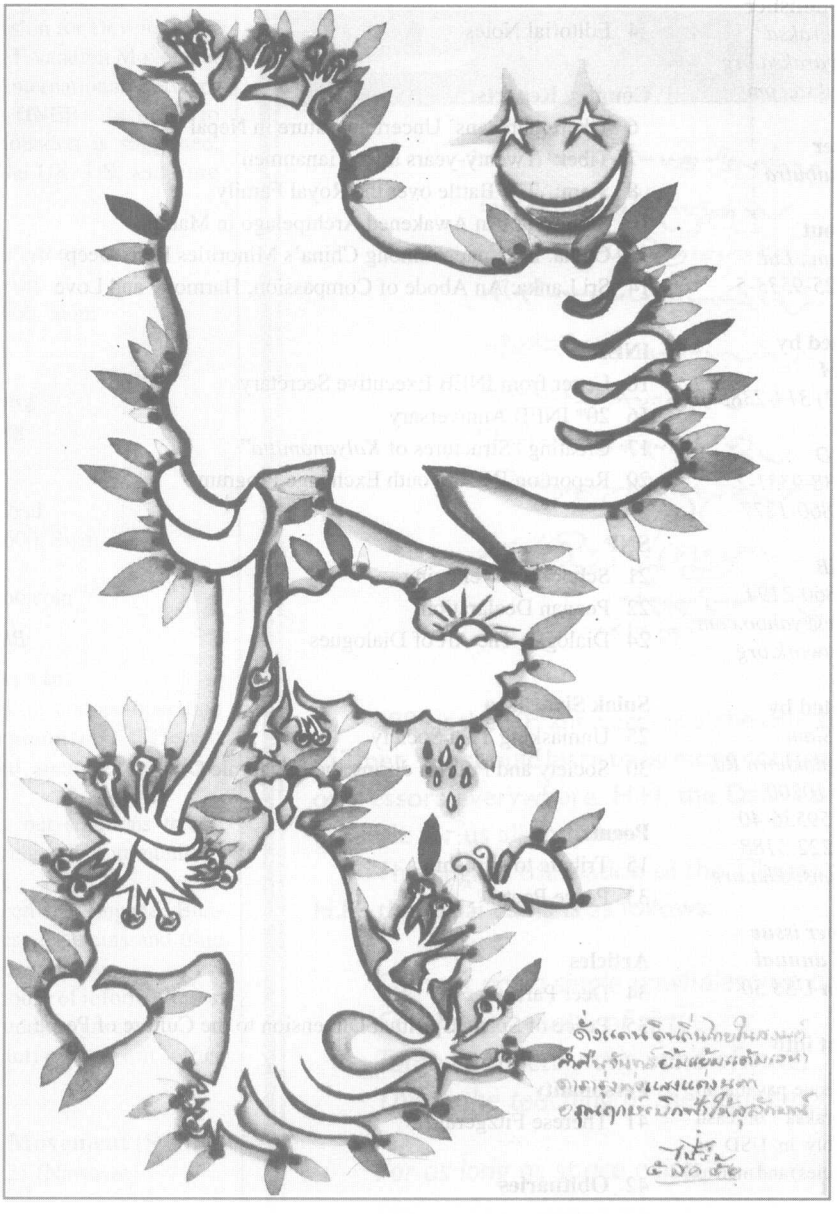
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Restoring Human Happiness



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PEACE

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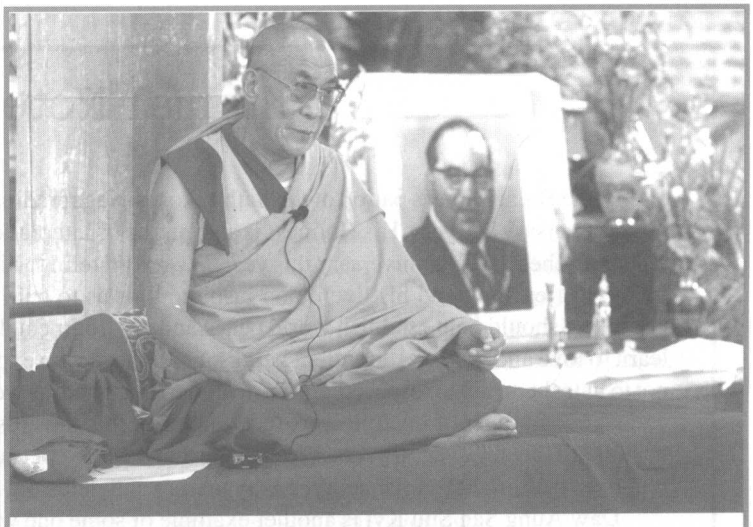
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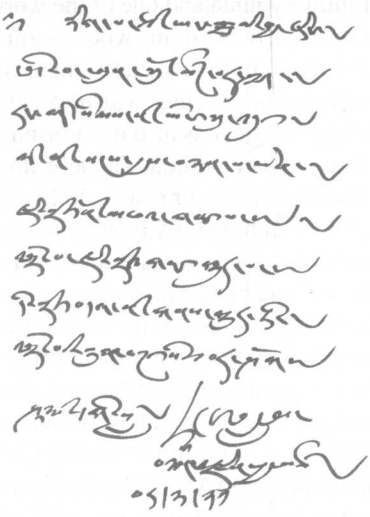
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The goals of INEB are to:

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

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2009 is the 50th anniversary of the Chinese occupation of Tibet. We should learn to be more compassionate to the oppressors everywhere. H.H. the Dalai Lama is the best example for us all to follow.

The English translation of the Tibetan calligraphy by H.H. the Dalai Lama is as follows:

Commit not a single unwholesome action,
Cultivate a wealth of virtue,
Tame completely this mind of ours,
This is the teaching of the buddhas.

For as long as space exists,
And as long as living beings endure,
Until then, may I too remain,
To dispel the misery of all beings.

Editorial Notes

H.H. the Dalai Lama is patron of the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, which celebrated its 40th anniversary last year. His Holiness is also patron of International Network Engaged Buddhists, which reaches its 20th anniversary this year. We are grateful to his patronage. As a simple Buddhist monk, his teaching and his livelihood inspire all of us to cultivate peace within and from inner peace, we should help establish world peace and environmental balance nonviolently. We should learn to love and honour all sentient beings. Even those who exploit us ruthlessly, we should learn not to hate them, but to respect them and to understand them as well as to forgive them. His Holiness and a good number of his followers really practice this towards the Chinese who have ruthlessly occupied Tibet for over 50 years. We are sure that the force of truth and compassion will eventually win over the force of violence, greed, hypocrisy and delusion.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is another example of some one who practices freedom from fear in the land of military junta and one of the worst forms of dictatorship. We would really like to ask her to be our patron, but so doing would harm her even more. So we regard her as a shining example for all of us in the family of socially engaged Buddhists. The movement of the Sangha in Burma that challenges the ruling elites with *metta* and *ahimsa* despite the violent and ruthless practices of the Burmese government is also most inspiring. We firmly believe that one of these days Burma will be a free country without Chinese domination behind the scene. The various peoples in Burma will really share their responsibility in running their country politically, economically and culturally. This will hopefully be true in our southern Muslim provinces of Siam as well.

This is not a dream or wishful thinking. Although Martin Luther King Jr. used the phrase 'I have a dream' and his dream has now almost become a reality, at least symbolically by having Barack Obama as president of the United States, which hopefully will drastically change its role from neoimperialism to be a republic, equal to other countries.

We must also not forget that Martin Luther King Jr. always stressed nonviolence as the answer to the crucial political, moral questions of our time!

Martin Luther King Jr. was a leading Christian minister, and so is our friend, John B. Cobb Jr., who initiated with Masao Abe, a leading Japanese Buddhist, the first Buddhist-Christian Theological Encounter even before the existence of INEB. Cobb has this to say:

One suspects that opposition to global capitalism will be equated with threatening U.S. global hegemony.

We may hope that as this new vision of Pax Americana becomes clearer, the traditional religious communities will be drawn into serious reflection and response. Is it religiously acceptable that the world be ruled by a single nation? Is it religiously acceptable that that rule be directed to the maintenance and extension of global capitalism? Can we answer these new questions from the point of view of our respective tradition? Can we formulate these answers in such a way that they will evoke strong response from most serious believers?

This is a challenge of historic dimensions. If our traditional religious communities are so alienated from the teachings of their founders that they cannot see that American imperialism in the service of global capitalism stands in sharp contradiction to all they have taught, their ability in the future to address any issue of public importance is radically compromised.

Actually, this may be a challenge of apocalyptic dimensions. If the United States proceeds as its leaders now desire, it will lead the world into ecological catastrophe. Since the United States has the military power to suppress all national military oppositions, the only effective resistance will be moral, intellectual, and spiritual. To be effective this will, no doubt, have to express itself in nonviolent civil disobedience. If our traditional religious communities do not generate, or at least support, such opposition, it is doubtful that resistance can achieve sufficient strength to block the implementation of disastrous American policies.

This is crucial. Socially engaged Buddhists need to collaborate ecumenically with Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, etc. and even non-believers in order to follow in the foot steps of Mohandas Koramachad Gandhi, who said "whenever you are confronted with an opponent conquer him with love".

Two years ago, the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation in Siam, organized an International Conference on Gross National Happiness in collaboration with the Royal Thai and Royal Bhutanese governments. This year, on 20th August we established the School for Wellbeing Studies and Research in collaboration with the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University and the Centre of Bhutan Studies. From 7-11 December, our editor/publisher Sulak Sivaraksa will hopefully participate in the workshop on Education for Gross National Happiness in Thimpu, Bhutan, since education is the key Buddhist concept as a means for real happiness and liberation form greed, hatred and delusion. One hopes that such a modest workshop will contribute significantly to GNH worldwide.

The Tibetans in India has now formed an Active Nonviolence Education Center in Dharamshala; the first issue of their *ANEC Souvenir Magazine* 2008-2009, published the following message from our editor/publisher, Sulak Sivaraksa.

We are presently confronting a frightening constellation of powers – imperialism, neocolonialism, neoliberal capitalism, terrorism – that kills, violates, oppresses, excludes, and de-realizes countless bodies and lives worldwide, inspiring fear and hatred, on the one side, and spiritual despair and political resignation, on the other.

The establishment of the Active Non-violence Education Center in Dharamshala, India, is thus of utmost importance, affirming that non-violence does not equate to political quietism and spiritual surrender and that it may serve as a vital strategy to bring forth the Good as well as being-together beyond greed, hatred, and delusion.

This is not the only initiative on nonviolence education. From 19-22 November, Samdhong Rinpoche, the Prime Minister of the Tibetan government in exile, will organize an International Centennial Commemoration of Mahatama Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* in New Delhi, to be presided by H.H. the Dalai Lama. This will indeed be a great event to spread the power of the truth (*satyagraha*) and the power of nonviolence (*ahimsa*) worldwide. As indeed in April last year, the Garrison Institute in New York has supported great events in that great city in collaboration with Philip Glass's opera *Satyagraha* at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York as well as speeches at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in the same city.

These events are now available on DVDs and many websites around the world for those who seek a spiritual life or contemplative lifestyle, while caring for social justice and the well being of all – as an alternative to the mainstream of capitalism, consumerism and neoimperialism. Since then the Garrison Institute has started the Initiative on Transformational Ecology Satyagraha Project. The World Future Council is also very active, especially in the field of justice which means recognizing the integrity, value and dignity of all human beings, the earth and all its life.

INEB's 20th anniversary from 15-21 November in Chiang Mai, Siam, perhaps may not have that great effect globally. We hope, however, that these events may help awake some of our friends to the fact that Buddhism in general exemplifies a sustainable lifestyle. It's sustainable at the individual level, because it teaches a lifestyle that minimizes our harm to others. It's sustainable at the community level, because it does not promote individual greed or acquisition, or one person becoming superior to other people. Finally it's sustainable at the global level, because it recognizes our interdependence with the environment.

Tibet:
Tibetans' Uncertain Future in Nepal

Until the invasion and occupation of Tibet by China's People's Liberation Army in 1950, ties between the Nepalese and Tibetans had been formed less by the push and pull of armies than the influence of a single person, a prince of Nepal named Siddharta Gautama (563-483 BC). Both historical evidence and living culture attest to the enduring devotion of the peoples of the Himalayan region to the teachings of "the Awaken One" or Buddha. The 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet is the most highly regarded of modern-day Buddhists and is seen by his followers as a manifestation of the Buddha of Compassion, Avaloketishvara. His flight from Tibet in 1959 and the Chinese control of the Tibetan plateau has destabilized an ancient relationship and created uncertainty for the future of Tibetans in Nepal.

That uncertainty has been intensified following the outbreak of protests and violence on the Tibetan plateau in March of 2008, and the ensuing brutal and systematic crackdown. The Nepalese authorities adopted a "zero tolerance" attitude to Tibetan demonstrations against the repression in Tibet for fear of annoying the country's powerful neighbor. Nepalese police, guided by Chinese embassy officials sometimes working behind police lines, have used excessive force during the demonstrations, denied the activists the right to peacefully protest and threatened them with deportation.

A late-night raid by Nepalese police on a Tibetan refugee center in Kathmandu in February 2008, just prior to the visit of a high-level Chinese delegation to the Nepalese capital, was a worrying precursor of unfolding events. It pointed to a worrisome dynamic between China's "Tibet problem" and Nepal's bendable resolve in meeting its humanitarian obligations as a transiting point for Tibetan refugees and as an historic and cultural ally of the Tibetan people. Increasingly, Beijing's irritation over the Tibetan refugee flow seems to be finding a compliant audience within the Nepal government. On Feb. 23, 50-60 Nepalese police, some brandishing rifles, pistols and batons, raided the Tibetan refugee center at 10:30 p.m. in search of a Tibetan man, allegedly linked to a stabbing in Tibet. Nearly 100 Tibetans, including children, were asleep at the center, funded by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and operated by the Lutheran World Federation. The Tibetan, Tsering Dhundup, was apprehended without resistance and handed across the border into Chinese-controlled Tibet on the afternoon of Feb. 25.

Ten days earlier, the Nepal Supreme Court had ruled against the Bhota Welfare Society whose registration to provide services to Tibetans in Nepal had been revoked by the government. The court's action was encouraged by the Chinese Ambassador to Kathmandu who accused Bhota of being part of the "Dalai clique." Western embassies and the UNHCR had been pressing the Nepal government for the registration since it forced the shutdown in January 2005 of the Tibetan Welfare Office and the Office of the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan offices had provided community and humanitarian services to Tibetans in Nepal since the 1960s.

Soon after the office closures, King Gyanendra dismissed the democratic government in Nepal, fired the entire parliament, placing prominent political and civil society leaders under house arrest, and assumed absolute control. Beijing sided with the king, contending that he had operated within his sovereign rights. The struggle for power between King Gyanendra, the major political parties of the former government, and the Maoists, has perpetuated not only instability in Nepal but space in which China has pressed its influence and its own agenda. China followed its unqualified support for the king with a flurry of trade delegations and arms deals. Whatever the eventual political outcome, China has signaled that the Nepalese can expect a generous and understanding neighbor across the Tibet border.

Every year, between 2,500 and 3,500 Tibetans transit through Nepal to freedom in India. Tibetans who arrive at the Tibetan refugee center in Kathmandu have sometimes failed at previous attempts to flee Tibet, some having been apprehended by Chinese and others refouled at the border. Refoulements from Kathmandu, several hours drive from the border, are unusual. The most

egregious incident occurred in May 2003 when 18 Tibetans, including 10 minors, were removed from jail in the Nepalese capital and delivered to Chinese authorities in Tibet where they were tortured and held in detention for some months.

Tibetans are routinely tortured as part of the interrogation process and, based on common practice, Tsering Dhondup, detained since his late-February arrest, will neither escape ill treatment nor receive a fair trial. In China, many rulings are based on forced confessions, trials take less than a day, and more people are executed than in the rest of the world combined. Irrespective of whether or not Nepal has an extradition treaty with China, Nepal is a party to international human rights conventions that oblige it not to expel persons who would be in danger of being subjected to torture or face a real risk of a death sentence.

In September 2006, a Chinese border patrol opened fire on a group of Tibetans escaping through the glaciated Nangpa pass, not far from Mount Everest. A young Tibetan nun, Kelsang Namtso, was shot dead, according to eyewitness reports. Forty-three Tibetans from a group of more than 70 were able to escape the gunfire and safely reach the Tibetan refugee center in Kathmandu. The rest of the Tibetans, including several children, were apprehended. The Chinese authorities described the incident as "normal border management."

Western diplomats express some surprise at China's acute sensitivity over Tibetan issues in Kathmandu. After all, age old religious and cultural traditions bind the Tibetan and Nepalese people together. Nonetheless, Nepal's new democratic alliance, like the King's government before it, seems willing to assuage China for now, and now, more than ever, Tibetans risk the dangerous crossing over the high mountain passes with little understanding of the uncertain welcome on the other side.

Mary Beth Markey

Tibet: Twenty Years after Tiananmen

Today the world's attention is rightly focused on the twentieth anniversary of the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square. As you do on significant anniversaries my thoughts have turned back to where I was at that time and the days that followed today's anniversary.

It was early in the morning and His Holiness' driver came to my home to bring me as quickly as possible to meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Normally when I met with His Holiness I make sure to wear a traditional Tibetan chuba but the driver said that there was no time to change from casual clothes and that I should come at once.

When I arrived at His Holiness' residence, Tenzin Geyche Tethong, His Holiness' secretary at the time, was there already waiting. We were rushed up to his room where His Holiness was looking out the window at the view of the Dharamsala valley. He didn't turn around when we came in and said to us, "Did you see? Did you see?" referring to the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square.

His Holiness then slowly turned around and asked us to prepare a statement expressing solidarity with the students and the call for democracy and condemning the brutal Chinese crackdown. I thought that because this was at a time when the Tibetan leadership was trying to reconnect with the Chinese that such a statement would derail the process. Apparently the hesitation showed on my face because His Holiness rather forcefully said to me, "What is it? What is it?" I said that if you make a statement it could have a negative impact on our attempts to reconnect. The Dalai Lama then became very thoughtful and said quietly, "That's true," and for a moment I thought he was going to reconsider issuing the statement. But then he became much more forceful said quite strongly, "But if I do not speak out for people asking for freedom and democracy what right do I have in asking the world for the same for my people."

It is moments like this that you realize the strong principles of the Dalai Lama making him the extraordinary moral and spiritual leader that he is. We then left the room and prepared

the statement that was subsequently released. The statement did affect our relationship with the Chinese government. I think Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping took it personally and may have changed his attitude on His Holiness the Dalai Lama thereafter. But His Holiness did what a leader of his standing would do in such a situation.

Personally, the tragedy that happened in Tiananmen Square had a profound impact on my mind. As a result of decades of China's brutal policies on the Tibetan people we had come to demonize the Chinese people themselves. This tragic incident humanized the Chinese people and strengthened my belief that if we pursue His Holiness' efforts that eventually we can come to an understanding.

Lodi Gyari Rinpoche

Thailand's Lèse Majesté Law

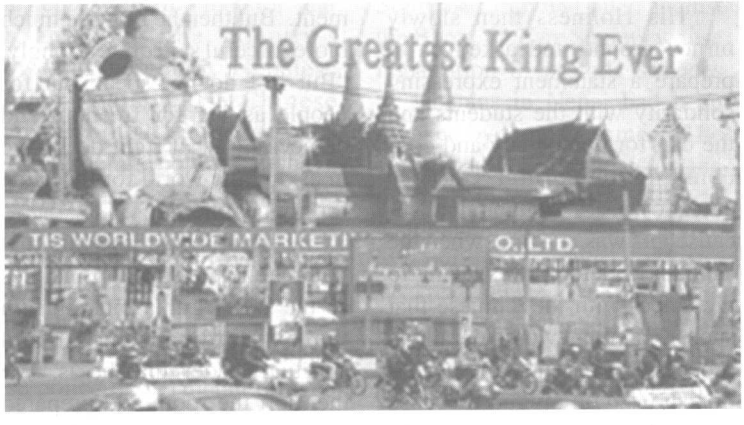
The Battle over the Royal Family between Government and Opposition Goes Online

ON YOUTUBE, he was "thaiman 8", a prolific poster of crude videos that mocked Thailand's royal family. These days Suwicha Thakhor goes by another identity: inmate in Bangkok's Khlong Prem prison. In April he was sentenced to ten years in jail after pleading guilty to *lèse majesté*, the crime of defaming or threatening the Thai crown. Since 2005 this century-old law has enjoyed a renaissance, netting politicians, scholars, activists and an Australian author. Recently, it seems to have got more coercive.

Daranee Charnchoengsilpakul was arrested in 2008 after a blistering anti-royal public tirade. She went on trial last week and the judge ordered the case to be heard behind closed doors on national-security grounds—a ruling that would conveniently bar the foreign press. Ms Daranee and her lawyer cried foul. An appeal is pending.

The scope of investigations under the law is widening. This week police began inquiries into whether the board of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand is guilty of *lèse majesté*. Equally disturbing is a new snitch scheme set up by the justice ministry. The scheme, claims a free-speech activist, is a way of monitoring social-networking sites. In May the prime minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva, signed up as the first volunteer. The goal seems to be to defend the royal family from criticism.

Thailand, unlike China, claims to be a democracy. But as in China, cyberspace has become a battleground between free speech and censorship. Online speech has been freer than Thailand's supine news media. But censors are working overtime. Since March 2008 the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (MICT) has blocked 8,300 website pages on *lèse majesté* grounds. Thailand's police have jammed another 32,500 pages for various offences. In 2007, YouTube was blocked for several months.



Cyberspace is being subjected not only to *lèse majesté* constraints but to other laws. Mr Suwicha fell foul of one. He was charged under Thailand's 2007 Computer Crime Act, which makes it an offence to import computer data that harm national security. In the eyes of Thai authorities, rude anti-royal videos fall into that category. Mr Suwicha is the first person to be convicted under a law that carries a five-year jail term and was passed by a military-appointed

legislature. He is unlikely to be the last. Police have arrested dozens of internet users who posted comments on web boards. Some face criminal charges.

The authorities are also going after webmasters for failing to delete offensive posts promptly enough. One, Chiranuch Premchaiporn, who runs Prachatai.com, a news website, was charged in April because her site carried a comment by one user which allegedly excoriated Queen Sirikit. Ms Chiranuch insists that she deleted the post when asked to by MICT. But Aree Jiworarak, an official at the ministry, says Ms Chiranuch should have spotted the post herself and is "responsible for what happens". To her distress, Ms Chiranuch was forced to disclose private data that led police to the user, a Thai woman with the online name "Bento", who was arrested and charged. Ms Chiranuch faces multiple counts that could, potentially, send her away for 50 years.

Crime or politics?

The political backdrop to this witch hunt is well known. Since a coup in 2006 Thailand has been torn between supporters of the ousted prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, and his conservative opponents in the armed forces, judiciary and, many assume, the palace. In December a coalition led by Mr Abhisit took power in the wake of anti-Thaksin protests by yellow-clad royalists known as the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD). A red-coloured protest movement allied to Mr Thaksin failed in April to force out Mr Abhisit. He has claimed that there is a conspiracy to undermine "the institution", as the crown is known. His backers point the finger at the irascible Mr Thaksin, who denies disloyalty to the throne while cocking a snook at "aristocratic" Thai government.

But the efforts of self-proclaimed royalists are arguably doing as much harm to the institution as criticism by their opponents. The justice minister, Pirapan Salirathavibhaga, for instance, has declared that his highest priority is the protection of the monarchy. So an elite law-enforcement agency in his ministry, which is supposed to take on drug kingpins and other crooks, is busy chasing lowly bloggers.

