top is the Central region followed by the South. The selected indicators include a wide range of items related to income, urbanization, education and health. All of these, among other things, point to the Government's failure in its distributional goal, in contradistinction to the growth achievement. Of more relevance to the point under discussion here is the strikingly positive correlation between the level of urbanization, that of per

capita income, and those of social services -such as concluded by Dr Oey Meesook previously mentioned. Then, upon a closer look at data on the gross provincial product across provinces, one can see even much greater differential between the lowest and the highest. By 1970, it was estimated to be 1:20.4 difference (1,153 baht per capita for Sisaket in the Northeast and 23,482 baht for Phuket in the South), which grew apart even further to 1:25.7 by 1976 (1,942 baht for Sisaket and 49,873 baht for Samutprakan in the Central region).(Oey Meesook 1978 : 13-14,28,81-82)

Moreover, not only the gaps fail to narrow down, but the urban-rural disparities even appear to have been encouraged and promoted. This impression can be drawn from the pattern of government expenditures or other policy-related measures. Here, again, the better-off localities are provided with higher benefits. Across provinces, the difference is as great as 1:6.4 between the lowest and the highest central government expenditures per capita. From this, the regional pattern repeats itself: most provinces provided with low per capita expenditure belong to the Northeast and the North, whereas those with high expenditures are concentrated in the Central and the South.(Oey Meesook 1978 : 28-30, Table 2.1.4,22)

The limits as "currently set" by the centralized structure of Government is only part of the whole story. There is also the element of economic or market forces that account for the existing urban-rural imbalances. Mention

Table 9 Concentration of businesses and finances in Thailand (1978-1979)

Assets (million baht)	No. groups	%	No. Firms	%	Assets	% (million baht)
10,000 & over	12	9.8	403	27.9	309,536	71.6
10,000 to 1,000	34	27.6	615	42.6	99,077	22.9
1,000 to 500	19	15.4	134	9.3	13,179	3.1
Under 500	45	36.6	234	16.2	8,234	1.9
Provincial	13	10.6	57	4.0	1,989	0.5
Total	123	100.00	1,443	100.00	432,015	100.00

Source : Adapted from Krikiet Pipatseritham (1981, PP 380-96)

has already been made with regard to the glaring disparities, both in terms of per capita income earning and of shares of the gross domestic product, between the agricultural sector and all the rest (see Tables 3 and 5). The pattern of "market" relations pretty well conform to what has been going on between developed and Third-World countries. Capital - both domestic and foreign - and advanced technology combine to bring about what the late J.P. Nettl (1969 : 23) dubbed an "enclave of high modernity" where concentrate the power of domination over the market and financial structure. In the market field, it is the modern sector that largely determines the price patterns of both industrial and agricultural produce. It is practically a one-sided affair. As fate would have it, it falls on the peasants who must perforce buy at high prices and sell at low prices-so a popular saying goes ! The government policy of price controls has so far tended to be strongly in favour of urban communities at the expense of the agricultural work force which comprise over 70% of population, Obvious examples can be seen in the case of rice and chemical fertilizers. The price of paddy has been kept low for the sake of city dwellers and consumers, at the same time that farmers are made to purchase chemical fertilizers at extra high prices as a result of the protective tariffs against those imported! So also with the cheap labour policy that has been lingering on and could even be intensifying for the sake of promot-

ing large-scale industrial investments needed for further growth. *

The extent and intensity of the modern sector's dominating influence can be clearly seen from Table 9 illustrating the business and financial structure in Thailand. The financial sector holds considerable control over various economic activities of the country. The banking system, in particular, has been growing fast during the past two

* That the cheap labour policy still looms large is reflected in recent press interviews given by key cabinet ministers Boonchu Rojanasathien, Deputy Premier for Economic Affairs, and Amnuay Viravan, Finance Minister -- both from the Social Action Party -- as follows (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 23-29, 1980, p. 42)

- Question: "Have multinational corporations indicated interest since your policy (of "Thailand" Inc.) was announced?"
- Boonchu: "I heard they're coming now. I want to improve the private infrastructure very urgently because Bangkok is still not the place where MNCs want to come and do business. Hongkong is a place which is already too crowded and expensive. Bangkok could be a place to substitute for Hongkong if we could build up the infrastructure."
- Question: "So you would try to cash in on the trend towards labour-intensive foreign companies leaving high-cost Taiwan, South Korea, Hongkong and Singapore to low-cost areas?"
- Boonchu: "Yes."

