

SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol.27 No.3

Sept.-Dec. 2554 (2011)



The Future of Buddhism :
From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation
Bodhgaya, India
October 26-29, 2011



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SEEDS OF

C O N T E N T S

Editor & Publisher

Sulak Sivaraksa
www.sulak-sivaraksa.org
www.sivaraksa.com

Cover

Medal of Niwano Peace Award

Lay-out

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

Published by

SEM
Tel. & Fax: (662) 314-7385-6
&
TICD

Tel. (662) 438-9331-2
Fax: (662) 860-1277

& INEB

Tel. (662) 860-2194
email: ineboffice@yahoo.com
www.inebnetwork.org

Distributed by

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

**Baht 100 per issue
suggested annual
subscription US\$ 50**

Payment info

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

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

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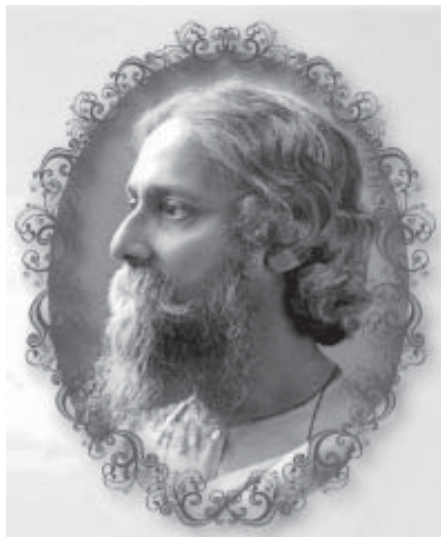
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The goals of INEB are to:

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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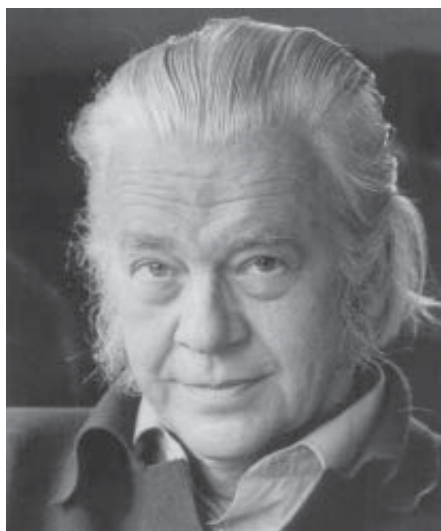
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150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore

Born 7 May 1861

Died 7 August 1941 (aged 80)



Schumacher the Visionary

E.F. Schumacher was born in Germany in 1911. He studied at New College, Oxford and became Economic Advisor to the National Coal Board from 1950 to 1970. He was the originator of the concept of Intermediate Technology and was President of The Soil Association.

Schumacher is still perhaps best known as the author of the new classic environmental book *Small is Beautiful*. He also wrote the less well-known *A Guide for the Perplexed*. He was awarded a CBE in 1974 and died in 1977.

Editorial Notes

The International Network of Engaged Buddhists intend to hold our bi-annual conference on “The Future of Buddhism: From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation” at Buddhagaya, the place where the Buddha was fully enlightened 2600 years ago. The Indian government has also supported a Global Buddhist Congregation to be held in New Delhi at the end of the year to mark the 2600th anniversary of the Awakening of the Buddha. We hope that all Buddhists who can make themselves available in India on either occasion will take part in it. The future of the teachings of the Buddha is at stake. The major task ahead is to make them appropriate for humankind and all sentient beings at least for another 2400 years from now on.

In a smaller time span, this year also marks the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore of India, whose life and work truly inspired many of us, who celebrated and shared his ideas and aspirations for harmony, wholeness and integrity. He dedicated his whole life to the cultivation of these ideas and dreams, especially through his poetry, plays, paintings and innovation in education.

For Tagore, growth in science, technology, and material wellbeing should go hand in hand with spiritual growth. One without the other is like walking on one leg. Also, Tagore did not reject the West or industrial civilization per se. Rather he insisted that the West must also learn from the East. The East has so much wisdom to offer the West. This balanced and holistic worldview is needed now more than ever, as it is a prerequisite for a sustainable and resilient future for us and for coming generations. Pure reason and pure materialism are as doomed as the pursuit of purely personal salvation. The world view of Tagore is seeing the unity of reason and religion, spirit and matter, and letting them dance together. This is the big vision where science complements spirituality, art complements ecology, and freedom complements equality.

For humanity, Tagore argued, the perfect relationship is one of love. He declared that this truth serves as the foundation of the teachings of the Buddha. According to him, we can only reach our freedom through cultivating mutual sympathy. To gain freedom we need to liberate ourselves from the fetters of self and from all those passions that tend to be exclusive. It is this liberating principle that we must apply to an imprisoned world.

What we call ‘progress’ or ‘development’ does not necessary conform to this ideal. With purely material progress, the greed for things tends to become a passion, thereby promoting unbridled competition and confusion. A reign of ugliness spreads like a callus over the whole world.

A mere addition to the height of skyscrapers or to the velocity of speed or the latest technological invention like nuclear power plants can lead only to a savage orgy of boasting and exaggeration, sometimes with very grave consequences.

We are shocked to see in front of our own eyes our arrogance and the illusion that we can somehow control our Mother Earth. The Earth that creates the great Tsunami is the same Earth that has been giving everything to nurture us. We must re-instill the sense of awe that we might have been missing for a long time. We must meditate so that we can rediscover a way to reconnect ourselves to our Mother. At the same time we must also admit that we cannot turn back the time. We cannot escape into a pristine nature or “first” nature. We only have “second” nature before us and we must live sustainably in it. This is what we mean by reconnection to nature.

We see clearly that we have been a part of this materialistic civilization and its violent system built upon our own greed, hatred and ignorance, or what Buddhists call the three root causes of suffering. Instead of accusing Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) and the Japanese government — indeed most governments — we must realize that it is we who created this monster called TEPCO that has become powerful enough to control government, media and other big businesses.