By persecuting Thais who give vent online, these moral guardians may be adding to the anger against Bangkok's elite and, perhaps, fanning the flames of republicanism. Their zeal certainly undercuts Mr Abhisit's feeble efforts to unite a polarised nation. Many observers conclude that the crown must be behind the crackdown. They think the royal family wants to keep a lid on frank discussion, at least until the 81-year-old King Bhumibol hands over to his likely successor... King Bhumibol himself said in 2005 that he was not above criticism. He has also pardoned *lèse majesté* convicts, including Harry Nicolaides, an Australian author, in February.

Even in China, it is hard to control the internet (this week, the country delayed plans to put internet filtering software into every computer). And compared with China's sophisticated controls, Thai censorship is Firewall 101. It uses keyword searches to turn up suspect websites. Wily netizens will no doubt stay a step ahead of the censors, using proxies and other tools, as they do in China and Myanmar. Meanwhile, the government's efforts to protect the good name of the king are not only damaging democracy but may even rebound upon the royal reputation.

Treason in cyberspace,
July 2nd 2009, Bangkok,
From *The Economist*
print edition



Sulak Sivaraksa was arrested in Khonkaen on 6th November 2008 for the speech he had delivered at Khonkaen University on 11th December 2007. The police accused him of lese majeste. Prior to that he was also charged of detaming the King by the Chanasongkram Police authority.

There were many appeals from around the world to the Palace, and to the Prime Minister against the false accusations. The Prime Minister even said he would stop the case. Yet nothing has happened so far.

Indonesia:
An Awakened Archipelago in Making

Just exactly a month before Indonesia celebrated its 64th independence day on 17th August 2009, another deadly bomb blasted Jakarta. It had naturally reopened the wound derived from the notorious Bali bombing in 2002 and series of bombings entailing it until 2005 throughout Indonesia. The man-made disaster has certainly added the weight of plights that Indonesia should bear: poverty, social injustice, corruption, environmental destruction, law enforcement, huge overseas debt, and neo-liberalism.



Having been independent since 1945, yet shackled by western capitalist pressure and influence in many fields of life, Indonesia still has to walk a long journey to realize the dream of being a just, humane, and prosperous country. Today, Indonesia needs to contemplate seriously and deeply on whether the dream set a century ago is still desirable and achievable since though being a sovereign country, Indonesia tends to bow and depend heavily on foreign capitalist pressure.

In commemorating 100 years of Indonesian National Awakening, HIKMAHBUDHI magazine (314th edition – March 2009) has published four articles reviewing contemporary Indonesia from the perspectives of economics, culture, environment, and law. This writing is an excerpt of them: 'Indonesia: Big Sale – a Centennial Reflection of National Awakening' of Eddy Setiawan; 'The Culture of Awakening' of Ivana; 'Toward a Sovereign Indonesia over its Environment' of Agus Hartono; and 'A Century of National Awakening' of Sukman.

The Awakening Days

Dated back to 101 years ago, exactly on 20th May 1908, a group of Javanese scholars had assembled to react against the discrimination, oppression, and injustice of Dutch colonialism toward the people of Dutch East Indies – a Dutch colony which later became modern Indonesia following World War II. They aimed to uphold the rights and improve the living condition of the oppressed residing in Java islands through education and culture. Since then that moment has been commemorated as the national awakening day. The movement later led to a broader and stronger one in 1928: the monumental Youth Pledge - a vow from young multi-ethnic Indonesians ranging from western to eastern part of the islands. They acknowledge one motherland and one nation: Indonesia and respect one language: Indonesian. Step by step, the historical movement in 1908 had eventually culminated in the proclamation of Indonesia's independence in 1945.

The Invasion of Multinational Corporations

Apparently, Indonesia hadn't been exist in 1908 legally, however the dream of a just, free, and sovereign Indonesia had been set a century ago. Using the centennial historical moment, we believe it is time for us to reflect whether Indonesia is hiking to its glory or sinking to its bottom. Indonesia's first two decades of post-independence was marked with figures like Soekarno, Hatta, Syahrir, and Tan Malaka. Known as the proponents of a free, independent, and sovereign Indonesia, they dared to oppose any foreign intervention and exploitation aiming to 'occupy' Indonesia in different form of colonization. They managed to uphold the nation's integrity and

independence.

Unfortunately since 1966, under Soeharto's rule with his New Order regime, Indonesia has begun to open its door for foreign interests including multinational corporations (MNCs). Most of the natural resources were severely exploited under unfair mining and energy contract inflicting great losses to the country. The regime applied the strategy of *Triple Alliance*, as what Peter Evans defines as: the partnership of the state, MNCs, and local private entrepreneurs in developing the country. The alliance had consequently created imbalance of wealth distribution as the strategy prioritized the capitalists' interests and neglected the poor's. The expected trickle-down effect from the partnership had failed to perform. Obviously, Indonesia has been losing its sovereignty over its own natural resources and being trapped in a vicious cycle of debt. Fertilizing the corruption, collusion, and nepotism among the elements of triple alliance, the development strategy in those era merely resulted in a bubble economy – a fake and fragile economy. Deteriorating life was inevitable and eventually, following a reformation in 1998, the authoritarian regime fell down leaving a huge multidimensional loss to the country.

After the fall, Indonesia entered a transition era witnessing a crawling democratization and economy consolidation process. The slow and unstable process has indeed failed to present justice and prosperity for the people. The era of the incumbent President Yudhoyono presents similar situation. The ongoing privatization of state-owned companies and the enactment of 2007 Investment Law which provide bigger rooms for foreign capitalists to own national strategic assets in Indonesia are obvious signs that his administration tends to take their side on foreign investors. This big picture clearly sends one gloomy message: the awakening movement voiced 100 years ago is in the verge of drowning as Indonesia keeps losing its grip on its own economy.

A culture of awakening

A journey to search the ideal cultural value of Indonesians has begun since the national awakening movement in 1908. Since then, the journey has been still an unfinished process. Not precisely an answer to the search, in 1977 Mochtar Lubis, a leading Indonesian journalist and novelist in his era, offered a description of dominant characteristics of Indonesians: hypocrite, irresponsible, feudalistic, believe in superstition, artistic, have weak personality, prodigal, own high sense of art. A sharp auto-criticism, but unfortunately, those are the things seen in daily life. With these mostly discouraging characteristics, how Indonesians will awaken their nation?

Those static human culture values must be absolutely altered with progressive ones. With its rich multi-culture background, Indonesia should be able to possess positive awakening culture values. However, it is surely not an easy task. The challenge is even fiercer now as we have to race with the impact of capitalistic culture with its globalization tools. The failure to build, promote, propagate, and internalize positive values to the society will absolutely cost Indonesia a huge damage. Not only losing their roots as being a nation, but also Indonesians will face broader problems in the fields of education, law, administration, media, and others as humans are the actors behind of all those fields. A low quality of cultural values will definitely turn out a low quality of human resources. In short, developing an awakening and positive cultural values matters and should be dealt thoughtfully!

Toward a Sustainable and Green Archipelago

Undeniably, Indonesia is facing a severe degrading environment quality in the development process. The unsustainable development strategy has put Indonesia in the black spot of environmental issue. Long list of



environmental damages confirms the distressing claim. Illegal logging, forest fire, and corrupted forest management have deprived 3 million hectares of Indonesia's tropical forest annually. Land reclamation, a current much-favorable pattern of development in Jakarta, has devastated 5,9 million or 68% of the total of 8,6 million mangrove forest. The mining and oil exploitations have as well created dreadful tragedies of humanity: the East Java Mud Volcano in Sidoarjo as the result of oil exploration which has relocated thousands of families; the pollution of Buyat Gulf in Minahasa, Sulawesi as an impact of mineral mining; the massive soil destruction in Papua, Kalimantan, Bangka, and Belitung islands over gold, coal, and tin mining. Last but not least, the notorious illegal sand mining sent to Singapore for its land reclamation projects – an action which seriously threatens the sovereignty of Indonesia.

A thorough revision and revitalization of environmental law is one of the key to halt the gigantic demolition of Indonesia's soil, forest, air, and water and to restore the environment quality. Although Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution has mandated that the soil, water, and natural resources contained in Indonesian territory are controlled by the state and should be used entirely for the sake of people's prosperity, the fact shows a upside-down facts: most Indonesians suffer from the ailing soil, air, and water because of uncontrollable exploitation, and worst of all, the exploitation of environment gives only a very small contribution for the people. Ironically, the bigger portion goes to foreign investors with its local cronies.

Revising and revitalizing the 1997 Environmental Law is inevitable as it has too many loopholes. Up to 2009, only 40 cases have been brought to the court since the law was enacted, according to an official from Department of Environment. It's very often that the issue of environment is put behind when confronted with the issue of development. The interest of capitalists has always been put forward sacrificing the ecosystem of life. As the environmental issue carries a snow-ball effect on the life of Indone-sia, this should be treated as top urgent matter. Failing to keep the balance between environmental protection and development will end up in a worse deep-rooted poverty, widening violence and social conflicts, and a possible break-up of a nation.

A Liberating and Democratic Law

Being a newly-born nation after declaring its independence, Indonesia was not ready with its legal system. To avoid the absence of administration law, the government has adopted the legal system enacted during Dutch colonialism period. Unfortunately, the today situation hasn't changed so much, many of the inherited colonial laws are still being applied to fulfill the needs of legal system. Consequently, the very discriminative colonial law keeps presenting great injustice for the people.

The ancient law, once used to maintain the power of the Dutch in its colony, is then used by authoritarian regimes to benefit their own clan's interest. The worst practice was performed by Soeharto's regime in order to maintain his 32-year-autocratic administration. Violence, kidnapping, assassination, and other vicious means of repression were exercised, while its corrupted and evil cronies were untouchable. Currently, slightly improving, the justice was not still fully upheld. The unsolved case of Munir assassination, the discriminative handling of corruption cases, the corrupted law enforcers are clear-cut examples on how the legal system and infrastructure should be upgraded and enforced indiscriminately. The dream of a just and civilized society is still far ahead and may take endless efforts to realize.

Based on above glimpse of gloomy realities faced by Indonesia today, it is difficult to say that this archipelago nation is heading to its awakening period. However, in the spirit of commemorating the liberating voice echoed over a century ago, we should use the momentum to reflect, to keep working, and to encourage everyone to achieve the noble dream an awakened archipelago state: a just, humane, and prosperous society.

Agush Hartono



China: Discontent among China's Minorities Runs Deep

Beijing is still failing to recognise and respect the cultural heritage of its numerous indigenous peoples rather then undertaking an impartial investigation into the recent violence in far-western Xinjiang province, China is instead poised to launch a serious crackdown on Uighur communities there. Beijing has deployed at least 20,000 troops in and around the region's capital Urumqi. The ethnic violence between native Uighurs and Han Chinese residents erupted on July 5, following what appeared to be an initially peaceful protest organised by Uighur students in response to the inaction of the government following the deaths and injuries of Uighur factory workers in Guangdong province on June 26.

The Uighurs are a Turkic-speaking Muslim minority group who, just a generation ago, accounted for the majority of the people in the remote region - until the Han Chinese moved in. Relations between the Chinese State and the Uighurs have been largely defined by repression of the Turkic language and of the native people's Islamic practices. The Muslims there have consistently questioned the legitimacy of Chinese government rule in their historic homeland. Mistrust between the Chinese State and the Uighur community remains high, and judging from the recent incidents, reconciliation is nowhere in sight.

As in the case of the Tibetans, the Uighurs' efforts at asserting their traditional identity are deemed subversive by the Chinese authorities. But unlike the Tibetans, the Uighurs are not well known and do not benefit from popular support around the world for their cause. Virtually the whole of Hollywood supports Tibetan political rights, autonomy and cultural identity, as does a large section of the American public. There is no such awareness of the Uighurs' cause.

On July 8, Chinese President Hu Jintao tried to sound sensible and reasonable, concluding at the end of the Politburo meeting: "It is necessary to isolate and strike at a tiny minority, while uniting with, educating, and winning over the majority. It is imperative to sternly crack down, according to the law."

But in spite of the lip service about a thorough inquiry into the violence, Beijing doesn't appear to be interested in investigating all aspects of the violence and its causes. Moreover, the state-run media continues to churn out footage and news that focuses almost exclusively on Uighur attacks on Han Chinese.

Of the 184 dead so far, 35 are Uighurs. The violent demonstrations also left more than 1,000 injured in the capital, according to government figures.

In addition to Beijing reinforcing its own perception that the Uighurs are an ungrateful people, mobile phone and Internet services were blocked within a few hours of the riots erupting. Chinese authorities in the region have announced they will seek the death penalty for protest organisers.

A skewed and incomplete picture of the violence has been spewed out to the Chinese public and international community, seemingly to justify the upcoming, across-the-board crackdown

Instead of addressing the root cause of the resentment, the Chinese government, without providing any evidence, has accused former political prisoner, Rebiya Kadeer, of orchestrating the unrest. Kadeer is a prominent Uighur rights activist in the US.

Even more absurd is the blaming of the US Congress, as well as al-Qaeda, for instigating the violence. Like many countries, including Thailand, China has capitalised on the US-led global çwar on terroré to meet its own perceived security needs. It has succeeded in getting Washington to designate the East Turkestan Independence Movement as a terrorist organisation. But human rights activists have derided the move. They warn that it will give Beijing a free hand to do whatever it wants in the name of counter-terrorism.

Unfortunately, Americans have come to know the Uighur people after it was revealed that some of them were detained at Guantanamo Bay. However, the number of detainees was less than two-dozen and the US government concluded back in 2003 that the Uighurs were not part of the global jihadist move-

ment, but were simply a nationalist movement. They also know that returning them to the Chinese would amount to condemning them to certain death.

By lumping Uighur nationalists among the world's terrorists, Beijing is doing a serious disservice to the global effort against terrorism, as well as to the victims of the recent clashes.

No doubt, the world needs to condemn in the strongest terms the violent actions of a number of Uighur demonstrators. This applies also to those Han Chinese who reacted in retaliation. Violence in any form should be opposed.

The immediate cause of the protests in Urumqi and other cities was the lack of government response to the deaths and injuries of the Uighur workers in Guangdong Province on June 26. But the **discontent** expressed by the demonstrators goes much **deep**er than the deaths of the workers. It has more to do with the six decades of Chinese rule in the Uighur homeland that is commonly referred to as East Turkestan.

China is going to have to do more than pour money into developing the region's rich oil and gas deposits, while at the same time financing the influx of Han Chinese into the historically contested region. This migration policy - a standard Chinese tactic - has systematically eroded the Uighur's identity and well-being, according to human rights groups.

In short, China must work towards a political solution that gives not only the Uighurs but also the Tibetans and other minority groups more say in the running of their lives.

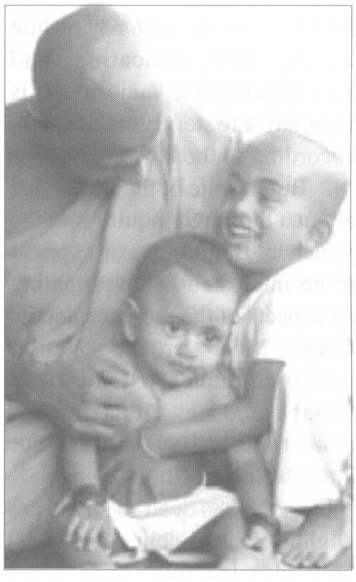
The Nation
July 15, 2009

Sri Lanka:
An Abode of Compassion, Harmony and Love

"Lord Buddha has taught us to help the poor and helpless," says Ven. Atambagaskada. "I have seen that old people and young children need much care and love. I do what I possibly can."

Wearing saffron robes and a heart filled with love, Ven. Atambagaskada Kalyanatissa Thero is a Buddhist monk who provides shelter, food and care for children made destitute by the war and children abandoned and orphaned by their parents. Along with three other monks, he serves at a temple situated in a small village off Atambagaskada which is a few kilometers from the Sri Lankan army camp in the Northern region of Wanni; a place where open conflict was a daily part of life until very recently when the Government of Sri Lanka declared victory over the Tamil Tiger separatists.

The monk's endless efforts began when he visited the Sidambarampuram refugee camp in Vavuniya many years back. Kuganeshan, an orphaned infant, took to him and refused to leave his arms when the monk was ready to go. Ven. Atambagaskada was moved by compassion to take the child with him. Since that day in 1995 around 1000 children have passed through his care and currently he provides a safe haven and home for 82 children —most of them from the ethnic minority, Tamil. Hearing of the monk's kindness, many a widowed mother has travelled from far away territories with the plea that the monk looks after their children. In the past, one or both parents have come to claim their child/children once they have been resettled in their villages after displacement.



The Ven. Atambagaskada's aged mother stays at the temple and overseas meal preparation with three other girls' help among many other things. She is also his help when it is required as the venerable often spends almost all his time as mentor, caretaker and parent to these children. For example, he settles their quarrels, listens to them, comforts them, teaches them and loves

them. His passion is evident as he explains: "we have fed these children with milk and brought them...they are our future, we look after them till either one of their parents come in search of them or until they are grown and independently decide to leave and manage life by themselves as adults. They will always have this place to call their home; they can stay here as long as they want to." The selflessness and dedication of the monk is immense. He often has little or no time to engage in daily religious rituals but feels he is doing as the Buddha would have wanted; it is a service to mankind.

As children from mixed ethnicities live together at the temple, he is of the hope that this different environment would foster understanding and forge relationships between the Sinhalese and Tamil people—a foundation of peace where past hostilities are forgotten. Some of the children of Christian or Hindu backgrounds who have grown up at the temple, have taken to the path of the Buddha at the example of the Thero and are involved in his efforts to care for the children. The older children also help out with administrative duties among other things.

After the official end to the war in the North there was a large influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) flowing in to the Wanni. Ven. Atambagaskada, along with the help of Sewalanka Foundation (a local Non-governmental organization based in Sri Lanka) is providing 3 meals a day, everyday, to 6,500 IDPs housed in the temporary refugee shelters. Sewalanka Foundation has also provided the temple with toys, books, food and funds as well. He says, "I like to help elders and children. They are not able to work themselves. People are born in to this and they have very little. They deserve to have their basic rights. We should ensure that". He also tries to connect separated families within the IDP camps through his work there and tries to get the very old and weak released to his care so he can provide a peaceful place for them to receive proper attention and care.

"This is my mite towards my country: kindness and love are powerful and I believe it must be shown regardless of the receiver's difference or likeness to you. The act of compassion if sown reaps a bountiful harvest of goodness that will allow these children and their future generations to live in harmony, fearless and free.

K.G. Krishantha

Tribute to Hiroshima

In sixty-four years of time
Beautiful trees, plants and flowers have blossomed over this parched earth
Carved stones continue to grow here as balm to heal the memories of pain
River Ota-gawa is silently flowing
As witness to the tragic interplay of modern science and the sins of politics
Hiroshima is a dual city
When you look deep into it
You can see the images of scattered bodies and faces burnt beyond recognition
People running here and there like fire balls wrapped in hay
Away from black rain and the smoke filled earth
Thirsty with memory of its beloved ones begging for water
Gasping for breath
Hiroshima remains
A living testimony of greed, power and the politics of nations
In the name of nationalism and patriotism
Hiroshima suffered the primitive nuclear beast
Unleashed by the Little Boy who knew not
What is human civilization?
A remorseless Fat Man
Followed this Little Boy to another unfortunate destination called Nagasaki
Hiroshima is an ancient city
Perished in its history of militarism and revenge of its enemies
Hiroshima is also a beautiful new city smiling like a child
Beyond any sorrow and memory of pain
Blooming upon the hearts of peace and reconciliation
Hiroshima remains a city of bridges
Between its past and future – war and peace

Letter from the Secretariat Office

Dear INEB members and readers,

It is only a few months from now that all INEB members will celebrate our 20th anniversary. The celebration is organized as "Engaged Buddhist Festival of Peace and Social Transformation" during 10 – 17 November 2009 in Chiang Mai province. There are many elements in the Festival. We have meditation retreat, conference, cultural night, public lecture, exposure visit, actions with the local engaged Buddhist groups like international alms round and peace walk. The information about the Festival appears below and in our website www.inebnetwork.org.

The Festival is a critical time for us to fortify our strengths and sharpen our ideology as spiritual-based social movements. There are numerous global and local challenges that we have to strategize ourselves to cope with them with compassion, wisdom and solidarity among ourselves and with other religious-based or non-religious civil movements. In fact, INEB has a lot of potentials and role to play in order to help establish true peace and social justice.

Therefore, your participation in INEB's "Engaged Buddhist Festival of Peace and Social Transformation" is crucial to define our future vision, direction and strategies. And, if you feel that the Festival is significant, you can also give us financial support. We rely on the generosity of our members to share resources with those in poor countries, especially monks, nuns, and young people, to be able to come to the Festival.

I am looking forward to meeting you all in Chiang Mai.

Yours in the Dhamma,
Anne Lapapan Supamanta
Executive Secretary

The 20th anniversary of INEB, Chiang Mai, Siam.

10-12 November 2009
- Meditation Retreat

13-15 November 2009
- The 2009 INEB Conference

15 November 2009
- Cultural Night

16 November 2009
- International Alms Round
- Exposure visit
- Special Lecture

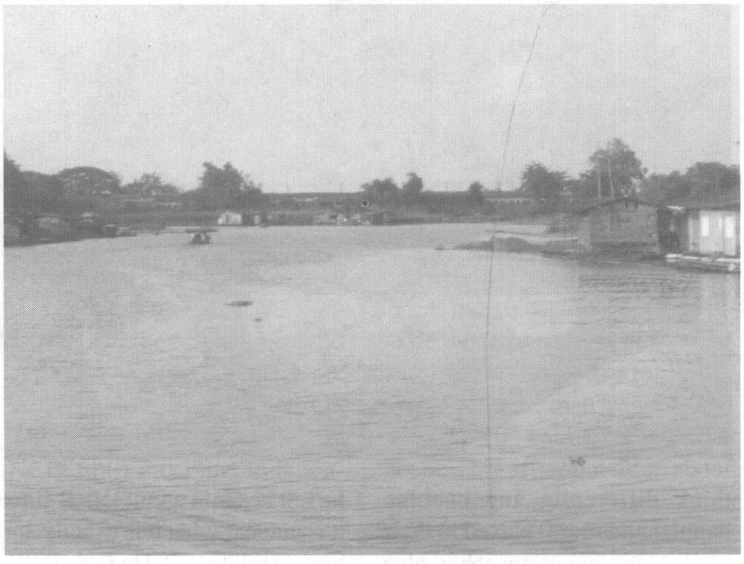
17 November 2009
- Engaged Buddhist Forum
- Chanting for Great Peace
- Peace Walk

Registration for participation starts from May 2009

Contact us:
International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)
Our office: 666 Charoen Nakorn Road, Bang Lamphu Lang, Klong San, Bangkok 10600, Thailand
Tel.:+66-89-150-8084 Fax :+ 66-2-437-7201,
Email address : inebconference2009@yahoo.com
Website: www.inebnetwork.org

Venue:
International Meditation Center of Mahachulalongkorn University and Suan Dok Temple Chiang Mai, Siam

Creating "Structures of *Kalyanamitta*"



20 years ago INEB came into being on a river boat in the central Thai town of Uthai Thani, the hometown of leading founder Sulak Sivaraksa's wife, and the sense to have this *international* conference at such a quaint, local setting reflected Ajahn Sulak's long standing emphasis on the power and meaning of human relationship. Coming off the stinging experience of the rise and fall of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD), which crumbled under interpersonal conflict, Ajahn Sulak had a new vision for INEB – one that would make human relationship the fulcrum for social as well as personal transformation.