And according to Amnuay Viravan (1972: 46) "We have been promoting export-oriented industries for some time.... It's consistent with our belief that this is the way we'll have to chart our industrial development programme...(and) to channel new investments towards export-oriented industries where we have a comparative advantage, such as labour and natural resources".

decades. The Bangkok Bank alone among 16 commercial banks, before the October 1973 popular uprising, under chairmanship of the former strongman Field Marshall Prapas Charusathien, has achieved the highest rate of growth from 23.4% of total banking assets in 1957 to 35.3% in 1979, from 20.6% to 33.8% of total bank deposits, and from 26.8% of loans to 38.5% in the same period (Krikiet Pipatseritham 1981 : 59-60, 78-80). From Table 9 it is obvious that the expansion of the business and financial sector has been highly concentrated. The Bangkok Bank alone, again, belongs to one group, or family rather, which owns as many as 80 firms, comprising assets as much as 121,769 million baht, equivalent to 39.3% of total assets owned by the top 12 business and financial groups with over 10,000 million baht assets each, or 28.2% of total assets owned by 123 big business and financial groups all over the country. The top 12 groups' firms number only 28% but own 71.6% of assets. Together with the second largest groups with assets of 1,000 to 10,000 million baht each, they comprise 46 groups or families owning 70.5% of big firms and 94.5% of assets.

It is interesting to see how these financial giants function. As noted in the World Bank Report (the World Bank 1980 : 34-35), "Formal financial activity is still concentrated around Bangkok, and has fallen short of meeting the credit needs of agriculture, smaller-scale enterprises, and productive activities in the regions outside of

the Greater Bangkok area." According to the current Governor of the Bank of Thailand, over 150,000 million baht or about 70% of total outstanding credits have been extended to less than 20,000 customers who borrow more than one million baht each. The financial orientation is clear, as commercial banks still concentrate their credits on large-scale enterprises at the expense of small customers (Nikul Prachuabmoh 1981 : 9). It is even more obvious with regard to the agricultural sector to which credits from commercial banks amount to a mere 4-5% as compared to about 20% for industrial enterprises and 22% for wholesale and retail businesses. (Krikiet Pipatseritham 1981: 48)

It should by now be amply clear from what has been narrated as to how the rural sector has been put under constraint. This is how "growth" has been conducted all along. Politics and economics are all entangled in the course of unbalanced growth, but not in the way that economic technocrats assume it to be. The two are in fact both cause and effect to each other. Political order, on the one hand, inherits "goals and fundamental structure" from its traditional past, while economic order has progressively been undergoing structural change. In the process, along with economic imbalances, there also develop political imbalances which certainly do not augur well for future transition from growth to equity. In broad outline, then, Thai society comes to a stage where emerges

something like a triangle of socio-political forces: the modern sector vis-a-vis the rural lots with authoritarian bureaucracy in between and, traditionally and currently, at the top of the decision-making hierarchy. From the perspective of "development" (as alternative to the focus on "growth"), the crucial question is how well these two extra-bureaucratic sectors - or, roughly speaking, market and non-market forces in neo-classical deceptive assumptions - have been doing and can possibly do in the future, that is to say, under the existing political structure and process.

This brings us to the much-talked-about issue of participation. Experiences have shown that those most involved in the growth process have benefited most and that, under the centralized structure of Government as it is, it is mainly the urban minorities who have most participated and hence most benefited. The widening urban-rural disparities are in themselves a manifestation of failure of the "top down" strategy which simply takes for granted that increases in national income will automatically and sufficiently trickle down to the rural masses and thus solve all outstanding social and political problems (Seers 1979 : 9 ; The World Bank 1980 : 37). To counter, and eventually reverse, the existing trends, an alternative approach obviously suggests itself with a view to enabling the poor segments of society to fully participate in the development process. The concept of rural

development as expressed in the Prime Minister's New Year resolution referred to at the beginning of this presentation, is basically a reflection of such a new development strategy. Of more practical significance, this essentially calls for substantial reforms, fiscal and institutional, so as to have decision-making and operational control gradually and effectively decentralised down to rural localities. The ultimate objective is to have developed among rural population true self-reliance, improved quality of life and finally a better bargaining position, economically and politically. (The World Bank 1978 : 87, 114-119, 121-122 ; United Nations 1975 : 184 ; Preecha Piempongsan and Saranya Bunnag 1977 : 93-94)