Yet many of us still remain content and hopeful for business as usual. The mass media is now busy orchestrating a cheerful chorus of ‘recovery’ and ‘reconstruction’. However, this is the time to be truly mindful (and not shocked) and engage in critical reflection. This is the kind of moment when we need to take a step back, talk more, and do less. More words, less action. This is the time for a major public debate.

The question is what we are going to reconstruct? Reconstruction for whom? Who will gain from it? Who will bear the bulk of the burden? Does reconstruction mean more of the same things? Are we going to reconstruct the same kind of towns and villages that have been proven too many times in history to be so vulnerable? The centralized massive energy system that has made our democracy hollow and has made the rural communities and remote regions enslaved by the big cities, electric power companies and central government? Reconstruct the banks and walls to protect the 50 plus nuclear power reactors, and make the reactors themselves strong enough to beat the next challenges of earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, floods and landslides? Recover the once famous Japanese technology and the invincible “kamikaze spirit” that would make no more mistakes and neglects like the ones we witnessed this time? Reinvent the once miraculously growing economy that required us to endlessly consume, to

build all those nuclear and other power stations, to destroy much of our once healthy ecosystems, and to sacrifice our rural communities and their beautiful landscapes?

Prof. Keibo Oiwa who established Sloth Club with its motto 'slow is beautiful' — obviously he was inspired by E.F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* (we also celebrate the 100th anniversary of the author of this famous book to challenge the mainstream in Japan)—tells me that he can already hear politicians in future elections talk loudly of those "reconstructions." But then we will have to remember that we can never reconstruct the world without the horrifying amount of toxic nuclear waste which will be with us for thousands of years to come. Every step we made during the last several decades with more and more nuclear reactors was to make both the reconstruction of a healthy past and the construction of a healthy future harder and harder. Put another way, the reconstruction of a pre-3/11 world would mean extinguishing the remaining hope for a healthy, sustainable world. So let us say "No" to the "reconstruction" of our previous Japan and choose from the remaining possibilities.

He can also hear clever people repeat the same old pre-3/11 stuff, saying that without giving an alternative, the argument against nuclear power is not persuasive. To this, he says he must repeat what the political scientist Douglas Lummis once said, the alternative to nuclear power is no nuclear power. Let us stop acting as if we still have a choice. We cannot afford another disaster, and that's how disastrous our situation is.

This is a new era that has started on the March 11th. This is the age of what the American Buddhist Joanna Macy called the "Great Turning," that has been prepared for in many parts of the world. According to her, the Great Turning has been occurring on three simultaneous levels; environmental movements, anti-globalization and re-localization activism, and personal, spiritual awakening. Let us, too, join in the creative process with the new vision given by the 3/11.

Of course, there are not too many reasons to be optimistic. Even if we turn around and shut down all the nuclear plants today, we have to spend decades to make sure that all the reactors continue to be cooled, and many generations after us have to invent ways to deal with the enormous amount of toxic nuclear waste that is already here. So shall we continue our pursuit of wealth and luxury without turning around? Why not stopping later instead of now, if it's too late anyway?

Perhaps Tagore's message may be relevant here. He said 'the time has come for us to break open the treasure trove of our ancestor, and use it for our commerce of life. Let us, with its help, make our future our own, and not continue our existence as the eternal rag-pickers in other people's dustbins'.

Tagore reminds us that "Indian civilization has been distinctive in locating its source of regeneration material and intellectual, in the forest, not the city"

Harmony in diversity is the nature of the forest, where monotonous sameness is the nature of industrialism based on a mechanical worldview.

This is what Tagore saw as the difference between the West and India. The civilization of the West has in it the spirit of the machine which must move, and to that blind movement human lives are offered as fuel.

The Buddha-to-be too left the city in order to search for the truth in the forest. And we believe that the Buddha has discovered the Four Noble Truth in the forest on the full moon of May 2600 years ago. Many of us in Asia embraced the teaching of the Buddha and we regarded ancient India as the source of wisdom and compassion. Recently however, most of us in Asia may still call ourselves Buddhists. But we blindly follow Western civilization, which is based on power and greed and the spirit of the machine worldwide. A civilization based on power and greed is a civilization based on violence.

Tagore warned that 'the people who have scarified their souls to the passion of profit making and the drunkenness of power are constantly pursued by phantoms of panic and suspicion, and therefore they are ruthless...They become morally incapable of allowing freedom to others.'

Tagore maintained that 'real freedom is of the mind and spirit; it can never come to us from outside'.

He only has freedom who ideally loves freedom himself and is glad to extend it to others...he who distrust freedom in others loses his moral right to it.

Today the rule of money and greed dominates our society, economy and politics. The culture of conquest is invading our lands and forests through the mining of iron ore, bauxite and coal. Many forest areas, especially in South and South-east Asia have become war zones. And every defender of the rights of the forest and forest dwellers is being treated as a criminal.

If we are to survive ecologically and politically, and if we want to stay democratic in its essence and if each citizen is to be guaranteed right livelihood, we need to give up the road to conquest and destruction and take the road of union and conservation, we need to cultivate peace and compassion instead of power and competition. We need to turn once again, to the forest as our perennial teacher of peace and freedom of unity and diversity.

We need to take Tagore seriously and we need to take the Buddha and ancient India as great visionary of our survival, and the survival of our next seven generations who should enjoy peace and social justice and environmental balance.

Burma: “Don’t Dam Our Lives” Video Available Now

Burma Issue produced this video in cooperation with Karen River Watch to document the effects of the Burmese government’s development projects. Many thousands of people have been forcibly displaced and many more continue to suffer.

This video was shot at Hatgyi, which is located on the banks of the Salween river in Karen State, Burma, where local people protested against the construction of a dam which will destroy their lives and peaceful coexistence with nature.

