SEEDS OF PEACE

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SPECIAL ISSUE
dedicated to
BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU



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SEEDS OF PEACE

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Objectives of TICD

1. To coordinate work among individuals, groups of individuals and various agencies dealing with religions and development in the course of working together.

2. To share experience in and knowledge of religions and development as well as exploring ways and means of working together.

3. To offer training and secure resources in terms of man-power an materials to support and enhance the agencies that need help.

Editor:
Mr.Nicholas P. Kohler
Cover:
Mr. Pichai Lertsuwannasri
Designed by:
Song Sayam Co.,Ltd.
Tel. 222-5696-8

THAI INTER-RELIGIOUS
COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPMET
GPO BOX 1960
BANGKOK 10501

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VEN. BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU ' S
7 th Cycle Anniversary



The 27th of May, 1990 will mark the completion of' Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's 7th Cycle anniversary. *Buddhadasa* is a gifted reformer of Theravada Buddhism with a wide knowledge of other world religions. His exploration of Dhamma has always been marked by a willingness to explore beyond the limits of traditional interpretations in order to confront the challenges of the modern technological society in all its complexity, maintaining throughout the noble teaching of Theravada Buddhism.

Buddhadasa has helped usher in a new intellectual age in Thai Buddhist thought and his writings are well-known both in Thailand and internationally, not only among Buddhists but also among scholars and followers of other religions who can see the universal application of his ideas on Dhamma and human existence.

We extend the greatest respect and best wishes to Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu on the occasion of this auspicious anniversary and humbly dedicate this issue of ***Seeds of Peace*** to honour his work.

EDITORIAL NOTES

In March we have been fairly busy organizing the second international conference of the *International Network of Engaged Buddhists* at Wat Suan Mokh, Chaiya (March 3 - 7), the first Inter Cultural Seminar at Thammasat University, Rangsit campus (March 11 - 15), and the second Thai-Indochinese Dialogue at a plantation area of the Forestry Department in Cholburi (March 16 - 19).

Additionally, some of our TICD members attended the World Council of Churches meeting in Korea on Justice, and Integrity of Creation (March 6 - 10) and a Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue in Penang, Malaysia (March 26-28) .

Most of these events are detailed in this issue, as well as other matters concerning ***Seeds of Peace.***

In February we thought the Thai government had at last come to its sense of dignity and integrity—not blindly following the dictates of the communinst Chinese—in welcoming His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit this country. Now the matter is again confusing as the government cannot seem to decide whether to grant or refuse a visa. Let us hope that goodwill and common sense will at last prevail among the Thai political elites.

On April 20th, we started the memorial park and building for Phya Anuman and Phra Saraprasert so that our Ashram for Life and Society will soon be realized.

Early in May, there will be a World Solidarity Forum for Justice and Peace in Sri Lanka to be held in this country from the 7th to the 10th. Before and after that date delegates will also visit Sri Lanka itself, hopefully a peaceful settlement in that country will soon be realized.

We still take keen interest in Sri Lanka, as well as Burma, Cambodia, Bangladesh, and India, and will continue our efforts towards the just and nonviolent resolution of the various problems presented by those countries.

On the 27th of May, the Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, patron of TICD and INEB, will reach his 84th birthday—the completion of seven 12-year life cycles and an important anniversary. He personally does not celebrate this date but mocks it, however, we humbly beg to dedicate the merit of editing this issue to our beloved teacher and good friend.

TICD and INEB hope to produce a large tome of articles on Buddhism and its position in the modern world as a *"Festschrift"* for Buddhadasa (*"The servant of the Buddha"*). Hopefully this volume will be published within this year.

We hope that our friends will continue to support our publication by renewing subscriptions and contributing articles and information for inclusion in the magazine. We are grateful that *Crossroads* and *Buddhist-Christian Studies* in the United States have advertised ***Seeds of Peace*** for us free of charge. We hope our membership and audience will also increase in the year to come.

The 2nd Annual Conference of the INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS



The International Network of Engaged Buddhists 2nd annual conference, held this March 2 - 7 at Wat Suan Mokh, Chaiya, was a great opportunity for socially active Buddhists from many countries, both within Asia and outside of it, both developed and developing, to meet each other, exchange information, and develop strategies for more effective action in regard to the work of engaged Buddhism. While the proposed aim of the conference was Buddhism and the Environment, issues ranging from nonviolence to women's issues to alternative education were discussed and explored over the course of the meeting. In attendance were over 60 delegates from more than 15 countries who, by the end of the conference, had made many new contacts, were exposed to many new ideas, and made many new friends.

The conferees met on March 2nd in Bangkok, some having earlier gone on an exposure trip visiting a Burmese student *"jungle university"* on the Burmese-Thai border and an alternative education project, some having just flown into Bangkok on that day. From Bangkok they made their way down to Suan Mokh overnight and the actual business of the conference was begun on the morning of the 3rd with a greeting of the Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu followed by a talk by Prof. Donald K. Swearer entitled *"Buddhist Ecology"*, which explored scriptural precedents for ecological awareness in Theravada Buddhism.

In the afternoon this was followed by the introduction of the participants to one another and a talk, led by Prof. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, on *"Buddhist Ecology, Social Justice and Human Rights."* The Ven. Buddhadasa, in his opening Dhamma talk to the participants, also touched upon the issue of ecology and gave a local example of one of the problems created by the deforestation of Thailand, stating that a stream running through the grounds of the wat, now little more than a trickle, was once deep enough for an elephant to bathe in. He further stated that the solution to the external problem of ecology ultimately rested in a proper internal ecology...that self-centeredness was a root cause of these problems which must be dealt with. This concept was applicable to many of the issues raised at the conference and is perhaps a key part of the sucessful practice of engaged Buddhism.

The morning of Sunday the 4th saw a panel discussion of Nonviolence, which discussed the methods and applications of nonviolence in causing political change and conflict resolution. Led by delegates from the Western world, the issue of nonviolence versus violence was questioned closely by delegates who come from countries which have extremely violent situations, most notably Sri Lanka and Burma, and the difficulties of using nonviolence in already violent situations. A sort of consensus was acheived at the closing in which it was admitted that nonviolent action was more suited for some situations rather than others but was possible in all cases, the solution lying in the application of skillful means in its use. This was followed by a talk by Prof. Phil Hwang on the situation

of Buddhism in South Korea, who discussed its position in relation to other religions there and its fledgling involvement in social issues. In the afternoon was a discussion of Women's Issues and Buddhism, which detailed some of the more pressing concerns of the exploitation of women in Thailand with regards to prostitution as well as the trickier issue of Women's rights in the structural makeup of the Buddhist Sangha and society, a difficult issue which led to no clear consensus.

The session begining on Sunday evening was started with a talk on the state of Buddhism in Nepal by the Ven. Suganda, who detailed its repression in that Hindu kingdom and the difficulties faced by Buddhists there. This was followed by the formation of discussion groups among the conferees into areas of more detatiled discussion. These areas were: Women's Issues; Buddhist Education; Human Rights; Spirituality and Activism; the Environment; and Violence/ Nonviolence. Originally a seventh area of discussion, Relations between the 1st and 3rd world, was slated for exploration but was dropped due to lack of interest. These groups of 10 or so persons each met throughout the rest of the conference and presented recommendations for action at the end, which were in turn discussed and form the basis for INEB's activities for the coming year. The final proposals adopted by INEB are detailed in another article in this issue of ***Seeds of Peace.***

While focusing on the group discussions, there were other activities over the course of the next few days. The situation of Buddhism and Buddhist activism in the countries of Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Soviet Union, Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, Europe, and the United States were presented, with the activities of INEB Japan standing out for their great efforts and work. Additionally, conferees toured ruins of Mahayana Buddhist monuments in the area of Chaiya from the Srivijaya empire and later visited the original site of Buddhadasa's Suan Mokh and a Muslim fishing village.

The atmosphere of the conference was greatly aided by the wonderful hill and forest setting of Wat Suan Mokh and the experience of interested conferees was broadened by the daily meditations led by Buddhists from many traditions and countries—Thailand, the Soviet Union, Cambodia, Great Britain, Japan, Sri Lanka to name a few. On the evening of March 6th the group reports were presented and a final resolution was adopted. Also, the Advisory and Executive Boards for the coming year were proposed. The morning of the 7th saw Ven. Buddhadasa's final Dhamma talk to the participants, again on the theme of Ecology and emphasizing self-centeredness as a root cause of ecological problems and the overcoming of self-centeredness as a necessary first step toward the overcoming of difficulties and the creation of a proper internal and external ecology.

The conference ended on that afternoon, the participants taking leave of Ven. Buddhadasa and boarding the train back to Bangkok. All in all a successful event which went a long way towards strengthening the activities of INEB and which has given valuable lessons which will aid both in the agenda for the year to come as well as in the smooth operation of next year's international conference, to be held in Thailand on February 18 - 24, 1991. Additionally, we hope to visit India sometime before or after in order to see the situation of Buddhism there and develop closer ties with that country.

Nick Kohler



INEB's
Organizational Aims for 1990

INEB's agenda for the coming year, as established at the 2nd Annual Conference held at Wat Suan Mokh from March 8 - 13, consists of both the continuation of current projects and the creation of others. The final resolution, confirmed orally at a meeting of conference participants, was based on the six topics of the Environment, Human Rights, Women's Issues, Spirituality and Activism, Education, and Nonviolence/Violence. These areas were discussed by small study groups formed at the outset of the conference, who then presented specific proposals of action. As voted by the conferees, these proposals are:

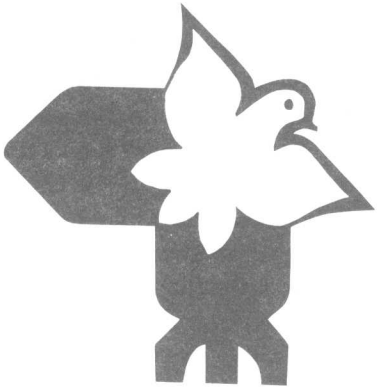


ENVIRONMENT

To coordinate and exchange information on nuclear power and its environmental effects so that lessons learned in the fight against nuclear power in developed countries can be used in countries in which nuclear power is being considered as an energy alternative.

To draft a letter in opposition to the dam being planned in Surat Thani Province, Thailand, asking that the rainforest which will be destroyed by the construction of the dam be given National Park status.

To prepare a list of environmentally sound practices which individuals can do by themselves in their own countries to help conserve the environment. This can be based on the form of the book ***50 Simple Things You Can Do To Save The Earth*** which applies specifically to the United States.



HUMAN RIGHTS

The proposals of the Human Rights group were mainly concerned with issues stemming from the situations in Bangladesh, Burma, Sri Lanka, China and India. In regard to Bangladesh, INEB and INEB-Japan will attempt to send a factfinding team to India to visit the refugee camps of the exile population of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, both in order to publicize their predicament and to gather more detailed information on their situation. Additionally, the office will draft letters which request the Indian government not to forcibly repatriate these refugees and to continue pressure on countries giving aid to Bangledesh to tie that aid to the observance of basic human rights.

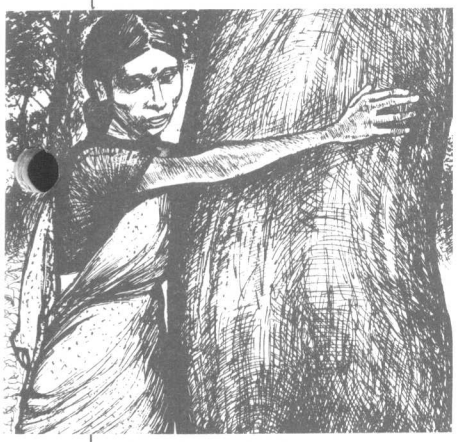
In regard to Burma, INEB will expand its information network to distribute information on the Burmese situation, both to show the plight of the ethnic minorities, students, and Buddhists in that country and to list companies and governments presently aiding the present oppressive Rangoon government.

In regard to Sri Lanka, INEB will draft a resolution to request greater attention to human rights and send it to the government of Sri Lanka and the Mahanayakas there. Additionally, a similar resolution will be prepared to be sent to parties outside of Sri Lanka who have some influence in the present situation. INEB will also coordinate its activities to aid the international conferences on human rights in Sri Lanka which are planned for the coming year.

In regard to India, INEB will attend a meeting of Buddhists in India to be held before or after next year's international conference. This meeting will highlight the present situation of Buddhism in the country of its birth and attempt to aid its existence in that country. Additionally, INEB will try and support the construction of a hostel in India, the details of

which will be discussed in a later issue of ***Seeds of Peace.***

Finally, although not addressed specifically by the Human Rights discussion group, INEB will continue to gather and publicize information in regards to the human rights situation in Tibet, a part of this being the assisstance of the Dalai Lama's planned visit to Thailand.



WOMEN'S ISSUES

Because of the nature of this issue, sweeping resolution in this area are difficult to propose. INEB activities will focus on local action in Japan and Thailand and the publicizing of these efforts. *INEB-Japan* resolved to make a leaflet discussing Women's Issues aimed at informing Japanese men. In Thailand, *Friends of Women* will prepare a similar leaflet aimed at male workers in Thai Non-Government Organizations.

Also in Thailand, INEB will look for ways both to educate the monkhood in Women's Issues, possibly by arranging a workshop, and to enhance the Buddhist educational opportunities and monastic status of women.

SPIRITUALITY AND ACTIVISM

Two specific proposals were made in this area, to develop an international training program for engaged Buddhism and to search for ways in which the next INEB international meeting could more effectively exemplify Buddhist ideals. The first proposal is very similar to suggestions for action made by the Education and Nonviolence/Violence groups and its implementation will be incorporated with the implementation of their proposals. Regarding the creation of a more Buddhistic model for the next international meetings, local groups connected with INEB are encouraged to explore possible ways of doing this and to report their successes and failures to the INEB central office with the aim of providing a format for next year's meeting.

EDUCATION

INEB's activities in promoting engaged Buddhist education will involve both the gathering and dissemination of information of related information, as well as the creation of a training program for engaged Buddhism.

INEB will collect and distribute information about afforts to establish programs which are in accord with Buddhist Dhammic principles, such as the programs of the Dhammavedi Institute for Mass Communication established in Sri Lanka by Raja Dhammapala in 1986. Ideally the distribution of this sort of information will lead to the creation of effective Buddhist educational programs in other countries.

In addition, INEB will promote and coordinate the creation of critiques of local educational systems from as many countries as possible, emphasizing the failure of modern education to fulfill social and spiritual needs and presenting educational alternatives in accord with Dhammic principles. In Thailand Santikaro Bhikkhu has already submitted a proposal for the formation of study groups which will be included in the next issue of ***Seeds of Peace.***

Regarding the implementation of educational programs, INEB will support the efforts of Mon Tantrakul to develop workshops and seminars to promote socially active Buddhism. This program is in its infancy and is being developed at the *Ashram for Life and Society* located outside of Bangkok.

This program will be loosely coordinated with the attempt to establish a training program/workshop/school for engaged Buddhism which will educate teachers, monks, and NGO workers in Dhammic principles applied to the modern situation. A Curriculum needs to be developed focusing on effective Buddhist social action, and instructors and a site for such a program need to be determined. This effort will incorporate proposals made by the *Spirituality and Activism* group and the *Nonviolence/Violence* group. Again, more specific details will be contained in the next ***Seeds of Peace.***

Finally, INEB will gather and distribute information on books, periodicals, tapes, and videos which relate to Buddhist education and social activism.

NONVIOLENCE/ VIOLENCE

INEB will continue to promote nonviolence training, both in seperately and in conjunction with the efforts to make a training program in engaged Buddhism, and will continue to support nonviolent efforts toward human rights in Burma, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and other countries.

SUMMARY

With these specific activities in mind INEB will continue its work during the coming year. Any suggestions and ideas related to these efforts is greatly appreciated, and those who have a specific interest in any program are asked for their full cooperation. Since the effectiveness of INEB as an organization relies more on the exchange of information than anything else, a continual dialogue between members is extremely important. Please stay in close contact with the activities and efforts which have been decided for the next year.