Over the last 20 years, INEB has experienced the many ups and downs that accompany the hard but rewarding work of building human relationship. Since the 2007 conference in Taiwan, however, INEB has taken some aggressive steps forward in constructing a more active and meaningful network. These have included restocking the Executive Committee with a number of younger Buddhist activists under 40 who represent the future of INEB and reinvigorating the role of the Advisory Committee by appointing a number of elder mentors who are still very much active. There has also been a concerted effort to convene the Executive Committee on a more regular and frequent basis, rather than once per year as has been in the past. Finally, with Ajahn Sulak himself charting his retirement from his own group of NGOs under the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, INEB has returned to the perennial discussion of how best to manage its affairs under the inspiration of Ajahn Sulak but not under his control. This is a discussion that has sometimes been divisive in INEB, but it is a discussion that Ajahn Sulak himself has not only allowed but at times has promoted under this core philosophy of human relationship, or what we call in Buddhism *kalyanamitta* – "spiritual friendship".

With the 20th anniversary of INEB upon us and our bi-annual conference scheduled for November of this year, a number of Executive and Advisory Committee members along with local INEB staffs and Ajahn Sulak reconvened on the riverboats of Uthai Thani over the weekend of May 2nd and 3rd to continue reinvigorating this dialogue on INEB's future organization and direction; and also, as equally important, to further to develop our *kalyanamitta* through sharing meals, having leisurely time in discussion, and experiencing the traditional Thai riverboat life of Uthai Thani. The following are noted on these discussions that revolve around the core themes of INEB's future and organization, the meaning of *kalyanamitta* for this future and organization, and the role that Ajahn Sulak will continue to have even in his "retirement".

Harsha Navaratne has come to INEB only recently at the INEB 2007 meeting. However, his deep wealth of experience in building the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka under A.T. Ariyaratne has already made him a new leader among us. After years of working in Sarvodaya, he went off to create his own organization, the Sewalanka Foundation, which is now one of the largest domestic development NGO in Sri Lanka. However, Harsha has felt a need to return to the Buddhist roots which were at Sarvodaya's core and thus began to develop a relationship with Ajahn Sulak. Through his exposure to INEB, Harsha has begun putting more spiritual elements into his organization, which has had good results, empowering staffs to



think differently and become happier and more relaxed in their work. This experience has also empowered Harsha to work more with religious clergy in Sri Lanka on conflict resolution there. In this way, he is concerned to further build up INEB's energy and consciousness. While he feels that the *kalyanamitta* network and upper management of INEB is clear, he feels the office management is unclear and needs to be further developed.

Hans van Willenswaard from the Netherlands has been involved with INEB and Ajahn Sulak's network since the late 1990s. While he became interested in Buddhism during the 1970s, especially vipassana, he became alienated by strict meditation and the feeling that you "detach from responsibility". After meeting Ajahn Sulak, he learned about merging meditation and social responsibility. Since then he has become interested in the alternative business sector and built with his wife, Wallapa Kuntiranont, a company dedicated to alternatives to consumerism called Suan Nguen Mee Ma or "Garden of Fruition". Like many others, he felt hesitant about INEB since it is unclear what it is exactly and how to relate to it. He feels INEB needs clearer organization and good governance, which enables decentralization and freedom of the movement. He feels "small is beautiful" is a wonderful motto but INEB's work is large that it cannot just stay as a small *kalyanamitta* group. Wallapa, his partner and a Thai native, also attended the meeting and expressed that Ajahn Sulak's retirement should mean that we don't bother him with INEB's daily matters. However, we still need him for plotting INEB's vision.

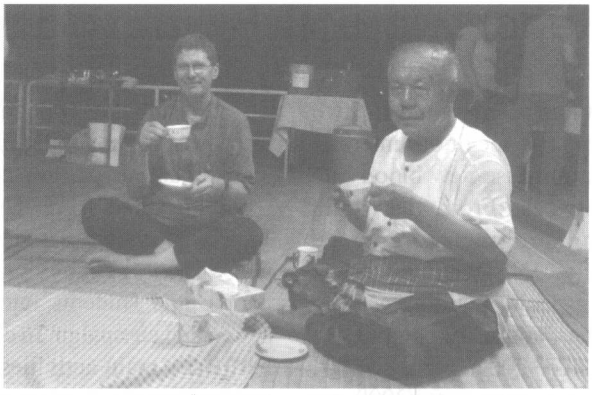
Dharmachari Lokamitra met Sulak in the mid-late 90s and has been active in INEB since the conference in Korea in 2003. His own Jambudvipa Trust and Nagaloka Center hosted the 2005 conference in Nagpur, India, and since then he and his colleagues have been very important instigators in INEB. He remarked that when he met Sulak, Sulak had huge regard for Gandhi yet he was also very interested in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who although is the inspiration for the massive revival of Buddhism in India today is not often well appreciated in the rest of the Buddhist world. Because of Sulak and their involvement in INEB, they have been exposed to many new *kalyanamittas*. Ajahn Sulak's emphasis on being radical, open and *kalyanamitta* helped to bring out a new dimension in his work. He feels this is a special time in INEB, an opportunity to open into a new period or realm both with the work of INEB itself and with our relationship to Ajahn Sulak. He feels that a network is not an organization, so the question becomes: what do we need?

Lapapan Supamanta, or Ann as she is known, is the present and longest serving Executive Secretary in INEB's history having been in the position since 2002. She perhaps more than any of us has engaged in a very intense *kalyanamitta* process with Ajahn Sulak. It is a testimony to both of their perseverance in this ideal that INEB has moved forward so much from its almost total dissolution in 2001. She noted that she originally had been working in the business sector but became disenchanted and started reading about Buddhism. She participated in the Songkla Lake Dhammayatra in southern Thailand run by old INEB members Santikaro and Ven. Kittisak. After meeting Ajahn Sulak, she became very attracted to the idea of INEB. For her, a central concern is what does INEB actually do, because all the members are already very active in their own work so they often don't have the time, energy or resources to commit to other INEB activities that don't seem to directly impact their work.

Poolchawee Ruangwichatorn, or Nong as she is known, has served for a long time in

Ajahn Sulak's wider network, but has been increasingly active in INEB since she participated in her first INEB conference in Kanchanaburi in 1997. She feels that the main INEB office should focus on making connections, while following Ajahn Sulak's worldwide vision which will be relevant for the next 10-20 years. The author here has been involved in INEB since almost its beginning working both in the Secretariat in Bangkok and on the Executive Committee in later years. He feels that human relationship and *kalyanamitta* have been the most important elements in INEB and should continue to be its core. However, he feels there is a challenge to create a sense of ownership among INEB members so as to mobilize them to build it further. This concerns mirrors those of Anne, the Executive Secretary, above. Further, concerning the future of the Executive Secretary and the continual stress and challenges of doing this work, perhaps it is better for INEB to have two or three kinds of networkers or "designated *kalyanamittas*" rather than a single Executive Secretary.

Dr. Hsiang-chou Yo met Ajahn Sulak in Korea at the INEB meeting in 2003, and then became the host of the 2007 meeting in Taiwan. Dr. Yo has also been very involved in the World Fellowship of Buddhists, which he remarked is more of a fellowship for making friends, unlike INEB which is engaged and must do something more. In this way, he has advocated for a more formal INEB structure and organization. He feels the original Sangha offers us an organizational model and that we must develop a paradigm or model – for example, two organizations: a limited foundation and a general social organization. INEB should not hold power but provide a mutual support system. INEB must become independent, and it should be a leader not just in the Buddhist world but in the world in general.



Ajahn Sulak himself spoke on these organizational matters and his vision for INEB. He feels that *kalyanamitta* is the key. He wants a network and networking but feels it shouldn't be a big organization, though it can be friends with such organizations. Everyone should have a key role, being friends and linking. There should be networking without hierarchy as a formal structure really creates problems. The key here again is *kalyanamitta*, which means working for one's personal transformation as well as social transformation. An essential element in Ajahn Sulak's eyes is the exercise mutual criticism. Some major Buddhist leaders have lost in developing their organizations, and Ajahn Sulak said with an air of wit and seriousness that he allows for criticism of his own hypocrisy in this area.

Finally, Ajahn Sulak emphasized the need for regular Executive Committee meetings every 3 months. Further, concerning the upcoming 20th anniversary conference, he advised us to do what you can with wisdom and joy and not to try to do too much or more than we can. He feels the 20th anniversary should not be a big affair but more about cultivating *kalyanamitta*. And, indeed, following this guidance, we spent the rest of our time restructuring our plans for the conference: shifting our focus on a massive 3 day public event in Chiang Mai city to a more typical INEB conference at a retreat center outside of the city. While the program will include some public events, the scaling down of the event is allowing the Executive and Advisory Committees to carefully plan the contents of the meeting towards encouraging members and participants to engage in significant strategic planning for the future at this upcoming conference. The hope is that by the end of this year INEB will have taken an important step forward in developing more "structures of *kalyanamitta*". Yet in the true spirit of *kalyanamitta*, these discussions and work will continue on – as long as we are in relationship and find that sentient beings are in need of relief from their dukkha.

Jonathan Watts
INEB Executive and Advisory Committee Meeting
Uthai Thani, Thailand
May 1st & 2nd, 2009

Report on INEB Youth Exchange Program

INEB has been around for two decades, and one of our interests now is to infuse new blood into the network. From the youth training programs organized annually, INEB extended the youth capacity building activity into the Youth Exchange for Peace since 2007.

In the year 2008/2009 we welcomed 7 young people from partner organizations: Deer Park Institute (India), PADETC (Laos), Khmer Youth Association (Cambodia) and a new partner Dharmajala (Indonesia). Each of them will work in different countries for 10 months. The general aim of the exchange is to support an organic process of learning of our exchange participants, towards an enriching and deeper understanding of the many factors which bring about individual and social change. The exchange program is in fact an activity in which the partner organizations share resources with one another through the process of nurturing the potentiality of the young people sent to them.

Kan Sophon from Cambodia was posted with PADETC in Laos. The young man whose work in Cambodia focuses on peace building was expected to learn organic farming. Working closely with PADETC's SME unit, he was trained in various skills such as waste management, fish culture, water filtering, growing fruit trees and mulberry trees for silk worms, and how to help a community set up a small business. This exchange was designed to open his eyes to understand broad-based peace, which includes food security, eco-friendly agriculture and right livelihood for the people.

Dharmajala was included into the program for the first time and began its participation by receiving Jane from Thailand. Jane is a student activist. Now her work is to mobilize young people and students into social action and campaign. In contrast, her host's main activities at that moment emphasized on spiritual transfor-mation, healing and spiritual community building for urban Indonesians. We expected that, Jane with her skills in organizing social action would help Dharmajala kick-off its initiative on waste management with local schools as its social outreach. Besides, it is a good chance for Jane to learn from the experiences of Dharmajala on how to use spiritual practices as a method to connect people to be a dedicated community for change.

INEB was a host to one volunteer from India. Deepak is a young Dalit with an impressive commitment to Buddhist studies. He showed his aspiration to be a future Dhamma teacher through his study and practices. To broaden his perspective and train him to be a socially engaged Buddhist, INEB introduced him to several social action ideas and experiences. While with INEB, Deepak was exposed to the Buddhist movements in Thailand and trained to conduct social actions with a Buddhist foundation. In addition, he learnt about Latin American people movements in which the religious groups are very much active in social justice issues. The knowledge will support his engagement with people's movements for human rights and dignity for the Dalit in his homeland. We are hopeful that with the experiences during the exchange, he would contribute to the spiritual and social transformation in the near future.

Being sent by PADETC which is very active in improving the education in Laos, Sengsouly gained a lot of experiences from Deer Park Institute and other NGOs in India. This may help him work better back home especially in the new area of ecology education which is one of Deer Park Institute's core concerns. He started developing the first Ecology Education Curriculum and tool-kit of Deer Park Institute that helped increase his knowledge on environmental issues. He also participated in one senior secondary school workshop on waste management.

Their stories represent INEB's effort in promoting the learning process of Buddhist youths who were selected into the program. Up to now we have 17 participants, including 7 persons in a new batch for the year 2009/2010. This is still a small number. But the program is very meaningful. Of course for the young people themselves, they can serve their community better with new knowledge, skill and attitude. At the same time it helps reinforce the capacity of our member organizations which in turn will make INEB more capable to respond to global and local challenges at the present time.

Lapapan Supamanta

SCHOOL FOR WELLBEING STUDIES & RESEARCH

A new initiative

For many years organizations under the umbrella of the Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation have contemplated an 'alternative university'. The Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation (SNF) was founded by Sulak Sivaraksa in 1968 and evolved into a SNF-family of independent groups. The Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) and Ashram Wongsanit have accumulated over the years enormous experience in all forms of 'alternative' non-formal and adult education, including long and short term residential courses, weekend activities, tailor made on-site courses, public debate, reconciliation dialogue, seminars, festivals and conferences. The International Network of Engaged Buddhist (INEB) has a long tradition of its own in organizing training courses and bi-annual conferences. While Suan Nguen Mee Ma publishers have done their part since they were established in 2001: shop talks in Suksit Siam bookshop, Green Fairs, book launchings and a series of meetings on Gross National Happiness (GNH). The memorable GNH conference in Nongkhai and Bangkok, 2007, resulted in the *GNH Movement project* and bi-monthly workshops, fora and public lectures were organized on a diversity of issues related to happiness, wellbeing and alternative development. Recently a 'National Round Table' on Measuring Progress of Societies was held at SASIN business school at Chulalongkorn University.



Last year Vajarayana monk Matthieu Ricard (France) shared the wisdom contained in his book *Happiness. Life's Most Important Skill* which was published in Thai language.

In a process of 'learning by doing' stable cooperation has been developed with the Faculty of Political Science, and the related Social Research Institute, of Chulalongkorn University, the oldest university in Thailand; as well as with the Centre for Bhutan Studies (CBS) in Bhutan.

CBS is a very fruitful think tank and research institute not only on Gross National Happiness, including the international impact, but also on Bhutanese culture and history.

The Faculty of Political Science, the SNF – Suan Nguen Mee publishers is a social enterprise affiliated with SNF – and CBS therefore decided to create a more permanent legal basis for this cooperation. Together they founded the *School for Wellbeing Studies & Research.*

With the *School for Wellbeing* a simple start has been made towards networking and cooperation with the many likeminded university based groups, organizations, and independent persons in the field of social transformation and wellbeing-driven public policies and practice in Thailand and globally.

The initiative has been shaped as a 'school' in its original sense: an open learning platform for creative exchanges. But also for research according to academic standards, although mainstream scientific assumptions may be questioned and new paradigms explored. Support for innovative action-research projects will be emphasized adding new dimensions to the community of practitioners.

Important books challenging mainstream academia like *Contemplative Science: Where Buddhism and Neuroscience Converge* by B. Alan Wallace will be made available in Thai translation.

The school should not only be a meeting point for (young) academics but serve as an independent think-tank (or: think 'pond') in which business people, policy makers and civil society leaders participate as equal partners, with the help of independent scholars.

An issue of particular interest will be the challenge to make 'democracy' work by fruitful interaction with the diversity of culture – rather than

rightsbased modes of decision making including traditions and social innovation towards 'consensus building'.

'Wellbeing' refers to a new field of academic inquiry including positive psychology, studies of alternative development, responsible economy, political science, inter-religious studies, anthropology and ecology. In short it underpins a holistic world view and is set to practice 'critical holism'.

An annual activity of the *School for Wellbeing* will be the International Summer Course, the first to be held in August 2010. It will include a 'Wellbeing-Interbeing' introduction in Ashram Wongsanit, an academic week at Chulalongkorn University and a study-visit to Bhutan. Its title will be 'Happiness *for* Global Transformation'.

The school does not pretend to be an 'alternative university' but we hope to add to the diversity of education in Thailand and Bhutan. And to strengthen international networking by forging a bridge between NGO-based non-formal education and the world of academia. Ultimately we hope we can contribute to global education reform towards human-scale education at all levels.

The inauguration, Thursday morning 20 August 2009, at Chulalongkorn University will be enlivened with a *School for Wellbeing*-dialogue between Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa (Advisor of the school), Dasho Karma Ura (Member of the Executive Committee), Professor Apichai Puntasen (Director of the Sufficiency Economy programme of the Thailand Research Fund, well known for his book on *Buddhist Economics*) and the participants on 'Our Common Future, Here and Now. Alternative Development, Wellbeing and the Search for Happiness'. Ajarn Surat Horachaikul of the Faculty of Political Science, and the Academic Coordinator of the *School for Wellbeing* will moderate the dialogue.

Thursday 20 August 09.30 – 13.00 (including lunch) at the Alumni Room, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University. Information: Siriwan sauvage_max@hotmail.com

Announcement

Tuesday 8 September 10.30 – 14.00 (including organic lunch): encounter with Helena Norberg Hodge, author of *Ancient Futures* on Ladakh and *Bringing the Food Economy Home.* The theme of Helena's presentation will be 'Globalization or Localization. Reshaping our economy'. Alumni Room, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University. Information: Nooth publishers@suan-spirit.com

Poznan Declaration: World vs. Bank

Nations are gathering in Poznan, Poland under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). To meet their obligations towards developing countries and repay their climate debt, industrialized countries must agree to appropriately and adequately finance adaptation, mitigation, and technology development and transfer. The World Bank Group is positioning itself to control key financial mechanisms of the UNFCCC.

We, the undersigned organizations, oppose any World Bank role in an international climate change convention regime, for the following reasons:

The World Bank is a major climate polluter. Despite professed concern regarding climate change, the World Bank Group is actually increasing its support for fossil fuel projects. From 1997-2007, the World Bank financed 26 gigatons of carbon dioxide emissions – about 45 times the annual emissions of the UK. In the last year, the World Bank Group has increased lending for coal, oil, and gas by 94%, totaling over $3 billion. Coal lending alone increased 256% in the last year. The World Bank's own 2004 Extractive Industries Review recommended an immediate end to coal financing and a phase out of investments in oil production by 2008 and found that "... oftentimes the environment and the poor have been further threatened by the expansion of a country's extractive industries sector." Yet in April 2008, the Bank approved a $450 million loan for a massive 4,000 megawatt coal project in India, expected to be one of the 50 largest greenhouse gas emitters in the world. Given the World Bank's existing and increasing support for fossil fuels, it is an inappropriate institution to lead the fight against global climate change.

The World Bank is a major deforester. Deforestation accounts for some 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions, but the Bank continues to promote industrial logging and agrofuels. A 2007 World Bank Inspection Panel report strongly criticized the Bank's support for industrial logging and violating the rights of indigenous Pygmy and other forest-dependent communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo, home to the second largest tract of rainforests in the world. Throughout tropical rainforest areas, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) – the private sector lending arm of the World Bank Group – finances soy and oil palm plantations and cattle ranching, as well as financing shrimp farming in mangrove forests. The IFC has a long record of support for livestock-based agribusiness, with US $732 million in investment over a 6-year period for livestock production projects. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that the livestock sector is responsible for 18% of global warming emissions.

The World Bank is a major rights violator. Numerous communities throughout the world – from those impacted by the Chad-Cameroon pipeline to the Nam Theun 2 Hydropower Project in Laos – have suffered human and environmental rights violations as a direct result of World Bank-backed projects.

The World Bank is an undemocratic institution. Its one dollar-one vote decision-making marginalizes Southern countries, and the United States simply chooses the Bank's president.

The World Bank's recent climate initiatives are severely flawed.

- The World Bank's recently launched Climate Investment Funds (CIFs) undermine UN climate negotiations, compete for funding with already established UN adaptation and technology funds, promote dirty industries like coal as clean energy, and force developing countries to pay for the industrialized world's pollution by providing loans for them to adapt to the climate crisis they did not create. Rather than treating the provision of climate financing as binding obligations by industrialized countries to developing countries under the UNFCCC, the CIFs are designed within a fundamentally unequal aid framework of donor and recipient. This is particularly odious given the large historical ecological debt owed by industrialized countries to developing countries. Though the CIFs have been described as new sources of funding by the World Bank, G8 governments have made clear that they are considered as part of Official Development Assistance, and thus are not new and additional.
- The World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), enabled by the Forest Investment Program, will include forests in dubious carbon offsetting schemes that allow industrialized countries to buy their way out of meaningful emissions reductions. In violation of the Bank's own policies, the FCPF has failed to ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in its design.
- In 2007, less than 10% of the Bank's carbon finance was allocated to solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, and mini hydropower. Energy efficiency captured 80% of the money allocated to purchase emissions reductions credits, the majority of which went to a single project in China to reduce emissions by burning off HFC-23, a potent greenhouse gas byproduct. The generation of carbon credits from HFC-23 destruction has been sharply criticized.

We call on the World Bank and its donors to immediately stop financing fossil fuels.

We further call on governments to:

- Reject the role of the World Bank in an international climate regime.
- Establish a financing mechanism fully accountable to the UNFCCC – based on equity and in accordance with the historical and current responsibilities of industrialized countries – with predictable, new and additional funding directly accessible to recipient countries.
- Invest massively in clean, safe and decentralized renewable energy, demand side energy efficiency and sustainable transport.
- Ensure forests are not included in carbon markets.
- Recognize and enforce customary and territorial land rights of Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities as the basis of any forest policy.
- Support forest conservation by promoting national programs and infrastructure that provide direct support to rights-based, community-driven forms of forest conservation, sustainable management and ecosystem restoration.
- Ensure that monoculture tree plantations are excluded from the definition of "forests," and from any mechanisms, policies and incentives that might be established to conserve forests or halt deforestation and

forest degradation.

- Address the drivers of deforestation, including agro-fuels; the excessive consumption of products such as meat, pulp and paper; and the destructive practices of logging and fossil fuel extraction.

Signed:

ActionAid International Africa Jubilee South Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ) CEE Bankwatch Network Development Alternatives with Women for A New Era (DAWN) European Marches against Unemployment, Precarity and Exclusion Fahamu - Networks for Social Justice Friends of the Earth International Focus on the Global South Greenpeace Indigenous Environmental Network International Alliance of Inhabitants

Dialogic: the Art of Dialogues

Dialogic: the Art of Dialogue is a contemporary art exhibition based on the 120th anniversary of Phya Anuman Rajadhon.

This exhibition is devoted to Phya Anuman Rajadhon, a diligent and extraordinary scholar who wrote and translated more than 200 titles in his entire life. The content of the show will be based on Phya Anuman Rajadhon's way of thinking and reflect his philosophy of self-learning.

Dialogic: the Art of Dialogues will be one of the most challenging art projects based in Thailand. It plans to invite 8 artists from different disciplines include painting, design architecture, theatre, film, multimedia, and creative writing. During a period of one month the artists will work together to create a new dialogue between the 8 different topics, which had been, formerly explored by Phya Anuman Rajadhon. The exhibit space will become a creative hub, an 'art junction' where all can cross paths and meet. We hope that a vibrant and relevant new culture will emerge from the dialogue.

The opening ceremony will be held at Bangkok Art and Cultural Centre on 5 November 2009 and it will run until 18 January 2010 with special programs and activities organized by Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation every weekend. The Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC) is located in the middle of the town at the Pathumwan Intersection. It is right at the BTS National Stadium Station.

Bhanuwat Jittivuthikarn

The Germanic word for king, Reinhard Bendix tells us, developed from the word for kindred. The ancient supernatural beliefs of the German pagans attributed charismatic power not to individuals but to entire clans (this was an idea which even Adolf Hitler, centuries later, would find compelling). The Germanic ruler, or king, was not therefore especially linked to the gods, any more than the rest of the clan, but he was, in general, a superior military leader. His successes reflected the supernatural qualities of the entire people, not just himself.