To view the full version of ‘Don’t Dam Our Lives’, as well as video highlights, or to find out more information on the struggle against the Burmese dictatorship, please visit www.burmaissues.org



China: China’s Assessment Calls for Burma’s Myitsone Dam to be Scrapped

China Power Investment Corporation is forging ahead with its controversial Myitsone dam in northern Burma despite its own assessment calling for the project to be cancelled.

The 945-page “environmental impact assessment,” fully funded by China’s CPI Corporation and conducted by a team of Burmese and Chinese scientists, recommends that the Irrawaddy Myitsone Dam not proceed. “There is no need for such a big dam to be constructed at the confluence of the Irrawaddy River” says the assessment.

CPI is planning to build and operate seven mega dams on the Irrawaddy and its tributaries. According to the assessment the dams will impact millions that depend on the river and threaten biodiverse ecosystems: “The fragmentation of the Irrawaddy

River by a series of dams will have serious social and environmental problems not only at upstream of dams but also very far downstream to the coastal area.”

Last month fighting broke out between the Kachin Independence Organization and the Burma Army near China’s Dapein Dams, also in Burma’s northern Kachin State. An estimated 30,000 people have been displaced.

Mega dams in Kachin State and Burma are deeply unpopular and numerous appeals to Chinese companies and government to stop the dams have gone unanswered. CPI’s own assessment warned that “the majority of local races oppose construction of the dams” and called for consultation with and consent of affected peoples.

Although finished in late 2009, the assessment has never been made public.

“Chinese companies are increasing their investments in Burma yet they are not following their own standards” said Sai Sai, coordinator of the Burma Rivers Network. “While CPI Corporation is hiding its assessment from the people of Burma, construction of the dams is speeding ahead.”

The study also recommends a full social impact assessment be conducted along the length of the whole river but this has not happened yet.

Contact: **Sai Sai** (+66) 884154386,
Ah Nan (+66) 848854154

To read the full assessment please visit www.burmariversnetwork.org

Siam: Human Rights Watch Demands US Waterboarding in Thailand be Investigated

The landslide election victory of the Pheu Thai Party and Yingluck Shinawatra's expected installment as Thailand's first female prime minister actually bring to the surface a dark chapter in relations between Washington, DC and Bangkok.

US President Barack Obama's administration has specifically outlawed torture and waterboarding of terror suspects. But when Yingluck's brother Thaksin Shinawatra was running Thailand, he collaborated in what the Bush administration called America's war on terror.

Yingluck is the public, smiling face representing her self-exiled, authoritarian brother, whose previous controversial relationship with Washington could provide important clues as to how Yingluck's new government could shape its political, financial and military policies concerning the US.

In the five years since the coup, Bangkok and Washington have enjoyed good relations. But when Thaksin was prime minister, America's national security was a major focus for Thailand. Thaksin's 2001-2006 administration coincided with the arrival of Americans who used cloaks, daggers and waterboarding to expand the US war on terrorism. Some critics believe the savage civil war that is going on

in the south of the country can be laid directly at the door of Thaksin, who told the military to crack down on Muslim separatist guerillas.

The US Central Intelligence Agency also established black operations where they secretly waterboarded a suspected al-Qaeda facilitator, Abu Zubaydah during 2002 while Thaksin was prime minister, flying in two American psychologists named James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen who helped create the CIA's interrogation program.

"The [CIA] agency believed tougher-than-usual tactics were necessary to squeeze information from [Zubaydah], so Mitchell and Jessen flew to a secret CIA prison in Thailand to oversee Zubaydah's interrogation," the Associated Press reported in December 2010. The pair waterboarded Zubaydah 83 times, according to previously released records and former intelligence officials."

The psychologists also waterboarded USS Cole bombing plotter Abd al-Nashiri twice in Thailand, according to former intelligence officials, AP reported, although Thaksin and other Thai political and military officials consistently denied knowledge of the CIA's secret prison and waterboarding activity.

The CIA's former head, Por-

ter Gross, agreed with his top aide's 2005 decision to destroy videotapes of harsh interrogation in Thailand, according to internal CIA e-mails, AP reported in 2010. In 2003, shortly after the waterboarding, then-US President George W. Bush visited Bangkok, met Thaksin, and upgraded the country to be an important non-NATO ally.

Today, Bush faces demands by New York-based Human Rights Watch for an investigation into torture and other violations committed in Thailand and elsewhere. On July 12 Human Rights Watch presented a 107-page report titled, "Getting Away with Torture: The Bush Administration and Mistreatment of Detainees." (<http://www.hrw.org/node/100263>)

The report's mention of "countries where they were tortured" could bring a fresh focus on US activity in Thailand when Thaksin was prime minister. It is unclear, however, if that would result in requests to Yingluck for information or assistance for an investigation, or how she might respond amid efforts by her new administration to establish good relations with Washington.

Bush and other US officials cited in the report have denied all allegations of illegal activity and it is extremely doubtful that the Obama administration is going to do anything about HRW's

charges.

The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly in a 2007 report titled "Secret Detentions and Illegal Transfers of Detainees" to various countries, called attention to allegations that Thai territory was used for secret torture.

"CIA sources indicated to us that Thailand was used because of the ready availability of the network of local knowledge, and bilateral relationships, that dated back to the Vietnam War," said the report by the council's Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights. "One CIA source told us: 'In Thailand, it was a case of 'you stick with what you know.' However, since the allegations pertaining to Thailand were not the direct focus of our inquiry, we did not elaborate further on these references in our discussions.

"The specific location of the 'black site' in Thailand has been publicly alleged to be a facility in Udon Thani, near to the Udon Royal Thai Air Force Base in the northeast of the country," the Council of Europe said. "This base does have long-standing connections to American defense and intelligence activities overseas. During the Vietnam War, it served as both a deployment base for the US Air Force and the Asian headquarters of the CIA-linked aviation enterprise, Air America."