A shift in development strategy and an accompanying institutional reform are indeed the keys to real participation by the rural sector from the bottom up. For nowhere does it have any meaningful place in the current political process. At the grass-root level, local leaders and institutions are by and large under strict traditional patronage within the bureaucratic line of command right from the centre. Their interest and influence is vested with the central authorities rather than with villagers. And as the government activities are increasingly expanded, so do they increasingly become bureaucratized, if not in law, then in their functioning.

In national politics, the rural sector can do even less, if any at all. Except for some passing policy statements by

Table 10 Cabinets under Military Premiership with Limited Legislatures (1969-1980)

Year	Prime Minister	Ministers (number)	MPs		Business		Government Officials		other (number)
			number	%	number	%	number	%	
1969-1971	Thanom	26	- ¹	-	1	3.8	25	96	-
1977-1979 ²	Kriangsak I	33	-	-	3	9.1	29	88	1
1979-1980	Kriangsak II	45	9	20.0	2	4.4	31	69	3
1980	Kriangsak III	38	3	7.9	3	7.9	30	79	2
1980-1981	Prem I	37 ³	16	43.0	8	21.6	13	35	-
1981	Prem II	40	14	35.0	5	12.5	18	45	3

1. No MPs were allowed to hold ministerial and legislative posts at the same time under the December 1968 Constitution

2. Period of appointed National Assembly with no elected House of Representatives

3. of the 10 SAP Ministers, 5 were non-MP appointees, which indicates the weight of business interest within the SAP Party. The 6 Chat Thai Ministers represent industry and provincial business group, while the SAP represents more central banking, financial and commercial interests

the governments and political parties, it can hardly be said to be represented. In the three popular elections of 1969, 1975 and 1976, in terms of occupational backgrounds, the proportion of agriculturalists elected ranged from 5.5 to 8.6%, while that of business men from 29.4-45.7%. In terms of educational backgrounds, the popular notion would have it that the "qualities" of MPs would get improved correspondingly to higher educational qualifications. For instance, it is recorded that MPs educational levels at B.A. and above have been on the increase from 41.5% in the 1969 election to 50.8% in 1976 (Likhith Dhiravagin : 6-13). From the standpoint of agricultural interests, however, such trends would serve little purpose. In the first place, under the current "national" educational system, very little room is allowed for children from rural families. The higher up the educational ladder, the less opportunities for them. Of all the secondary-school graduates who manage to get into universities each year, only 6-7% come from agricultural, but mostly well-to-do, families (National Education Board). And secondly, once these have got through university education, their intellectual outlook and energy would most likely be oriented mainly towards making their way up to the top of the social and political hierarchy. All of which is the price to pay for elitist type of education with so little relevance to economic, social and political needs of rural people.

In any event, elections and elected parliaments have proved to be exceptions rather than the rule. During the almost 25 years since Sarit's "Revolution" in October 1958, democratically elected parliaments survived for less than 2 years between 1974-1976; some 4 years for elected but limited legislature between 1969-1971 and as from 1979 up to the present; and the rest came under purely appointed national assemblies. Over the whole period, the country came under what could be called civilian rule only for 3 years between 1973-1976. But side by side with depoliticization and thus neutralization of "non-market" forces under military rule, the "market" forces keep on expanding and growing, not only economically but also politically. The overwhelming proportions of businessmen, government officials and professionals in elected parliaments indicate how little the existing parliamentary system and electoral process can be responsive to the rural sector. It is even less so in the case of appointed national assemblies. (Likhit Dhiravagin : 8-9)

Even more interesting is the growing stature of business and financial groups with the executive branch of government. This impression could be drawn by way of cabinet compositions as shown in Table 10. Earlier on, mention has been made of the interlocking between the power and influence of the political-cum-bureaucratic forces and the interests of business and industry. The point to be noted here is the apparent changing pattern of

power relationships whereby the latter seems to have increasing leverage in decision making right within the top echelon of government itself. The last three of five cabinets selected for this study are of similar features which, in this author's view, indicate the most probable trend of the future political process. All are under military premiership accountable to a bicameral parliament, one appointed with military majority and the other popularly elected. The most notable feature is the business element drawn from outside both of parliament and bureaucracy.