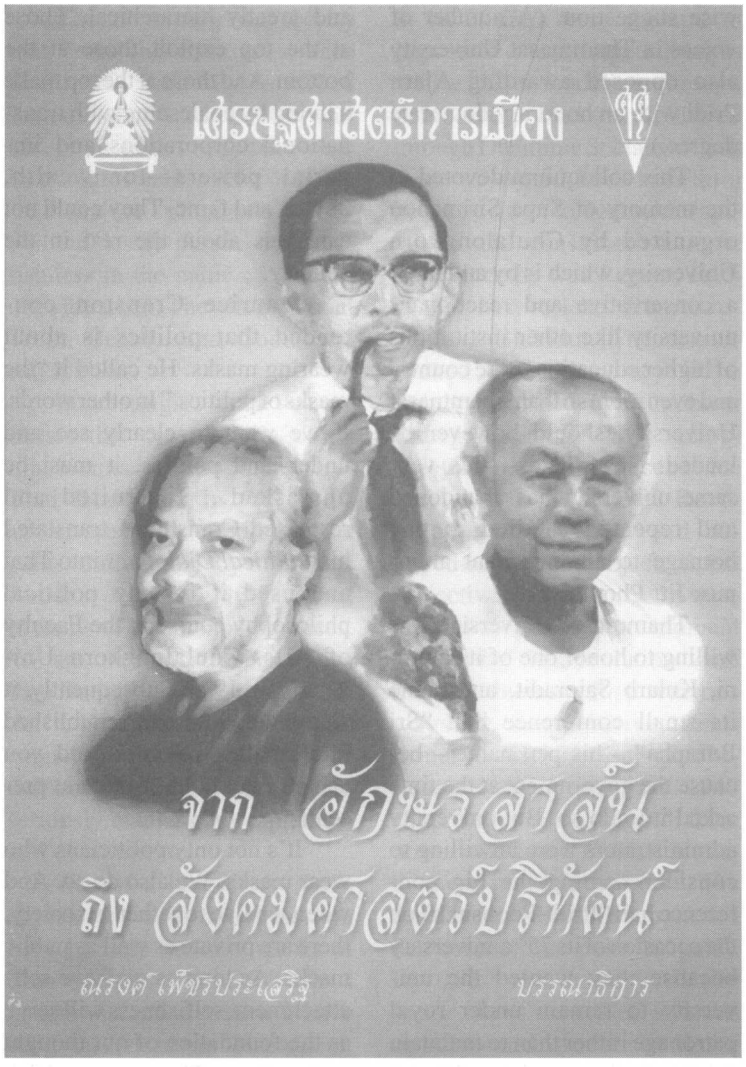
IDEAS, a History From Fire to Freud by Peter Watson

It must be said that the experiment of running the world without the Empire cannot be adjudged an unqualified success. The post-imperial age has been characterized by two contradictory tendencies: economic globalization and political fragmentation. The former has certainly promoted economic growth, but the fruits of growth have been very unevenly distributed. The latter tendency has been associated with the problems of civil war and political instability, which have played a major role in impoverishing the poorer countries of the world.

Empire by Niall Ferguson

Unmasking Thai Society

Supa Sirimanon was an important person whom the ruling class in mainstream Thai society found unworthy. I will not elaborate on his virtues because other speakers before me have already done so. Suffice it to say that he was a great editor and writer. The last stages of his life were devoted to cultivating and strengthening the ethics of journalism and professionalism in various local and provincial newspapers. To me, however, he was most importantly a *kalyanamitta*. He also acted as a virtuous companion to Ajarn Pridi Banomyong, especially when the latter was in power. Supa had the knack for courageously and sincerely criticizing those whom he respected. Ajarn Pridi respectfully listened to Supa's criticisms, treating the latter as an equal. As every good Buddhist knows, having virtuous companions is the most important thing a person needs if s/he wants to follow the Noble Paths. Buddhism treats the voices of *kalyanamitta* as one's external conscience, fostering self-reflection and–criticism. One polishes" oneself in this practice. Even when Ajarn Pridi fell from power and was in exile, Supa continued to serve as his *kalyanamitta*.



The above trait alone is sufficient to pronounce Supa's excellence, a point many people may find it difficult to fathom. As mentioned above, Supa was my *kalyanamitta*. He did not waver from this role even when I was a self-declared enemy of Pridi. At the time, we never had a heated debate on Pridi. Through our developing friendship and mutual trust, Supa enabled me to realize the truths about Ajarn Pridi by myself. With a slight shift in perspective, I was able to see the truth that Ajarn Pridi unconditionally fought for: the fact that everyone is equal and the people are equally capable political subjects since they are the actual owners of the country. This presumption of equality propelled the 1932 Revolution and was vital for the organization of the Seri Thai Movement during World War II. We are still living in the political sequence kicked off by the 1932 Revolution whose truth we have to continue to fight for. In this respect, Supa was very important to me.

But then Thammasat University, which was established by Ajarn Pridi, only awarded Supa with an honorary MA degree—while a horde of morally half-baked and mediocre individuals got honorary doctorate degrees! Being a humble person, Supa accepted the honorary degree with equanimity. If I were him, I would stamp on the awarded degree. When I told him about it, he simply laughed and asked me to always keep calm

and control my temper. To this day, I still have not been able to completely follow through his wise suggestion. (A number of voices in Thammasat University also opposed awarding Ajarn Pridi with an honorary doctorate degree.)

This colloquium devoted to the memory of Supa Sirimanon organized by Chulalongkorn University, which is by and large a conservative and reactionary university like other institutions of higher education in the country and even more so than Thammasat University, should however be lauded. Nevertheless, this very same university has abandoned and repeatedly failed to pay homage to an important alumnus: Jitr Phoomisak.

Thammasat University was willing to honor one of its alumni, Kularb Saipradit, and name its small conference hall "Sri Burapha" – his pen name – because the government at the time asked it to do so. But university administrators were unwilling to consider naming the big conference hall "Pridi-Poonsukh" on the occasion of its 75th anniversary because they wanted the university to remain under royal patronage rather than to maintain fidelity to the principle of "santi pracha dhamma" and follow the presupposition of equality to the end.

The organizers of this event gave me full liberty to decide on the title and contents of this address. I chose "Unmasking Thai Society" (ถอดหน้ากากสังคมไทย) to differentiate from the title of one of my books "Skinning Thai Society (ลอกคราบสังคมไทย), which the city police confiscated and banned in 1984, and ultimately led to my first arrest under the charge of lese majeste. To this day, Iûm still being charged with defaming the monarchy. This does not come as a surprise because Thai society is still class-based and greatly hierarchical. Those at the top exploit those at the bottom. And those at the top make a living by coalescing with transnational corporations and imperial powers—for wealth, power, and fame. They could not care less about the rest in the country...

Maurice Cranston contended that politics is about wearing masks. He called it "the masks of politics." In other words, if we want to clearly see and understand politics, it must be unmasked... I admired and respected Cranston. I translated his *Political Dialogues* into Thai and used it for my political philosophy course at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, in 1971. Subsequently, it was divided up and republished into smaller volumes, and you can still get hold of them at present.

It's not only politicians who wear masks. We also do so. And when we live together in society, there are private as well as public masks. As long as we have self-attachment, selfishness will serve as the foundation of our thought and action. The more selfish we are the more hypocritical, deceitful, and cunning we will become at both the individual and the collective levels. Whether private or public, masks are all reified and fetishized. The nation-state is no different as Benedict Anderson has long pointed out in *Imagined Communities*. This book was recently translated into Thai, and the book launch was held at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, on 18 January 2009. I was invited to give some closing remarks, which you can read them in *เพียรพูดความจริงในวัยสนธยาแห่งชีวิต*, pages 53-60.

In this address I will focus on Thai society or the community that relies on the Thai language as the main medium of communication. This may not include the three southernmost provinces, which primarily use Melayu. Admittedly, I'm not familiar with the language, religion, and culture of the South. And the Thai society that I am familiar with is narrow and often limited to the urban middle-class.

At times the term "Thai society" encompasses a much broader meaning, even including the Thai country. Here are a few random examples.

1) "In 'Prathet Thai' [the Thai country] the thing that is lacking most is justice" (Thanakorn Huntrakul, *Sarakadee Magazine*, May 2009, p. 51.).
2) "Thailand was only a paradise for fools and farangs, for criminals and foreigners" (from *Sightseeing*, a collection of short stories by Rattawut Larpcharoensup).
3) "At present, there's only General Paiboon Karnjanapiboon who is in the process of publishing a biography of Phya Pahon. I once had a chance to gather at the Army's Artillery Center in memory of Phya Pahon. Soldiers praised him. They wrote about him. No one mentioned 24 June at all..." (Sukpreeda Banomyong, lamenting on the absence of interest in Phya Pahon, *Thai Post Tabloid*, 21-27 June 2009, p. 3.)

The three examples cited above show that when one is

talking about Thai society one may also be referring to the Thai country as follows: (1) it lacks justice. How long will an unjust society last or survive? 2) It is a paradise for fools and degenerates, if not for mainstream farangs who visit the country for sex and sun, for criminals who become politicians, and big capitalists who lead the Wrong Livelihood. Things are this way because: (3) we are not willing to face Truth. We deny that the 1932 Revolution told us the truth about Thai society. We have betrayed this truth rather remaining faithful to it, rather than seeing it to the end. We choose to surrender rather than struggle on. We don't have confidence in the people as the actual owners of the country, as equal subjects who have the future in their hands. Therefore, we find it hard even to speak about Ajarn Pridi and Phya Pahon. We don't even have their monuments in front of Parliament.

It's alright to have King Rama VII's monument in front of Parliament as long as it is accompanied by those of these two great commoners, as long as they all share the same platform, being next to one another. The King Prajadhipok Institute should also be renamed the Citizens' or People's Party Institute. Or Phot (Pahonyothin)-Pridi (Banomyong) Institute. What's in a name? Does it matter? The name "King Prajadhipok Institute" means that it provides the kind of knowledge that power likes—cultivating subservience, fatalism, moral cowardice, depression, etc. On the other hand, a "Phot-Pridi Institute" or "People's Party Institute" will be based on radical egalitarianism and will empower the people, the excluded, the supernumerary, etc. And so on. There will be stark differences, to put it mildly.

The inhabitants of a society that lacks the courage to face Truth will naturally be filled with moral cowardice. They will accept all sorts of injustices and inequalities in the name of being 'realistic' or 'pragmatic.' They will ruthlessly pursue their selfishness in the name of modern individualism. They live without Truth, Beauty, and Good, and call it bliss…

Interestingly, Thai society insists that the majority of its inhabitants are Buddhist. But Thai Buddhists in the mainstream are hardly treading on the paths trail-blazed by the Lord Buddha. We are only Buddhist in terms of ceremonial practices. We are often more superstitious than Buddhist. Mainstream Buddhism also goes along well with capitalism. At present, it seems that only the Santi Asoke sect is seriously challenging capitalism and consumerism.

To cut a long story short, capitalism and consumerism have become the new masks of Thai society. Through various means and ways which I have long talked about elsewhere, these two masks were quietly and gradually worn since the kingdom opened its door to Western imperialism during the Fourth Reign. It was done first in the name of civilization then of modernization and now of globalization. Suffice it to say that our ruling elites have been at the forefront of civilizers, modernizers, and globalizers; these ideas were not simply forcefully imposed on a hapless and geopolitically weak Siam. *In other words, it was primarily the weakness of thought and subjectivity that enabled the rise of these masks, not of the lack of power.*

When the revolution erupted in 1932, there were attempts to oppose Western imperialism as well as Thai feudalism through democracy. Had we followed through Dhammic Socialism back then, we would have been in a better position to deal with capitalism and consumerism now. Ever since he was Regent, Pridi did his best to learn from Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. The former wanted Thai democracy to be deeply informed by Buddhism and egalitarianism. Let's simply say that the political sequence unfolding from the 1932 Revolution was disrupted and betrayed at both the objective and subjective levels. Those who were faithful to the utopian moment created by the revolution were mostly destroyed in various ways by conservative, reactionary, and counter-revolutionary forces. After the 1947 coup, which removed Pridi from power, the mask of Thai feudalism was gradually restored. The forces of dictatorship supplanted democratic ones point by point. By 1957 the country finally 'came out of the closet' and was openly and unabashedly a dictatorship. It proudly became a satellite of the American empire. And let's just briefly say that things turned from bad to worse.

The snapshots provided above are merely to show the dominant forces or masks that captured Thai society, that held it under a spell. They were constituted by transnational corporations and the new empires such as the US and China with active collaboration by the Thai ruling elites.

No matter how capable (or innocent or just) one is, as long as one still wears these masks one

will have to dance along the hegemonic song of globalization. We can call it neoliberalism. It is based on competitiveness and entrepreneurialism. It accepts all sorts of inequality as long as they feed competition and entrepreneurship. Nature is just a factor of production. Nature is to be protected or conserved insofar as transnational capitalism remains untouched.

Thus in a reply to Thanakorn Huntrakul, how and where can we find justice in Thai society? And it is not surprising that Thai society is a paradise for fools (especially the rich and the powerful) and their servants, mainstream farangs, and so on (as pointed out by a character in Rattawut Larpcharoensup's short story). This is because of the betrayal of Truth, because people don't dare speak and write the truth, etc.

The lower class in both the urban centers and the rural areas is exploited in every conceivable way in the name of development and more recently of globalization by local (i.e., regional and national) and transnational capitalists.

Democracy in the Thai country is merely about form, not substance. It's about the fetishism of numbers: the majority always wins. To what extent have we really seriously talked about and debated on ethics or justice?

....

If humans are unable to think Truth (or Beauty or Good), moral courage will be impossible. And Truth will emerge when we confront Suffering, individually and collectively.

The suffering of Thai society is a suffering that causes the people to be depressed, unconfident, and cowardly. They are compelled to climb the social ladder, to surrender to the class structure, to lose all hope, and to abandon their rich cultural roots in favor of anything Western.

At present, Oxbridge is in fashion in Thai society (again). I wonder if those consumed by the Oxbridge fever know William Blake's view on England's most famous and oldest education institutions. Blake said that Oxbridge works in the service of the British empire—of colonial superiority and domination—with callous disregard for the poor and elementary justice.

But Harvard is still considered to be superior to Oxbridge. Harvard's motto is that truth is important above all. Yes, tell that to Harvard academic Henry Kissinger who served under the Nixon administration and brought destruction to Vietnam and Cambodia. And there was Samuel Huntington (who recently passed away) who advised the American administration to bomb South Vietnam as part of its counter-revolutionary and modernization campaign—not to mention his notorious "clash of civilizations" thesis. My point is, have they both sought after Truth or brutal victory?

We have docilely followed the American empire, haven't we? The Sirindhorn Dam was constructed in an area with highly fertile lands because the local farmers were accused of cultivating and harvesting rice to feed the communists. Therefore the rice fields had to be inundated and replaced by a dam. The dam is by and large useless. The farmers' livelihood was destroyed. And so was nature.

....

Our ruling elites first began to wear foreign masks on Thai society during the Fifth Reign. These masks have grown thicker ever since. King Rama V believed the British rulers in India that the world of the ruling class could be preserved through the following ways: 1) the people must be educated to accept inequality and the privilege of the ruling elites as natural and necessary; 2) the centralization of power in the capital or in the hands of the ruling class; and 3) the creation of military forces that would ruthlessly crush dissenting or recalcitrant movements. Since the Fifth Reign, Thai soldiers have primarily waged war on the people. They have never won a single battle against external opponents.

In sum we need to critically examine these masks.

The mask each of us wears is that of selfishness or self-attachment. Every religion teaches us to unmask it by practicing humility and respecting all humans and sentient beings. Even nature itself is to be respected. This view is largely based on the interconnection of all things, creating some sort of harmony and balance. Of course, this view is no longer dominant in the mainstream of the West—as well as in the upper and middle classes of Thai society. Arguably, the upper and middle classes in Thai society are more Westernized than at any time in its history.

Buddhists turn to the Threefold Refuge of the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Order to practice humility. Instead of worshipping money as god or power and status, being awaken from greed, hatred, and delusion is the noblest thing in life. This will enable one to grasp that there's nothing necessarily true about the reality we daily perceive and experience. And then we can model social

relations along the lines of the egalitarianism and fraternity of the Sangha in order to liberate us from greed, hatred, and delusion.

In Buddhist practice, once we have accepted the Three Refuges we will begin to normalize ourselves and our society.

The precepts enable us to understand violence and overcome it. The first precept concerns violence pertaining to life; the second to possessions; the third to sex; the fourth to language; and the fifth to thought and emotion (e.g. intoxicated by alcohol, chemical substance, religion, propaganda, etc. one is often not mindful). What must be reminded at the outset is that violence can be both direct and structural.

Johan Galtung, a Norwegian Buddhist who nominated my name to the Right Livelihood Award at the Swedish Parliament in 1995, was the person who coined the term "structural violence." He talks about the built-in inequality of a structure or system that leads for instance to the unjust and unequal distribution of resources, making countless lives who are internally excluded unlivable. This logic is extended to cover nationalism, class system, sexual exploitation, etc. Structural violence is manifested politically, economically, and culturally. Start thinking about slum-dwellers, ethnic minorities, illegal immigrants, factory workers, etc. in these terms and we will start noticing structural violence.

Social structures are not natural. Rather they are constructed alongside political and economic developments that are based on exploitation.....As such they can be changed. There's nothing true about them. Moral training can thus be adapted to facilitate the transformation of society.

Aside from structural violence, there's violence that emanates from language and symbols, constituting a culture of violence. For instance, the other can be represented as less than human or subhuman. Or the other is the enemy, the public enemy, the enemy of humanity, and so on. Pridi and the People's Party were demonized. The peoples of Burma and Cambodia were represented as inferior to Thais, disease-ridden, woefully ignorant, etc.

Under structural violence and a culture of violence, direct violence is rendered easier, more acceptable, or even necessary. If Thammasat University was infested with Vietnamese communists and their sympathizers in October 1976, massacring and/or torturing them was more legitimate and understandable.

If one doesn't want to talk about structural violence, one should shut up about globalization. There's no point external to capital in the world. Millions of lives are said to be internally excluded, deprived of access to even basic necessities. Many of us here may however feel safe and secure in our lives. We may even personally condemn violence—wars, rapes, ethnic conflicts, marital abuses, etc. We may despise and avoid fast food and carbonated drinks. We may even be minimizing our use of plastic bags and styro foams. Some of us may find the time to meditate regularly. If the meditation masters in the country cannot help appease our restlessness, we still can rely on the deep meditation of Plum Village, for instance. Or Goenka's. They all help us to develop the inner distance we need to live in structural violence, to be blind to social suffering.

If Buddhists who are quite well to do or ruling elites who uphold morality do not perceive structural violence and culture of violence in both their knowledge and action, the mindfulness they are cultivating is merely a form of escapism. Or it is in order for them to accept the world as it is. Who are we to change the world? This mode of thinking is simply delusional. It shows a failure to grasp the Three Characteristics. That is, we must confront the state of suffering (*dukkhata*) and realize that things are transient (*anniccata*). Therefore, there's a void or emptiness ultimately (*annattata*).

If we are able to see the various forms of violence and try to find a way to cultivate peace from within ourselves in order to transform our consciousness as well as society, this is ultimately a way of unmasking ourselves. How can we be liberated from greed, hatred, and delusion when the majority of people are still unemancipated from structural violence and culture of violence?

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu often said that if morality does not return, the world will be heading for destruction. And globalization is what is leading to world destruction.

Thais in the past often used the word *sila* (morality) and *dhamma* together. Morality refers to a state of normality, individually and collectively. Dhamma must be adapted and used to liberate society from domination; that is, to foster normality.

Buddhism teaches that the sublime states of mind constitute the dhamma for the ruler or for the fully grown. Only those with the sublime states of mind can

transform crisis into happiness. I've talked about what loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity mean for personal and social emancipation elsewhere and therefore will not repeat them here.

...

Being liberated from or overcoming social suffering does not mean surviving day by day. Rather it means the courage and confidence to struggle against and rupture with the way things are—politically, economically, and culturally—through *santi pracha dhamma*. Without *santi pracha dhamma* our struggle will not be egalitarian and universal. This is an affirmative vision. Dhammic Socialism is a Good that we should set out for and carry its consequences to the end. It's better to struggle for Dhammic Socialism and fail than to surrender to reactionary forces of various shades and hues—from militarists to capitalists, absolutists to imperialists.

The first precept is not simply about killing. Buddhists must not only confront individual suffering but also social suffering. With moral courage, Buddhists must overcome social suffering alongside the cultivation of the sublime states of mind. We must never forget that our main objective is concerned more with the dismantling of structural violence than with the hatred for the powers-that-be and the obscenely rich.

As for morality, where should we begin? Here the Ven. Maha Ghosananda is a worthy guide. He says we should tread step by step mindfully in our identification with the poor, excluded, etc. In particular, we should identify with the poor who are struggling against social structures that are unjust and violent: the Assembly of the Poor, the movement against the Pak Moon Dam, etc.

Our struggle should be non-violent and preferably should create transnational alliances—with the monks against dictatorship in Burma, the Tibetans, etc.

I maintain that this is how we should unmask ourselves and our society. You may not agree with the things I've said. But at least I hope they will provoke you to think about the ways to unmask Thai society.

Were Supa Sirimanon alive, he would gladly approve of my lecture today.

Translated, excerpted, and summarized from Sulak Sivaraksa's Supa Sirimanon Lecture, Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University, on 16 July 2009.

Society and Politics during the Economic Crisis

The theme of this year's conference is "Man and Society in a Borderless World." It must be pointed out from the outset that historically, humans in Thai society did not give much significance to borders until recently. Instead, Thai ruling elites were largely preoccupied with the royal or capital city given its symbolic importance. Thus, the official name of the Thai kingdom was "Krung Sri Ayutthaya." Similarly, the Burmese called their land "Angwa" or "Hongsawadee" depending on where the royal city was situated. The Thais only began to use the name "Siam" during the Fourth Reign when we opened our door to farangs. And we began demarcating our borders only when farangs were occupying and colonizing our neighbors. On this historical background please consult the classic work *Siam Mapped* by Thongchai Winachakul.

For ordinary Thais (i.e., commoners) departing from the kingdom's territorial borders to Burma or India did not require any official documents. This was the case even well into the Fifth Reign. Prince Damrong observes in *Nithan Boran Khadi* (Historical Anecdotes) that he initially thought he was the first Thai to visit Buddhagaya in the subcontinent. As it turned out, there was evidence that Phra Samunet of Wat Bupharam had reached there by foot before he did.

Demarcating the borders of different lands was an obsession of farangs. They believed that the more extensive one's borders were, the more prosperous one

would be economically and the more stable one would be politically. All these were of course delusional. As David Loy points out in his most recent book on Buddhist social sciences what farangs called worldly success really derived from "the sense of lack" in every human being.

Alexander the Great was possibly the first farang to extend the eastern borders of his empire to the subcontinent—through war and conquest. There he met a Jain monk. He asked the latter whether it was justifiable for him to sacrifice blood and tears in order to extend his empire to the subcontinent and spread Hellenic civilization, which was allegedly superior to all other civilizations at the time. The Jain monk replied that had the emperor truly reflected on this matter, he would have sought happiness in his own land, not in distant lands at great physical, human and animal costs.

This was the view of a monk against territorial conquest and expansionism approximately 2,000 years ago. Expansionism however continues to this very day in various forms and guises. Generally, it no longer takes the form of geographical expansion as it was in the case of Alexander's empire. Two recent exceptions however include the American occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq.... Unlike the American empire, the Chinese empire is not expansionistic. It is largely concerned about suppressing indigenous peoples and minorities within its 'borders', including Tibet and Xinjiang. Broadly speaking, the expansion of both empires often comes under the banner of globalization, emphasizing political control, economic penetration, and cultural pull more than military conquest. To what extent are the Thai middle and upper classes and academic institutions aware of this fact?....