During Bush's 2003 visit to Bangkok, he also praised Thaksin for helping the CIA capture an alleged top Indonesian Islamist fighter, Riduan Isomuddin,

who travelled under the nom de guerre Hambali, two months earlier in central Thailand.

Hambali was part of "a plan to have terrorist operatives hijack an airplane, using shoe bombs to breach the cockpit door, and fly the plane into the tallest building on the west coast" Bush said in 2006 referring to the 73-story US Bank Tower in Los Angeles, California.

Hambali has been caged in Guantanamo Bay for more than seven years without trial.

Similarly, in 2002, a terrorist suspect from Yemen, Amin Al Bakri, was seized in Thailand and flown by the Americans to Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan.

Despite helping the US track and seize terrorist suspects, Thaksin did not later receive Washington's assistance when he needed it the most. During the former premier's last months in power, he pleaded with President Bush for help, apparently fearing the September 2006 coup that soon toppled him.

"There has been a threat to democracy in Thailand since early this year," Thaksin wrote Bush in a secretive 544-word letter dated June 23, 2006, which became public three weeks later. "Key democratic institutions, such as elections, and the observance of constitutional limitations on government, have been repeatedly undermined by interests that depend on creating chaos and mounting street demonstrations in Bangkok, as a means to acquire political power that they cannot gain through

winning elections.

"Having failed to provoke violence and disorder, my opponents are now attempting various extra-constitutional tactics to co-opt the will of the people," Thaksin's letter said.

Bush sent a noncommittal 138-word reply two weeks later that said: "Free and open political systems can be unpredictable."

In Thailand, Thaksin was brought down by a combination of royalists, the military, the Bangkok elite and others partly because of his awakening of the poor of Isaan, the rural northeast of the country, and partly because of growing unease over his apparent abandonment of democratic institutions and the perversion of them to his own purposes.

Following the coup, Thaksin was indicted and convicted of charges that he did not pay taxes on US\$1.8 billion in profit his family pocketed when they sold their Shin Corp. telecommunications empire in 2006 to the Singapore government's investment wing, Temasek Holdings. Today he remains a fugitive, based in Dubai, avoiding a two-year jail sentence for a separate deal in which his ex-wife purchased real estate in Bangkok at a deflated price while he was prime minister. That exile is expected to end now that his sister has led the Pheu Thai party to victory.

(Richard S. Ehrlich is a Bangkok-based journalist. His web page is <http://www.asia-correspondent.110mb.com>)

Siam: Somsak's Second Open Letter to Princess

A question to Princess Chulabhorn: Aren't 91 deaths and 2000 casualties more distressing than the "torching of our home"? And why did you not criticize the PAD?

As I have previously indicated, the interview given by Your Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn Walailak on the "Woody Koet Ma Khui" show took place in an "unfair" context, because although Your Highness is not protected by the "lèse majesté" law, you allude to the King and Queen, who *are* covered by the law; and also because Thai society is, in practice, subject to a system of one-sided public relations and inculcation on royal-related matters, rendering it extremely difficult to criticize any royal (which is extremely unfair).

However, in some sections of the interview just aired on Sunday night (3 April 2011) you touched on points of significance to current Thai politics in a manner that would, in my view, only exacerbate pre-existing injustices if not countered with criticism and argument. I refer to the following statement in the interview (from 3:23 onwards in this YouTube clip — and thanks to CiNNtv1 for the upload — <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBpqjHrqk4>)

"Truth is, I'm not someone who gets involved in politics. I have no wish to talk about others in terms of who is good and who is evil. I don't know, because I've never associated with politicians. Only...I only know that the events of last year, in which our home was torched... that brought great suffering to the King [and] Queen. The King, from being able

to practise His walking, suddenly deteriorated. He developed a fever and had to be put on a drip. He was bedridden. The Queen was terribly upset, and remarked that "when we [previously] suffered the "torching of our home", it was when Ayutthaya fell to the Burmese...but this time is even more distressing because it is Thais themselves torching Thailand."

First of all, we see that although you claim not to be "someone who gets involved in politics", this part of the interview has an obvious and **highly** political character (in fact, if speaking of "politics" in the broad sense generally accepted in academic circles today, the whole interview is without a doubt intrinsically "political".) To reiterate, **giving such a political interview or making such political remarks in today's legal and social setting is entirely "unfair"**. Which newspaper or TV station would dare offer a dissenting view — whether those of its own or by circulating such views — regardless of whether the newspaper, TV or others actually held opposing views, and regardless of how questionable an interview or royal remark might be on the basis of facts or reasoning?

My next point is this: Your Highness referred to the physical and mental state of both the King and the Queen as having severely deteriorated due to the "torching of our home" last year.

In the case of the King, given the relation to natural aspects of His Majesty's health, it is difficult to assess whether His "deterioration" to the stage of being "bedridden" was as a result of

witnessing the "torching of our home", or of some other pathology. I therefore wish to refrain from making any direct statement about the problem of the King's health, and I must consider that this part of the account given by Your Highness constitutes Your Highness's own political interpretation, or an expression of Your Highness's own political view. To put it simply, **Your Highness personally** is of the view that the "torching of our home" caused the King to "deteriorate" to the point that He "developed a fever and had to be put on a drip", and was "bedridden".

In the case of the Queen, it is believable enough that Her Majesty genuinely was "upset" and did compare last year's "torching of our home" with "the fall of Ayutthaya", as per the account given by Your Highness, because we have other circumstantial evidence of support from Her Majesty for critics of the Red Shirt rallies. Refer to the image below, showing a letter [from Her Majesty] to Napas Na Pombejra. (Napas's letter to CNN featured several passages attacking the Red Shirt rallies, and her expression of dissatisfaction with CNN was based on an expression of dissatisfaction with the Red Shirt rallies. See Napas's letter here)

Chitralada Palace

24 July 2010

Khun Napas Na Pombejra

To Khun Napas Na Pombejra,

Upon reading the letter you wrote to the CNN News Agency, I was proud that you had stood up and performed the duty of a Thai person, in responding to foreign journalists boldly and forth-

rightly, but also with courtesy and sufficiently clear reasoning to cause those in the world community reading your letter to rethink their faith in CNN.