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Impressions

We were so anxious to make an impression,
But what impression did our life make
On this little plot, our world?
Less than a footprint in the sand
And when we died, remained a little while
Then washed out by the tide.

All our possessions despersed,
For some - a shrine.
But neither statues nor memorials
Can anchor us.
Less than a footprint in the sand, our life.
Tread lightly.

Wat Suan Mokh
INEB Conference.
March 2 - 7th 1990

Avoiding a Cultural Collision



"CULTURE is the sum of all the forms of art, of love and of thought, which, in the course of centuries, have enabled man to be less enslaved".

—Andre Malraux

Today, Malraux's sentiments may need to be revisited. In Southeast Asia especially, where the people are going through a tug-of-war between their own ethnic culture and the "knife and fork" culture, fresher perspectives are apparently needed to redefine the exact nature of this thing called culture.

Last week, some 40 academics and "cultural workers" from 12 Southeast Asian nations got together to try and work out solutions at the three-day "Inter-Cultural Seminar" held at the Institute of East Asia Studies at the Thammasat University Rangsit Campus.

Although it was a potential "ivory tower" environment, there were in fact no rose-tinted glasses to be seen. Pompous speeches were out.

The seminar, which was organised by the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, was handled realistically and speakers went straight to the point. The atmosphere was casual. Quiet enthusiasm was the order of the day whilst fellow delegates gently sailed their straight causes.

The "sum" of all the forms of "art" was reflected in the various presentations on literature, philosophy and culture. "Burma is the burning issue now," the Philippines' Dr Ben Medina commented later. "Other issues have more or less already been dealt with before".

"So, who'll go and tie the bell on the cat's neck ?"—was the crucial question raised by one Burmese delegate, lawyer Khaing Saw Tun of the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), referring to the current crisis in his country. Whether it's regarded as Art or Science, politics was apparently inevitable in a gathering of this nature which included countries that are still undergoing so many crises, culturally, socially and politically.

"Political interference," was promoted by some participants as single most important approach to resolving the cultural crisis in Southeast Asia.

In his presentation, Prof Cao Xuan Pho from Vietnam touched on one of Southeast Asia's major dilemmas, "tradition versus modernisation." This "social phenomenon," said he, is caused by the "imbalance between the economic development and social problems raised from it," with, in most

cases, the latter "lagging behind" the former. Because of this "imbalance" "adaptation from both sides" is needed and an "interaction" is required between the two forces.

In order that this interaction might be practical, cooperation between those from "above, below and the middle" is a prerequisite culture, as the Vietnamese professor seemed to indicate, is not only the sole property of the privileged class. How one might bring the culture of the lower classes to the attention of the upper echelon, evidently needs help from those in the middle.

ILLUSTRATE

An old Vietnamese folk tale was used to illustrate the point, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies's academic was making concerning the role of the "middle" man. A king who's sick with all things surrounding him, having had everything, and whose health is deteriorating, is advised by a wise man to journey to a mountain on which a special kind of seed that will restore his health and enthusiasm are to be found. There's one condition: during the many days' journey no food or drink must be taken.

The prohibitions and especially the journey of course were the wise man's ploy. During the journey the king became tormented by hunger and through his insistence was given rice mixed with sesame-powder. The king realised that he had never before tasted such delicious food and decided that sesame seeds, the commoners' diet,



be inscribed in the royal menu. Later, through the gastronomical skills of the royal cooks, sesame seeds appeared in many other forms and hence, became popular amongst the elite.

"By this tale, king could be considered as the factor from above, symbolising the modern way of life; the sesame the factor from below, the traditional and the wise man the medium factor," concludes Professor Pho. "Without the wise man, the king could never appreciate the value of sesame, and without him again the sesame could scarcely have found its way amongst delicacies. And as a result, the populace would benefit from the wisdom of the wise man..."

However, Nepal's Laxman Rajbanshi who caught the Swiss media "by storm" at the 1969 World Peace Conference in Geneva, being the smallest and the youngest' delegate, rejected the view as being a "feudalistic approach." Rajbanshi's supporting points were reflected in his paper entitled. "Culture: What I Understand It to be."

This 40-year-old political scientist and founder of the experimental "Siddhartha Vanasthali Institute" in Kathmandu, divided culture into two categories—universal and ethnic. The former, "equipped with modern technology which is motivating the younger generation," he called "spoon and fork culture," whilst the latter is the old traditions handed down from generation to generation. The two cultures are presently seen to be in collision in Nepal.

Loose trousers vs pants; sari vs frock. Long black locks of hair vs frizzy brown hair. Instead of leaning against the wall of the mud house with crossed-legs, we see them on a luxurious sofa. The straw and bamboo mattress has been replaced by the foam or steel or wooden beds in a cement house...

"A small section of people in Nepal has come to realise that we went wrong somewhere. They are desperately campaigning to regain the lost land of culture whilst the government submits to the popular trend in the name of democracy," Rajbanshi explained.

Gaining the "lost land of culture" can be done through education, the Nepalese delegate was definitely convinced. To

realise how more education is urgently needed in his country and to be able to do something about it on a major scale requires the help of politicians who are "empowered" to do so.

"Political interference is inevitable for a cultural work in developing countries," Rajbanshi later stressed, adding, "Look, King Asoke the Great conquered first and then talked about peace later.It's all politics"

"It has been a fascination of modern man to interpret culture in philosophical or religious terms. Also attempts have been made to paint Divine into Devil. But culture, being a spontaneous expressing of mass sentiments, expects no trace of religion in its origin. Culture has been handed down from older to younger generation, and is either elaborated or synthesised for their convenience or compulsion. Culture, therefore, requires to be assessed against the background of its origin."

Dr G. Lubsantseren from Mongolia, for example, talked about how Indian culture was transmitted through religion in the past. To him, the relationship between culture and religion is well established because of this transmission process.

As for literature, Malaysia's Prof Muhammad Haji Salleh pointed out: "Living in South east Asia and practising to be a scholar, one is continually bombarded by theories not only from China and India of old but also perhaps more ferociously by those of the West." To resolve this dilemma, specifically to "enrich the literary experience and also self-reflection," he noted that one must maintain one's own culture and from time to time refer to the "instruments of study taken from the West."

From the visions raised at the seminar, it seems all the Southeast Asian nations are undergoing some sort of crisis in one form or another.

"Let us identify this path," Sri Lanka's W.R. Darmapala opined. "It is only through a doctrinal outlook and approach that a permanent solution is possible to the existing crisis in Sri Lanka." One way that has been explored in the Sri Lankan situation is to specifically reform the monks and religious leaders combining modern science, technology and Buddhism together. The "Dharmavedi Institute for Mass Communication and Social Develop ment" has been founded for this purpose.

Obviously, the crisis in Burma has not so far received any close attention from neighbouring countries other than from the economic point of view. "Burma is the only question that needs something else" Dr Medina, who's an historian, remarked. "Maybe they'll have to do away with idealism or realism, perhaps confrontation might be the solution for now. The country has been closed for already 40 years."

The ALP member looked at the crisis in his country as being two pronged — one, is the cultural fight amongst the minorities to regain their identity; and the other, the fight to restore democracy. "There's such a thing as peace policy. But we have to shout a lot and the problem is who'll be the one to tie the bell around the cat's neck?" questined Khanig Saw Tun, the lawyer who said all lawyers in Burma are "supermen because there's no law to practise there."

All points taken, the "Inter-Cultural Seminar" ended on a positive note with participants responding favourably saying in unison that it was a "useful" forum for airing their problems. As Thailand's leading social critic Sulak Sivaraksa assured: "That's why you've been invited so that we could help one another even in some small ways."

It's worth noting that although the conference was billed as "intercultural," from the delegates' accounts there was very little difference from one Southeast Asian culture to another. The problems, thus, are identical — lack of education and government's lack of commitment to the development of educational system in all countries.

This lack or meagre support from the government is the developing country syndrome and unless it's addressed urgently and properly, more serious problems are bound to occur.

The culture of technology is playing a more and more crucial role in Southeast Asia. And if we, the citizens of this part of the world, neglect our own heritage, Herman Hesse's words — that "When two cultures collide is the only time when true suffering exists" — will surely be once more sadly proved correct.

In the year 2025 AD, well-

known psychologist and philosopher Abraham Maslow says a new species of human being is to emerge. He calls them "creative man." A "creative man," a la Maslow, is "one who completely unites the two cultures within himself and doesn't draw a distinction between what is humanistic and what is scientific because he's at home in both worlds."

Philosopher Dr P.H. Hwang from Korea, in citing Maslow's "futuristic and humanistic" theory, added one more valuable thought to it. He charged that such a perspective was not based on a "de facto situation." Race, creed, nationality and colour, he said, are not "petty", "trivial" or "ephemeral" and are still presenting problems in the world. Dr Hwang's thinking was that the only value that's humanistic is one that's based on some sort of "spirituality".

Will Maslow's prediction of the coming of "creative man" prove correct? Thirty odd years seem a trivial time for evolution to accomplish any significant step. In as much as sprirituality is a major component or our region's cultural heritage and one that is more recently alive than in the West, perhaps Dr Hwang has a point.

Instead of serving humanity, technology is being used to alienate us, to reduce society's cohesiveness to individual, mechanistic components. Our spiritual roots need nurturing lest they wither and die forever.

Kanjana Spindler
Bangkok Post, March 21, 1990

THE 2nd I



The second Indochinese-Thai Dialogue was held from March 16 - 21 1990 at Forestry Department Hostel in Cholburi Province. It was organized by Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute and Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation. There were a number of participants from Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam, and Khmer Buddhist monks living in Thailand also attended. We expected to have Khmer refugees and delegates from Phnom Penh to participate in, but they could not make it.

The dialogue started with the welcoming remarks made by Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa, Director of the Institute, who also explained about the schedule of being together for the 3-day conference. This was followed by a self-introduction of participants.

On the second day, participants shared and exchanged their ideas and views with Thai social workers and academics. In the morning, the discussion focused on children's problems i.e. malnutrition, children's rights, child labour, child prostitution, drug addiction, etc. which was presented by Mr. Piphob Dhongchai of

OCHINESE-THAI DIALOGUE



Foundation for Children. Participants from Laos were very keen on this issue, expecially the child prostitution problem which will be expanded to Laos coincidently with the ***"open door"*** policy. Besides, they were worried about the AIDS infection, they requested Thai friends to help in disseminating the facts of AIDS.

After that, participants from Laos shared their experiences on children's issues with the Foundation for Children i.e. Orphan School in Laos, simple ways to cook food for children. Then Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa added that local people have to help themselves for the four basic needs which are food, lodging, clothing and medicine. They have to join together to learn more and do research and disseminate about the problems with which they have been faced. Participants from Vietnam agreed with his idea. They proposed that at this stage of research, we should divide investigation into separate issues, e.g. usage of herbal medicine, weaving, etc.

In the afternoon, Ven. Kamron Dhammapalo informed participants about the problems in Cambodia. He would like to see peace settled in his home country. As such, he proposed to revive Buddhism in Cambodia and launch the rehabilitation of the Cambodian people as soon as possible. All agreed with his proposal. Then Dr. Puwadol Songprasert introduced the activitites of Social Science Association of Thailand and of the Institute of Siamese Studies.

On the third day, the focal point of discussion was the establishment of various projects to be implemented in the future.

After the actual conference, an exposure program was organized for Indochinese participants to meet and discuss, as well as to share their working experiences, with social activists in Bangkok and its neighbouring provinces. The following was the day-to-day exposure programme.

On March 19, 1990, they visited the integrated farming and herbal plantation of the Village Head Mr. Viboon Khemchalerm. Participants were very much interested in his activities, and they planned to send some other people to visit here again. Then they proceeded to visit the Street Children Project at Wongsanit Ashram in Nakon Nayok Province. There, they had a chance to discuss and share their views with the young people who took care of the project.

On March 21 - 22, participants visited some NGO groups in Bangkok i.e. the Traditional Medicine for Self-curing Project, Technology for Rural and Ecological Enrichment, Thai Volunteer Service, Project for Ecological Recovery, and Foundation for Children.

They agreed to work together with some of these NGOs as follows:

1. Exchange Programme on the knowledge of herbal plantations between the Traditional Medicine for Self-curing Project and herbalists from Laos.
2. Joint project on the protection of child traffic from Laos (in order to force them to be prostitutes) between Foundation for Children and Women Federation of Champasak.

3. Project for plants presented to Buddhist monks in a ceremony called "Pha Pah" at one certain temple in Laos.

In addition, there was the exchange of documents, books, pamphlets, and video tapes. Besides, they subscribed to some Thai NGOs regular newsletters.

On March 21st, the evaluation session was held. In this occasion, participants were able to meet with some funding agencies i.e. Ford Foundation, and Friedrich Naumann Stiftung. It was a good opportunity to be with these because they could propose their projects directly to them and some of the projects have been approved on that day, e.g.

1. The Promotion of NGOs in Lao People Democratic Requblic Project
2. etc.

After the conference ended, most of the participants did not go back to their countries at once. They visited the groups they were interested in. Participants from Laos went to the office of Social Science Association of Thailand and they have made the agreements on various matters to be jointly undertaken. Then they went to Friends of Women group in order to be informed of Thai women's problems. As well, they went to the World Wildlife Fund.

On March 24th, they went to the northeastern region to visit a silkworm raising farm, as well as to see the Thai silk weaving.

PROPOSALS FROM LAOTIAN PARTICIPANTS

1. To send a group of people to attend a training on the simple way of nutritional cooking with local materials.
2. To receive AIDS infection documents in order to alert Laotian people on the grim problems of AIDS.
3. To support their initiative to preserve the environment around the area of one Buddhist temple in Laos and in providing the education on forest restoration, as well as on fish raising in a pond, in order to be an example for the monks there.
4. To organize a training on herbal medicine for Laotian people.
5. To work jointly on the prevention of child traffic from Laos to be forced into sex trade in Thailand.
6. To help them in preventing deforestation and protest campaign on using chemical fertilizers in Laos.
7. To promote the handicrafts and the quality of lives of Laotian women and children.
8. To organize a conference for Buddhist monks from Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in Vientiane.
9. To organize a training on the orientation of Thai NGOs for people from Laos.
10. To set up a group which will coordinate with the government officials.

PROPOSALS FROM CAMBODIAN PARTICIPANTS

1. To send Thai Buddhist monks to help in reviving Buddhism in Cambodia and to launch a rehabilitation programme for Cambodian people.
2. To organize an exposure programme in Thailand for Cambodian Buddhist monks.
3. To provide documents, books and video tapes on Buddhism to publicize in Cambodia.

PROPOSALS FROM VIETNAMESE PARTICIPANTS

1. To organize a siminar on herbal medicines both in theory and in practice in Vietnam in the latter part of this year.
2. To launch a programme on Thai studies in order to learn about history, language, religion, culture, art and literature of various Thai people in Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. This will be organized by Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Vietnam, in collaboration with Laos and Thailand.
3. To have coordination among Thai NGOs, Laos and Vietnam in upcoming issues e.g. a seminar on herbal medicine.
4. To visit AIDS patients and to publicize the problems of AIDS infection to make Vietnamese people alert about this dreadful issue. This will be done in collaboration with Thailand.