Without too much ado with reading the figures, suffice it to observe at this point the increasing trend in favour of the business groups. Their political weight, though far from being unifying, in fact far exceeds the 21.6% as appears with the current Administration for at least two reasons. First, account must also be taken of business and financial elements within the MPs' category. Secondly, all the eight non-MP Ministers in the business group hold key economic Ministries namely Finance, Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. And all are having strong vested economic interests attached to metropolitan centres both at home and abroad.

All these political predicaments constitute a setting that can hardly gear to the long-term needs and problems of the rural sector. Nowhere in the executive branch of government are its needs and interests truly representative except through traditionally paternalistic expressions

and programmes of action here and there as occasions arise. And yet Thai society as a whole is in urgent need of a change in political outlook and line of action that sufficiently responds to the problems at hand: that is to say, a strong shift in development strategy which requires in its train reallocation of national resources and institutional reform to enable all strata of society to truly participate in the process of development.

Summing up

This paper begins with a high hope - hope that has been encouraged by words from the highest authority. By themselves, these words suggest nothing entirely new, but they at least reflect a certain objectivity in the way of looking at the source of social and political problems. So it is with a sense of optimism that this presentation is being made. As has been well recognized, the dimension of the task and problems involved is such that requires a highly-motivated political will and determination. But, then, political will is not simply a matter of someone's good intention. In the last analysis, it is the question of how well equipped is the current and future political leadership in getting ideas translated into practical reality.

In this study it was deemed necessary to make inquiries into the nature of the power structure which itself is

in a process of change. General Prem started his Administration with an ethical aura characteristic of his professional career, that is, to be "above interests, above parties and above connections", which is also to be expected of Cabinet members under his premiership. And yet the key men invited to serve in the Cabinet have been so involved, one way or another, in the nation's development over the past two decades that, unfortunately, they exacerbate the critical problems of social imbalances confronting us today. Of more importance, it is these very men and their like who have most benefited from the current strategy of development with almost exclusive focus on economic growth for its own sake, and who thereby have succeeded in establishing themselves as a dominating force in the present business and financial structure.

Descriptions of social problems - urban-rural disparities, poverty and unemployment - and of men of influence, are not new in raising questions as to personal integrity. In fact part of the optimism and realism in this study is to take the existing system and structure as well as the *dramatis personae*, as given. The main thesis here is to bring all these things in order to present the real dimension and implication of the problems under discussion. The growing power of business and financial groups or families into the political realm is a reflection of dynamism of the Thai political system and process. Whether, from the standpoint of the need to rectify the

existing social imbalances, this dynamism is going to be for the better or for the worse, remains to be seen. At least it is something to be aware of.

Finally, it remains with the leadership within the political bureaucracy whether and to what extent it can alert itself and the whole machinery to the country's long-term needs and problems. Its supremacy and authoritarianism has succeeded only too well in neutralizing both the economic and political potential of the rural masses who, in General Prem's own words, are the heart of the nation. Again, it also remains to be seen if the all-powerful bureaucracy can be awakened from its traditional inward-looking and be made to look to the outside world and its own fellow-countrymen in a new light. But this of course involves quite a radical change of heart and consequent loss of privileges and authority, all of which do not seem very promising in the present socio-political set-up. And if experience can be of any guide, this study cannot help but conclude with a note of rather less optimism than where it has begun.





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Prof. Saneh's work is a cultural act for freedom ... It is a voice of reasons for the silent ones who are victims of inhuman theories and cold policies. Moreover, it is a voice from the periphery responding to the center in the language of the center. While this is rare for Thai scholarship where a contribution is internationally made, not on the subject of Thai studies, but on democracy and development at the theoretical levels grounded in empirical experiences...

Approaching the twenty-first century, Prof. Saneh's voice and caution admonition should be heeded if participatory democracy and human-centered development are to be creatively and constructively realized.

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