I highly commend you for assisting to restore the nation's image.

[Signature]

Nonetheless, as the Queen is protected by the “lèse majesté” law, and given that the reference to Her Majesty’s words by Your Highness was in the manner of an endorsement, I wish here to make an expression of opinion in regards to Your Highness’ above words from the interview, *in their status as Your Highness’s own opinions.*

This is not the first time Your Highness has expressed such a view on the events of last May. Only two weeks after the cessation of rallies as a result of the Government crackdown (6 June 2010), Your Highness remarked to Thais in New York that (see report [here](#)). I took Your Highness’ words below from the clip accompanying the news report, starting at 1:07):

“As for politics, I really don’t know who hates whom; who is vying against whom. However, if you’re going to act you ought to have at least some small degree of ethics. Take at least a little pity on innocent people; think about how much difficulty [will result for them]. Besides the pain and suffering that has resulted, what happened has also led to economic difficulty: to have a long-running protest and violence occurring causes problems for our business sector, which has an effect on the Thai economy.”

It can be seen that Your Highness’ remarks in New York and on the “Woody Koet Ma Khui” show are along much the same lines: critical of the Red

Shirt rallies, and particularly their impact on the “business sector”, even though the “torching of our home” was not, as we know, of common people’s homes; not even of markets or local stalls and shopfronts, but rather of shopping malls in high-end business areas. Of course, Your Highness has every right to single out for criticism the issue of impacts on the “business sector”, or the burning of shopping malls in high-end business areas.

However, the first thing that would likely seem odd to followers of politics over the past few years is this: why, either during or after the “long-running protest” (in the words of Your Highness above) in the 2008 case of the People’s Alliance for Democracy — which included seizure of both the most important Government building, Government House, and the crucially-important heart of the nation’s “business sector” (and more besides the business sector), Suvarnabhumi International Airport — did Your Highness not make comments in this same vein? As is well known, Your Highness accompanied the Queen to the cremation ceremony for a PAD protester on 13 October 2008, even as PAD rallies continued (and, further, if the information from a Wikileaks telegraph of 6 November 2008 is correct, Your Highness and Dr Chaichon Lochareernkul were the ones who requested that the Queen attend in person).

Even more importantly, why during neither Your Highness’s remarks in New York, nor your interview on “Woody Koet Ma Khui”, did you make any mention at all of the nearly 100 people who were killed as a result of the Government crackdown, and the other close to 2000 who

were injured or disabled? If any one thing was most “distressing” about the events of last May, would it not be this, even more so than arson in high-end business areas (for which, to this day, the responsibility remains unclear...but even assuming that it was the work of protesters)?

That Your Highness expressed her distress at the death of a single PAD protester in 2008 by going so far as to attend the cremation ceremony is understandable enough (I too was distressed). But in the case of nearly 100 dead, to not mention them at all and instead mention only the burning of buildings, which were not even “homes” but rather high-end shopping malls ...this is somewhat hard for me to understand.

P.S. During the events of May 1992, Princess Sirindhorn said in an interview that “*Killing or using violence is not a good thing. The loss of material things is less important than the loss of lives. I wish for the killing to stop; the violence to stop; because we are all Thais.*” While the role of the monarchy in relation to the May 1992 crisis is more complex than the public relations story generally propagated, looking solely at the statement by Princess Sirindhorn that “*The loss of material things is less important than the loss of lives,*” it must be said that this was quite right, and more fitting than raising the point of the “torching of our home” as a focus. **Certainly, it is a shame that during the recent May events, Princess Sirindhorn did not again give an interview along such lines.**

By Somsak Jeamteerasakul

5 April 2011

Translated by Michael Sloggett

India: Who Pollutes: The Rich and Powerful or Poor and Powerless?

On the 29th of June, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met with editors of a few newspapers. When asked about whether he had been putting pressure on the Environment Ministry to approve environmentally destructive projects, he said “yes”, and justified by quoting Indira Gandhi “poverty is the biggest polluter, we need to have a balance”. Indira Gandhi had said this in Stockholm in 1972 at the first Environmental Conference. She had also quoted from the Atharvaveda —

“Whatever, I dig of you, O Earth,

May that grow quickly upon you,

O Pure One, may my thrust never pierce thy

Vital points, thy heart”.

The Prime Minister has conveniently ignored the more significant quote.

The Prime Minister’s duty is to uphold the nation’s constitution and nation’s laws, including environmental laws, not subvert them. By admitting that he has been putting pressure on the environment ministry, he has admitted that he is subverting the law. Most commentators view the removal of Jairam Ramesh from the Environment Ministry during the July 12th, 2011 cabinet reshuffle as a further step in environmental deregulation.

While quoting Indira Gandhi to justify his subversion of environmental law, the Prime Minister seems to have forgotten that Indira Gandhi created the country’s environmental governance structure during her tenure as Prime Minister. It was Indira Gandhi’s intervention that supported the call of movements and scientists to not build a hydroelectric project in Silent Valley in Kerala saving a biodiversity rich ecosystem. It was Indira Gandhi’s concern that Mussorie, the queen of the hills, was being stripped naked by limestone mining that led to the Environment Ministry to take action. We were invited to do the study of the environmental impact of limestone mining in Doon Valley in 1981. Our study became the basis of the Supreme Court case. In 1983, the Supreme Court shut down the mines.