EVALUATION FROM PARTICIPANTS OF THE DIALOGUE

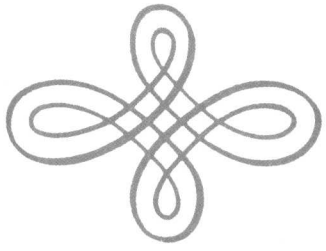
1. It was not all the same participants as the first dialogue, so they could get to know each other only this time for a very short period.
2. As for Vietnam, participants were not those who were involved at the grassroots level so their views or ideas did not relate to those of other participants who have worked directly with the people.
3. Participants had a problem of obtaining visas due to the 3 conferences held in one month which was too long for participants from the socialist countries to apply for visa from the authorities concerned.
4. Too many activities were scheduled for the exposure programme which made them tired.
5. The dialogue provided a chance for the participants who have similar history to share their good and bad things.
6. The dialogue made them to be aware of their own problems because they had the opportunity to listen and see various problems of other countries.
7. They had a chance to discuss with Thai NGOs and saw their activities for themselves which could be adapted to their own activities.
8. Common problems i.e. women and children, environment preservation and herbal plantation are to be undertaken at once in their own societies.
9. The visitation to Thai NGOs was a new phenomenon. Participants could see some of the problems Thai NGOs were facing which they thought earlier were not problems. This alerted them to prepare themselves to do something in the future.

EVALUATION OF THE CONTINUAL ACTIVITIES FROM THE FIRST DIALOGUE

1. The seminar on herbal medicine to be held by Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand has not been substantiated. The participants from Vietnam who proposed the seminar requested Laotian participants to be in charge of organizing the seminar. So, they proposed this to the government of Laos, but no news so far.
2. Participants from Laos proposed to their authorities concerned about the establishment of NGOs in Laos, but they have not heard anything from those authorities.
3. Various projects to be done for Cambodian refugees in the camps have not been launched due to the problems of regulations of the camps in terms of going in and out, besides the problems among refugees of different sides.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT CONFERENCE

1. It should be a bilateral meeting because some countries cannot attend the meeting at the certain time scheduled by the convenor.
2. The discussion should go deeply into one particular problem so that they can deal with it more effectively.
3. To emphasize that regional coordination is needed.
4. Participants should also come from the government sector, since in a pratical way, governments have to support all these activities. Those who come from government offices should be the persons who work directly with the people.
5. Representatives from each country should include the former participants in addition to the new ones.
6. They requested the convenor to send the proceeding of the conference more quickly than that of the last one.



The Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue



The dialogue, jointly sponsered by the **Alirang Kesedaran Negara** of Malaysia and the **Santi Pracha Dhamma Institue** of Thailand, took place March 26-27 in Penang, Malaysia. Twelve men participated in the dialogue, three from Thailand, seven from Malaysia, and two from the U.S.A.

Following a round of self-introduction, Chandra Muzaffer reviewed the purpose of the dialogue—to develop understanding and trust with each other and to agree on some projects for common action. Sulak Sivaraksa, of the **Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute,** stated that Buddhists and Muslims must begin to work together and saw this initial dialogue as a first step. The rest of the morning session was given to the presentation of ideas for possible projects and areas of cooperation. An agreement was reached for four aims: *1) to establish a coordinating group of 10 to 30 Muslims and Buddhists from Malaysia and Thailand; 2) to work toward publishing a series of pamphlets and books discussing the underlying views of Buddhists and Muslims toward each other; 3) to organize study groups, seminars and dialogues to involve local people and organizations in the learning and sharing; and 4) to produce a series of video tapes and other teaching tools. The remaining three sessions focused on project ideas and methods of carrying them out.*

The remainder of the two days of unhurried and trusting dialogue which followed led to agreements to publish a book discussing the meaning of greed from both the Buddhist and Muslim perspective; the manifestations of greed in different sections of society, especially in Thailand and Malaysia ; prevalent ideas and concepts which lead, directly or indirectly, to the growth of greed; how people understand greed; and an essay on an alternative social order.

To tie in with the planned book it was decided to undertake four case studies, two in Thai villages and two in Malaysian villages, each with Buddhist and Muslim communities, to determine the impact of greed on the day to day life of the villagers. The various parts of this ambitious task were assigned and an appropriate time schedule was set up.

The entire group plans to meet again early in 1991 to review the progress of the planned book and case studies.

The two-day dialogue was a promising first step in furthering trust and cooperation between Buddhists and Muslims. It is hoped eventually to invite Muslims and Buddhists from other Asian countries to join in the dialogue.

The dialogue was stimulating and creative. Ideas were brought forth, listened to, and willing cooperation was evident as participants accepted responsibilities for various tasks. The friendly and trusting tone of the dialogue is itself a model for further and continuing dialogue. The home-like hospitality of the Lone Pine Hotel where the dialogue took place and the excellent food no doubt contributed to the success of the dialogue. At the closing dinner we honoured Sulak Sivaraksa on his birthday.

George Willoughby

International Conference Buddhist Woman

October 25 - 29 , 1991
Bangkok , Thailand

Introduction

Buddhist women' s activities has been felt but sporadically in the past two decades. By fortunate coincidence in November 1984 while Ayya Khema started her International Buddhist Women's Center in Sri Lanka,Dr Chatsumarn Kabilsingh also started the newsletter on International Buddhist Women ' s Activities in Thailand without knowing of each other. The two of them soon got together with Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo (Patricia Zenn) in India and co-ordinated the first conference on Buddhist nuns in Bodh Gaya, India in Feb. 7-11,1987. There were 120 Buddhist laymen, laywomen, monks and nuns who came together from 22 countries. At the opening ceremony more than 1,000 people attended and His Holiness the Dalai Lama blessed the ceremony with his encouraging opening speech.

From this conference, Sakyadhita (meaning daughters of the Buddha), an International Association of Buddhist Women came into being. It is now a registered religious organization based in Los Angeles U.S.A. Sakyadhita members in different countries are also forming Sakyadhita locally. Sakyadhita England met in Sept. 1989, and Sakyadhita Thailand celebrated an opening ceremony on Oct. 14,1989.

Four years have passed since the first conference in 1987, it is now high time that Sakyadhita members meet again to discuss various interesting issues regarding responsibilities, the role of Buddhist women, role of bhikkhunis, women's commmitment to Buddhist communities and to the world at large.

Objectives

—To help strengthen the organization of Sakyadhita, the International Association for Buddhist Women.

—To heighten the awareness of the diversity of traditions sharing similar concerns and to learn how that diversity effects one's understanding of the problems and prospects of Buddhist women.

—To provide the venue for concerned Buddhist women from various parts of the world.

—To find out new and more effective means to deal with the existing problems that Buddhist women face in their practice.

—To make available Buddhist education for women.

Honorary Committee

His Holiness the Sangharaja of Thailand
His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet
Bhikshuni Hiu Wan (Taiwan)
Bhikshuni Voramai Kabilsingh (Thailand)
Bhikshuni Ayya Khema (Sri Lanka & Australia)

Advisory Committee

Prof. Sathien Pantharangsi
Mr Sulak Sivaraksa
Prof Jamnong Thongprasert

Planning Committee

Bhikshuni Darma Lekshe Tsome (U.S.A.)
Bhikshuni Jampa Tsedroen (W. Germany)
Dr Chatsumarn Kabilsingh
Mr Martin Perenchio



JOURNEY TO JUNGLE UNIVERSITY:

A BRIEF EXPERIENCE OF BURMA'S TRAGEDY





As part of a trip to Thailand to attend the 1990 INEB Conference, I was invited to offer a workshop at Jungle University, a student study center in exile designed to keep young minds active, alert and connected to the larger world, from which they are so thoroughly isolated. Jungle University moves frequently from one student border camp to another, because the Burmese military is gaining air and road access to the camps and wiping them out constantly. Most unfortunately, the Thai logging concessions aid the military in their quest to murder students and ethnic minorities; logging money buys weapons and logging roads move soldiers and equipment directly to camp sites.

Travelling to ***Manerplaw Camp*** with long time US peace activist George Willoughby and our Thai guide, we planned to facilitate a two day workshop for students that would create links to the world - wide pro-democracy movements and examine strategies for social change that might be applicable to their situation. We had put a lot of time and attention into organizing our teaching and hoped it would be of real value to the students. However, it was not to be; the Burmese army changed all that.

The journey to ***Manerplaw*** began with a 14 hour overnight bus ride from Bangkok. Awake most of the night, I gazed at fog covered jungle hills by the light of the full moon, wondering what strange karma had led me to this strikingly remote corner of the world. The bus left us in the northwest Thai town of Mae Srieng, from which we took a 3 hour truck ride through deep jungle and then a 2 hour boat ride down the beautiful Salween River that serves as the border between Thailand and Burma.

Manerplaw Camp is the home in exile of several hundred male students, aged 14 - 40's, a few young women and one monk. Adjacent to the student camp is the Karen National Union, a camp of many families living like the students in very difficult and challenging circumstances. It is through the good graces and generosity of the ethnic minorities that the students are surviving at all; they have been welcomed, given land and taught the ways of jungle living.

On our first day in ***Manerplaw,*** George and I used our time to make contact with the students and to gather documentation about their lives and circumstances. Their situation is appalling; it is a wonder that they are hanging on and are worry about how much longer they can continue to do so. Ninety percent suffer from repeated malaria attacks, and many die from malaria, jaundice, dysentery and other diseases of abject poverty in harsh surroundings. Malnutrition is widespread; the twice daily meals I witnessed consist of rice and a bit of sauce or vegetable. There are neither blankets nor mosquito nets and medicine and doctors are both in very short supply. Emotionally, the students are of course homesick, isolated from all news and contact with loved ones, deprived





of books and education, constantly frightened by military bombings and attacks, helplessly watching friends die, and terribly alone in the world. They are beautiful, bright young revolutionaries from all of Burma's universities, and they are trapped in the jungle with nowhere to go.

On the second day of our visit, George and I gathered with about 40 students in a bamboo longhouse to begin our workshop. No sooner had we completed the introductory rounds when a student came running in to report that military planes were approaching the camp and we might be bombed in 20 minutes. We disbanded quickly and went to another bamboo hut at the base of a mountain, where we waited for several hours wondering if indeed we would be shelled and possibly hurt or killed. Fortunately, no bombs were dropped that day and our lives were spared, for which I was certainly very grateful. Unfortunately, military raids are frequent and powerful and our Burmese brothers and sisters could not live with us; many of their lives may not continue beyond their time at Manerplaw and other camps.

The workshop could not be resumed. The situation was dangerous, stressful and unpredictable, and the students needed to focus their attention on survival. I returned to Mae Srieng with mixed feelings: relief at being alive and deep sadness and concern for all those students and ethnic minority members who remain in internal exile on all of Burma's borders.

There are few friends in the world speaking out for Burma. A small country closed to both foreign media and casual tourist for 27 years can be easily forgotten in the press of world events. And Burma's natural resources are an enticement that keep foreign governments close – mouthed about its domestic policies. Thailand supports the dictatorship with a booming teak business, the Japanese trawlers have fishing rights, the US is drilling for oil, and then there is Burmese opium, certainly one of the most sought - after commodities in the world trading market. Against these economic temptations, human rights are a small voice.

The so-called "elections" scheduled in May will be a farce; oppostion candidates are under house arrest, students and minorities are in the jungle, half a million Rangoon residents have been dislocated to distant malaria swamp areas so they cannot vote, and there is intimidation and military presence everywhere.

Our efforts do make a difference. Your support for human rights, letters of condemnation to your governing bodies, and material aid to students are important. In a political situation receiving so little world attention, every voice counts.

Change will come to Burma one day, as it comes to everyplace, sooner or later. With the help of concerned and compassionate citizens around the world, perhaps we can hasten that day.

Paula Green

Atrocities Against Buddhists in The Chittagong Hill Tracts



The ***Chittagong Hill Tracts*** is the largest district of Bangladesh. In this area live 12 different ethnic groups though the majority are Buddhists. Racially they are Mongoloid, linguistically Tibeto-Burmese. They have many links with numerous ethnic groups of S-E Asia. The people of the *Chittagong Hill Tracts* have been described as being so different from the Moslem Bengalees as the American Indians were from the early American European settlers.

Despite the fact of the *Chittagong Hill Tracts* (CHT) annexation to the British Empire in 1860 for administrative purposes, the people of this area have nothing in common with the Indo-Aryan population of the Plains of Bengal.

The British Administrators were seemingly aware of this dissimilarity and they placed the CHT peoples under a seperate jurisdiction than that employed in the Plains of Bengal. This seperate jurisdiction was also known as an *"Exclusive Area"* and was made a district of the Bengal Presidency Commissioner under Statutory Regulation, Act 1 of 1900, known as the *"Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation"*.

The regulation provided *Autonomy* for the *CHT* peoples and encouraged them to preserve their district social laws, cultural dignity and lands.

By regulation people from other geographic areas or districts were not allowed to settle in the Exclusive Area. They could not purchase land from tribal people and outsiders could be expelled from the District if they were thought to be undesirable or if it was felt they were doing anything prejudicial to the interest of *CHT peoples.*

After India's Independence, the CHT lands were included for administrative purposes under the jurisdiction of E. Pakistan. The traditional *representatives of the CHT peoples* voted to be integrated into India where in Assam and Tripura peoples of the same backgounds lived. The traditional CHT representatives feared for the future of the *CHT peoples* (Buddhists, Christians and Hindus) under a Moslem controlled Pakistan.

Despite their desires to be included as part of India they were not. At the same time the Pakistan Government started moving great numbers of Moslem Bengalees into the *Chittagong Hill Tracts,* and CHT tribal police were transferred to other Districts and replaced with Moslem police. This of course was completely contrary to the original intent of the *Chittagong Hill Tracts Act* of 1900 which provided for CHT autonomy, but with the independence of Pakistan and India all legal safeguards of the tribal peoples were abolished and the Pakistan Government treated the *CHT peoples* as dis-enfranchised people within their own lands.

For these reasons, during the Pakistan's rule over the CHT people and lands, great numbers of Bengali Hindus and thousands of Buddhists were forced to cross the Pakistan-India Border seeking shelter and security. Because of this mass movement of people, religious and racial riots occurred on many occasions. In 1964 due to flooding of 40% of CHT lands to create hydro-electric energy for the Plains of E. Pakistan 45,000 CHT tribal people fled to India to settle in Arunachal Pradesh. where they remain without rights to this day.

Bangladesh took its independence in 1971 from an orthodox Moslem and racially natured nation; Pakistan. Bangladesh now seems to be more racially prejudiced and more conservative in its Moslem beliefs and ultimately more cruel.

Soon after its independence the Bangladesh Army killed 400 tribal Buddhists. It appears that Moslem Bangladesh has plans to accomplish the uncompleted task of Moslem Pakistan through a campaign of genocide of the Buddhists of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The Moslem Bangladesh Army burned thousands of homes. Many tribal women and girls were abducted, tortured and raped and about 200,000 tribal civilians slaughtered or crippled in the CHT *(Cf, B.P.F. Newsletter vol. 10, Nos. 3 - 4, 1984)*

Thousands of tribal Buddhists were uprooted from their homelands and pushed into India. At the same time the Bangladesh government helped the new Moslem Bengali settlers occupy the Chittagong Hill Tracts lands belonging to the Buddhists, this resulted in a mass exodus of Buddhist people, repeated violation of Tribal Cultural Norms and ecological deterioration including deforestation.

In their efforts to violate the rights of the *CHT Buddhists,* the Bangladesh Government has established three Army Cantonments at Dhighinals, Ruma and Alikadam along with innumerable Army Camps.

It now appears the whole might of the Bangladesh Government and Military Machinery has been mobilized to eliminate the Tribal Buddhists of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

In 1986, 50,000 Buddhist refugees crossed from Bangladesh to India in an attempt to seek shelter and safety. Thousands have been killed and some have been left stranded in the Jungle and died of starvation.

In May of 1989, a large number of refugees from the *Chittagong Hill Tracts* crossed the Bangladesh-India Border through the Tripura States. Estimates are that 90,000 are in Tripura State of India.

Moslems atrocities upon Buddhists are not a new thing for past Moslem Governments in Mogul period in India.

Indian history reveals much evidence of torture and other atrocities by Moslems upon Buddhists of this situation I have just described continue for the *CHT peoples,* the Buddhists of the *Chittagong Hill Tracts* will be completely eliminated by the Moslem Government of Bangladesh.