Now comes the main part of my talk. The topic assigned to me was "Thai society and politics during the economic crisis." Let' s begin with an often overlooked fact that globalization is supported by violent and unjust structures, which are necessary for its smooth functioning. This can be seen in the human and environmental costs of globalization. Again, I need not spell them out in details. My point is that we can be nice and upright at the individual level while being complicit in the violence of the global order through our actions. We may condemn the eruption of violence daily in the world, but it does not necessarily mean that we are also opposed to the violent system. We may not drink Chang beer, but do we realize that its owner is buying up lands throughout Chiangmai to extend his business empire? We may even be minimizing our use of plastic bags and styro foams. But are we willing to reject 7-Eleven and Tesco-Lotus altogether? Some of us may find the time to meditate regularly. If the meditation masters in the country cannot help appease our restlessness, we still can rely on the deep meditation of Plum Village, for instance. Or Goenka's. They all help us to develop the inner peace and distance we need to live in structural violence. In a way, we need to distance ourselves from the things that help distance us from structural violence. It is rare to find a meditation master who teaches us how to meditate deeply in order to understand systemic violence, cultural violence, etc. And thus meditation may really be a form of an escape into the brutal present. It is no surprise that many among the powers that be like to meditate.

....

Today, many of us are worried about the ongoing economic crisis. In the wake of the 1997 financial crisis the then president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, asked me how as a Buddhist I felt about it. I replied that the crisis was like a divine messenger who came to warn us. When Prince Siddharta saw an elderly person, a sick person, a dead body, and a monk he took them as messengers telling him to leave the palace life and to bring out the truth of the enlightenment to all. Ultimately, he clearly saw the root causes of all suffering: greed, hatred, and delusion. And he devised the way (The Noble Path) to overcome them. In distilled form, this way can be approached via the Three-fold Training....

....

The good news is that in this 'borderless' world there are many alternative currents that are increasingly challenging the mainstream. Many farangs now accept that Reason alone cannot solve social and global problems. The heart must also be used to tame the mind—to make it more humble, less selfish, less violent, etc. In some circles, even the GDP is being displaced by the GNH (Gross National Happiness), a concept initiated by the small kingdom of Bhutan. Thich Nhat Hanh had been a guest speaker at Davos. This year a key speaker at Davos was Mathieu Ricard who gave a talk on the GNH....A Mexican PhD student at the University of Pennsylvania is also researching on the GNH. The university gave him a research grant and pro-

mised that if his findings are convincing and relevant it may incorporate the GNH into its curriculum. These are the good news. But if one follows the analysis above, are there also other reasons to explain these phenomena—aside from a change of heart on the part of the powers that be? Can it also be that certain streams of Buddhism are getting along well with globalization; that is, it's becoming an ideology of globalization?

....

Some of us already know that Fritz Schumacher was the first person to propose the notion of Buddhist economics that challenged mainstream economics approximately four decades ago. Venerable Payutto carried on and greatly deepened this line of thought. Apichai Puntasen has also worked in this field. He recently organized an international conference on Gross National Happiness at Ubonratchathani University.

In England, Schumacher College established a joint working committee with the New Economics Foundation in London. The latter strives "to improve quality of life by promoting innovative solutions that challenge mainstream thinking on economic, environment and social issues." It seeks to "create new ways of measuring progress towards increased well-being and environmental sustainability." On the political science front, a noteworthy contribution is the work by Glenn Paige. His latest book is *political Science without Killing* — recently translated into Thai.

The World Future Council is comprised of many leading thinkers worldwide. It takes a long-term perspective to secure the survivability of at least seven future generations, in particular focusing on the following issues:

1. Global warming and renewable energy
2. Quality of life in urban areas (which should be free from pollutants, consumerism, alienation, etc.)
3. Legal changes that will bring justice to the excluded and restore equilibrium in nature
4. Participation of youths and children in these matters

Vandana Shiva, also a member of the World Future Council, stated in rough paraphrase that we must not commit the same mistakes as Westerners did because 1) they don't really care about us; 2) they laughed at us; 3) they humiliated us; and 4) they feel that they must lead us and that we cannot tread on any other path of our own choosing. Mahatma Gandhi showed us that humanity was ready to undertake vast changes despite the obstacles and the seemingly utopian objectives. Gandhi's philosophy is still highly pertinent to us today.

At the end of this year, H.H. the Dalai Lama will preside over the opening of a conference held in New Delhi on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of Gandhi's *Hindswaraj*. In this book, Gandhi emphasizes self-reliance and the power of truth and nonviolence in defeating the enemy. With the power of these ideas, Gandhi successfully liberated India from the British empire—the greatest and most violent empire at the time.

....

We who are attending this conference may constitute a minority. But as Margaret Mead reminded us, important changes often come about by the determined efforts of a small group of people. If this conference is to send ripples across society, we must abide by certain agreed principles and have faith in what we are doing to the end in order to achieve concrete results; that is, we want to unplug our education system from the mainstream, which is dominated by the rich, the powerful, the imperialist, the Wrong View, etc. Truth (or Beauty or Goodness) must set us on the right path.

Speech at a conference held by the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Maejo University, on 24 July 2009 at Chiangmai Orchid Hotel.

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Peace.

Whispered softly, the word drifts down,
Gently as petals, from a dying flower,
Born by the wind.

Peace, fragile as a crystal wine glass,
Easily shattered in a drunken moment,
Flung to the ground.

The joyous ringing of the crystal,
Can no longer be invoked by skilful hands.
Is heard no more.
Drowned by music from all the ugly instruments of war.

The screams of wounded men
Lamentations for the dead,
Terrible explosions, deafen the ear
And fill the heart with dread.

"*Lord give us this day our daily bread*"
Our crops are all destroyed,
Our dwellings gone, and all our livestock dead.
The madness of war engulfs us.
Peace has fled.

Can Peace be resurrected from the ashes,
When anger smoulders in the embers of the fire,
And in the memories of countless disposessed ?
When the winds of discontent and fear,
Blow strong enough to fan the flames again,
Anger fuels the fire, consuming all we hold so dear.

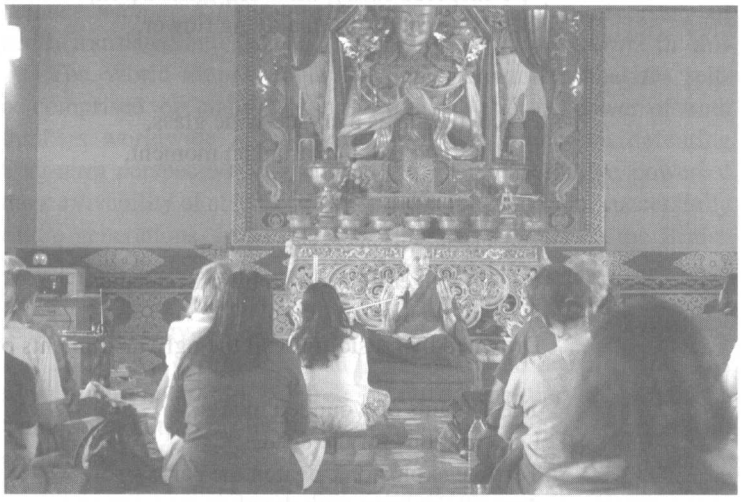
"Oh Lord, let this bitter cup pass from our lips."
For we cannot forgive those who have trespassed against us.

Peace can never be redeemed,
By planting seeds in arid soil,
Where landmines of injustice and corruption,
Still lie buried deep.
The blood of countless martyrs shed in vain,
Does little to exacerbate the pain.

Peace is a fragile vessel to contain
The hopes and fears and aspirations of the human race.
War and Peace, the Janus face we bear,
Seekers of truth and justice,
To the Gates of all beginnings
Only to repeat the same unhappy endings.
All that remains – is hope.

Venetia Walkey

Deer Park



Long before the western world proclaimed their knowledge to the rest of the world, true sanctuary of wisdom and knowledge was already flourishing around the 5th Century B.C in Nalanda a small township in the present state of Bihar.

But the name soon transcended from just being the name of a village to become a learning centre with over 10,000 scholars from all parts of the world. Nalanda means giver of lotus, and lotus symbolizes knowledge and wisdom. This ancient university proved a beacon of light, for Nalanda indeed was only one of its kind. This unique residential centre was almost an extension of the *gurukul* system of the Vedic period for here thronged aspiring young minds and learned scholars from across the globe.

When the pitter patter of the rains gave way to the thundering incessant showers during the rainy months the Buddha retired to the solitude of this place. Leaving all his wanderings he stayed there giving teachings to the monks who were only too eager to soak in the sweet nectar of his speech. As years rolled by and the teachings of the Buddha resonated in every part of the little place, kings, scholars, students visited the place to a tune themselves to the teachings and understand the Buddha dharma. Monks absorbed themselves to the study of supreme reason and were searching out the deepest principles of intelligence. There were *sangharama;* garden of priests finding delight in silent contemplation. Halls of this glorious institution witnessed great teachings and debates and the rich libraries complimented what had been taught by the *panditas* of this institution.

In the *aryabhumi* called *bharatavarsha*, the resonance of Buddha dharma was never lost. In the thundering sound of change, it perhaps got muffled. Flux of time brought down the magnificent Nalanda to the present of ruins, but it still holds an enchantment that takes us back to its past grandeur.

Centuries later a monk from the land of snow did not only get lost in the bygone magnificence of Nalanda but also dreamt of reviving the old spirit this great institution. This was no romantic thought. Tucked away in the Dhauladhar mountain ranges in a small place called Bir he resolved to realize the dreams of Nalanda. Debates and teachings of the great panditas are not things of a distance past he felt. Wanting to recall that tradition with the freshness of contemporary expression he thought of the *Mriga dava* and the result was the Deer Park Institute. This would be a place, he thought, where scholars, *bhikhus* and lay people would commit themselves to the learning of classical language, culture, history, arts, logic, science and the dharma of all denominations.

The then prevalent education in Nalanda was no bed of roses. The student was like a *tapasvi, an* ascetic moving with one pointed goal towards what his guru had ordained for him. Under the gentle light of earthen lamps students poured over the scriptures like the *chataka* bird waiting for its thirst to be quenched. Lodged in tiny cells the ruins of which one can see even now scholars from China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Tibet, Nepal and Ceylon studied under the able panditas of Nalanda. The courses offered at Nalanda included the study of scriptures of Mahayana and Theravada Schools of Buddhism, Brahminical Vedic texts, Philosophy, logic theology, grammar, astronomy, mathematics and medicine.

Today this simple Tibetan monk stands with a twinkle in his meditative eyes and a gentle

smile on his compassionate face surrounded by students, dharma practitioners, lay people and scholars. In front of him is the magnificent statue of *thatagata*. But can one miss the beautiful sculpted image of *Saraswati* that stands gracefully watching the students come from all across the globe? It is a beginning that promises a future of enormous scholarship. The door to the Deer Park Institute has indeed been opened. Students from every tradition and from all walks of life are drawn by the vibrant enthusiasm of this great master. How could it be otherwise, for the monk is no ordinary one, he is a Rinpoche, a bodhisattva, one who has taken upon himself to remove the ignorance and sufferings of sentient beings. His compassionate demeanor does not compromise the rigors of learning. Technology has replaced the earthen lamps but the enquiring minds are still sitting through wee hours of morning reading the scriptures. *Tapasya* continues!

The teachings from 31 March to 4th April 2006 took one back to life times. Listening to *The Sutra of Recollection of the Noble Three Jewels* one marveled at the continuity of these teachings. Has anything changed at all from the time of Nalanda?

Have not the student community gathered here transcended the barrier of nations; language and belief systems with a single motivation to learn under the guidance of this *acharya* as they perhaps did in Nalanda?

It is not just the spiritual teachings that draw one to Deer Park. Retreats and sessions in art, music, meditation chants, medicine draw the students to its premises. With the Himalayas as the amphitheatre for performances and theatre and where students and seekers are reminder in the most inspiring and creative ways, of regenerating our ecosystem, and bearing witness to our ecological footprint, everyone can experience ways of rebuilding and recovering our sense of balance with nature.

Spirit of Nalanda is pulsating again under the loving kindness of this teacher whose vision is to offer a space where dialogue would be possible, where debates would be held with love and compassion and where intellect and heart would go together, where this unique tradition would be accessible without any trappings under the able professorship of Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche.

The general *Sangharama* seal of the institute depicting the wheel of dharma with two gazelles is a gentle reminder that great traditions would always take back the people to the path of dharma. The journey of the Deer Park Institute, a vision of Ven. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche has indeed begun!

Raji Ramanan,
Faculty and Board
Member of Deer Park Institute
www.deerpark.in

Peace of Spirit: Spiritual Dimension to the Culture of Peace

King Ashoka of the Mauriyan Empire in ancient India was an ambitious and ruthless monarch who turned into a compassionate and benevolent person after his encounter with a Buddhist monk in his camp at the battle of Kalinga. He annexed several neighbouring Kingdoms and Kalinga was the last one he invaded. It took several years for him to conquer the Kalinga Kingdom and at the end he was conquered by the spirit of peace, love and service to humanity. The Kalinga war lasted many years and left several hundreds of women, children and the aged in sorrow and destitute. The king was filled with remorse and pity. He was almost inconsolable. At this hour a frail old Buddhist monk entered his camp begging for his help. He had nothing with him expect a begging bowl, a mud crown, a balance and a lamb. The King asked the monk how he could help him and what are his needs. The monk replied that he was performing a Yagna (ritual of pyre) for which he needed gold coins. He then placed his mud crown before the King and asked for gold coins equivalent in weight to the crown. Ashoka considered this as a donation too small to be asked from a monarch like him. He was prepared to give more. But the monk refused saying that it does not befit a monk to be avaricious and he did not require a coin more. The mud crown was placed in a pan and the gold coins in the other pan of the balance. The

king called for a bag of gold coins and yet they could not weigh as much as the bowl. He was deeply intrigued and pleaded with the monk to unravel the mystery of the mud crown. The monk simply smiled and said to him that the mud crown was symbolic of his ambition for power and greed for more territory. In monk's view no amount of gold coins, again symbolic of material acquisitions, can weigh more than the mud crown. The King became more curious and wanted to know whether there was anything that will weigh more than the mud crown. The monk showed him the innocent lamb and told him that the lamb represented thousands of innocent men, women and children who were killed by his soldiers. The monk at once replaced the gold coins in the pan with the lamb. The pan with the lamb went down at once. The monk then removed the mud crown from the balance and broke into pieces by throwing it on the ground. The king now clearly understood that the lives of innocent men, women and children are more precious than his crown of ambition. He at once thanked the monk for showing him the way out of the conflict that was raging in his heart. Ashoka, the great, at once begged the monk to take him to the Master, Buddha, the Enlightened.

The moral of the story above is that the spiritual mind is beyond any measure of time, knowledge, power and success. The spiritual mind is the real revolutionary mind because it has understood itself. It can respond to the past, present and the future. All our problems are inter-related. We may solve one problem or the other everyday and yet feel more insecure. This is mainly due to the fact that we do not address ourselves to the basic ones. Our lack of understanding of the 'self' is the root cause of all our problems.

There is a clear relationship between our thought and action. There is a way we think about the problems of war and peace. The vision is often blurred by our perception of other people, cultures, religion, colour, race and customs. Our faculties of reason and rationality have not been allowed to play their role in a pre-deterministic situation. Our brain cells have been conditioned for centuries now. There are more wars, both inter and intra-state conflicts, taking place in different parts of the world. The ethnic cleansing is still going on. There is a growing destruction of forests and other natural resources. This includes threat to survival of indigenous people and cultures. There are extreme conditions of poverty and underdevelopment. There are millions of people moving from one place to another in this earth as refugees in search of food, shelter and medical attention. These are spread all over the world. Only the nature and intensity of the crisis are varied. All these problems easily evade our consciousness. The society of man is made up of individuals. The global society is made up of people (and nations) of the world. We cannot be 'particularistic'. It is due to this problem that our cultures are also in crisis. Since the human consciousness and cultures are not different. The root cause of this crisis is our mind.

The most outstanding character of the spiritual mind is its universality and to be more precise, it is the mind of mankind. A real spiritual man is a true citizen of the world. The spiritual mind is the most unifying and uplifting of all influences. Buddha perceived the universality of the pain and sorrow. He also prescribed a remedy for this universal sickness of humanity.

Nirvana is Bliss Supreme
Dharmapad, v. 203/204

Nirvana is a departure from the greed and craving. It can also be explained as the extinction of the fire of hatred (and delusion). The world can seek amity through the removal of hatred from our lives. There is a need to recognise the fullness of the existence. This is possible only through the recognition of the pain and sorrow of the others. The first step is to identify ourselves with other people in their struggle against poverty, injustice, violence and war. It is possible to abolish indifference and hatred from the face of this earth only through unity of purpose and action. We need to transfigure our selves from the condition of the particulars to the Universal.

I shall narrate here a poignant scene from Richard Attenborough's film on "Gandhi". An armed man comes to Gandhi and sobs uncontrollably. He is visibly raged: "My only child, this big, was butchered by Muslims. I cannot rest till I take revenge". Gandhi tells him, "there is one thing you can still do, my friend. Adopt a child of the same age and give him everything you would have given your son. Only make sure he is a Muslim child". The weapon drops from the hand of the man and he walks away having experienced a brief moment of inner light and revelation.

According to the teaching of the Buddha:

> *He whose mind is free from selfish desires, hated and cruelty is saturated with the sprit of selflessness, loving – kindness and harmlessness, lives in perfect peace. He is in deed a blessing to himself and others.*

The Buddha advised his disciples thus:

> *Wherefore, O Bhikkhus, however men may speak concerning you, whether in season or out of season, whether appropriately or inappropriately, whether courteously or rudely, whether wisely or foolishly, whether kindly or maliciously thus , O Bhikkhus, must you train yourselves - Unsullied shall our minds remain, neither evil words escape our lips. Kind and compassionate ever shall abide with hearts harbouring no ill – will. And we shall enfold those very person with streams of loving thoughts unfailing, and forth from them proceeding we shall radiate the whole wide world with constant thoughts of loving – kindness, ample, expanding , measureless, free from enmity , free from ill-will. Thus must you train yourselves.....*

A young truth-seeker named Subha was deeply concerned about the disparity that exists in the world. He went to the Buddha and asked him:

> *What is the reason , what is the cause , O Lord , that we find amongst mankind the short – lived and the long – lived , the diseased and the healthy , the ugly and the beautiful, the powerless and the powerful , the poor and the rich , the low- born and the high- born , the ignorant and the wise ?"*

Buddha responded:

> *All living beings have action (karma) as their own inheritance, their congenital cause, their kinsman, their refuge. It is karma that differentiates being into low and high states.*

Buddha then explained the causes of such difference in accordance with the law of cause and effect. We need not to be too concerned here that *karma* is tantamount to fatalism. *Karma* is only the law of moral causation and rebirth is its corollary. These two are basic doctrines in both Hinduism and Buddhism. In Buddhist philosophy the law of *karma,* important as a primary cause, is only one of the twenty-four causal conditions. Buddhism considers every possibility to mould one's *karma* through present actions. The concept of *moksha* (heaven) in Hinduism is more deterministic upon the present action than the past. There is a scope to redeem our past. Every religion affords this opportunity for redemption without which there is no religious life. In the words of T.H.Huxely, "We have come to look upon the present as the child of the past and as the parent of the future".

The spiritual mind is the beacon of the culture of peace. It has not only understood itself but also can provide solutions for the problems facing the mankind. It has already overcome conflicts from 'within'. According to the *Upanishad* philosophy one who has realized the self is free from evil, free from impurity, free from doubt; he has become properly entitled to the dignity of a *Brahmana*. It is only through understanding of this mind that we can seek solutions to our problems. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

> *Spirituality is indeed the master key of the Indian mind and the sense of the infinite is native to it.*

There are some outstanding questions of our time which deserve our attention here. What are the causes of inequality that exists amongst the people and the nations? Why do some people live in a condition of extreme comfort and luxury and others in absolute poverty, in abject misery? Why are there so much violence and oppression in our lives? We cannot simply attribute these concerns to a single cause such as the will of a creator or as pre-destined. Buddha explicitly denies the existence of a creator as an almighty or as a causeless cosmic force. Neither can we say these problems are due to some blind chance or pure accident. It is relevant to quote here Ananda Coomarasvami's illustration of the process of *karma* through a series of billiard balls in close contact:

> *If another ball is rolled against the last stationary ball, the moving ball will stop dead, and the foremost stationary ball will move on... the first moving ball does not pass over, it remains behind, it dies; but it is undeniably the movement of that ball, its momentum, its karma, and not any newly created movement, which is reborn in the foremost ball.*

Didn't the discovery of gun powder change the nature of warfare and the compass, the history of this world? The children of today have inherited a

world with problems like war, violence, nuclear weapons, arms race, threat of acid rain and global warming, destruction of forest and nature, and threat to cultures. How can we help change the world that we have inherited and also build a new world tomorrow? We must then find ways of redemption. We alone are responsible for our sorrow and happiness. We are the architects of our world.

In recent times we are witness to various conflicts among people over their socio-cultural and religious identities. There are learned views about these conflicts including the so-called clash of civilizations. Why do people go to war in the name of religion? Religion in this context is only an identity that helps mobilization towards resolution of socio-economic and political conflicts. In a true sense religion is a human fellowship. God cannot deny or accrue the benefits of collective consciousness to only some and not to others. He who is truly enlightened is the one whom we recognize as God. He is the soul of the nature and the soul of the souls. Religion is *dharmik* (dharma) and spiritualism is *adyatimka* (or, *paramardhika*), which is beyond this body of earth and material world. Religion is a path to spirituals awakening. Spiritual mind contains within itself both scientific and rational minds. It is only those men and institutions devoid of scientific inquiry and spiritual consciousness have created the division amongst people and societies. This division of your religion and mine is only created by thought. This idea again is as artificial as the boundaries between nations built by men. Mankind is a single community.

We often consider that our problems are many and too complex for any simple solution. According to the philosophy of the *Vedanta* all our problems are reduced to four fundamental conflicts. They may be classified as social, personal, natural and spiritual irreconcilabilities.

First, the problem of social conflict. This is mainly due to the irreconcilability of human nature, views and conditions. These are highly visible external conflicts between individuals, societies and countries. They are often translated into political conflicts that result in extreme condition of violence and wars. Beginning from an individual everyone is convinced that the root cause of his problem or unhappiness is someone else. This problem is mainly due to our perception of the perceived. The danger is that the gap between our perception and reality may gradually be reduced to a point that they are, in fact, the same. This is highly true in conflict situations involving use or deployment of weapons. In military sense, the action-reaction spiral of the arms race is the typical case related to threat perception and reality, this problem is common to social and political conflicts too. The result is fear and insecurity at all the levels of human existence.

Secondly, the problem of internal conflicts or psychological crisis. There is a need for harmony between the outer and inner worlds. This is mainly dependent on the relationship between our thought and action. A unique aspect of our mind and brain is that their movements are infinite. While it is the outward movement of the brain which is infinite and in case of our mind the inward movement is infinite. The limitations of our thought have a vital role in the movement of our brain and mind. Because our thought-process itself is limited by our knowledge of the outer world and inner itself.

By self is one defiled
By self is one purified
Dharmapada, v. 165

In order to overcome our internal conflicts or psychological problems we should become aware of the 'self'. The knowledge of the 'self' is highly relevant for the resolution of our internal conflicts. All major transformations primarily come from 'within'. The solitude within us must be understood. The knowledge of 'self' will go a long way in the resolution of existing human conflicts both 'within' and with the outside world.

Thirdly, the problem of relationship between man and nature. It is highly important to recognise that upon the balance between man and nature depends the durability of peace in society. The mechanistic view of progress an economic development has endangered the delicate relationship man and nature. There is no genuine development sans harmony with nature. We hear so often but the success of man and machine is taming the nature for human ends. The result is that we are faced with threats of various calamities in future. The forest cover is rapidly decreasing. In several countries (some of them are extremely poor) the rich mineral and forest resources are being exploited to pay debt and buy weapons. There is a growing threat to the survival of indigenous people and cultures all over the world. The indigenous people have not only lost access to

resources and their traditional system but have also lost their way in the so called crosses of modernization. There is little justice in distribution. There are places which produce enough food for others but people living in the region die of hunger and malnutrition. We draw resources, water and generate power for cities from places were people have to walk miles to get water and still have no electricity. In some countries, indigenous people have been shifted to border areas as a human cover during military operations. They also have to bear the brunt of internal violence and even extermination, and that explains partially the cause for their decreasing number. There is little modernity in these actions. These steps are in fact, a silent war against a hapless humanity. There is an acute crisis in the world that has been created in the name development and modernization. This is about the use of and conflict over resources and greed for more. Gandhi emphasized a balanced relationship between the uses of resources, ecological stability and social justice. Gandhi advocated:

Earth provides to satisfy every man's need but not for every man's greed.