In the pre-trade liberalization days, it was accepted that if commerce undermines ecosystems which support life, then commercial activity must stop, because life must carry on. Art. 21 of the Constitution make it the duty of the state to protect life. Since ecological processes support life, the state has a duty to protect ecology.

Under Prof. Manmohan Singh’s leadership since the 1990’s based on “growth fetishism”, all ecological devasta-

tion is justified in the name of growth. Who is driving this ecological devastation and the pollution? The rich and powerful corporations or the poor and powerless women, farmers, tribals and the displaced rural communities who become urban slum dwellers?

The poor live in the places polluted by the rich. They do not cause the pollution. And they live in polluted places because they are displaced from their homes in rural areas where they have lived sustainably for millennia.

They are victims of pollution because they are victims of dispossession. This is environmental injustice. And it is an inevitable consequence of outsourcing of pollution from rich countries in the garb of FDI.

Coastal Orissa is a case in point. In the Jagatsingpur district where POSCO’s giant steel plant is planned as the highest FDI of \$ 12 billion farmers, grow biodiversity — betel vines and paddy, coconut and cashew, fruits and fish. There is no pollution and no waste. There is a prosperity that GDP does not count. This economy of sustenance is being uprooted with violence to enable POSCO to export our iron-ore and steel. Every law of the land including the Forest Rights Act and the Coastal Zone Regulation Act are being violated as committee

after committee has recognized. And when the Ministry of Environment Committees affirms the violation of laws, it is the Prime Minister who puts pressure on the Environment Minister to give an approval to POSCO. It was the women and children of Govindpur, Dinkia and Nuagaon who lay down in front of the police in the scorching sun to stop the land grab in June. They were still forming a human barricade when I visited on 23rd June.

The Prime Minister is intervening to promote this land grab and resource grab. POSCO gets our land and our resources. What we will inherit from the POSCO project is ecological destruction, pollution, displaced people and the destruction of our democracy.

In India, it is the corporations that are building giant coal based power plants who are major climate polluters. It is the automobile industry that pushes more cars on our roads that are leading to higher carbon dioxide emissions. Emissions from the use of fossil fuel are driven by the economically powerful, not the poor. But it is the poor who are most vulnerable to the floods, droughts and cyclones that climate change intensifies.

The same applies for toxic pollution. In 1996, we filed a case in the Supreme Court to stop the import of toxic waste from the U.S. This waste was generated by rich consumers in the U.S, not by the poor in India who put their lives at risk sorting out the toxic garbage. The Bhopal disaster and it is still continuing toxic

pollution was not caused by the poor who died in thousands. It was caused by Union Carbide, now owned by Dow.

A major issue related to toxics is the pesticide, endosulfan. The U.N has banned it. Most countries of the world have banned it. The Supreme Court has ordered an interim ban. 1000 people have died in Kasargod where endosulfan was sprayed on Cashew plantations for 20 years. More than 9000 are crippled. The innocent victims did not cause the toxic pollution. It was caused by powerful corporations who influence decisions and have blocked a ban on endosulfan, even as people die and children are born disabled.

Toxic agrichemicals harm all life. Synthetic fertilizers run into rivers and oceans, creating “dead zones”. Nitrogen oxide released from nitrogen fertilizers accumulates in the atmosphere as a green house gas that is 300 times more damaging than carbon dioxide. These synthetic fertilizers also make bombs as the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai and the Oklahoma bombings in the U.S have shown.

We now have a new form of pollution in agriculture — genetic pollution from genetically engineered crops. Genetic pollution is destroying biodiversity and devastating farmers livelihoods.

The poor do not cause chemical and genetic pollution — giant chemical / biotechnology corporations do. And the chemical corporations are also the gene giants who now control

seed. Here too, instead of being the voice of poor and vulnerable farmers, the Prime Minister is the voice of powerful global corporations through his repeated reference to genetic engineering as the second Green Revolution.

Whether it is atmospheric pollution, toxic pollution, genetic pollution or urban waste pollution, environmental pollution is an externality of a greed based economy which privatizes profit and natural resources and socializes pollution. The rich accumulate the land, the biodiversity, the water, the air and the profits. The poor bear the burden of dispossession and accumulated pollution.

We expect the Prime Minister to uphold India’s Constitution and environmental laws not subvert them. We do not expect him to support and promote the polluters. We expect our Prime Minister to recognize that the poor are victims of pollution and environmental degradation, not its cause. We expect the Prime Minister to remember that he holds our precious natural heritage and natural capital in trust for future generations, not to be given away to greedy corporations and destroyed for short term profits.

We expect our Prime Minister to grow beyond his “growth fetishism” and recognize that we are all part of Mother Earth, and pollution is violence against the Earth and people.

Vandana Shiva,
23 July 2011

Singapore: Murdochian Democracy?

Rupert says the lion city is his version of utopia.

Probably the most telling statement the press baron Rupert Murdoch made during his abject mea culpa before the UK Parliament Tuesday was his praise of Singapore, saying “the most open and clear society in the world... is Singapore — the cleanest society you can find anywhere — as every minister is paid at least one million dollars a year and has no temptation to transgress.”

What that statement betrays is that Rupert Murdoch appears to have no basic understanding of either independent journalism or democracy itself.

Transparency International’s Corruption Index ties Denmark and New Zealand with Singapore at the very top of its corruption perceptions index. Leave aside the question of what the lawmakers of Denmark and Sweden are paid to maintain their integrity — a fraction of what Singapore ministers get.

What keeps Singapore’s ministers in line is not those million-dollar paychecks but the fact that they are scared to death of Lee Kuan Yew, who has shown no compunction whatsoever in jailing the odd minister who does stick his hand in somebody else’s pockets. In 1986, Teh Cheang Wan, one of Kuan Yew’s best friends, a co-founder of the state and the head of the country’s national development ministry, committed suicide rather than face corruption charges that Kuan Yew

was intent on bringing against him. Also leave aside the fact that the PAP has historically delivered a supine parliament mostly via gerrymandering and intimidating the opposition.