A similar destruction of Buddhism by Moslems occurred in India from the 12th to the

18th century. That age has been called the "Dark Age" of Buddhisim in India.

To a large degree the Moslems are habituated towards genocide of the Buddhists. Agressive Moslems take advantage of the non-violence of Buddhists and as history shows millions of Buddhists were compelled to convert to Islam during Moslem rule (Mogul) of India.

The present facts are:

1. If the International Community does not look after the tribal Buddhists, Hindus and Christians of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, these people will either be forcibly converted to Islam or subjected to numerous atrocities and probable death.

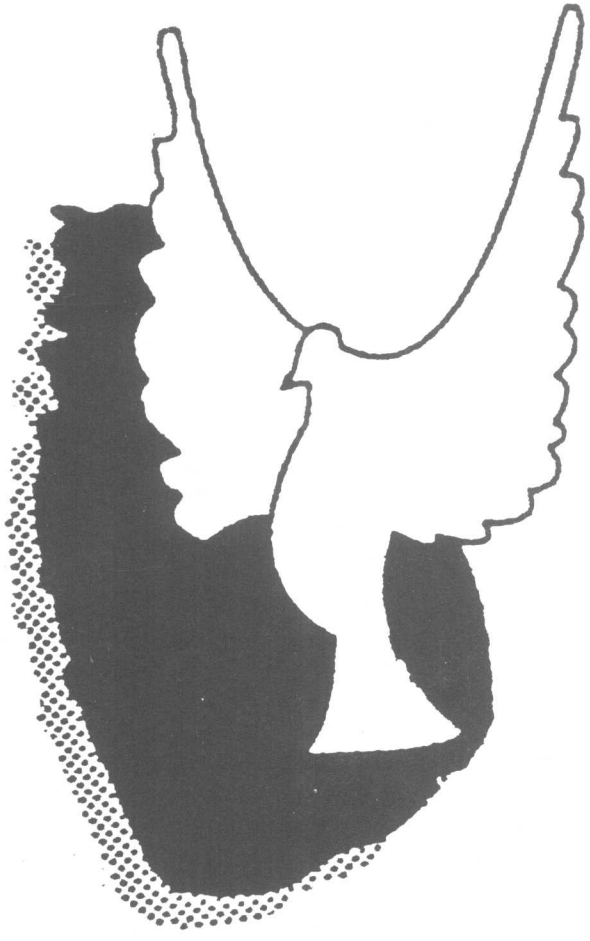
2. It is absolutely necessary to protect the Tribal peoples from genocide and secure for Buddhists, Hindus and Christians of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, their basic human rights.

3. The aim of Bangladesh policy has been made clear by a statement from a representative of the Military Government in 1979 when he said publicly; *"We want only the land and not the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts"* (Cf. Survival Internataional 1984. 21).

4. This statement and evidence of brutalities against CHT people show the violation of *CHT people* over the last 18 years, is aimed at expelling or eliminating the tribal population rather than neutralizing political adversaries.

5. For this reason members of the *CHT people* should receive international protection from the violent and agressive tactics demonstrated by the Bangladeshi Government and Bengali Moslems.

P. J. Chakma



A PLEA TO STOP THE GORY VIOLATION IN SRI LANKA

Amnesty International issued, on 14th December 1989 a report on extra judicial execution in Sri Lanka which report, incomplete as it is bound to be under the circumstances, will shock the conscience of the civilised world. (AI index ASA 37/21/89).

The *dramatic surge* - the meteoric rise – in the number of dead bodies that float down the rivers and waterways into the sea — has sent fish prices tumbling down. The reason is that people do not eat fish because fish eat people.

AI report correctly sees the relationship between this appalling increase in the number of dead bodies strewn all over the country and the emergency regulation 55 FF reintroduced in June 1989. This regulation authorises the disposal of dead bodies by the security forces without a judicial inquiry and post-mortem report. Regulation 55 FF is in fact an invitation to "kill, kill and kill" the people.

The state in the guise of the emergency regulations (55 FF and several others) have provided the infrastructure and the machinery to the police and the security forces to physically annihilate the rebels and indulge in unrestrained reprisal murders. If however the lawfully constituted army and the police are not able to complete the task by themselves, additional paramilitary forces, vigilante groups, Green Tigers, Black Cats, Yellow Cats, Eagles. PRRA and a host of other right wing murder squads have been set up by the government party and issued with sophisticated fire arms to indulge in the orgy of killings.

AI concludes "violence is now so widespread that it is difficult to establish with certainty who the agents of specific killing were – or even to identify the victims whose bodies are sometimes grossly mutilated, burnt to ashes or transported long distances from the scene of arrest or abduction before being dumped."

This is not a mere isolated finding by the much verified Amnesty International whose report was frowned upon by the National Security Minister. Now let us listen to what an official monitoring committee report has to say on the subject of murder by para-military groups. This committee was appointed by the government to monitor violation of a 6 day cease fire in September 1989. The committee reports :



" On the material before us it is difficult to resist the conclusion that groups other than the Armed Forces and the police on the one hand and the militants on the other are also in the field..."

As regards reprisal killing the same committee, with some difficulty, concludes.

"...Some of these events have taken place during curfew hours and others in broad day light in public places. It is therefore difficult for us to understand how some at least of these incidents could have gone undetected despite the check-points and the patrols by the security forces especially during curfew hours . Since the prevailing situation is such that many groups are said to be carrying out illegal operations assign liability to any particular group." (Report of committee to monitor step taken in the restoration of peace and normalcy - Oct 89.)

But the ordinary man in the street has no difficulty in understanding how these killings take place. Ask him and he will tell you... They come in unnumbered vehicles... in uniform ... mostly under the influence of liquor... during curfew hours... with guns and take away the young boys... into the darkness... and we hear a few gunshots... In the morning dead bodies all over the place.

The widely believed reason for the re-introduction of the emergency and regulation 55 FF in June 1989 is the alleged decision by the security council to commence mopping operations in all areas sympathetic to the JVP political moves to bring a negotiated settlement having failed. The security forces wanted a free hand to put an end to the insurrection. In their assessment there were

150,000 activists in the rebel movement. If the security forces could catch and annihilate 100,000 of them the backbone of the insurgency would be broken and there would be peace and stability in the country so argued the security spokesmen. They won the argument, accordingly the security forces were given a free hand to achieve what the political leadership in two successive administrations had so far failed. The president obliged the security forces with the most sophisticated weapon in the operation regulation 55 FF which had once been withdrawn under pressure from international public opinion was re-promulgated by his excellency the President Ranasinghe Premadasa. The police and armed forces commenced their final onslaught rounding up villages under the cover of darkness and curfew, unidentified dead bodies appeared each morning in hundreds up in hills, down the river, along the roads, tyre necklaces burning bright.

When two rebel leaders who had refused to come to the negotiating table were arrested and brought to Colombo presumably unarmed and while still in the custody of the security forces, they were killed in cold blood. Now that is homicide under the ordinary law, but their bodies were burnt, purporting to act under regulation 55 FF. Please spare the lives of the youth, the cream of our future generation.

If the match is over, why hit a man on the ground , why hit him below the belt.

Please stop this mad massacre , the continuing violation of the right guaranteed in the Charter of the United Nation to which we are a signatory.

PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL IN SRI LANKA



Members of INEB and readers of ***Seeds of Peace*** will be aware of the sad situation in Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese-Tamil conflict is for the moment being fought in the political rather than military sphere as the Indian Peace Keeping Forces withdraw and the LTTE (Tamil Tigers) consolidate their victories in the North and East.

In the South, too, it may seem that the situation is returning to normal; no more curfews in Colombo, shops and businesses open as usual and travel in the south is much easier. The terror killings by the JVP have been halted as remaining members have been driven underground by the crushing of the entire leadership structure. Elements of the emergency regulations have been removed including the hated 55 FF which allowed for the disposal of bodies by the security forces without autopsy or informing relatives of the death. Some members of the security forces are being prosecuted for illegal activities and rehabilitation camps are renewing suspected JVP sympathizers or associates.

However, the killings in the south continue, particularly in the countryside. Young men still disappear without trace and people can still be seized in their homes at night by armed men and taken to be killed as the case of Richard de Zoysa illustrates. Human rights advocates, development workers and trade union organizers still live in a climate of fear but pursue their work in the face of threat and intimidation. There also remains the trauma suffered by the society from the deaths of tens of thousands, mainly young men, victims of the violence of security forces, pro-government vilgilantes and the JVP.

Peace Brigades International (PBI) has had a team of 3-5 volunteers working in Sri Lanka since October 1989. PBI has been providing accompaniment to people whose lives are threatened because of their work for human rights, in particular lawyers who file habeas corpus writs for people who have been

detained without charges or have disappeared.

PBI is an international non-partisan organization committed to non-violence and aiming to reduce violence in areas of repression or conflict and to support local social justice initiatives. Formed in 1981 PBI has been working in Guatemala since 1983 and EL Salvador since 1987. Their work has been to

a) Provide protective accompaniment of those whose lives are threatened . Hoping to deter violence presence and the support of an "emergency response network" of concerned organizations and individuals who send telegrams when a kidnapping or crisis occurs.

b) To further reconciliation and peace dialogue among conflicting parties.

c) To educate and train in non-violence and human rights.

PBI's work in Sri Lanka has centred on accompaniment of threatened individuals but there are a number of prospects for the extension of PBI ' s role in the country. To date none of those accompanied in Central America or Sri Lanka have been killed or disappeared.

PBI is seeking support for the project in Sri Lanka and invites interested groups and individuals to write for further information. Help is needed in the areas of financial support / fund raising, training of volunteers, education work and support for the emergency response network. And, of course, volunteers are needed to undertake PBI's non-partisan, non-violent work in Sri Lanka itself.

Futher information can be obtained from

303/7 Soi Santipap,
Nares Road,
Bangkok 10500.

Diane Hendrick



THE NEED FOR
A GREEN S

Without some kind of accompanying psycho-spiritual revolution, it is not easy to take seriously our vision of a radical Green future. Putting an end to large scale, systemic aggressiveness and acquisitiveness is surely the biggest ever U-turn in human history. And our autonomous, democratic and human-scale communities are to be regulated neither by the discipline of the market nor the authority of some new power elite. We expect that such communities will uphold social and economic justice and equity and behave responsibily towards one another, global humanity, the Earth and other species. Even to contemplate such a degree of freedom and responsibility is as scary as it is stimulating. Is it romantic wish-fulfilment or could it really be possible ?

Achieving and sustaining such a society implies a very high level of public spiritedness, openness, tolerance and mutual trust, and a well developed capacity for co-operation, bridge-building, and conflict resolution. Yet these and similar qualities are not abundant so far even in Green gatherings and publications. Old fashioned gusty combativeness and abrasive dialogue are symptomatic of deeper mentalities.

To develop the positive qualities above I believe we shall need to find ways of becoming more emotionally secure and at peace within ourselves. Whether men or women, we shall need to nurture the feminine, as well as the masculine qualities, to be able to relate to one another without aggressiveness or defensiveness. In particular we shall no longer need to seek meaning and identity by heavy emotional investment in ideologies and movements (Green and otherwise) which obscure our view of reality and distort action. For example, in much 'New Age' formula writing I find a kind of cheer-leading righteousness reminiscent of that which was sustained by 'the historical inevitability of Socialism' or (a little earlier) the Second Coming.

Since it is a *Green axiom* that means cannot be separated form ends, and that we build the road and the road builds us, then we shall need to start changing ourselves as well as the world as from now.

It is true that *Greens* have for long ackowledged that in some way 'the personal is political' and that we each need to take responsibility for our own personal 'revolution', for changing, as well as 'raising' our own consciousness. As Einstein said, we cannot hope to get out of our present fix if we are still moved by the same level of consciousness that got us into it. But this aspiration seems to have got lost in recent years, leaving little more than a concern for a *'Green life style'*.

Most *Greens* (and especially the Red ones) still seem to be locked into the traditional social engineering mentality whereby Green revolution depends entirely on changing social structures and institutions together with a new 'mass consciousness' which has to do with what we think rather than the kind of people we are. With the coming of the secular, scientific era, the personal has been privatised out of politics, with radicals--in Schumacher's words--'dreaming of (social) systems so perfect that no one would need to be good'. Notwithstanding their considerable achievements, the social and political revolutions of the last two hundred years have brought us to the edge of planetary crisis. Societies with widely differing social structures and ideal are all marked by elitism, patriarchy, militarism, exploitation, notional and racial oppression, large authoritarian organisations, and environmental spoliation.

The radical Green vision will go the same way unless social and personal transformation take place, enriching and reinforcing one another. This means that our inner work should be as important as the outer work which at present takes up all our time and energy. The inner work can involve both psychotherapeutic and spiritual practice, overlapping. Until our movement starts seriously to come to terms with it, 'spirituality'

PIRITUALITY

will remain such a fuzzy and misleading term as to be almost useless. For many it is at best socially irrelevant and other-worldly and at worst it opens the door to all that is regressive in institutionalised religion. For a start, it is helpful to see it not as a system of beliefs but as a well proven system of discovery and exploration of reality, found in variant forms in all the world's great religions.

However, at the preliminary level the purpose of the inner work is to develop a more peaceful and responsive personality, with inner strength and yet freed off for effective action unimpeded by the usual ego trips and hangups. Individually and in groups, the cultivation of a deeper self - knowledge and awareness begins to affect the way we live out our lives. Meditative and other spiritual practices gradually enable us to degrees awareness of the root fear, anger and clinging which unconsciously shape the ways in which we act and feel. They slowly dissolve our alienation from our feelings, our body, other people and all that is'other'. In this way we awaken to the consciousness of *Deep Ecology* --the interdependence of all phenomena. (It is unfortunate that here and there *Deep Ecology* has degenerated into an *anti-humanist ideology* or an *ecoromantic escapism* from the full social responsibilities of a humanity which is conscious of nature as well as a part of it, free as well as dependent).

Different people will favour different kinds of inner work, all designed to help us to become a little more human. But there is also the possibility of some mainstream fellowship -in-practice which would be acceptable to most *Greens*. For example, there are traditional meditation practices accessible to all and of great personal and political potential. Valuable also are the many humanistic growth therapies, some of which are suitable for do-it yourself group work. An outstanding example of what can be achieved are the 'despair and empowerment' workshops developed by Joanna Macy, an American Buddhist peace worker. These enable people of varying beliefs to work through the often deeply buried grief, anger and fear arising from the seemingly inevitable fate of our planet. Out of this work comes a new-found confidence and empowerment. In the UK workshops similar to this are offered through networks like my own, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. The latter is currently offering the services of facilitators to any radical organisation which would like to get started on the inner work, and we are already getting some takeup.

For most people to be able to keep up their inner work group support is essential– meditation, therapy, counselling and interpersonal skills groups, affinity and working groups. When tuned up, the small group can be a superb instrument for both the inner and the outer work. At present almost all discussion is about the situation *'out there'*. Our perceptions tend to be rational, abstract and answer seeking, with little time out to explore together how we really feel or how we can get in touch with specific and concrete situations beyond the conceptual *'policy'* world we easily mistake for reality. The well - worn grooves of intellectual business and social outgoing always conceal a lot of deep rooted stuff, organisationally as well as individually, that's worth exploring. Time is needed to identify what is hindering the group's effectiveness and detracting from members' well-being. No time ? Precisely ! The sense of being hassled by time is itself a prime subject for inner work...

Some years ago a study of the German Green movement by Frijtof Capra and Charlene Spretnak noted failure to develop 'structures and processes that encourage bonding and conflict resolution: that is, to align their own actions with the cultural values expressed in the programmes . The picture was one of lack of mutual trust, overloaded programmes and too little time to work through to real consensus. At the larger organisational level it is desirable to build in procedures and structures which encourage dialogue, mutual understanding, flexibility, trust, conflict resolution, consensus building, and positive discrimination for minority views. Conventional conference procedures seem designed to achieve the opposite of these goals, though in the Green Party conferences the Other Ways of Working (OWOW) are already beginning to make an impact. Periodically the clock needs to be stopped to make space to check out how things are really going. What people are feeling as well as saying and what roles are being played out (e.g. female/male). One day we will realise

that the process is as important as the *content*.