This relationship is applicable to local, national and international situations. We are trying to unify the world without being too concerned about the diversity of our cultures. There is no universal validity. The materialistic assumption of modernity undermines the power of an ideal and social diversity. All cultures unite in a single tree known as **Mankind** and different cultures are in fact the branches of the same tree. But what is a tree without its many branches (of diversity). There is no (one) fixed eternal truth. There are, in fact, many different and equally valid truths.

In India, the relationship between man and nature is considered as sacred. In our world view, the rivers, mountains and forests constitute as vital sources of spiritual inspiration for the people. They are not only sacred but are also part of the social–the socio-cultural life of the people. In 1970 a woman named Amrita Devi of Kedali village near Jodhpur in Rajasthan, India hugged a tree and pleaded with men armed with axes not to cut trees. She said:

This is my brother-sister tree, our village protectors.
They are the breath of life, the water we drink,
and our food. Chop me first.

Her body was chopped before she could prevent the men from cutting the tree. Amrita Devi's three daughters followed her soon. People from the neighbouring village came and tried to save the trees. They were also killed. As many as 363 Vishnois men and women died for this cause. The tradition among the members of the Vishnois community, practised to this day is that they would not allow anybody to cut trees and kill wild animals. This tradition is based on the *Aranya Culture* (Forest Culture) of India. In 1973, a similar movement against the felling of trees in the hill was started by the women of the central Himalayan region. The Chipko (hug-the-tree) movement is the response of the people to save the forest cover from destruction. Like Amrita Devi they say that the forest bears the soil, water and the pure air. If these are not the true basis of life then what is? India's spiritual tradition(s) of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (earth family) is a holistic perspective of peace and development. According to this view peace is not only meant for man but all living organisms. In view of the classical Indian tradition peace of mankind cannot be isolated from peace in the universe.

A Vedic poet worshipped thus:

Peace of Sky, Peace of Earth,
Peace of Waters, Peace of Plants,
Peace of Trees, Peace of Universe,
Peace of Peace
May that Peace come to me.

Lastly, the problem of spiritual crisis. This is mainly due to the lack of harmony between us and the ultimate reality. We are at conflict with the creator (superior consciousness), cosmos, universe and the nature. We take our existence in this earth for granted. We even refuse to accommodate the simple truth that we all will die one day. It is useful to quote the words of Carley here:

"*... That warrior on his strong war-horse, fire flashes through his eyes; force dwells in his arm and heart: but warrior and war-horse are a vision; a revealed force, nothing more. Stately they tread the earth, as if it were a firm substance: Fool! The Earth is but a film; it cracks in twain, and warrior and war-horse sink beyond plummet's sounding. Plummet? Fantasy herself will not follow them. A little while ago, they were not: a little while, and they are not, their very ashes are not...*

Thus, like a God created, fire -breathing Spirit- host, we emerge from the Inane; haste stormfully across the astonished Earth; then plunge again into the Inane ...But whence? - O Heaven, whither? Sense knows not; Faith knows not; only that it is through mystery to mystery, from God and to God."

Our needs are endless without rational understanding of others. We are unable to appreciate similar need in others. Our desire for power, wealth and more geographical territories as zones of influence are endless. How can similar endless goals co-exist? There will be conflict and insecurity. The rise in weapon culture, the possession of nuclear weapons, has not resulted in more security of the world. Our lives have, in fact, become less secure and more vulnerable. Only then we can help establish a better condition for social harmony, peace and human solidarity in the world.

We are at the early periods of a new millennium. The twentieth century was a witness to the power of nonviolence and the rise of a new politics based on peoples initiatives. The power of human spirit is at the heart of these developments. Nonviolence has for the first time outwitted the demonstrative effectiveness of violence. Gandhi not only advocated the nonviolent means of political struggle but also its use as a defence policy of free India instead of military means. Gandhi firmly believed that India has a soul that cannot perish. Gandhi considered that war cannot be avoided, so long as its seeds remain in man's breast and grow and develop in his social, political and economic life. He demanded nothing less than rooting out violence from one's self and one's environment. Mahatama Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Albert Luthli, Nelson Mandela, Dalai Lama and Aung San Suu Kyi are only a few outstanding advocates of peace and nonviolence. There are in fact many more .There are more nonviolent struggles taking place everyday in different parts of the world than armed conflicts. They are little known and shared more in a manner preserved as an oral tradition within the community. These are simple indications of an idea whose time had long since come but also the revelation of the spiritual progress of humanity. There is in fact a close relationship between spiritual strength and strength of nonviolence. The development of nonviolent strategy and its success depends on the spiritual and moral evolution of mankind. In political translation the strategy of nonviolence is based on the courage of conviction and the righteousness of the cause. Nonviolent strategy is a revolutionary and dynamic one. The spirit of the soul is the source of this revolution.

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Ramu Manivannan

The author teaches Political Science at the University of Madras, India. He is the Co-ordinator for the Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, University of Madras.

Interview with a teacher
Featured Interview with *Therese Fitzgerald*

Therese Fitzgerald brings decades of Dharma practice at the San Francisco and Tassajara Zen Centers and then with Vietnamese Zen monk and peace activist, Thich Nhat Hanh, who ordained her as a Dharma teacher. Therese has served as Director of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and co-founder of the Community of Mindful Living, which developed programs for social service in Vietnam and, with Maxine Hong Kingston, offered mindfulness-and-writing workshops for veterans of war. Therese is presently director and teacher of Dharma Friends, based on Maui, Hawai'i. Please visit www.dharmafriends.org and come to the retreat on Maui in December!

YM: What do you teach?
TF: I teach presence—mind fulness, dwelling deeply in each moment, awareness of the mind-heart, and paying profound attention to the world.

YM: When did your path in this "work" begin?
TF: The early death of my mother in 1974 catapulted me into meditation practice and the study of Buddhism. I needed to know life from the inside out. And I was fortunate to be among friends who were Way-seekers, and we started to meditate together.

YM: What defines a Dharma teacher?
TF: Dharma is a Sanskrit word that refers to the teachings of awakening. I received "Dharma transmission" from Thich Nhat Hanh in 1994. In the ceremony, the teacher passes a lamp to signify the transmission of and responsibility for the teachings.

YM: What are the most valuable teachings that you have learned from your teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh?
TF: I learned from Thich Nhat Hanh's example and his belief and trust in me how to concentrate my energy for the benefit of many. One person who sees another's capacities and cares to encourage them and draw them out can be a great catalyst and inspire boundless creativity.

YM: What are the most accessible lessons at the root of your teachings?
TF: The mind's garden of brilliant flowers—compassion, love, and wisdom—grows from the compost of examined suffering and deep cultivation of whole-making mind states and actions.

YM: What do you say to the skeptic of peace?
TF: Don't stop there. Doubt and skepticism call for thorough examination. I always appreciate historian Howard Zinn's mostly sobering study of human events. And yet he expresses a strong conviction that hopeful breakthroughs—"surprises," he calls them—are possible, and he takes great delight in pointing them out. To question and to doubt are quite natural as a seeker of liberation and awakening. But it is problematic if we solidify our skepticism to the point that we cannot let in the "fresh breezes" or "surprises" of peace, joy, and transformation.

YM: How can your teachings be integrated into daily life?
TF: The foundational practices of calming body and mind are great resources for coping with physical ailments, staying present through discord, and dealing with difficult life issues.

Reflecting on the causes and conditions for the arising of suffering or happiness is profoundly sane-making, especially given the complexities (and speed!) of most of our lives. And study and contemplation of concepts such as "non-separate selfness" (or interbeing), impermanence, and non-duality open doors to meaning and wisdom that are deeply enhancing.

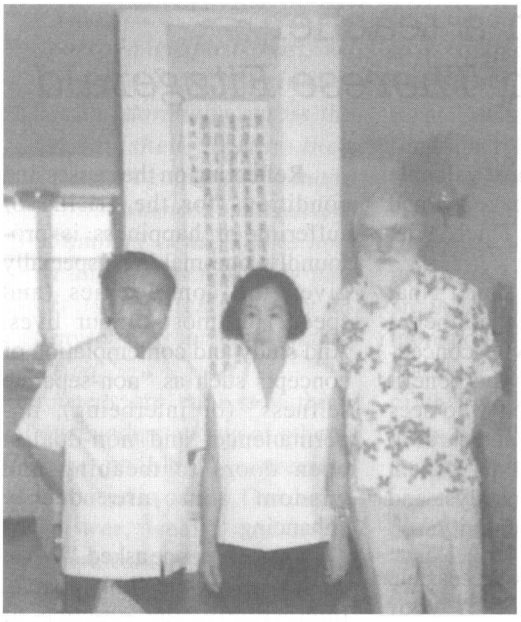
Once someone asked, "When do we get to the 'holy' part?" Interestingly, the practice of presence and taking intimate care of our lives open our hearts to boundless compassion and love, the greatest treasures of human life.

YM: Please tell us about your programs in Vietnam.
TF: For ten years, I worked closely with Thich Nhat Hanh's colleague, Sister Chan Khong, to raise funds and consciousness to address the needs of people in Vietnam who were suffering from the lack of basic medicine and food. This was a way to extend my awareness and to practice compassion and service. It was also a way to give back to my teacher's native country in gratitude to him.

I try to continue what I learned with them in practicing meditation and mindfulness with inmates, those in their final days, and veterans of war.

YM: Why and how was Dharma Friends formed?
TF: We started Dharma Friends when it became time to grow another branch of the tree.

Please visit
www.dharmafriends.org and come to the *retreat on Maui in December!*



DeWitt Barnett
(1940 – 2009)

DeWitt and his wife, Rebecca (Becky), were members of the Society of Friends (Quakers), and were sent to Hong Kong by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to serve as consultants on Chinese-American relationships. DeWitt was born in Shanghai, China, and in 1940, he received a B.A. degree from the University of North Carolina. DeWitt and Rebecca served from 1971 to 1975, and again from 1978 to 1982, promoting "people-to-people" relationships with the Chinese.

Prior to 1971 Dewitt was stationed in Tokyo, in charge of the American Friends Service Committee in the Far East, which included Southeast Asia until the new office was opened in Singapore. Dewitt and the AFSC staff in Japan initiated many worthwhile activities to help solve the Vietnam War, organizing informal meetings between Russian and American diplomats. He also encouraged young Southeast Asians to meet their counterparts in the region as well as in East Asia.

Becky and their four sons, Peter, John, Andrew, and James were by his side when DeWitt's ministry on this earth concluded on February 16, 2009.

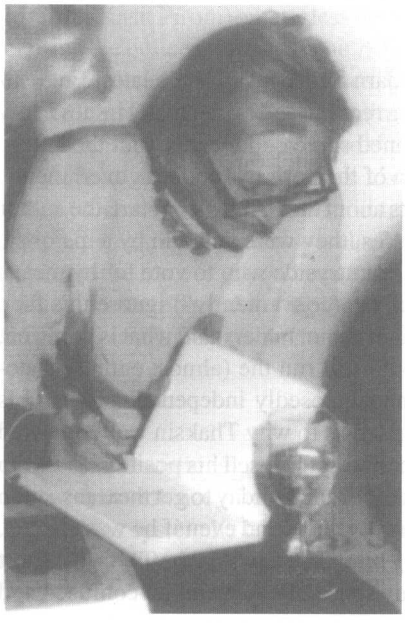
Sergio Regazzoni
(25 June 1956 - 1 August 2009)

He was educated at the University of Turin, and did his thesis on Henri Dunant and the International Red Cross. He worked as a journalist and radio broadcaster in Switzerland, before joining Comite Catholique Contra la Faim et pour Developpment (CCFD) in Paris, working closely with peoples in Southeast Asia. He was very much admired in the region where he was willing to listen and learn from friends of different faiths and ideologies. After his retirement from CCFD, be pioneered in establishing Centre Lebert, named after a Catholic priest with commitment to socialism and ecumenism. The Centre tries to apply spirituality for social justice in a nonviolent way. He was a special friend to those who were in difficulty. Indeed he was a wonderful human being.

We regret to record the demise of two dear friends:

1) **Mr. Supot Dantrakul** (9 September 1923 – 12 February 2009) who fearlessly exposed the truth on the mysterious death of the late King Ananda Mahidol. Unless truth prevails on this vital matter, this Kingdom will always be clouded by hypocrisy.

2) **Ms. Khwandee Attawavuddhichai** (1 April 1938 – 25 March 2009) who contributed much to Thai literature. Her writing also contributed to Buddhist-Muslim understanding in the southern provinces. She translated into Thai, *Buddhism with Open Eyes: Belief and Practice of Santi Asoke* by Maria-Leena Heikkila-Horn.



Nancy Brewster Grace
(1910 – 2009)

Nancy enriched our lives in so many ways: by her warm and perceptive sense of humor, by her gentle and active intellect, by her persistent curiosity that brought her beyond the obvious and the conventional, and by her confident faith in human goodness, kindness and uniqueness.

She was intensely aware of human suffering from injustice and in conflict; and clearly and simply discerned their fundamental causes. Her advocacy and activism to resolve these were always determined, often courageous and usually contagious.

Our meeting today reassures us that her spirit is alive and well and will always be part of out lives.

Haverford Friends Meeting House
July 24, 2009

Last words spoken by Letitia

From the tallest pine a solid lump of snow falls, direct, weighted, like a heavy piece of fruit. I lie now, like the great Maharaja's jewel of my dream, green against the whiteness of the snow. The shrieking wind retreats into silence. Cold penetrates my body to warm it. A great space opens up around me. Peaceful finally, but festive still, I know, as my wings open and I fly effortlessly into the beauty that surrounds me, that I am dead.

From ***Letitia,***
by Nancy Brewster Grace, 2007

Nancy was a Quaker in faith and practice. In her faith she sought that of God in herself and in all human beings. Her inner spiritual light guided her practice of the fundamental Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace and social justice.

In Philadelphia and in her many travels, she cheerfully lived the preaching of George Fox, a founder of the Society of Friends:

Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them. Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.

In commemoration of her life and spirit,
contributions can be made to the American Friends Service Committee
for its international work that she has always cherished.

American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry Street,
Philadelphia PA 19102

Dear *Seeds of Peace*,

Jeffery Sng's article "The Politics of Spirituality" referred to Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa's latest English-language book, *Rediscovering Spiritual Value*. Both made interesting reading and raised many issues in my mind. This letter is mainly about the former but I have also mentioned some comments about the latter.

Mr Sng has made some good points, for example the exclusion of the poor by modern governments. However I think many people will disagree with him on his comments about the PAD. For a start, the author claimed that Thaksin's governments were democratically elected. Yes, they were voted in by a majority, but the means was dishonest (vote-buying and telling people in the countryside who to vote for by means of village elders). All the Western media and even Al Jazeera seem to (conveniently?) ignore this fact, making people misunderstand the situation. Also, many people in Siam do not understand what is going on, or have a very one-sided view because, apparently, Thaksin's people still run the (almost entirely state-controlled) media which only tells part of the story. Even the one supposedly independent channel is reportedly full of Thaksin's supporters. A lot of people are still puzzled as to why Thaksin was convicted just for signing consent for his wife to buy some land (they do not know that he used his position as PM to get the land at below the market rate and forced civil servants to work on a bank holiday to get the transaction done on time so that he could avoid paying the higher tax rate due next year). And even if he was elected, he acted like a dictator. People were beaten up or killed for criticising him. The news on the TV is just short bits and pieces, with no comment or analysis and does not make any sense. People end up confused and unable to make decisions.

When he was PM, it is alleged that Thaksin used taxpayers' money to line his own pockets (loans to Burma to buy his company's products being just one example). Even the populist policies which made him popular with the rural poor were self-serving (common cited examples include the rubber tree scam and the 'plastic cow' scheme where farmers were encouraged to buy useless, infertile cattle and were forced to sell their land due to debt).

The PAD held their protests because they could not stand by and let Thaksin's governments do what they liked, selling off the country. They wanted a change from the '4 minute democracy'. As I understand it, the PAD's New Politics is about the people having a say in decision making rather than just ticking a box every 4 years. It is about transparency and holding governments to account, and getting rid of them if they fail to deliver. I think this is reasonable and viable. Just because a government is elected, it does not make them immune from being challenged or even overthrown if they are corrupt or violent. Elected governments can be dictatorships, in any country.

I am a PAD supporter and listen to ASTV on the radio every day but even I do not blindly believe everything they say. I am often irritated by the way many presenters go on about how the monarchy should be worshipped and beyond criticism. I think it is unhelpful that some of them demonise people who think differently about the lese-majesty issue, such as those who signed the petition to abolish or change the lese-majesty law. This is one fault of the PAD which Ajarn Sulak has also touched on in *Rediscovering Spiritual Value* in the chapter 'Turning a crisis into an opportunity'. Despite this, the PAD has to promote this sort of monarchy worship because the overwhelming majority of people in this country are still unquestioningly reverential towards the King. The King is the only entity they all respect because they themselves have different interests, religions etc. Because of this, the King is the only means to galvanise the masses. Even though this is so, the PAD is so far the only organisation bringing together people from all walks of life (not just the urban middle class) and is potentially very powerful.

As for the claim of using violence, during the demo I visited nearly every site several times, even staying overnight at Government House. I saw guards with guns and batons but I never saw any violent action. All property was kept intact and clean as far as I could see. The demonstrators were tidy, disciplined and non-violent. Even the VIP marble lavatories at Government House (which I have had the privilege of using!) were kept spotlessly clean. Considering how the PAD suffered constant violence from the red-shirted mobs and the police, even M79s being fired into the compound from police headquarters on sleeping demonstrators, I think it is only reasonable that the guards have weapons to protect the peaceful protesters. However I have heard alternative reports from others, including the author. Perhaps they know better.

I do agree with Mr Sng that the present government is just copying Thaksin with their money handouts. Abhisit is an honest, well meaning gentleman, but too many of the ministers (with the exception of Foreign

Minister Kasit Pirom) are useless and seem to be insincere. They have done nothing to control the redshirts or bring the police involved in the 7th October killings to justice. Recently we saw how the redshirts wrought serious violence: blocking off roads, burning buses and attacking ordinary people, even trying to hunt down and kill the PM. What were the ministers doing?

Ajarn Sulak himself gave me the task of proofreading *Rediscovering Spiritual Value*, which I found very educational. He reiterates his interpretation of engaged Buddhism and its role in confronting greed (consumerism), hatred (military violence) and delusion (attachment to status, self-importance and nationalism). For me, a particularly striking example of engaged Buddhism in Siam was that of Phra Prachak, the forest monk whose ordination of trees acted as non-violent resistance to the greed of loggers without inciting hatred among the villagers with whom he worked. I think many people will learn a lot from this book and highly recommend it.

Zia Collins Free

P.S: The international media have finally woken up to Thaksin's deceit thanks to his interviews following the redshirt violence where he struggled to answer their questions. This is a good thing but even if the person is gone, the system he has helped to entrench in this country will stay.

May 13th 2009

Dear Ajarn Sulak,

Peace from 'The Kingdom of Wonder' as tourism of Cambodia likes to sell herself. Going on 30 years for this one, I'll admit this kingdom can still make me "wonder" (often of the expletive deleted variety) I just wanted to pass along the latest book on Maha Ghosananda. It was put together by Venerable Santidhammo (Tom Flint) of the USA. I met him over Khmer new year in Phnom Penh. He is happy to share it far and wide. We're hoping a Khmer version won't be too long in the coming.

In 2007 I had a rather wonderful sabbatical in the USA. It had been thirteen years since my last visit to the belly of the empire. Spent eight months of it dwelling on a grey hound bus visiting folks who are working hard to decrease the suffering in their times and places and therefore positively affecting our tired world.

Spent part of this year teaching Buddhism to monks at Buddhist university in Battambong. The young monk administrator had participated in our peacemakers program in the 1990's and asked for help. It has been good first hand experience at how terribly weak the Khmer education system is.

It makes one realize perhaps thirty years of war with a genocide included wasn't such a good idea after all! It is such a long, long walk back. Maha would tell us, 'slowly, step by step.' Some times I hear that as a warning.

I've been following with 'wariness' the tensions in the kingdom of the Thais that bind over recent months. I would like to humbly suggest a monthly 'no shirt' day. We all wear the same 'birthday shirt'. So one day a month everyone wears only that "shirt" (good, now that's solved; it's on to Sri Lanka and let's win There!)

My experience with CPR over the past twenty years is that most 'peace work' is done quietly, humbly, painstakingly, one by one, step by step (literally and figuratively in Cambodia), reflectively with a gentle wisdom and lots of good luck.

I'm probably one of a few left on this side of the border who knows the role you and the many "branches of Sulak" have played in supporting the Khmer peace process (and still do!) over the years. For that a deep wai and humble bow. Walk on, Ajarn Sulak, with our love, respect and gratitude!

Bob Matt

21st June 2009

Dear Ajahn Sulak,

You may or may not remember meeting with me during your previous visits to Germany. Anyway, I would like to submit a request today.

Last November, a colleague from Hamburg University and I organised a symposium on "Buddhism and Human Rights" (for details see http://www.buddhismuskunde.uni-hamburg.de/fileadmin/pdf/Sammelmappe1englMenschenrechte.pdf). The basic idea was to look at how the different Buddhist schools perceive and deal with the issue of human rights vis-à-vis the violations happening in countries like Burma, Thailand, China and Tibet. Some of the papers presented there together with some other essays are to be published. Since I was responsible for the Theravada tradition, I would be very honoured if you could consider my request to write an article on your experiences of promoting human rights in the Theravda Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia (and Sri Lanka).

What we have already, is a highly theoretical article written by a young German scholar, Martin Seeger, who deals with the writings of Phra Dhammapitaka on this issue. Therefore, I would appreciate a more practical approach and an article written by a Thai Buddhist.

If you feel not able to write a contribution, maybe you could ask some of your co-workers of your foundation and the contributors to *Seeds of Peace*. I am sorry to say that due to the requirements of the sponsors the deadline is the beginning of August.

I am looking forward to your reply, hope that it will be in the positive and wish you all the best.

With metta and love.
Hans-Bernd Zoellner
Universities of Hamburg and Passau

July 12, 2009

Dear friend Sulak,

I continue to find *Seeds of Peace* most interesting and helpful balance to much of the news I get about Thailand and Southeast Asia. Just completed reading the recent issue. Thank you for the moving obituary of Lillian.

The enclosed about Lillian was given to all the 300 people who joined in her memorial meeting held in Haddonfield Meeting House some many weeks ago. I am not sure that I send you one earlier.
Somewhat belated I send happy birthday greeting, and may you have many more years living in harmony with the Spirit and serving the cause of peace and justice.

I am seeking a leading from the Spirit to help guide me in these last years in this life. I realize as never before how much Lillian and I grew as we worked together. What do I do now? I will be led surely, but accept patience in the process.

Enclosed is my check in support of *Seeds of Peace* and INEB. Do continue the good work.

Yours friend,
George Willoughby
340 Pine Ave. Deptford NJ 08096
(856 227 5723 geowilby@verizon.net

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14 July 2009

Dear Sulak,

How wonderful that the International Network of Engaged Buddhists is celebrating its twentieth anniversary! Your original vision of a worldwide fellowship has borne fruit in remarkable ways. INEB has been instrumental in putting engaged Buddhism on the map, not only geographically, but also conceptually

and spiritually. Your steady hand on the tiller never faltered.