The leader of the world’s most powerful news organization, who presumably ought to believe in the independence and freedom of the press, was praising a country that most recently jailed the author Alan Shadrake for pointing out that Singapore’s criminal justice system is skewed towards hanging the poor and finding ways to excuse the wealthy and expatriates. Singapore has the highest per-capita rate of executions in the world.

It seems odd that Murdoch didn’t notice that Reporters Without Borders ranks Singapore at 140th of 167 countries in terms of press freedom, or that Time Magazine, Asiaweek, the Financial Times, the International Herald Tribune, The Economist, Bloomberg News Service and other publications have been cowed into submission through libel suits, contempt of court action and gazetting to limit their circulation. It is especially odd that Murdoch owned two of them—the Far Eastern Economic Review, before it closed, and the Wall Street Journal/ Asia. Those that haven’t been sued or otherwise attack have learned their lesson and simply don’t report critically on the country.

The country’s own media dare not report what happens in Singapore beyond what the leaders want to see in print. And

what has happened, considering the practice of democracy and free elections, is nothing short of appalling.

According a chronology compiled by the website New Asia Republic, since 1994, in addition to suing newspapers on the thinnest of pretexts and winning all of its cases in its own courts, police have raided private homes and arrested members of churches it doesn’t like.

Former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong once threatened to turn constituencies into slums if they didn’t vote for the ruling People’s Action Party. Both opposition leaders Chee Soon Juan and the late JB Jeyaretnam have been sued, charged with perjury and defamation and hounded with a variety of other offenses in an effort to drive them out of politics. Opposition leaders’ homes and offices have been stormed by Inland Revenue officials who carted away tons of documents and articles to seek to make cases for tax evasion.

According to the US State Department’s human rights report on Singapore, it is widely believed that the authorities routinely conduct surveillance on some opposition politicians and other critics of the government. The same report also stated that the Internal Security Department is believed to run a network of part-time informants in the US, Australia and other countries.

Political films and videos have been banned. Foreign television stations and networks

have been asked to restrict covering of small political parties and warned against critical reporting of the country. The police have been given lawful access to data and encrypted material. CD-ROMs have been added to the Undesirable publications Act.

In 1999, the Home Affairs Ministry admitted that it had secretly scanned the computers of more than 200,000 Internet users. Even women's magazines have been warned not to get involved in partisan matters. Public rallies by the opposition have been banned repeatedly. Falun Gong members have been arrested.

In 2001, the Parliament passed a law that allows punishment of foreign news broadcasters deemed to be engaging in the domestic politics of Singapore. Political campaigning has been restricted on the Internet.

Election time for campaigning has been as short as 17 days. Police have raided Internet critics' homes and confiscated their computers. In 2002, the supposedly independent courts ruled that there would be no trial for defamation suits brought by Goh Chok Tong and Lee Kuan Yew against opposition leader Chee Soon Juan. He was found guilty by summary judgment.

Nor does Murdoch appear to have noticed that Singapore, this paragon of integrity, is home to vast amounts of the stolen wealth of both Burma and Indonesia. Some 18,000 Indonesians described as "rich" were living in Singapore in 2007, according to *Tempo Magazine*, worth a combined total of US\$6 billion. Some US\$13.5 billion of that alone was looted from the Indonesian central bank's recapital-

ization lifeline to 48 ailing banks during the 1997-1998 Asian Financial Crisis.

Burma's generals, who have beggared their country and savagely repressed their citizenry, are believed to have transferred nearly US\$5 billion into two Singapore banks from the sale of gas since 2000, according to Earth Rights International. One of their generals has even had a rose named after him in the Singapore Botanical Gardens.

Aside from whether the old lizard was crying crocodile tears in his testimony when he said he and his top executives knew nothing of the fact that his employees had hacked into hundreds of voicemails up to and including the royal family, his apparent admiration of Singapore speaks volumes about his own corporate empire.

If this is what he believes about the foundations of democracy—that mere money will bribe politicians to stay out of trouble—then there are few moral imperatives that guide his stewardship of the press. It is okay for Fox News in the United States to hire Republican presidential candidates and give them a nationwide forum while—in Fox's famous slogan—they report, the viewers decide. It is okay for a putatively neutral news organization to virtually dictate who will be in power in the UK.

It was okay for him to make a fire-breathing speech in 1993 to London advertising executives that communications technology would allow dissidents to bypass state controlled media and that satellite broadcasting would make it possible for information-hungry residents of many closed

societies to bypass state-controlled television channels. The Bosnian Serbs can't hide their atrocities from the probing eyes of BBC, CNN and Sky News cameras; the extraordinary living standards produced by free-enterprise capitalism cannot be kept secret.

But it also appears to have been okay to cravenly back away from that statement when it appeared that it enraged the Chinese authorities who had direct control over his Star TV footprint in Asia, and to court them in every way possible. He dropped the BBC from programming after he heard that BBC news offended the Chinese government, then tried to claim it was a business decision. A Murdoch subsidiary purchased the rights to a book by Deng Xiaoping's youngest daughter. None of it worked. The Chinese figured that out. It would be inimical—unthinkable—for any government to order the divestment of any enterprise having to do with a free press, no matter how odious, and a lot of Murdoch's various media enterprises are odious in that they have interfered with the free and fair operation of democracy in at least three countries by scandalous and biased reporting designed to further his business interests. But maybe it is time for the heretofore toothless board of directors of News International to take a look at where he has got them. That is what boards of directors are for.

*John Berthelsen,
Asia Sentinel,
21 July 2011*

Letter from the Secretariat's Office

Dear INEB members and readers,

First of all, we would like to congratulate Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa, who has just received an award from the Niwano Peace Foundation, held on the 23rd July at Rissho Kosei-kai's Kyoto Fumon Hall in Kyoto.