So, in public campaigning the impression made by the 'tactics' is no less important than the policies and demands. The medium is the message. What kind of people are these Greens ? Just politicians like the rest ? What kind of language do they use ? How do they do their opponents ? The answers to these questions are what will really spell out whether the Greens have a radically different politics or just different policies. We need to break out of a certain political tradition. Avoidance of the cult of personality is a start, but many more positive opportunities still await us.

The ultimate outer expression of the inner work is positive and creative nonviolence. It will not be effective if it is a mere technique. It can only be effective if it is the natural campaigning style of nonviolent people who have done the work on their own anger, fear and violence. Creative nonviolence maintains real communication with the adversary which shows appreciation of his attitudes, fears—and humanity.

If we can sincerely do this then we have already taken a huge step towards a Green society. (But Gandhi and other pioneers always emphasised that we should not compromise our basic principles, which might well require escalating increasingly severe sanctions and pressures against an adversary).

Ken Jones



Preserving and Cherishing the Earth : An Appeal for Joint Commitment in Science and Relgion

The Earth is the birthplace of our species and, so far as we know, our only home. When our numbers were small and our technology feeble, we were powerless to influence the environment of our world. But today, suddenly, almost without anyone noticing, our numbers have become immense and our technology has achieved vast, even awesome, powers. Intentionally, or inadvertently, we are now able to make devastating changes in the global environment—an environment to which we and

all the other beings with which we share the Earth are meticulously and exquisitely adapted.

We are now threatened by self-inflicted, swiftly moving environment alterations about whose long-term biological and ecological consequences we are still painfully ignorant-- depletion of the protective ozone layer; a global warming unprecedented in the last 150 millennia; the obliteration of an acre of forest every second; the rapid-fire extinction of species; and the prospect of a global nuclear war which would put at risk most of the population of the Earth. There may well be other such dangers of which, in our ignorance, we are still unaware. Individually and cumulatively they represent a trap being set for the human species, a trap we are setting for ourselves. However principled and lofty (or naive and shoursighted) the justifications may have been for the activities that brought forth these dangers, separately and together they now imperil our species and many others. We are close to committing—many would argue we are already committing—what in religious language is sometimes called *Crimes against Creation.*

By their very nature these assaults on the environment were not caused by one political group or any one generation. Intrinsically, they are transnational, transgenerational and transideological. So are all conceivable solutions. To escape these traps requires a perspective that embraces the peoples of the planet and all the generations yet to come.

Problems of such magnitude, and solutions demanding so broad a perspective must be recognized from the outset as having a religious as well as a scientific dimension. Mindful of our common responsibility, we scientists—many of us long engaged in combatting the environmental crisis —urgently appeal to the world religious community to commit, in word and deed, and as boldly as is required, to preserve the environment of the Earth.

Some of the short-term mitigations of these dangers—such as greater energy efficiency, rapid banning of chlorofluorocarbons or modest reductions in the nuclear arsenals—are comparatively easy and at some level are already underway. But other, more far reaching, more long-term,is more effective approaches will encounter widespread inertia, denial, and resistance. In this category are conversion from fossil fuels to a nonpolluting energy economy, a continuing swift reversal of the nuclear arms race, and a voluntary halt to world population growth—without which many of the other approaches to preserve the environment will be nullified.

As on issues of peace, human rights and social justice, religious institutions can here too be a strong force encouraging national and international initiatives in both private and public sectors, and in the diverse worlds of commerce, education, culture and mass communication.

The environmental crisis requires radical changes not only in public policy, but also in individual behavior. The historical record makes clear that religious teaching, example, and leadership are powerfully able to influence personal conduct and commitment.

As scientists, many of us have had profound experiences of awe and reverence before the universe. We understand that what is regarded as sacred is more likely to be treated with care and respect. Our planetary home should be so regarded. Efforts to safeguard and cherish the environment need to be infused with a vision of the sacred. At the same time, a much wider and deeper understanding of science and technology is needed. If we do not understand the problem, it is unlikely we will be able to fix it. Thus, there is a vital role for both religion and science.

We know that the well-being of our planetary environment is already a source of profound concern in your councils and congregations. We hope this *Appeal* will encourage a spirit of common cause and joint action to help preserve the Earth.

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from ***Global Forum of Spiritual & Parliamentary Leaders of Human Survival***

Selfishness the Cause of ENVIRONMENT DESTRUCTION



A prominent Buddhist scholar and well-known preacher, Phra Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has voiced criticisms that people who cut down trees or destroy forests and other parts of the natural environment are not *"genuine Buddhists"* and are Buddhists just in name.

Forests across Thailand and the globe have been destroyed by people whom he said were all *"selfish"*. Even Suan Mokh Temple (his forest monastery in Chaiya district of the southern province of Surat Thani) had not escaped this selfish greed, the monk said.

At present, capitalists, workers and those who are neither capitalists nor workers are selfish. This attitude leads directly to environmental destruction and the ensuing problems of atmospheric, oceanic, and other pollution.

Venerable Buddhadasa refused to blame increasing population pressures for the destruction of the environment. *"Selfishness, which is a type of greed, is the chief culprit,"* he said.

"Human beings from every level (of society) including the rich, the poor and the middle classes know selfishness, and this selfishness leads them to destroy nature and environment" he said.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, or Phra Dhammakosajarn according to his monastic rank, made these statements in a speech on Buddhism and the environment given last Sunday to a group of some 100 foreign and local lay people and monks at Suan Mokh Temple .

The elderly monk, 84, was invited to give the unprepared sermon by the Bangkok-based co-organisers—the Santi-

Pracha Dhamma Institute and the Komol Kheemthong Foundation at a five-day seminar on Buddhist religion and ecology held at the temple.

Buddhadasa commented that when he originally looked for a location to found Suan Mokh some 50 years ago, a stream—deep enough to cover an elephant—cut through the forest in which the monastery was later built.

Now that stream is almost impossible to find—only a few puddles remain. *"The place was full of water but now we have to dig wells,"* he said.

Although environmentalists have heaped praise on the forest monasteries for their efforts to protect indigenous trees and species of increasingly rare animals, the monasteries have not been immune to the destruction taking place beyond their walls.

"Our forests were destroyed by economics, by the planting of rubber trees that came from Malaysia. But, no matter how many rubber trees you plant you can never replace the natural forests.

"We wanted the villagers to live in forests but they couldn't resist the temptation to cut trees down because they wanted more land on which to grow the commercial rubber trees." he said.

Suan Mokh and dozens of other monasteries around Thailand have applied Buddhist principles to protect their immediate environment but have had less success in translating their beliefs to the villages. The result is denuded plains and mountain sides with dried-out creek beds and waterfalls, the monk said.

Modernisation of science and technology has caused mankind to become more selfish, Buddhadasa said.

"Now we have lots of progress, and all this progress makes more opportunities for selfishness. But the Buddhist doesn't blindly try and change the results," he said

But how does one apply Buddhist doctrines to the fight to preserve the environment which, in a Buddhist country like Thailand, is deteriorating at an alarming rate ?

According to Buddhadasa, genuine Buddhists should preserve the environment at both the mental and physical levels.

Buddhadasa said there are two kinds of nature: the inner mental nature, or *dhamma dhatu,* and the physical nature which arises from phenomena.

"If we understand that the mental nature controls the physical nature then we can understand how nature works".

"By preserving the inner mental nature people can effectively prevent the rising of the ego or their selfish nature and nothing will prompt them to go out and destroy the forests," Buddhadasa said.

Returning to environmental destruction in India, Buddhadasa noted that the environmentally-ravaged subcontinent has one tremendous advantage over Thailand which is heading down the same path.

"If we compare Thailand with India, there are more forest here. But now we are less able to protect the trees. India, however, has the Himalayas to the north and a mountain range in the south that provide huge volumes of water while Thailand has nothing".

To remind people of the importance of nature, Buddhadasa urged that the Thai word for nature, *thammachaat* (*dhammajati* in the ancient Pali language used for monastic texts), be used in preference to the English word which, he said, does not have the same meaning for Thais.

The monk said *thammachaat* has four important aspects: everything that emerges from nature or the body of all things in the world, laws of nature, duties that arise out of nature, and results that come from those duties.

"All these aspects of ***thammachaat*** *are within ourselves. Our bodies have their physical manifestation, laws, duties and results. The world outside our body also embodies the four aspects of* ***thammachaat***" Buddhadasa said.

In order to remove selfishness, the monk advised all Buddhists to clearly understand the inner and outer nature which is but the law of nature, or the Buddhist doctrine of *paticca-samuppada*—which states that all things are dependent and all things that arise in the world are dependent on other things and other conditions.

"If this Law of Paticca-samuppada is clear in our heart and if we experience this law of causation clearly, then it would be absolutely impossible for any ego or selfishness to arise," he said.

He also urged people to live above and try to be free

from what he called positiveness and negativeness in order that they may better prevent selfishness from arising.

But, Buddhadasa said, selfishness among mankind appears to have increasing, and shows no signs of relenting, the monk said.

"It's pitiful that the chickens at Suan Mokh are no more selfish than they were one thousand years ago, but we human beings are much more selfish and the results are becoming painfully obvious," Buddhadasa said.

"Even the UNO (United Nations *Organization*) *cannot agree on things; even there you can find selfishness,* he said.

Buddhadasa said the solution would be to scrap the UN and replace it with the United Religions Organization (URO).

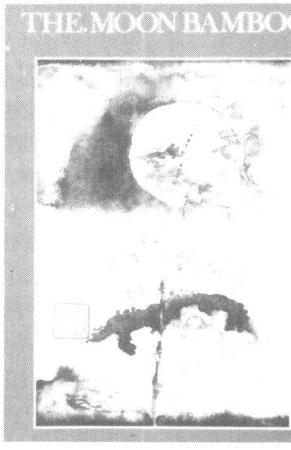
"All religions seek an end to selfishness, so let's get the religions involved and give them a proper role and the other things will work themselves out. When we are slaves to selfishness there's no way we hope for peace," he said.

Thailand, meanwhile, needs a Ministry of Religion to supervise all other ministries. But, Buddhadasa said, it would be difficult to find a suitable minister to run the religious ministry.

" Once Buddhists are genuine Buddhists who seriously and sincerely follow religious teachings, then we'll be able to conserve nature. And as long as we all have selfishness more forest destruction cannot be prevented," Buddhadasa concluded.

Sommatr Noimarerng
The Nation,March 7,1990

Thich Nhat Hanh, THE MOON BAMBOO. Translated from the Vietnamese by Vo-Dinh Mai and Mobi Ho. Illustration by Vo-*Dinh Mai. Berkeley, California : Parallax Press, 1989, 180 pp.*



Recently, Liv Ulman, the movie star turned activist, invited Mrs.Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, to come visit the boat people in Hong Kong. The invitation came with one condition, that this visit should be made by Mrs. Thatcher, not as a Prime Minister, but as a woman and a mother. It was hoped that such a visit would create a new perspective on the situation, and perhaps a new hope for the people. It remains to be seen whether Mrs. Thatcher will respond to the challenge or not, and whether that crucial distinction could be made.

Thich Nhat Hanh's **The Moon Bamboo** is also a new challenge for the world to see the Vietnamese situation from a different and more humane perspective. **The Moon Bamboo** is a collection of four romantic short stories, written in the style of a fairy tale. Each of the four stories, *"The Stone Boy", "A Lone Pink Fish", "The Moon Bamboo"* and *"Peony Blossoms",* is a combination of tragic facts of life of the Vietnamese people and a storehouse of fairy-tale-like imagination. In the first story, *"The Stone Boy",* one reads about the tragic fate of a Vietnamese peasant family whose father died in the war, whose mother was lost in a village ambush and whose daughter was blinded by a chemical bomb. The story centers around the little girl's search for her mother together with the *"Stone Boy"* who one day *"came down"* from the high mountains being attracted by the sad sound of the little girl's flute. The bond of friendship between them is very touching and the miracle at the end of the story attests to the author's message of hope.

The second story, *"A Lone Pink Fish",* is basically a collection of firsthand accounts of the fates of many boat people who left Vietnam out of necessity, only to encounter more danger at sea. The pink fish is one of the survivors who lost her younger brother and her mother during their trip at sea. Through a miracle, she becomes

a fish who takes upon herself the task of a Bodhisattva for other boat people. The story recounts episodes of violence, rapes, plunders and deaths these people have to face at sea. It also tells a tale of hope about a boat called the Shantisuk which poses as a fishing boat to save people. This boat is operated by eight persons, all of whom are disciples of a spiritual master living in Doi Suthep in northern Thailand. Again, *"A Lone Pink Fish"* is another story of hope against despair, of miracle in a sea of misery.

The third story, *"The Moon Bamboo"*, is a *"Cinderella"* story with the leading girl, an orphan, being abused by her aunt and her two cousins. Through her patience and good deeds she is rewarded with true love from two men, one on earth and the other on the moon. Fate has it that she belongs to both men and bears them children. The conflicts between her two families intensify until at one point she attempts to commit suicide. Miraculously she survives and, in the end, symbolically through her, earth and the moon become one though they remain separate. This is a truly touching story and seems to touch on several themes which are more universal than the Vietnamese situation itself.

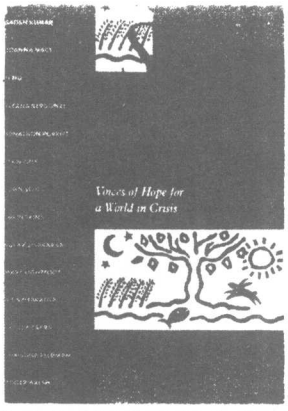
The last story, *"Peony Blossoms"*, is about a Vietnamese scientist living in France who has to go through painful realization of the limit of his science when his only son is at the edge of death. After hours of tortuous ordeal, the scientist father came to the realization that "To exist mean to live in the totality of time with no beginning and no end. If there is no past, then there is no present or future. If there is no futute, there is no present or past. Birth and death are conventional expressions, but they obscure the vision of a total reality which has never been born and will never die." It is interesting to see how the Buddhist vision of radical interrelatedness of all time and all beings has become a source of metaphysical consolation for a father with a dying son.

If one takes the boy in this story to represent the future of the Vietnamese people (or even the future of mankind), one might see that when the future is in crisis, it is the religious believer (the boy's mother), and the artist (the boy's uncle) rather than the scientist (the boy's father) who seem much better equipped to cope with the ordeal.

This book is a beautiful combination of facts and fantasy. As stated in the introduction, "Blending fiction and non-fiction, imaginary characters in Thich Nhat Hanh's stories weave through the lives and experiences of actual persons. In *"The Stone Boy"*, accounts of attacks on village conditions,in prison camps, and the plight of children wandering in search of their parents are based on actual events or were told firsthand." On top of these tragic facts, Thich Nhat Hanh charms the reader with images of a stone which turns into a boy, magic dew drops which heal blindness, a bamboo tree which grows up to the moon, a girl who turns into a pink fish, a golden bird which comes to lead the way for small children who are looking for their parents. All these point to a very relevant issue of the *"truth"* of these stories. But perhaps a distinction between facts and fantasy should not be so readily made, particularly when the *"reality"* of daily living does not make sense. When a war causes so much suffering for so many innocent people, maybe fairy tales are the only stories with any logic. When senseless suffering is normal for so many innocent people, when families disintegrate in an instant, a fantastic rendering of their situation will make it all the more tragic. But fantasy also creates a chance for hope through images of beauty and innocence which are abundant in all these stories.