I have vivid memories of all the places I have watched you in action over the years — from Swarthmore to Suan Mokh, Kyoto to Cape Town, Lincoln Center to the Zen Center. A classic moment was the time you told a large audience of Japanese Buddhists, "Japanese temples are too beautiful. When truth must be spoken to power," Sulak is the go-to guy!

Trudy joins me in sending heartfelt congratulations. We hope to see you soon. Until then —

Nine bows,
Kenneth Kraft

9th August 2009

Dear Sulak

Greetings from a nice cool summer-day in the Blackforests !

Let me just tell you something which may enjoy your heart! On August 5, 2009, the Television channel 3SAT in its evening program brought 30 minutes about "Bhutan - On the Trail of Happiness". The author, a Peter Kunz, referred to Buddhism and he seriously tried to explain your concept of Gross National Happiness! He described Bhutan as a small kingdom which is aiming for happiness instead of progress. Therefore, its people are living in accordance with nature and tradition. In order to keep/reach this target, they abstain from modern standard of living.

In June 2009, Vol. III (589 pp) of my "Memoire in Dialogue" – after Vol II in February 2008 (670 pp)) – was published. Looking into my files, I was reminded that *Seeds of Peace* had published a "Recommended Readings" of the First Volume, done by Jeffery (Vol.19, No.2, 2003). Vol II continues with the country based narrative reflection of Vol I . Vol III contains more systematic contributions circling around "Utopian Solidarity of Global Civilisation". All written in the English language. If you are interested personally or/ and for *Seeds*, just give me a short notice and I will mail to you the two volumes immediately.

That's it for today. Peaceful greetings, also from Inge.

Wolfgang Schmidt
Gustav-Struve-Weg 20, D-79737 Herrischried

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12 August 2009

Dear Sulak,

Have been at Shambhala Mountain Center for the summer, working at their Shotoku School, doing haiku poetry with the program participant kids, mostly. Met a wonderful young man from Korea, Jeeheon Cho [jeeheon@gmail.com], into "alternative development," gave him my copy of your new book, *The Wisdom of Sustainability*, and suggested he get in touch with you when he gets to Thailand–which'll be soon: August 16th, or thereabouts.

But he'll be in Thailand, apparently teaching, for about 5 years–if I understood him correctly. I guess he must have some sort of fellowship, or "study abroad" program in Boston he's involved with, I'm not sure. But he's very good, and I suggested he try to attend the upcoming 20th anniversary INEB conference, now set for November 2009. (He's also an excellent guitar player–"finger picks," doesn't just strum: Very Good.)

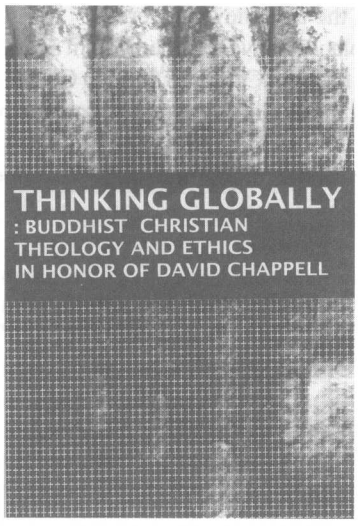
Best Wishes,
Jim Hartz

Peacemaking and Inter-Religious Dialogue: The Legacy of David Chappell

Thinking Globally: Buddhist and Christian Theology and Ethics in Honor of David Chappell
Edited by Donald K. Swearer
First Edition by Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation (SNF), 2009
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David Chappell, who passed away in December of 2004, is still affectionately remembered by many as a dedicated teacher and scholar of Buddhist Studies and as a long-term friend to the socially engaged Buddhist movement. David's life encompassed peacemaking in many forms, perhaps foremost among them the promotion of inter-religious dialogue. He was instrumental in sponsoring Buddhist-Christian dialogue as a co-founder of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies, and later in life he broadened his activities to promote Buddhist-Muslim dialogue as well.

In its annual journal for 2006, the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies' published papers from two conferences under the title *Thinking Globally: Buddhist and Christian Theology and Ethics in Honor of David Chappell*. The 2006 edition of the journal was dedicated not only to the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies but also to Sulak Sivaraksa and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB). Now, in mid-2009, as INEB prepares to celebrate its 20th anniversary at a conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand, Sulak Sivaraksa has chosen to reprint selections from the journal as a



volume that will make these papers available to a wider public.

As Donald Swearer notes in his introduction to this volume, the broad title is intended to indicate the nature and breadth of David Chappell's work as well as to reflect the range of themes in the collected papers. Swearer begins with vivid reminiscences of David that offer the reader a glimpse into his qualities as a friend, scholar, and activist. He then provides exceptionally thorough summaries of the papers, which are divided into those that address primarily ethical issues and those that address primarily theoretical or doctrinal issues, and all of which bear in some way on the field of Buddhist-Christian studies.

Swearer closes the introduction with a pair of quotes that I found inspiring and thought-provoking. I quote the entire paragraph here:

In *Buddhist Peacework: Creating Cultures of Peace* (1999), edited by David Chappell, Maha Ghosananda challenged Buddhists to "find the courage to leave our temples and enter the temples of human experience, temples that are filled with suffering. If we listen to the Buddha, Christ, or Gandhi, we can do nothing else. The refugee camps, the prisons, the ghettos, and the battlefields will then become our temples. We have so much work to do." Maha Ghosananda's challenge extends beyond Buddhism to all the world's religions and resonates with Hans Kung's oft quoted statement: "No peace in the world until there is peace among the religions: no peace among the religious until there is dialogue among the religions." (9-10)

This is an inspiring beginning because it suggests a profound hope for the role of dialogue between religions. This hope has many historical antecedents—in the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, for example, and in the emergence of various interfaith movements after World War I, when many felt that internationalism would help prevent further conflicts. It is also inspiring because it sees dialogue as a form of engagement with the world.

But this inspiring beginning also raises many questions. Is the hope to reduce violence the primary impetus for inter-religious dialogue? And can this hope be borne out in practice? What concrete forms might dialogue take on in the present? And does entering the arena of religious dialog bear a resemblance in fact to entering the ghettos or refugee camps that Maha Ghosananda holds up as temples of human experience? The value of this book lies in raising or provoking such questions, then offering a variety of answers that help the reader explore the possible links in the contemporary world between socially engaged spirituality and inter-religious dialogue.

Peter C. Phan, for example, moves methodically through a series of arguments that help to broaden the concept of what dialogue entails. He initially raises the question of how religious traditions can play a role in reconciliation and peacemaking, in spite of their history of aiding and abetting conflict. Phan then draws on interesting sources such as John Paul Lederer in building an argument for what is required in true reconciliation. He ends by recommending the wider adoption of a proposal by Asian Catholic Bishops to undertake "the four dialogues" (104-105). The first is the "dialogue of life," in which Buddhists and Christians meet simply as friends to share joys, sorrows, and daily concerns. The second is the "dialogue of action," which involves undertaking common projects for peace, justice, and reconciliation. The third is the "dialogue of theological exchange," which seeks to appreciate the wisdom of disparate traditions. And the fourth is the "dialogue of religious experience," which involves practicing meditation and prayer together in spite of doctrinal differences.

Many of the writers here take up the issue of how far conceptual categories can be shared in the context of a dialogue between traditions, and warn of the dangers of arriving too easily at points of commonality. Velez de Cea appreciates attempts at finding resonances between the Buddhist concept of emptiness and the Christian mystical or apophatic (approaching a sacred reality by describing what it is not) traditions. But he provides detailed arguments to show where those attempts break down and works from there to emphasize instead the resonances in ethical and spiritual intent between Nagarjuna and St. John of the Cross. For some of the writers, like Thometz, it is the limitation of language in describing ineffable sacred realities that opens up a space for the continuing enfolding of meaning within, and between, traditions.

Through reading the various articles addressing human rights, conceptions of justice, and mystical traditions, dialogue comes to be seen not only as a concrete practice that religious groups may choose to engage in but also as the very groundwork through which justice, human rights, and even spiritual insight may be realized. In making this broader understanding of dialogue available to readers through the papers collected here, this volume does a valuable service.

Two problematic areas deserve attention. I feel it is unfortunate that Samuel Huntington's thesis on the clash of civilizations is brought in—in one article complete with his demeaning assessment of Africa's cultures as possibly constituting a civilization—as a way to explain conflicts between religious traditions. Michael Von Brück points much more helpfully to power inequalities as a source of much of the world's violence. Readers and writers need to be aware of the critiques of Huntington's work, available in volumes such as *Why America's Top Pundits Are Wrong: Anthropologists Talk Back* and other sources before taking up his problematic notions of cultural and religious identities.

A second question has to do with Perry Schmidt-Leukel's critique of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's "dictatorial dhammic socialism" as naïve, dangerous, and moralistic. Schmidt-Leukel is right to object to any effort "to force the high ethos of Buddhist morality on a complete society" (43). But is that really what is going on in the writings of Buddhadasa and his followers on dhammic socialism? I leave that as a genuine and open question. I feel that the key danger here lies in the other direction—of taking what is intended as an imaginative exploration of social and moral possibilities as a rigid prescription. All people should be encouraged to imagine what social life could be at its best, and then, yes, those visions need to be critiqued. But the critiques need to be fair to the spirit and intent of the creator and to the context of articulation. Santikaro, a disciple and interpreter of Buddhadasa who is criticized here, does not actually call for the elimination of universities, for example, in my reading of his article.

One final comment: on the whole the language of these articles is very abstract and sometimes highly specialized. Reading this volume may be easy going for students or professionals in the field of religious studies, but it might initially present a challenge to lay activists or non-professionals. In part this is in the nature of academic discourse. However, as an anthropologist whose research has been in socially engaged Buddhist movements, I felt on occasion that greater reliance on concrete examples and empirical referents would have made a number of these articles more alive and more accessible to a wider educated readership. Having said this, I strongly encourage all those interested in these issues to take the plunge. The volume will

reward your effort with a broader understanding of the possibilities of dialogue in the present era, and of dialogue's role in constituting and enlivening spiritual traditions. That these papers can achieve this makes the collection a worthy celebration of David Chappell's legacy.

Theodore Mayer
Hua Hin

'Truth on Trial in Thailand'
David Streckfuss

Hardcover: 240 pages
Publisher: Routledge; First edition (15 Dec 2009)
Language English
ISBN-10: 0415414253
ISBN-13: 978-0415414258

Le Roi reigne mais il ne gouverne pas

Actually I must also be criticised. I am not afraid if the criticism concerns what I do wrong, because then I know. Because if you say the King cannot be criticised, it means that the King is not human. If you rule out all criticism as a violation, the damage is done to the King. That the king can do no wrong is an insult to the king. (HM Bhumipol Adulyadej 2005 Annual speech) This is a brief over-simplified overview of Streckfuss excellent thought provoking work which audaciously interrogates, using a law and human rights framework how Thai Theravada Buddhism has unintentionally supported illiberal socio-political 'rule' and 'censorship' in Thailand through lese majeste (hereinafter LM) and defamation laws. The latter's powers, in the name of Thainess: Monarchy, Religion and Nation, to ensure individuals acquiesce to subjugation in a "ritual purification state" which excludes and displaces 'the Truth' and democratic possibilities. His extensive historical exploration shows how and why Thai rulers and society, despite appearances, have never been 'modernised' secularised or disenchanted through domination by a sacred ruling 'mentality' of the ruling 'elites'. Since the 1980's there has been a revival of the absolute authority of sacred monarchy and state underwritten by an ultraconservative version of Buddhism which legitimates a 'karmic' and 'merit' hierarchy and social and political 'caste' network of purity arranged by those closer to the charisma of king and monks who possess the signs of prestige, wealth, status and have unique access to control and ownership over 'ultimate truth'. Streckfuss argues following Gray, that what matters is loyalty to a partial truth and the royal regime: Dhammaraja as a pure rule, rule by purity. Theravada Thai Society's single organizing principle of epistemology is Dhamma: hidden or immanent phenomena to be searched for or illuminated open to a few 'exceptional individuals in society monks and kings, to men of pure minds' Needless to say, such a myth perpetuating injustice inequality and racism is the total opposite of all non-State reformist rationalist 'buddhisms', especially the versions of Buddhdasa, Mr Sulak and Bhikkhuni Dhammanada.

The problem of LM is how, alleged criticism of a highly revered monarch, with righteous semi-divine attributes, functions and is used. Who decides what is lese majeste? It is not His Majesty! Others (presume to) decide on his behalf and or as his representatives. Herein lies the nub of the issue. Streckfuss is absolutely right to bring in Carl Schmitt's notion of 'he who decides the exception is sovereign' and exercises sovereign political powers. LM in Thailand is used a repressive political tool resulting in a paradox that lese majeste accusations themselves can be considered lese majeste as anyone can make them, often for selfish and ignoble motives. Thus, extra-royal (military) forces and *persons 'call the shots' in the* name of protecting an institution and enforcing its authority and their own! As Giles Ungpakorn's metaphor questions "is the 'sovereign' an all powerful spider in the web, or, an ensnared fly being used and manipulated by others". Streckfuss poses this issue as follows: "how can the institution of the monarchy be so utterly loved if it requires the most repressive lese majeste law the modern world has ever known?" The acid test surely is tolerance, dissent, free expression and criticism, which the king himself supports as in the above quote. However, LM tries to enforce reverence and love. In ultra-nationalist Thai discourse all Thais love the king but they are not free to express anything other than unconditional love and undying patriotic loyalty! As Streckfuss argues 'Can a person be Thai if they do not love the king?' Could they: quite like him; be indifferent; dislike; even hate him, or be a republican without being assigned to the category of un-Thai-ness and its criminal consequences; this pathological

reasoning and use of Buddhism is equivalent to witchcraft accusations in 17th Century Salem, or, being an un-American communist in the 1950-s McCarthy era, or, a un-Thai Vietnamese /communist- a non-person unworthy of living, in anti-dictator pro-peoples sovereignty struggles in 1970's Thailand?

Steckfuss seems to claim empirical and scientific objective truth is always trumped by cultural truth, sacred legitimation and nature of the State and Monarch as Thainess; this is why the legal person of the Thai state is not a fan of the American series C.S.I. (apart from the leading Thai forensic pathologist Khunying Pornthip!).That is, means of establishing 'objective truth' via falsifiable evidence, observation, technology and scientific reasoning are seen as no value in relation to establishing truth by force, image, reputation the moral purity and guilt of those accused of LM are divined using supernatural logic and a 'science of treason' in the name of the sacred truth of 'Thainess'. What matters in judging defamation and lese majeste are intentions and motives: are they pure or evil and what their (hypothetical) effects upon imagined recipients 'the people' and 'public order and morality' not the truth of what was written or said, and its benefit to the common greater public good social justice. For Streckfuss in Thailand 2+2 =5. The knight of legal rationalism is not going to ride in and save the day, to prove through evidence distinguishing true from false, as the powers of Thai law determine guilt by imputing and assigning intentions of a perpetrator and the hypothesized effects of their speech: they are judged according to whether they are loyal patriotic subjects not truthful ethical sentient human beings. Thus defamation and lese majeste laws emerge in Steckfuss's analysis as Orwellian 'thought crimes' whereby anything negative or against the ruling regime it is judged 'false' un-true as it is not to do with "reality" or evidence 'complete reality of the crime is within itself, within human minds, of thought' and hence it is a 'crime to speak the truth'

Streckfuss's characterization of contemporary Buddhism as the predominance, in Peter Jackson's terms, of royalist establishment Buddhism (following Christine Gray, as a continuation of pre-modern Theravada Buddhism) fusing of Church and State is problematic. It ignores the continuing work of violent exclusion and marginalization of the many other sects and versions of Buddhism: oppositional minority reformist traditions which resist domination by popular superstition, ritual purification. One might get the wrong impression that reformist and socially engaged buddhism had no role or power to contest and challenge repressive styles of government, the truth and imposition of a spirit of neo-liberal capitalism and one dimensional development, for instance, the anti-dictatorship democratic uprisings of the 1973 1976s and 1992 partially fuelled by radical Buddhist ethics.

It may well be that Thai politics is in crisis and in an exceptional state, but, upon reflection, this predicament of interminable crises and 'unchanging change' by coups, leaving things the status quo pretty much intact, is the abnormal norm of the Thai 'exceptional state' or mentality of rule wherein norms, the rule of law -much as it can be said to exist in Thailand-law constitutions are suspended in the name of national security and public order.

On a positive note, simple reform stopping abuse by others of the LM law is possible: amending Section 112 of the penal code adding a clause using it 'only by order of the King or with his consent" (Streckfuss 'Is it now the time to discuss lese majeste law?)

Tim Rackett

Religion and Development

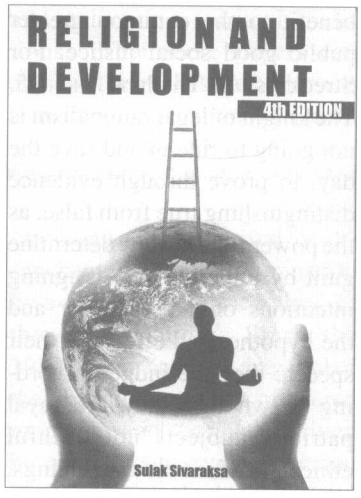
by Sulak Sivaraksa (Fourth Edition), SNF 2009;
translated by Francis Seeley,
edited by Grant Olson,
produced by Maiprasong Printing House, Baht 200.

Religion and Development is the transcript of Ajarn Sulak's talk in 1976, delivered as the 9th Sinclair Thompson Memorial Lecture in Chiang Mai. Even though the lecture was given before this reviewer was even born, it is still very relevant 33 years on.

Ajarn Sulak argues that the goal of development should be the wellbeing of citizens; however there is a tendency by politicians and economists to view development in terms of quantity (higher GDP, higher profits, more industry) rather than quality. One reason is that quantities are tangible and easy to measure, but as a consequence, material development

ends up as being more important than quality of life. In the UK, for example, this reviewer was actually blamed for suffering from a recurring long term condition. The doctor argued that if such people had to take time off work due to illness, the British economy would lose billions. Her attitude, also common in the multinational-owned British media, was that profits come before everything else, even before peoples' health. Large scale development projects are talked about in terms of the tangible benefits, but there is little mention of the intangible costs to culture, local people and the environment (the Three Gorges Dam in China is a recent example of this recurring problem). Ajarn Sulak points out that such projects serve to isolate humanity from its surroundings, when in fact development is about working in harmony with the environment because all things are interrelated and interdependent. If one is destroyed, so the other will be.

Religion sees the importance of this relationship. In Ajarn Sulak's view, religion and true development should work hand in hand as their goals are essentially the same: both aim to solve humanity's problems and therefore improve quality of life. In addition, religion seeks answers to matters beyond the physical world i.e. the meaning of life. In Buddhism, spiritual development is seen as the elimination of desire and selfishness. This involves contentment and empathy with all life forms. Such attitudes, Ajarn Sulak explains, are at odds with capitalism, which needs to create surplus needs to sell products to boost profits. People are just labour (who can be hired or fired



depending on how much they cost, the less the better) or consumers (who just exist to buy and individually mean nothing to a large TNC). This message is more relevant than ever, now that we have TNCs who can move across borders at will and governments who are desperate to attract foreign investment, doing so by a 'race to the bottom' to keep wages and environmental standards low. This is unsustainable development, leading to destruction.

Ajarn Sulak explains that capitalism has its roots in the West and spread with colonialism. Interestingly, even though it was never actually colonised, Siam has been even more affected by capitalism than some former colonies such as India. In the past, Siamese people lived in small, largely self-sufficient communities centred on the temple, where they learnt morality from respectable monks. The leaders of 'Thailand' later forced people to adopt Western habits and 'modernised' the country. This obsession with the West seems to have reached every level of society. Even in Esaan, poor villagers are proud to show off their Tesco carrier bags (Tesco had recently opened in the area) and the younger generation can no longer cook or obtain salt from hollows in the earth as their parents did. They get their meals and salt from Tesco. In India, on the other hand, only the upper and middle classes are Westernised whereas most people, who were excluded from the colonial set, still largely continue their traditional way of life.

This contrast may also have to do with the national characters of both countries, but in general it is evident that most Thai people have lost touch with their religion, which leaves them spiritually empty, making them increasingly materialistic. Religious leaders, argues Ajarn Sulak, are partly to blame as they have mostly failed in their duty to engage with humanity's problems, indulging instead in useless rituals. Ajarn Sulak urges us to get to the heart of our religion and change ourselves so that together we can change our world.

Much of Ajarn Sulak's work emphasises the three worldly conditions according to Buddhism: *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering) and *anatta* (not self). These truths are eternal and ultimately all societies, materialistic or not, will decay and disappear. But if we are accept these truths, we will see the emptiness of materialism and learn to share rather than compete. Only then will we have true development.

Zia Collins Free

The Anti-Globalization Breakfast Club: Manifesto for a Peaceful Revolution.

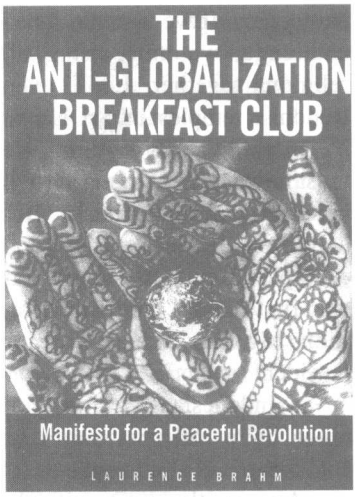
By Laurence Brahm.
Published by John Wiley & Sons (Asia) Pte. Ltd., 2009

Participants of the Third Conference on Gross National Happiness, held in November 2007 in Nongkhai and Bangkok, will remember the remarkable paper of Laurence Brahm. It was not included in the academic session but freely distributed because it surpassed academic criteria, typical for the work of 'out of the box' financial analyst and journalist Laurence Brahm.

In his paper Brahm launched the visionary concept of the "Himalayan Consensus". Now, in his new book *The Anti-Globalization Breakfast Club* recently presented at the Foreign Correspondents' Club in Bangkok, he tells the spirited story of how this idea emerges from a series of dialogues with civil society opinion leaders and how it becomes the corner stone of the 'Peaceful Revolution' Brahm – and we can join him – ignites.

Brahm is American, a lawyer and economist, and he advised China's leadership on state-owned enterprise reform throughout the 1990's. He served as an independent advisor to the central banks of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; is the author of more than 20 books on the Asian region, and columnist of the *South China Morning Post*.

He knows his rival consultants from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank inside out and often clashed with them. These were not only personal encounters: gradually it becomes clear to him that the giant he is



fighting with is the "Washington Consensus". Under this label USA imperialism treats developing countries and ex-communist states with 'shock therapy' molding the World Bank, the IMF and later the WTO into cruel instruments of market-fundamentalism resulting in an always growing gap between the rich and the poor.

Now this is a story we all know more or less. The book becomes exciting when Brahm confesses his transformation from initial admiration for the Chinese leaders and the master strokes with which they shape a strategically planned 'alternative' capitalism; to his realization that the Chinese people end up with an ethical void and money-only-driven life style, which is not much different from the darker sides of the American, Judeo-Christian complex.

Is what the Chinese and Americans, Europe, and peoples of the world, have in common: that they all suffer under 'globalization'? One of the very good elements of the book, which reads in one breath, is that Brahm depicts globalization and anti-globalization with every nuance needed. The title of the book is a tongue-in-cheek reference to a breakfast he had with economist Jeffrey Sachs, at the start of a journey of many breakfasts, noodles and cups of coffee all over Asia.

Brahm favours the term 'global justice movement' as proposed by Walden Bello over 'anti-globalization'. However, this global movement emphasizes cultural diversity. What emerges as a real inspiration is the 'Himalayan Consensus'. Brahm, once he moves his residence from Beijing to Lhasa in Tibet and starts small-scale alternative development projects around his house which he runs as a small guest-house, realizes that anti-globalization is not only about justice, but as much about spirituality: compassion, generosity and forgiveness.