Noteworthy, too, is the sense of sound which permeates the stories, ranging from the songs of a flute, the children's voices, the song from the golden bird, the chanting of sutras, to the sound of nature itself. All these help create a deep feeling of tragic peace and woeful consolation throughout the book. Some people might say that this book is just an escapist's way out of unbearable sorrow. They are right. But is is also right to feel the need for love and faith, for magic and hope, to heal the wound and to have fantastic dreams amid a sea of suffering. I highly recommend this book for everybody who still has heart enough to feel, and particulary for those who already lack one. This book is about the Vietnamese ordeal, it is also about all of us.

Suwanna Satha-anand



Spirit for Change: Voices of Hope for a World in Crisis by Christopher Titmuss, Green Print, 1989

The reputation of Christopher Titmuss as a meditation teacher, facilitator and friend in matters spiritual, psychological and Green is worldwide; he practices what he preaches. Meditation teachers who are campaigning Parliamentary candidates are not all that common...

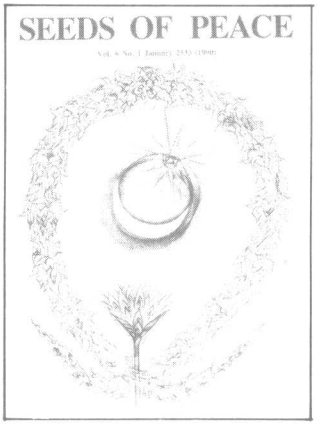
This book consists of interviews with 14 spiritually informed men and women from around the world. Each offers inspiration and guidance about how we can live in active and generous compassion for our planet and all its creatures. The interviews are divided into four sections: inner awareness; attitudes towards creatures and the planet; social action; psychology and change.

Inevitably, some of the interviews went off better than others. The magisterial U Nu, former Prime Minister of Burma, discoursing on the ins and outs of vipassana meditation, seems to have given Christopher a rather difficult time, for instance. On the other hand, two interviews with little-known people seemed particularly successful: With Fleana Bergon Zi of Italy, dying of cancer; and with Mary Lightfoot, an independent social worker in Bihar, India. The same goes for interviews with Joanna Macy and Christina Feldman, which unfolded purposively, crisply and systematically.

The unavoidable unevenness, however, is more than offset by the spontaneity, freshness and variety of such an interview presentation. Jonathon Porritt is always worth reading, especially on Green spirituality. The interview with animal rights campaigner Jean Pink ends up with a lively to and fro on the value (or lack of it) of gurus and of making one's self-transcendence first and foremost. Jim Perkins provides a racy account of the American Plowshares action against nuclear warheads, and how people reacted to the savage prison sentences that were handed out. He is followed by Sulak Sivaraksa on the religion of consumerism. Other contributors include Satish Kumar, John Seed, A.T. Ariyaratne, Fritjof Capra and Roger Walsh.

I found this book a lively and inspiring read. Old-timers will discover it to be a useful refresher; to new comers it offers a rounded and varied introduction to socially engaged spirituality generally and to engaged Buddhism in particular.

Ken Jones
Buddhist Peace Fellowship
Newsletter Winter , 1990



The first copy of 1990s Seeds of Peace, a prime journal which is produced three times annually by Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD), is now available. To let it escape Bookmarker's mentioning would be to tip those readers interested in the issues of peace and other peace - related topics off balance.

The journal is divided into eight major sections. Under "Human Rights Issues", seven high powered articles are offered, ranging from human rights abuse in Burma and Tibet to violence in Sri Lanka. This section is followed by "Socially-engaged Buddhism", "Inter-Religious Interaction", "The Environment", "Book Reviews", "For the Records" "Recommended Reading" and "Letters" respectively.

"For the Records", includes the full text a speech by His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet who in October last year was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Stating that he accepts the Nobel Peace Prize" in a spirit of optimism despite the many grave problems which humanity faces today", the Dalai Lama stresses that "freedom" which is a "real source of human beings" should be allowed to flourish, and this alone can "genuinely stabilise the international climate".

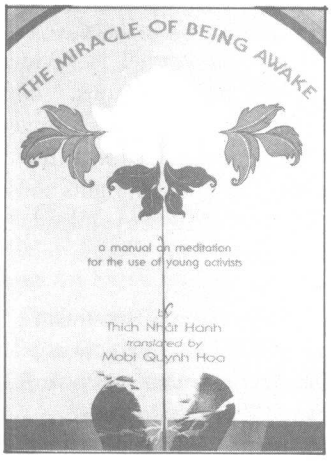
According to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, during the past 40 years over a million Tibetans "perished and more the 6,000 monasteries were destroyed", since the country has been "sealed off" and a "systematic effort to crush the spirit and national identity of the Tibetan people is being pursued by the Government of the People's Republic (of China)."

The journal can be obtained from TICD, Tel 437-9445 at a "suggested minimum donation" of US$10 per annum. The

fantastic drawing which appears on the cover is by one of Thailand's eminent artists, Angkarn Kalayanapongse and is itself worth the price alone.

GAP

Bangkok Post, January, 1990



Thich Nhat Hanh's book; ***The Miracle of Being Awake*** .a soothing timeless essence.

"When your mind is liberated, your heart floods with compassion. Compassion for yourself, for having undergone countless sufferings because you were yet able to relieve yourself of false views, hatred, ignorance and anger. Compassion for others because they do not yet see and so are still imprisoned by false views, hatred and ignorance, and continue to create suffering for themselves and others..."

This quote comes from revered Vietnamese monk/ philosopher Thich Nhat Hanh's book; ***The Miracle of Being Awake***.It's most unfortunate that this excellent publication escaped publicity when it was first published in Thailand sometime last year. Reading it recently, I realised I had blundered by letting it slip by unnoticed.

There's so much merit in this publication which has been translated from Vietnamese that despite the lateness in introduction, its timeless essence will serve to soothe one's soul in any case. Being "awake" is to be "mindful", and to be mindful doesn't mean one should be dominated by the distinction between what's good or evil. Doing that, says Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, will only "create battle within yourself"

In other words, you don't have to try too hard to get rid of evil or dwell on it -"to acknowledge it is enough"

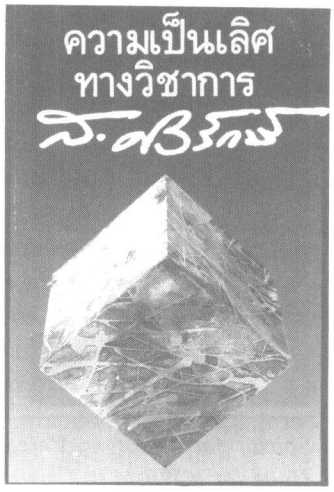
It's not really as confusing as it sounds. In fact when it comes down to it, the teachings are rather scientific. "Breathe in peace, breathe out happiness" as Archarn Sulak Sivaraksa often says. Like, perhaps, when you see your own reflection in the mirror , you can't expect it to smile at you if you don't in the first place.

This book was published by the International Network of Engaged Buddhists last year, but has previously been translated into Thai and has gone through a few reprintings. For those who have missed it, here's your chance. At 120 baht a copy at "Suksit Siam" bookshop on Rama IV Road, or in other leading bookshops in the Metropolis.

A blurb on the front cover says that this book is a "manual on meditation for the use of young activists". I presume the word "activists" in this regard refers to modern active people who don't especially have any time left for one another considering the ratrace kind of life they have to be in. For them, the chapter on " Thirty two Exercises to Practise Mindfulness" which offers ways to practise mindfulness, is highly recommended. Happy breathing

GAP

Bangkok Post, February 11, 1990



Kwaam Pen Lert Tang Vichakarn (Academic Excellence)... challenges western philosophers.

One may be drawn to leaf through this book in the first place because of its author. Sulak Sivaraksa's name is like a trigger to stimulate people's curiosity. An outspoken and fearless critic, Sulak always manages to provoke reaction in people, be it positive or negative, as his views have often been designed for further debate.

In his most recent book, ***Kwaam Pen Lert Tang Vichakarn*** (Academic Excellence), Sulak, who celebrates his birthday today, may yet set off another sparkling debate amongst some students of Western philosophy. He challenges some Western thinkers like Descartes, Francis Bacon. and Isaac Newton as to whether their academic excellence, which was once a model for later generations, has in fact been truly beneficial to mankind.

In his opinion, the author doesn't seem to think that these philosophers and scientists have contributed to either human race or nature when all things have been considered. Their own lives in the end also proved that they failed as human beings themselves. Bacon, says Sulak, died

from pneumonia like the mouse that he had stuffed with snow. Newton, ended up fighting with everyone because he "didn't use his heart in making friends". And Descartes, with his egito ergo sum (I think therefore I am) proposition no longer gave the heart and soul any importance. The rational mind was all.

The author supports his argument that the Western kind of "academic excellence" has created a thinking system which destroyed both human qualities and nature. One example he uses, which occurs in our own rural areas, is the "centralisation" scheme which through different processes, makes religion become the Government's tool.

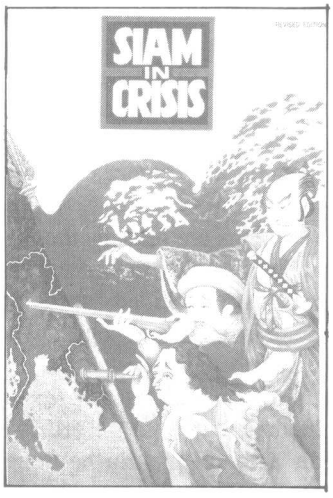
Other famous names which come under discussion include Schumacher, John Mill and John Locke.

Naturally enough, the author offers an alternative approach to the pursuit of academic excellence that which is done in a Buddhistic way. "Self- deveopment is the path toward excellence in a Buddhistic sense", says Sulak. But in Thailand, this is difficult to attain. Five major causes, according to the author, prevent it from happening. Most important of all is "selfishness" writes Sulak: " The less selfish one is, the brighter one's intellect shines. One doesn't have to have an exceptional brain, but one can still attain excellence..."

Not surprisingly, Sulak will find plenty of people to disagree with what he has to say in his latest book. But that is unimportant. Sulak is a Thai version of the Western electric cattle prodmore humane, more elegant but just as stimulating.

GAP

Bangkok Post, March 25, 1990



SIAM IN CRISIS

Another marvellous read which non-Thai readers can also benefit due to both the essence and language in which the book is written is Sulak Sivaraksa's revised edition of ***Siam In Crisis*** . The book , which appeared in its first edition in 1980, was released only a week ago.

The timing is right for the second edition, or so the author feels, reasoning that the year of publication (1989) happens to be the fiftieth anniversary "since the name Thailand was imposed on us by the dictatorial regime of P. Pibulsongkram."

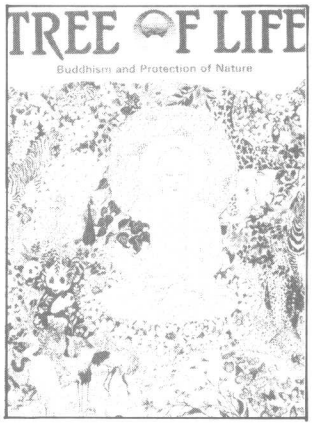
Whether or not Siam is in crisis is an important issue to the author who's adamant in his belief that the change of name from "Siam" to "Thailand" is in itself the first crisis because "the name Thailand signifies the crisis of traditional Siamese Buddhist values" and thus "removing from the nation the name it has carried all its life is in fact the first step in the psychic dehumanisation of its citizens..."

Sulak indicates in his Notes from the Author that despite the passing years since the book was first published the view he holds on his country and the region "has not changed significantly." While the society is benifitting from economic progress which seems to be one aspect that may have "changed" , what about others? Study S.Sivaraksa's viewpoints on topics such as " On Southeast Asian Modernization," or " The Religion of Consumerism," or his "Arguments for Real World Development : a Buddhist Perspective."

Sulak remains unbent and unswerving in his vision. As Siam sags under the mantle of Western materialism, NIC-dom almost within our grasp, his call continues to remind us of alternative paths. ***Siam In Crisis*** will prick your conscience. If you haven't read it , buy it.

GAP

Bangkok Post , January, 1990



TREE OF LIFE is a book of superior quality in both design and content terms. Printed in three languages – English , Tibetan and Thai –the book is a joint effort of many institutions, organizations and individuals who are committed to a "new perspective for conservation education."

The "new" perspectives involves Lord Buddha's teachings in relation to nature preservation. "Buddhism and Protection of Nature", thus , is the theme of the book which mainly comprises three articles by Dr. Nay Htun, Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh and

writer Nancy Nash . A pioneer in international conservation , Sir Peter Scott, introduces the book whilst His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso the Dalai Lama of Tibet touches briefly on " An Ethical Approach to Environmental Protection."

Dr.Chatsumarn's article on "How Buddhism Can Help Protect Nature" is incisive and very interesting. As usual, this Thammasat University scholar demonstrates her points convincingly. Buddha talked about environmental preservation 2,500 years ago. "Centuries before contamination of the earth's water would be the widespread threat to health and life that it is today," writes Dr.Chatsumarn, "Lord Buddha set down rules forbidding pollution of water resources. Even detailed description of how a toilet should be built were provided , specifically to protect a healthy environment."

Buddhist literature, as a matter of fact , also shows the "mutual relation and interdependence of humankind and wildlife", Dr.Chatsumarn professes, saying that many of the earth's most famous animals appear in the Buddha's teachings. The point , says she , is "compassion and loving kindness." Other examples of teachings are related- the discoveries of which, the writer confesses, have provided "shocking reminders of how much we have lost of the natural world." By bringing Buddha's teachings to light , the author expects that they'll be an "active element in the proper conservation of the natural environment."

The article by Dr.Nay Htun, former professor of Environmental Engineering at the Asian Institute of Technology and at one time United Nations, Environment Programme Director for Asia, concentrates on "The State of the Environment Today : the Needs for Tomorrow." In this highly informative essay, that's supported by strong scientific evidence, the author offers a "brief overview" of the state of the air, water, soil and forests, the so-called "acid rain", the "greenhouse" effects, and so on. He also offers advice to correct the degradation and measures to promote "sustainable development."

In his conclusion, Dr. Htun advocates ethical principles to solve the problems following Buddha's teachings. The need for today and tomorrow therefore, is "for the individual to be aware of the fundamental importance of environmental ethics and practice them."

This indeed is a great publication. If you would like to acquire a copy try calling UNEP at 282-9161. Since the aim of the publisher, "***Buddhist Perception of Nature***", is to reach as many people as possible, securing a copy should hopefully present no problem. This may well be the best "Earth Day" gift to yourself, your family and friends.

GAP

Bangkok Post, April 22, 1990.

The Social Face of Buddhism — An Approach to Political and Social Activism; Ken Jones; Wisdom Publications, London, 1989.

As a long time social activist in the Western tradition and with only a modest acquaintance with Buddhism, I was stimulated by the writer's analysis of Buddhist ideas in relation to the human condition and his often provocative discussion of socially engaged Buddhism today. Buddhist social activism-- "engaged Buddhism" -- is not some new kind of Buddhism but the logical extension of traditional Buddhist teachings of morality and compassion to contemporary conditions.

I found especially interesting Ken Jones' rough sketches of a Buddhist theory of society for today and his discussion and ideas of the essentials for Buddhist social activism.

This well-written volume is not easily digested in one reading. It can serve as the basis for dialogue between social activists rooted in Buddhist tradition and thought and Western social activism rooted in a loose mix of the Christian and the secular. Both groups could profit from such an exchange.

George Willoughby

Buddhism Today- A Collection of Views from Contemporary Scholars; Pub. The Institute of Oriental Philosophy, 236 Tangi-cho I-chome Hachioji, Tokyo, Japan. 1990. Yen 1,600.

With essays by Western thinkers and scholars connected with Buddhism, this book seeks to provide non-Buddhits with an increased understanding of Buddhism and to provide Buddhists with a new perspective on the contemporary aspects of its spread.

Buddhist Peace Fellowship Newsletter; Published by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, P.O.Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704, USA.