From the projects he initiates in Tibet he links up with the countries and peoples that are connected with the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau through the magnitude of rivers which spring from the eternal snow and ice fields (as long as global warming does not interfere) to branch out as far as from Pakistan to Vietnam.

During the Gross National Happiness (GNH) conference in Bangkok Brahm discovers that the people from the Mekong region, whom he knows from his earlier consultancy work, feel intimately connected with the new development paradigm initiated from Bhutan. When interviewing Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley, the present Prime Minister of Bhutan, who then ran for the first democratic elections, he asked "Why did you decide to enter politics?" Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley replied: "Bhutan is located between the two most contentious countries in the

world (India and China), and there are compelling forces of globalization that have created new fears." "My decision to go back into politics was driven by fear that there may be a derailing of the GNH policy. We need to continue to breathe life into our goals of social justice and human rights."

From this single point arises the "Himalayan Consensus". It is not a consensus forced by big nation-states but a revolution gently arising from small countries like Bhutan, and emerging from communities and indigenous peoples who still live close to Nature; from urban people who wake up. Although the "Himalayan Consensus" may be based on Hindu-Buddhist-Islam-Tao foundations it does not fall into the dualisms of organized religion.

Brahm meets Sulak Sivaraksa at the GNH conference and asks: "You have often spoken of an 'Asian challenge' to the globalization of Westernization – or Americanization. Can you explain what you mean by an 'Asian challenge'?

"In Buddhism, we challenge the traditional hierarchy." Sulak replies. "If we want to be serious, we must challenge our own culture and not blame all things on the West. Cultural integrity means diversity. The West has gone wrong by advocating only one acceptable way – Western democracy. If we want an Asian challenge, we must bring all religions together. Look, even Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka have Hindu gods within. We must have cultural integrity, but be aware of (and check) globalization. Indonesia is a good example of cultural integrity. It was first Hindu, then Buddhist, then Muslim. Their former president once said, 'In order to be an Indonesian Muslim, you must have cultural roots in Buddhism and Hinduism'."

Among the many people Brahm meets are Arundhati Roy, Muhammad Yunus, Helena Norberg Hodge, Reza Aslan (Iran born leading scholar on Islam in the USA), Pushpakamal Dahal (former Prime Minister of Nepal), Mahinda Rajapaksa (President of Sri Lanka), Zhu Rongji (former Premier, People's Republic of China), the Abbot of Jokhang Monastery in Lhasa, and local community leaders.

An intriguing part of the book is his encounter with H.H. the Dalai Lama of Tibet. His dialogue with the Dalai Lama suggests an important story-line to be opened midway the book but Brahm wisely leaves the details of his attempts to mediate between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government unrevealed. Until a next book?

Certain subjects are dealt with in a somewhat artificial way like the potential similarity between *Ulma* in Islam and *Sangha* in Buddhism. Deep conflicts in Asia and the Himalayan region often are ignored. And sometimes the virtues of Eastern philosophies are too simply, unfairly, compared with the ugly sides of Judeo-Christian impact. But the activist spirit of the book is very refreshing and the concluding 'Manifesto for a Peaceful Revolution' is creatively formulated, in particular when compared with what we remember from the decades-old Earth Charter that never really came to life.

'Restoring Human Happiness', 'Invest in People's Future', 'Turn Madrasas into Vocational Networks' are some of the awakening chapters of the Manifesto, and the second pillar of the Himalayan Consensus "calls for engaged social interaction without violence, and broad egalitarianism and equality. These are goals common to Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Taoism (...)".

A Thai translation of the book is being prepared by Suan Nguen Mee Ma publishers and we trust it will strengthen Thai alternative activists, social entrepreneurs, change agents, and inspire regional networking. And a 'Buddhist Revolution'?

Hans van Willenswaard

Slow is Beautiful

In Praise of Slow
Carl Honore
Orion Books UK
£10.99

A book advocating slowing down our lives has long been needed. Over the past century wherever we look our world has been speeding up. The first billion world population was not reached until 1800 AD, and the sixth billion took only twelve years. Of this population over half live in urban areas, and that in urban slums is increasing at 4 million a month. Not until 1900 AD was a land speed record of 100 kph reached and now this

record is over 1200 kph. Our planet is increasingly at risk from acceleration in the rate of carbon dioxide emissions and global warming, and this despite the fact that the private car only began to become popular less than a century ago. The first cars could not go faster than walking speed, as they had to be preceded by someone with a red flag, but now with the concentration on speed there are around a million deaths annually from cars. Thus when I first saw this book 'In Praise of Slow' I felt that that its publication could be important, providing us with information to help us take action to slow everything down.

The middle classes work long hours glued to their desks or their computer terminals, and even at home they are called at any hour on their mobiles or their blackberries giving them very little time to spend with their families. It almost seems to be honourable to work long hours every day, and even during the weekend also. If they manage to spend quality time with their children its rarely more than ten or so minutes a day, and if they do make love to their spouses they only have a few minutes available for this. They buy powerful and expensive cars that can go much faster than any speed limit, and look for supersonic or the fastest planes that 'save' them just a few hours. Western oriented men and women have been led to believe that the faster they deal with all aspects their life the better. The less time they 'waste' in eating and preparing their food the more time they have for other activities. The average time spent in a McDonald's including ordering and eating is just twelve minutes. Even a consultation with a doctor in England takes just 6 minutes. The net result of this concentration on speed is often indigestion, colic, heart attacks, and divorce.

Even children are pressurised to take special tuition as early as nursery school, and are involved in so many special classes, music lessons, sports activities, and additional languages from the age of six that they are no longer able to be children anymore playing with their friends on what might seem to their parents as nonsense activities. Children have as much need to slow down as do their parents.

The only reference to eastern wisdom is in a discussion of ways in which those of us who were stressed out from the pressures of modern high speed existence are increasingly turning to meditation, breathing exercises, yoga, and chi kung.

This is how things are, but it does not have to be so. According the Carl Honore we can all make marginal changes in our lives which can have an extraordinary impact. He is of course speaking to the bourgeoisie not to poorer working class families.

The book is full of interesting anecdotes. Before the fourteenth century there were no reliable clocks.. Sundials read different times depending on the season and whether it was cloudy or not, the time measured by calibrated candles varied by candlestick makers, and hour glasses relied on someone being around twenty four hours a day to turn the glass around. The first mechanical clock in a town square was in Cologne in 1300 AD. This clock was from the outset used to control people, first with curfews, and then to determine working hours. Now of course this has passed into normal practice, and workers clock In and out of their work place. Not until the middle of the nineteenth century was there any standardisation of time between neighbouring towns, each having their own time one different from the other. In Gulliver's travels the Lilliputians thought that Gulliver must worship his watch as he was looking at it so often. Ghandi was aware .that there was more to life than increasing its speed.

For the past half century communist and capitalist politicians alike have been talking about freeing people from the drudgery of labour, and entering a golden age when no one would have to work more than a few hours a week. Think tanks were established to help plan what people might do with their increased leisure, but like the paperless office it never came to be. People are spending more and more time at work to feed their desires for more and more stuff

Given the importance of the issues raised despite the anecdotes, and an often interesting analyses of the impact of our concentration on speed I was less impressed with this book than I was expecting to be, as the author's suggested solutions neither resolved, and at times did not even relate to the problems raised. As an antidote to modern man gulping down microwave heated pre-prepared meals Carl Honore describes a four hour feast he has in a small backstreet restaurant in an Italian hill town. To tackle the problem of speeding drivers we are given a description of a small retraining workshop for such drivers. In order to resolve the problem of the speed which doctors have to deal with their patients he describes how a Reiki

practitioner was able to spend an hour or more talking him through his pain. To mitigate the speed at which couples make love to each other he takes us to a residential Tantric sex workshop.

The author has tried too hard to maintain his popularity with his readers, and thus has avoided any discussion of radical solutions to the serious issues he raises. Hopefully this book will become the first of many dealing with ways to significantly slow down our lives, and incidentally the destruction of our planet.

Nicholas Bennett

Contextualizing of Buddha Thought

Swaris, Nalin. 2008, *The Buddha's Way to Human Liberation: A Socio-Historical Approach*, Sarasavi Publishers, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka, revised and abridged paper back edition. 333 pages, SL Rs. 800.

The Buddha's Way to Human Liberation is a refreshingly new reading of the early Buddhist discourses from a multi-disciplinary perspective in order to foreground the social elan of early Buddhism. It is an attempt to apply the core teachings of the Buddha; impermanence (*anicca*); non-self, non substantially (*anatta*) and conditioned co-arising (*paticca samuppada*) for understanding the causes of suffering at the personal and social levels. The Buddha searched for, and discovered, by human effort and striving, an answer to the basic paradox of the human predicament; how is it that humans perceive and comprehend a kinetic actuality in terms of stable things and beings and cling to them, creating their own frustrations and hates? Through brilliant diagnosis of this human malaise, the Buddha unmasked the power of desire and the desire for power which underlie human motives and actions and which spawn suffering in the world.

In his discussion of the Buddha's theory of human agency (*karma*), Swaris argues that the Buddha's key principle of explanation – conditioned co-arising – opens up a breakthrough perspective for human self liberation. Suffering is produced not by chance, nor by the fates, nor by gods. They are results of human action within determinate conditions; what was produced by humans can therefore be changed by humans. This is the practical, liberative character of the Buddha's Way. It helps humans realise that, for better or worse, they are the architects of their own destinies.

This study would appeal to socially engaged Buddhists who believe in the possibility of living in a reconciled universe – at peace with themselves, with others and the living environment. The Buddha's Way shows that the task of human liberation is a practical not merely a contemplative act.

Jonathan Watts
Research Fellow,
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Exchange Center,
Yokohama, Japan; Lecturer,
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Abridged from *The Island*
May 13, 2009
http://www.island.lk/2009/05/13/midweek6.html

Direk Jayanama, *Thailand and World War II*,

Revised English edition,
edited by Jane Keyes
Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books,
2008.
xxxiv+566 pp.. Baht 995
ISBN 978-974-951 1-33-6

Direk Jayanama was a leading figure in Thai public affairs in the 1930s and 1940s. He hailed from a family that was already prominent in public service, and has since become even more so. After a brilliant early career as a lawyer, he joined the People's Party shortly before the 1932 revolution, and became a member of parliament afterwards. From 1938 to 1947, he was a minister almost continuously, mostly either in foreign affairs or finance, except for a twenty-month stint as ambassador in Tokyo. In 1947, he was appointed ambassador in London but resigned a few months later as a result of the Phibunite coup. He then taught law at Thammasat University, and wrote texts on diplomacy and foreign affairs.

This voluminous memoir was published in Thai in 1966. only a few months before the author's death, A decade later, Sulak Sivaraksa oversaw a project to translate the memoir into English, and persuaded Jane Keyes to serve as editor. When she fell seriously ill, a decision

was taken to publish the manuscript, even though it was then only work-in-progress. The memoir has since become a key source for historians of Thailand's role in the war. Jane Keyes was finally able to complete her editing work for a second edition, planned to mark Direk's centenary in 2005, but a little delayed. This second edition does not contain any significant new material omitted from the first English-language edition of 1978. The earlier edition was "incomplete" in the sense that the editing work was unfinished. Some of the sentences were a little creaky. The text was littered with bracketed insertions which the reader was not sure were the work of the author or editor. This revised edition is much smoother and much clearer. The text reads so well that the reader soon forgets that this is not an English-language original. The editor's insertions in the text are clearly defined. In addition, Silkworm Books has put the text into a professional layout which is much easier on the eye than the makeshift presentation of the first edition.

The revision was a job worth doing and a job well done.

The value of Direk's memoir lies in its level of detail. While holding public office, he kept a very full diary, and while writing the memoir he consulted the documentary record. As a principle, he determined to write only on events which he truly knew: "Throughout the book I have adhered strictly to the principle of describing only those events which I had first-hand knowledge of or evidence about." Direk's account is especially good on the Franco-Thai conflict of 1940; the invasion by Japan in 1941; the delicate relationship with Japan over 1942-3; financial affairs in the immediate postwar periods and the negotiations to rehabilitate Thailand with the Allied Powers, including becoming a member of the United Nations.

In order to widen the coverage beyond his own personal view, Direk invited three colleagues to write essays on their personal experiences. This was a brilliant idea, and two of the three essays have rightly become classics. Thawi Bunyaket contributed an account of 8 December 1941, the day of the Japanese invasion, from his vantage point as secretary of the Council of Ministers. Puey Ungphakorn wrote a delightful narrative of being parachuted into Thailand as a Free Thai undercover agent. Prasop Sukhum described a mission to India in 1945 to persuade the US to treat Thailand sympathetically in the aftermath of the war.

The memoir includes a 170-page appendix of documents, mostly treaties and international agreements over the period 1940-47. Jane Keyes' footnotes identify people and places mentioned in the text, and provide background information on key events.

Few of the major figures in Thai public life have written their memoirs, and even fewer have been rendered into English. As a result this is a rare and valuable book that will have lasting value, both as a source for historians and as an appealing account of a fascinating period. It is good that everybody involved, including Sulak Sivaraksa. Jane Keyes, the Jayanama family, Silkworm Books, and the Jim Thompson Foundation (which provided financial support), thought it worth bringing out this second and completed edition.

Chris Baker
Published in *The Journal of the Siam Society*, *JJS* Volume 97, 2009

An Inconvenient Buddhist

The Wisdom of Sustainability: Buddhist Economics for the 21st Century
By Sulak Sivaraksa
Edited by Arnold Kotler & Nicholas Bennett
102 pps • $12.50
2009, Koa Books, Hawai'i

As much as anyone I can think of, Sulak Sivaraksa embodies the qualities of an engaged Buddhist. He has been practitioner, social philosopher, writer, activist, and trouble-making truth-teller for fifty years. While he is not well enough known in our western Buddhist circles, Sulak's writing and work — founding the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) and many other grassroots organizations in Thailand and Asia-at-large — have been an essential link among engaged Buddhists for more than thirty years. He is the author of at least a hundred hard-to-find books in Thai and English, so this succinct new volume, *The Wisdom of Sustainability*, will broaden his audience and deepen our understanding of his critical vision of an interdependent world.

I met Sulak Sivaraksa on my doorstep eighteen years ago, suitcase in hand, exiled from Siam

(the traditional name he prefers for Thailand). Thailand was in the midst of a periodic military coup, and as a result of his brash inclination to speak truth to power, Sulak was charged with lese-majeste and defamation of coup leader General Suchinda Kraprayoon. The seriousness of these charges, and threats against his life, led Sulak to flee his native land — not for the first or last time. All his life Sulak has been an inconvenient man. As the title of his autobiography reads: *Loyalty Demands Dissent.*

When he arrived at our home, I was familiar with Sulak's writings and inspired by his engaged Buddhist work. Earlier that year Parallax Press (founded by Arnold Kotler, now of Koa Books) published Sulak Sivaraksa's *Seeds of Peace — A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society*. Many of us in the west inhaled his teachings about the dangers of consumerism, the harsh realities of structural violence, the necessity of grassroots interfaith social action, and a Buddhist-based vision of society. In the years since, a wide community of Buddhist activists have worked closely with Sulak in INEB and other initiatives, building unique working relationships with peers in Burma, India, Sri Lanka, Ladakh, Bangladesh, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and the west.

The Wisdom of Sustainability expands on themes Sulak has hammered out for many years. The book begins with the life of the Buddha, his first encounter with sickness, old age, death, and renunciation — heavenly messengers. Just one paragraph later, Sulak is speaking with James Wolfensohn, then president of the World Bank, at the time of an Asian financial collapse in 1998. He tells Wolfensohn that he sees this collapse as "a heavenly messenger to encourage us to seek alternatives to economic globalization." This seems to be a considerable leap, but Sulak's vision of dharma is logically compelling and clear.

He reframes the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path as analytical tools for examining social/structural realities, and as guideposts towards a culture of peace. In the midst of conflict, the first noble truth, the acknowledgement of suffering, calls all parties to speak from their direct experience.

Second we try to understand the external *and* psychological roots of the conflict. When we project our emotions onto an object (animate or inanimate), we experience the "other" as having traits which, in fact, dwell first in our own unconscious mind…To discover the roots of any conflict, we must also examine its psychological dimensions.

The third noble truth is the cessation of the causes of suffering. This does not presuppose that we can reach a state that is conflict-free, but encourages us to grapple with the details — internal and external — every time. Conflict can be an opportunity to go directly to the heart of the matter and learn more about ourselves.

The fourth noble truth — peace as a way of life — shows us how to live in ways that reduce suffering and conflict.

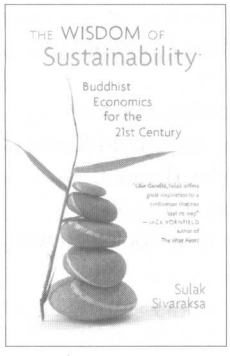
The fourth noble truth *is* the eightfold path, which is precisely about relationship to the world around us and to ourselves. As Sulak says later in the book, "The teachings of the Buddha transcend individual suffering." This emphasis on relationship, bringing everything down to a human scale is, in fact, the "wisdom of sustainability." Sulak is extending the radical approach to Buddhist economics laid down in E. F. Schumaker's *Small Is Beautiful.*

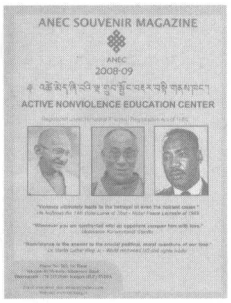
We need to find ways to make communities stronger — socially, politically, and economically. We need to re-establish the commons — the public sphere…making decisions about the things that affect their lives and livelihood.

Like all good teachers, Sulak raises essential questions and leaves them for us to answer. *The Wisdom of Sustainability* is concise and clear, deceptive in its simplicity, but deep. The urgent social questions Sulak raises and the inner work that goes hand in hand with social action must be our life and practice. Closing with Sulak's words, I hope you will study this wise book yourself, so that, in time, each of us can become more inconvenient — for the sake of the world.

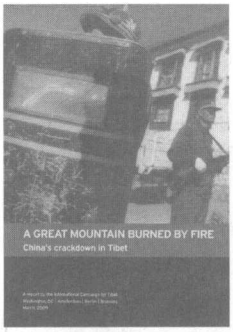
"The root of the world *buddha* means "to be awake." When we are awakened to simplicity and humility and aware of the suffering engendered by greed, hatred, and ignorance, our consciousness is restructured. We become mindful about ourselves and others, and naturally try to restructure society."

Hozan Alan Senauke

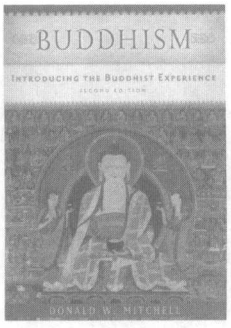




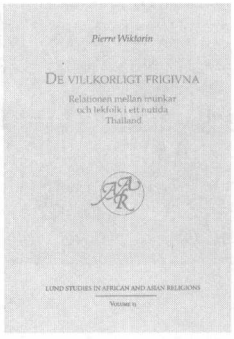
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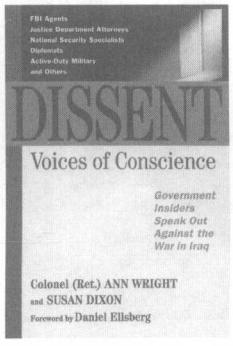
A Great Mountain Burned by Fire:
China's Crackdown in Tibet
A Report by the International Campaign for Tibet
Published by the International Campaign for Tibet, 2009



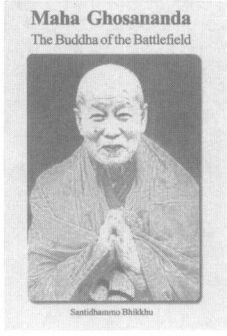
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By Donald W. Mitchell, Purdue University
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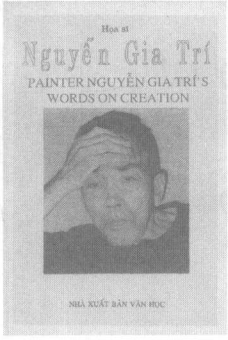
De Villkorligt Frigivna: Relationen mellan Munkar
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By Pierre Wiktorin
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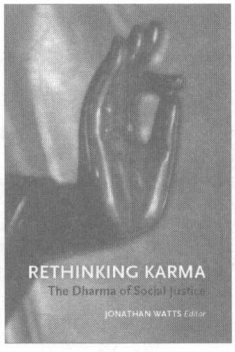
Dissent: Voices of Conscience
By Colonel (Ret.) Ann Wright and Susan Dixon
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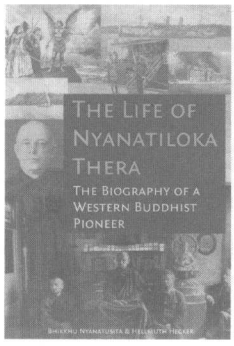
Maha Ghosananda:
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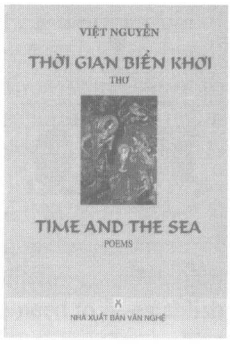
Painter Nguyen Gia Tri's Words on Creation
English translation by Vu Anh Tuan, 2009



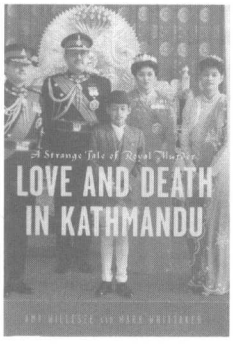
Rethinking Karma:
The Dharma of Social Justice
Edited by Jonathan Watts
and published by Silkworm Press, Chiang Mai,
Thailand



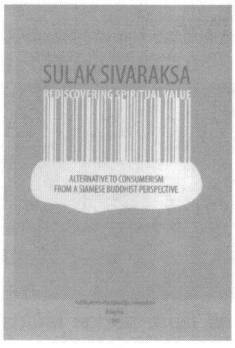
The Life of Nyanatiloka Thera: The Biography of a Western Buddhist Pioneer
Compiled and edited by Dr. Hellmuth Hecker and Bhikkhu Nanatusita
Published by Buddhist Publication Society, 2008



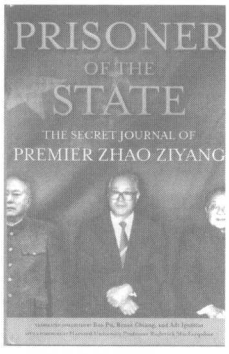
Time And The Sea
Translated by Vu Anh Tuan



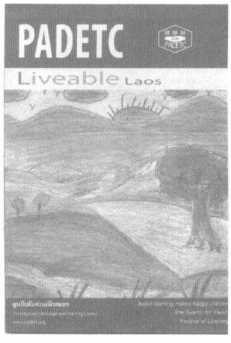
Love and Death in Kathmandu: A Strange Tale of Royal Murder
By Amy Willesee and Mark Whittaker
Published by St. Martin's Press, 2003



Rediscovering Spiritual Values: Alternative to Consumerism from a Siamese Buddhist Perspective
By Sulak Sivaraksa
Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation (2009)



Prisoner of the State : The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang
Translated and edited by Bao Pu, Renee Chiang, and Adi Ignatius
Simon & Schuster, New York (2009)



Liveable Laos
By Bridgette See
Published by Participatory Development Training Centre (PADETC) in Vientiane, Lao PDR, 2009

We regret to record the demise of

Mr. KARUNA KUSALASAYA
(10 May 1920 – 13 August 2009)

our *kalyanamitta* and *guru.*

We shall publish his obituary in the next issue.