Newsletter of the American Buddhist Peace Fellowship which details their activities and provides information on Buddhist issues around the world with which the BPF is concerned.

Buddhist-Christian Studies; Journal published by the University of Hawaii Press, Journals Department, 2840 Kolowalu St., Honolulu, HI 96822-1888, USA.

Articles, book reviews , and news items on Buddhism and Christianity, exploring their interrelation both in regards to historical research and contemporary practice. Published yearly.

Crossroads--An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies; Published by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University , Dekalb, IL 60115, USA. Twice yearly $US 10.00.

Scholarly journal for the disciplinary and regional interests of all Southeast Asianists.

Dawn News Bulletin; Published by the All Burma Students' Democratic Front, P.O.Box 1352 GPO, Bangkok 10500, Thailand.

Newsletter which details the actions of the ABSDF and ethnic minorities who oppose the military regime in Burma and are working towards its reformation.

Dhamma; Ed. Acharya Buddharakkhita, 14 First Main Rd., Gandhinagar, Bangalore-560 009.

A monthly devoted to ethics, values and Buddhist culture.

Ethics of Environment and Development--Global Challenge, International Response; J. Ronald Engel and Joan Gibb Engel, eds. The University of Arizona Press, 1230 N. Park Ave,., Tucson, AZ 85719. $US 29.95

A collection of essays from a wide range of sources criticizing the current practice of nonsustainable development and examining the possibilities of creating an ethic of sustainable development.

Evolution/Liberation ; ed. Santikaro Bhikkhu, c/o Suan Mokkhabalarama Amphor Chaiya, Surat Thani 84110, Thailand.

Occasional newsletter of Wat Suan Mokh, providing information of the Wat's activities, new translation of Ven. Buddhadasa's work, and informing readers about Dhamma practice.

The Faith to Doubt--Glimpses of Buddhist Uncertainty; by Stephen Batchelor, Parallax Press, P.O.Box 7355, Berkley, CA 94707, 1990. $US10.00.

Book which examines the concepts of "Faith" and "Doubt" in relation to the context of Buddhism, specifically with regards to the author's Zen training in South Korea and Buddhism's encounter with the West.

Life and Work of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu; Documentary Video distributed by The Foundation for Children, 1492/3 Chareon-Nakorn Rd., Klongsarn, Bangkok 10600, Thailand.

English language video presenting an interesting and informative account of the history and thought of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, the prominent Thai Theravada thinker.

Popular Buddhism in Siam and other Essays on Thai Studies; by Phya Anuman Rajadhon. Bangkok: Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development / Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation (Dist. by Suksit Siam, 1715 Rama IV Rd., Bangkok 10500, Thailand), 1986. $US10.00.

Zygon--Journal of Religion and Science; Published by Joint Publishing Board of Zygon, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida 32789, USA.

A quarterly journal which explores ways to unite religious wisdom and modern science.

The Dalai Lama : A Biography ; by Claude B. Levenson. Translated by Stephen Cox (Unwin & Hyman) London 1988 14-95 ponds, a fascinating book.

Essays on Cultural Thailand ; by Phya Anuman Rajadhon (Office of the National Cultural Commission) Bangkok 1990- an interesting book.

Dharma Gaia : A Harvest of Essays on Buddhism and Ecology ; Foreward by H.H. Dalai Lama . Edited by A.H. Badiner (Parallax Press) Berkeley, Cal. $ 15.00

Theology for the Third Millenium : An Ecumenical View ; by Hans Kung (Double day) New York $ 24.95.

Thailand Editions Autrement Editor : Guido Franco, (Paris) 1990.

Asian Buddhist Congress meets in Sri Lanka

The inaugural session of the Asian Buddhist Congress was held March 22-27 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. With membership from most Asian countries, the Congress will work to preserve and spread Buddhist values and peace throughout Asia and the world.

Forum for Justice and Peace in Sri Lanka to be held

At Suan Nong Nuch Resort, Pattaya, Thailand will be the site of the World Solidarity Forum on Sri Lanka for Justice and Peace on May 8-10, 1990. The aims of this forum are :

1. To build world solidarity primarily to support the initiatives taken within Sri Lanka towards the fulfillment of peace, justice, and human rights.
2. To explore a process of building possible consensus.
3. To identify areas of future collective action.
4. To build understanding of human rights and promote solidarity work with regard to human rights realities.
5. To note areas of agreement and disagreement.
6. To broaden, strengthen and inspire the international network on Sri Lankan issues.

Represented at the conference will be members of involved political groups, human rights groups, development agencies, religious organizations and other concerned individuals. To be held in Thailand because of the political difficulties in Sri Lanka itself and the historical links between the two countries, groups connected with the forum will visit Sri Lanka itself both before and afterwards-a visitation programme on May 4-6 and a Peace Mission on May 12-14. It is hoped that this will be a strong step towards achieving justice and peace in Sri Lanka.

PHA PA FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN SRI LANKA

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF
THE SUPREME PATRIARCH

Professor Prawase Wasi , M.D. , Chairman of the Laymen Board Committee Members of the "Pha Pa for Peace and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka" disclosed that Somdej Phra Nyanasamvara ,the Supreme Patriarch ,has kindly agreed to be the Patron of the Pha Pa which is scheduled to be presented at Wat Bovornnives Vihara in Bangkok, on Sunday, June 17, 1990 at 2.30 p.m.

(The Pha Pa ceremony was formerly arranged as Forest Robes to provide basic necessity for the monks who refused extra robes but only rags or robes thrown away in the forests, which has been adapted later to also raise funds for temples or activities of the monks' communities).

The intention and objectives of this Pha Pa ceremony are to raise funds in order to support bhikkhus and laymen who are affected by the current conflict in Sri Lanka. Many thousands of innocent people, bhikkhus, laymen, children, were killed or badly injured. Many have to fly away from their own country, etc.

Because religious ties between Sri Lanka and Thailand went back over a thousand years ago, and many historic relationships between the two countries urges the committee board members, the concern over the destruction of our neighbouring countrymen. Thus the "Pha Pa" is aimed to raise funds, lending hands for both moral and monetary supports for those who need help in Sri Lanka and for those residing in Thailand as well , in the hope that the tradition of exchange and understanding would continue for the mutual benefit of the two nations.

The organizing committee setting up this "Pha Pa" ceremony consist of : The Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD); The Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute; The International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB); The Foundation for Children, together with many committee members from various fields voluntarily joined the efforts.

Charitable donors who wish to contribute to this worthwhile cause to help other suffering people can donate in a form of cash or check to TICD office, 124 Soi Wat Thongnoppakhun, Somdej ChaoPhya Road, Bangkok 10600, Thailand. Money order can be addressed to "Pha Pa for Peace and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka Project", c/o Klongsan postal office, Bangkok 10600. For additional information, please call Mrs.Nantana at TICD office, tels. 437-9445, 437-9450

MEDITATION FOR PEACE IN CAMBODIA

Our country of Cambodia has been greatly torn by strife, death and starvation. Our people have been turned on each other, and brother fights brother. The whole world supplies our people with guns to kill each other.

So the suffering of Cambodia has been deep. From this suffering comes great compassion. Great compassion makes a peaceful heart. A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person. A peaceful person makes a peaceful community. A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation and a peaceful world.

As Cambodian monks, we come as close as possible to the Cambodian leaders and offer meditation, prayer and silence, it is to offer a spiritual setting for peace, parallel to the political dialogue, it is to offer encouragement, it is to emphasize silence and listening and the middle path. We pray for peace, and end to the suffering and also for the freedom of our people, it is for all this we come to Jakarta, the wonderful promotor of *Pancasila(The five Peaceful-Coexistence Principles).*

May peace prevail in Cambodia.
May peace prevail in the World.

Cambodian Buddhist Monks

Ven.MAHA GHOSANANDA (U.S.A.) Ven. YOS HUT (Australia)

Ven.TOUCH SARITH
(France)

Death in the eyes of Tibetan Buddhists

What happens at the moment of death?

How does one feel ? And how can one prepare oneself for a graceful departure?

If there really is life after death, what must one do to ensure a better next life? And what to do to reunite ourselves with those we love?

These were among the questions which bombarded the Venerable Lama Ampoche Rinpoche, believed to be the fourth reincarnation of one of Tibet's holiest Lamas, when he gave a talk on "Death, Dying, and Rebirth" to a packed audience recently at Thammasat University.

Ordained at the age of three after selection as the reincarnation of Amchok Geshey Sonam Chopel who lived in the early 19th century, and having undergone intensive spirtual education, Ampoche Rinpohe has no problems tackling the age-old mystery according to Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

But the 46-year-old ascetic was quick to point out to his audience from the outset that although the understanding of the process of death can liberate us from fear of the unknown, it cannot help free us from the devastating grief of loss if we are still chained by emotional attachments to this present life.

Moreover, the belief in reincarnation based on one's longing for eternity can also pose a big obstacle to reducing one's greed and delusions.

Death and dying must, therefore, be understood under the universal rule of dependent origination in order to help one reduce one's attachment to self, without which one cannot attain the goal of Buddhism- that is the eradication of illusions and worldly desires.

Death, he said, is actually a process, not an abrupt independent incident.

"In a broader sense, aging is the process of dying,"he said. And death is but the link between lifetimes in one's spiritual journey to uproot greed, lust, and delusions.

In other words, there is no need to fear death. Every ending marks a new beginning. And death simply means the beginning of the next life to carry out the unfinished spiritual task.

"Buddhism teaches that our body is made of five elements, namely earth, water, wind, fire and space.

"Life is delicate and fragile. As long as these elements are in balance, we are considered well and healthy. Sickness occurs when they are out of harmony.

"In the normal process of death through sickness, one can notice the gradual dissolution of these elements.

"The earth element will dissolve into water first, then water into fire, and fire into air.

"At this stage, the dying will experience white and red light which will slowly become dimmer and dimmer until there is complete darkness and no experience of life.

"The person will feel as if fainting. When waking up (after fainting), there's a feeling of emptiness. That's what we call the experience of death."

A seasoned meditator can stay unperturbed for days in the deep stage of meditation while this physical dissolution of the body is going on, he said. During this meditative stage, the body will stay fresh and free of foul smell. One will know for sure that "consciousness" has left the body when there is liquid, white or red, coming out of the nose.

What happens next, he said, is that the

consciousness will be in the "intermediate stage", a form of energy which, with different time and space dimensions, can travel through any kind of earth substance until it is reborn.

He describes this consciousness as the aggregate of mind, feelings, memory, wisdom, and knowledge that continues through lifetimes until one attains enlightenment which ends the Wheel of Life.

Ampoche Rinpoche said the form of this energy depends on the form of rebirth it is going to take, which is in turn controlled by the power of one's particular past "karma" in previous life.

Each action in one's lifetime, he said, will be stored in one's consciousness and create a momentum so powerful as to take one to the next life.

How long it will take the consciousness to take its new form depends on the power of karma, he said, but the longest one stays in this transitory stage is 49 days.

During this period, the consciousness will change its form every seven days, which explains why the Chinese kongtek ceremony for the deceased is performed every seven days during this period.

Even for the Thai audience, among whom the concept of reincarnation is nearly universally accepted, many questions still remain.

If one's consciousness is needed for rebirth, why is it that the world is facing a problem of population explosion?

If there really is a previous life, why can't most of us remember it?

And if there really is a next life, how can we make sure that we are born a millionaire rather than ending up a stray dog?

The tall, serene, and soft-spoken monk answered with a tolerant smile but also with obvious caution, being aware of the dangers of over-simplification which can reduce the topic that may take an ascetic a lifetime to master to a farce in the eyes of sceptics.

Human beings, he said, are only one form on the various levels of life forms. The current population increase, therefore, is the result of the consciousness of other life forms taking the human one as a result of their karma power.

The reason that one forgets one's past life, he explained, is because the power of memory is tremendously disturbed and destroyed by the physical breakdown during death.

"This is probably why we can remember more after dreaming because the consciousness remains unbroken," he said." And it is also probably why the ones who die during deep meditative stage can remember more and can still relate to certain things in their previous life."

As to whether one is to be born a human being or a dog in one's next life, however, is not for him to answer as it is solely determined by one's individual deeds.

At the moment of death, he explains, certain karma will be stimulated to determine the form and condition of one's next life and any effort to change the course at that point in time is too late.

This does not mean, however, that one cannot prepare oneself for a favourable condition in one's next life to work towards the eradication of greed.

"One can stimulate the karma by will. In effect, Buddhism shows one the way to select and stimulate the karma that will lead to a better spiritual life," he said.

He said Buddhism divides Buddhist disciples into three categories: those who are concerned only about their own next lives, those concerned with freeing oneself from the Wheel of Life, and those concerned not only for themselves but for others.

What ever level, all need a good rebirth in order to purify their souls.

How then to seek a good rebirth?

In Thailand, where merit-making is taken to an extreme that it is seen as an "investment" to enjoy wealth in the next life, Ampoche Rinpoche's answer comes as a surprise.

Instead of talking about merit-making, he recommends detachment from this present life.

"Death is fearful and disturbing because one does not depart from this life. And the more one is attached to one's life, the more one tries to accumulate wealth and indulge in pleasures regardless of means.

"And once you commit non-virtue karma, this karma will stimulate another karma of the same nature. And the wheel goes on.

"We must then be aware that whatever enjoyment we may experience now is very short. The awareness of its impermanence will put us in a better position to judge things more wisely."

By contemplating death, one comes to realise that there is no such thing as "me" or "mine" since all things including ourselves are mere aggregates of other forces which are due to disintegrate, thus being transitory. This wisdom, he said, helps one to relate oneself to others rationally.

Take friendship, for example, he said.

"Everyone has friends. But when we know that friendship is short, one will not develop subtle emotions and attachment. So whatever happens, you will not be disappointed much.

"If you understand the nature of relationships, which is impermanence, you can judge more wisely because you will be less emotional.

"It's the same with our body and life; the realisation of impermanence will help us to have a better chance to choose the right karma, which will lead us to a good rebirth and which explains why we need to have a good understanding of death."

Sanitsuda Ekachai
Bangkok Post, February 6, 1990

Plans for Dalai Lama's visit ruffle Govt's China policy

A private invitation to Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, to visit Thailand has posed a serious dilemma for the Chatichai Government, should it risk offending China by allowing the visit or upset its own Buddhist people by stopping it?

The invitation was extended by a private Buddhist foundation for May to coincide with the 84th birthday of revered Buddhist monk Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.

Many Thais support the visit, but Thai officials are locked in debate over whether to allow it to go ahead and anger China, which says the Dalai Lama is a political activist trying to win support for Tibet's independence movement.

"The Dalai Lama is coming to Thailand as guest of a private organisation and not as a guest of the Government." China has no right to express opposition to this, the mass-circulation Thai-language daily ***Matichon*** said in an editorial on Tuesday.

The Thai government refused the Dalai Lama a visa three years ago on the grounds that his visit would damage Sino-Thai relations.

But newspapers reflected a growing sentiment that the Government should establish its policies independently.

"It is time that the (foreign) ministry demonstrated political courage and made its views clear on the Dalai Lama," the ***Bangkok Post*** said in March 30 editorial.

"We must take time to consider this sensitive issue," Deputy Foreign Minister Prapas Limpabandhu told reporters on Wednesday. The discussions were heightened by a visit to China last week by Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila.

The National Security Council held a meeting on Tuesday with other government agencies to debate the issue. Prapas said their findings had been submitted to Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan, who would make the final decision.

A senior government official who asked not to be named said on Wednesday that the answer would probably be no.

A spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok said: "We oppose the Dalai Lama visiting foreign countries in order to get support for his political activities. He is not just a religious figure, but a political one."

Asked whether relations between the two countries would be harmed if the visit was allowed to go ahead, the spokesman said: "We have not yet decided. Wait and see what happens."

The Dalai Lama, who to China's annoyance was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year, fled Tibet in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule. He has been living in exile in India ever since.

China uses Thailand as a conduit for arms to radical Khmer Rouge soldiers in their fight against the Vietnamese-backed government in Cambodia.

Some government advisers are keen to cut off arms supplies to the Khmer Rouge in response to international concern at the prospect of their return to power in Cambodia.

But diplomats say Thailand is not likely to do anything to jeopardise the tight trade and military ties between the two countries.

Trade between China and Thailand has been growing in recent years, reaching $1.1 billion in 1989. China was Thailand's sixth biggest trading partner.

The Government avoided taking part in the international condemnation of Peking after its bloody crackdown on pre-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square last June.

Denise Young
Reuter

from ***Bangkok Post***, April 6, 1990

Thai-China ties at crossroads

The invitation to the Dalai Lama to visit Thailand by a non-governmental organization and the controversy that has followed have once again put Thai Chinese relations under strain. The government has so far acted uncharacteristically, avoiding a decision on the issue although it can be dealt with promptly.

Despite earlier statements that the Nobel laureate would be allowed to visit Thailand, the Foreign Ministry backed off after M.R. Kukrit Pramoj came out to say that Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila should resign if a visa was issued. The ministry passed the buck on to theNational Security Council, which also proved incapable of making a decision on the matter. A new meeting, to be chaired by Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan, is slated to be held within the next two weeks.

It has become clear that this pattern of deferred policy making is an attempt by the government to make public pressure the determining factor in resolving the issue. There was an out cry from non-governmental organizations and the public when the Tibetan monk was denied entry in October 1987.

The decision then was enforced by the Foreign Ministry under the supervision of Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda, following on strong Chinese pressure.

It is just as clear that public opinion favours the Tibetan's visit, as Thais generally see him as a spiritual leader and a follower of their majority faith. His religious aura in any case is more apparent than his political cause. And so, it is as sure as the sun rising in the morning that the government will issue him a visa, and will be able to claim it was forced to do so by public pressure.

What is depressing is the way the controversy is being domesticated by certain parties for their own ends. Some have used it as a test of the true friendship between Thailand and China while others have made a pitch to Thai nationalism against the Chinese.

But this makes it apparent what the true issue is: Thai-Chinese relations are not what they used to be, contrary to the govern ment's statements and the perception of both nations' leaders. If they are not able to come to grips with this reality, the Dalai Lama's visit could set the tone for future Thai-Chinese relations, for good or for ill.

Whether or not the Dalai Lama ever appears on Thai soil, the controversy has already damaged bilateral ties, between the Thai government's indecisiveness. the pressure the Chinese govenment has once again been bringing to bear, and the latter's sensitivity to any hint of discussion about China's unity.

Both governments need to limit the damage rather than moving along in their familiar roles. The government must come out with a decision fast and the Chinese should stop lobbying officials and academics.

Though it is unlikely, if Thailand does bow to China's pressure once again, the repercussions for future relations will be disastrous. And the government knows it. It is now that Thailand needs to demonstrate its political finesse and independence.

The two countries can no longer rely on the good will of the past, or on the personal relations their leaders forged over the years. Indeed, if the current controversy is an indication, it is apparent that relations have already changed.

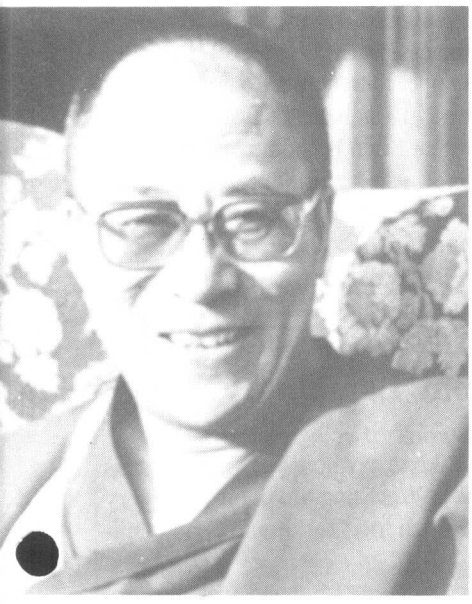
In the past, a matter as small as a visa for the Dalai Lama would not have had such implications. Bargaining is likely to get tougher between the two governments, and cooperation on a personal level is likely to become less common.

Bilateral ties have already been weakened by a series of issues about the Cambodian conflict, which ironically was one of major factors that brought good relations to their zenith in 1979.

The common position on Cambodia is wearing thin, not because Thailand and China are losing interest in one another, but because of how the two countries are reacting to developments within the region and the world.

Natuarally, Thailand must be more flexible, given its proximity to Cambodia as compared to a distant China. When Chatichai came to power, Beijing hoped he would further strengthen the ties he helped create under the Kukrit government. But its enthusiasm quickly evaporated into unspeakable frustrations over Thailand's new policy on Indochina.

As Thailand asserts its independence, trade and defence issues will also be likely to shake up the relationship. During a visit to China in March, Siddhi expressed Thailand's concern that



Beijing had failed to purchase150,000-300,000 tons of Thai rice and 50,000-100,000 tons of rubber as specified in a trade accord.

And sooner or later the Taiwan factor will make itself felt. Individually, there are more Taiwanese investors with interests in Thailand than Japanese. Taiwan's overall capital ranks second to Japan, leading the third placed United States.

It is no secret that the Far East Trade Office, "representing" the government of the Republic of China in Thailand, has gradually turned their economic presence into political pressure by asking for more recognition and cooperation. The office has already asked for an upgrade of its presence with a longer visa stay.

All things considered, the proposed visit of the Dalai Lama is just a prelude to a less stable future. It is time for Thailand and China to understand that there are limits to improving their relations. In the past, Thailand based its policy toward China on its antagonism with the Soviet Union and Vietnam. Now that has passed given changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and Vietnam's preoccupation with its internal affairs.

Still, Thailand cannot afford to lose China. In fact, no country can. Even after the Tienanmen massacre, Chatichai went to Beijing, giving implied support of Beijing's justification for the crackdown in the process. It is time Beijing comes to that kind of understanding in regards to Thailand's pending decision. Without any adjustment on the Chinese side, its will be done in by its persistence. But given China's strategic and geo-political interests in Thailand and vice-versa, both sides need a cool-headed reevaluation of relations.

Thailand is changing fast and the experience of new policy makers is different from their older colleagues. The younger generation does not personally identify with China, unlike some of our old guard, including academics, who have been blind to some extent when it came to seeing the real China. It is inevitable that some hard bargaining, based on equal relations, is needed for productive cooperation between the two countries in the future.

Kavi Chongkittavorn
from ***the Nation*** April 20, 1990

Ashram for Life and Society

On the 20th of April, the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation started to build a memorial hall for Phya Anuman and Phra Saraprasert, two founders of the Foundation, within the Ashram for Life and Society. With this new facility, the Ashram will now be a place where meditation and activism can take place side by side.

The chief Bhikkhu of Nagaranayaka Province presided over the ground breaking ceremony, and the Sri Lankan community at the Ashram took active part in the cultural events of the day. Those who are interested in the project should consult ***Seeds of Peace*** (Vol. 6 No.1 JAN 1990) or may ask for the small booklet "SOUVENIR" published by the Foundation and the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development.

Drawing exhibition at National Gallery, Bangkok

From the 24 April to May 24 there is an exhibition of drawings from the North of Thailand by Prof.Fua Haripitak, national artist and Thai conservationist of the year, at the National Gallery in Bangkok.

Prof.Fua is 80 years old and works closely with the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation. His designs have often graced the front cover of ***Seeds of Peace.***

Puppet Show in May

The Komol Keemthong and Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundations will sponsor a puppet show on May 14 at the National Theatre. Afterwards the show will tour Japan at the invitation of the Min-on Concert Association.

The Friends of Buddhism Malaysia

I have been reading your book "*A Socially Engaged Buddhism*" and I find it very interesting. On behalf of our Society, I would like to request permission to reprint the section on "Dialogues With Christians" for free distribution.

You might be interested to know that my pupils (one of whom is a doctor) and I have completed a book on "*Love and Marriage - a Buddhist Perspective*" as part of our contribution to a socially-engaged Buddhism in Malaysia and Singapore.

With best wishes.

Yours in the Dhamma,

Ven. Piyasilo

From A Friend in USA.

I have just returned from my Guatemala and Mexico trip and found your letters and enclosures to me. Thank you for these letters and for the issue of *Seeds of Peace* which also came seperately.

I believe that the Institute for Earth Education is doing some of the highest quality work being done anywhere and think that if you are able to attend their conference in July that you will return to Siam with your mind overflowing with ideas and thoughts about how these programs might be included in the curriculum of the ashram project as well as the public and private schools in your beautiful country. I do not know if any of you three have close friends who are intimately involved with the setting of curriculum for the 10 to 12 year old students in public or private schools. It would be very nice if you could get some private school for instance to express interest in your attendance at this conference so that you could be their "eyes and ears" at the conference and know that when you returned that they would welcome your report and suggestions. Maybe this is too much to ask but I bring it up because this conference will have teachers and public educators in attendance than any other occupation.

I was immensely pleased to know of your translation of the *One Straw Revolution*. What a wonderful work that is . I keep a copy near my bed to re-read frequently. It is so many things. A Buddhist manifesto, a philosopher's message, an agriculturist's bible and much more.

To all of you, my wishes for continued success in your consciousness raising work. Earth Day 1990 (April 22) appears to be off to a grand start here in Oregon and in much of the United States as well . I' d like to hear Siam will do to acknowledge this important event.

With best regards to you all.

Sarvahara Judd

From Lamphun

First I would like to say how very happy I was to be with you all at Wat Suan Mokh. It was a very good experience, much food for thought and inspiration for action.

The exposure course beforehand was also extremely illuminating. My thanks to Piak and Khun Lek who looked after us so well.

The sight seeing trips were very interesting and much appreciated. The informality of the proceeding was a nice contrast to the extremely serious subjects under discussion at the conference and your light touches helping at difficult moments.

Vinetia Walkey

Maha Bodhi Society

Recently I happened to come across a folder describing the objectives of the INEB and feel that coordination of the efforts of the engaged Buddhists will surely produce benificial results. We, therefore, take this opportunity of intimating you of the details of our activity.

Ours is the premier Buddhist Organization in South India. In Bangalore we execute the following programmes :

(1) Bhikkhu Training Centre
(2) Sunday Dhamma Discourses
(3) Publication of Dhamma books
(4) A Printing Press
(5) Mahabodhi Gurukula School
(6) Arogya Hospital
(7) Artificial Limbs Centre.

At our Mysore branch we have the Junior section of the Gurukula School and a nursery school for local children.

At Leh in Ladakh we have Mahabodhi Meditation Centre and Library. We propose to build a

proper Meditation complex, a school for children drawn from Ladakhi villages, and Milarepa Meditation retreats during summer.

We are enclosing the papers which give detailed description of the activities. Though our projects are ambitious, our financial resources are very limited. Thus we have to rely on donations constantly.

We approach you with hope in this regard. If you kindly make our activities known to like-minded and generous persons ,it is possible that our projects would receive sufficient encourangement and assistance.

We are also glad to know that you publish a Magazine : ***Seeds of Peace.*** We will very much appreciate if it is possible for you to send us your Magazine in exchange to our monthly Magazine: ***Dhamma.*** One copy is enclosed herewith as a sample.

May the good work being done by you bring you satisfaction, happiness and well-being.

With Metta and the Blessings of Noble Triple Gem.

Yours in the service of Dhamma,

Bhikkhu Sanghasena
President

A new journal from Buddhist Publishing Group Buddhism Now

For all kinds of Buddhists. By all kinds of Buddhists:

The Dalai Lama, Ajarn Sumedho, Kusan Sunim, Phiroz Mehta, Maizumi Roshi, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and others, plus items of news, book reviews and practical advice on living a Buddhist way of life. Indeed, something for everyone.

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Notice

27 th May is not only Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's birthday , it is also a day of unfree and farce general election in Burma. All foreigners, except diplomats, are asked to leave the country before then.

Short Obituaries

We are very sorry to record that two of our dear friends passed away recently: **Mr.Soedjatmoko** at the age of 67 on 21 December 1989 and **Ven. H. Saddhatissa** at the age of 77 on 2 February 1990.

Mr. Soedjatmoko was a leading Muslim intellectual and a mystic. When he was rector of the United Nations University, he helped organize a subproject on "Buddhism and the desirable society in the future" which was discussed in ***Seeds of Peace*** vol. 2 May 1986.

Ven. Hammawalawa Saddhatissa was a leading Singhalese monk of the Sayamnikaya chapter. He was well-known in the U.K. as Buddhist Chaplain of London University and incumbent bhikkhu of the London Buddhist Vihara. He was also on the executive council of the Pali Text Society. His most popular books were ***The Buddha's Way*** and ***Buddhist Ethics***; ***The Path to Nirvana.*** When ***Seeds of Peace*** first appeared as an organ of the Buddhist Association of Thailand under royal patronage in 1976, he was a member of the advisory board along with Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh and Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.

On 14 April, His Majesty the King personally persided over the cremation of the late Venerable **Somdej Phra Vuddhacariya** (Arj Asabha),formerly Chancellor of Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University and Abbot of Wat Mahadhathu largest monastery in Bangkok.

Although the Somdej was once acting Supreme Patriarch , during the dictatorial Sarit Thanarat regime in the early 60's he was defrocked and put in gaol for quite a few years on the charge of being a communist.

The late Venerable was a far-sighted monk and an able non-violent fighter for justice, as well as a renowned Pali scholar and meditation master. He was 86 years old when he passed away.

BUDDHADASA'S WORK IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES



A WELCOME ADDRESS TO WORLD SOLIDARITY FORUM

ON SRI LANKA FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

As a Thai sponsor , I am very happy to welcome you all to this very important and timely Forum.

I am very glad that this country is chosen to be the meeting place. Indeed, Siam and Sri Lanka have a long historical, cultural and religious connection, quite intimately.

Most informed Thais are very concerned on the great upheaval in Sri Lanka , especially since 1983. I myself and a few of my colleagues have been trying our best to do something for peaceful settlement and reconciliation in that island.

In 1987, Peace Brigades International, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, United Nations University, Asian Cultural Forum on Development and the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development , as well as, the Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University help to organize an international symposium in this country on "Buddhism and Peace ; Seeking a Peaceful Solution to the Present Conflict in Sri Lanka." Quite a number of prominent Sinhala and Thai monks participated in the symposium and our Tamil friends were pleased with the outcome of it.

Although the conflict was not resolved, we tried to do our utmost in anyway we could, for instance Peace Brigades International has now set up a team to help escorting human rights lawyers in Sri Lanka. Since last year, we have founded an International Network of Engaged Buddhists to help in Sri Lanka as in other countries like Bangladesh, Burma and Tibet.

Speaking as a Buddhist, I feel if we practise tolerance, believing in unity and diversity and use nonviolent approaches, we will be in a good position among ourselves, as well as with our Tamil brothers and sisters. Hence, we hope to have within this year, a long training session of six weeks or so for Sinhala Buddhist leaders who may come to this country for training in nonviolence and reconciliation. Quite a number of leading Bhikkhus in Sri Lanka have already approved of the proposal and our friends at the International Research Institute in Oslo have been preparing this training course with us. I hope this may be a useful follow-up of this Forum.

Another follow up intended among the Buddhists in Siam is that we will have a Pha Pa for Peace and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka. This is under the patronage of His Holiness the Sangharaja (Supreme Patriarch). Hopefully, this will conscientise the Thai public to be aware of the suffering of our fellow human beings in Sri Lanka.

It is a great opportunity that the Forum starts today – the days of the Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment and Nirvana. May the light of wisdom and compassion spread to us all here so that we may open up our hearts to listen respectfully to those with different views from ours, and together we may find a solution to end the suffering in Sri Lanka.

S. SIVARAKSA
8th MAY 2533