The INEB Secretariat and its network members have been very involved in the Biannual Conference which will be held in Bodhgaya, India, October 26 - 29, 2011. We have received wonderful support from the partners who are assisting with all aspects of the conference. Despite this support funding is still needed in order for the conference to accommodate the 300 participants that are expected to attend. Your support of this conference is one meaningful way to share dana, which will benefit many people.

The conference is offering many opportunities for examining the theme: *The Future of Buddhism: From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation* in the historic setting where the Buddha achieved enlightenment. Morning programs will be held at the ancient temple where meditation will take place. Morning plenary sessions are times for generational sharing and round table discussions about dharma and the Sangha for the future. Pre and post conference sessions are also scheduled with an International Buddhist Arts Gathering and International Youth Volunteer Workshop preceding the conference. Post conference events include a Think Sangha meeting, INEB's Executive and Advisory Committee meeting and a workshop conducted by Venerable Bhikkhuni Dhammananda for YBS, as well as optional pilgrimages to Buddhist sites.

The Conference registration closes on 31 August, so we urge you to visit the conference website — www.inebnetwork.org — where you can register either online or email the registration form which can be downloaded to conference@inebnetwork.org. Payment can be made online through PayPal.

Several INEB sub-committee meetings were held in July which focused on establishing a Right Livelihood Fund (RLF). More information will be available soon with details about the RLF.

The Secretary and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee have been traveling extensively, meeting with our partners to strengthen relationships and reach out to new partners. We have gained positive responses throughout South and Southeast Asia, as well as on the recent visit to Kyoto to attend the Niwano Peace Prize ceremony. Visits to South Korea to connect more with Jungto Society and Buddhist Solidarity for Reform in South Korea have also been very positive.

Yours in dhamma,

Somboon Chungprampree (Moo)
Executive Secretary
secretariat@inebnetwork.org
www.inebnetwork.org.

P.S. You may go to www.inebnetwork.org to see every issue of *Seeds of Peace* from the earliest volume.

Samdhong Rinpoche Interview

May 2010 - Berkeley, California

Interviewed by Alan Senauke for Edited Draft 2 - 4.3.11

Background

Lobsang Tenzin, more commonly known as Professor Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche served as Prime Minister, or *Kalon Tripa*, of the Tibetan Government in Exile from 2001 to 2011. From 1991 through 2001, he was chair of the Tibetan Parliament in exile, responsible for important reforms in the exile government.

He was born in Eastern Tibet in 1939. At five years of age he was recognized as the 5th Samdhong Rinpoche. In 1959, at the age of 20, he fled the Chinese occupation of Tibet, and settled into exile life in India.

From early years in exile until the present Samdhong Rinpoche has been a teacher serving the lay and monastic Tibetan community in schools and universities. He directed the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Varanasi, the most prominent Tibetan university of philosophy and Buddhist studies.

His social and political thinking and his dedication to nonviolence is influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and J. Krishnamurti, as well as by the teachings of his own tradition. Samdhong Rinpoche is author of *Uncompromising Truth for a Compromised World: Tibetan Buddhism and Today's World*

INTERVIEW

Alan Senauke: Where did you spend your childhood — in the city, in the countryside? Where did you grow up?

Samdhong Rinpoche: I was born in the countryside in a very small village. At the age of four I shifted to a small monastery, about ten

or fifteen kilometers from my village.

AS: What part of Tibet was that?

SR: In the very southeast, just bordering China. It is called Dechen.

AS: When you moved there, had you been identified as the reincarnation of Samdhong Rinpoche?

SR: Not yet. I had an uncle monk, the younger brother of my grandfather. Since he belonged to the older generation, he had a young disciple monk. Both of them used to visit my home quite often, every two months or so.

I wanted to go with them and my parents did not allow it because I was too small. One day that young monk came, and I remember that as he was returning to the monastery, I was crying. I blocked the head of the staircase and insisted on going with him. My father was a bit angry and said, "Take him." So the monk took me with him to the monastery.

The monastery usually would not allow a small child to live there. But I refused to go home. My uncle had to seek special permission from the abbot. The abbot allowed me to stay in my uncle's care. The next day my father came to take me back, and I still refused to go.

AS: He wasn't angry any more?

SR: He was angrier. He thought if I went away I would be pacified and come back home. But I remained in that monastery with my uncle monk. The next year, when I was five, I was recognized as the reincarnation of Samdhong. So that was the sequence.

AS: Did you stay there or did

you go to another monastery?

SR: I moved to a monastery about fifteen kilometers away.

AS: A large place?

SR: A little bigger, but not a large place. But there was a huge house and many servants. My family was so poor. Our village house was like a kind of a shed. There might have been thirteen houses in the village. My family was the poorest of them. But from the age of five, I was no longer impoverished. My family also prospered.

AS: Did they come with you?

SR: No, they remained in our village. The local authorities waived all taxes for them. People offered donations on my behalf, so they were able to build a new house.

AS: It sounds like you had a very strong calling to be in the monastery.

SR: Yes, monastic life was good. I never missed my home, and I never tried to go back there.

AS: But it's unusual to do this at the age of four or five. You must have had a very thorough monastic education.

SR: Yes, I had — but formal education came a bit later. When I was recognized as a reincarnation, then there was a process of finding my teacher. When my teacher was finally appointed, I was eight years old. Then I started formal education.

AS: How long were you studying with your teacher?

SR: Until I was thirteen. Then I was sent to Tibet for higher studies in a full monastery. It was quite a long way from my hometown. At the age of twenty I left the training monastery.

AS: Did you leave Tibet with His

Holiness the Dalai Lama?

SR: I was part of another group. His Holiness left Lhasa on the night of the 17th of March, 1959. We remained in the monastery three days more. On the night of the 20th and morning of the 21st bombardment started. Then on the 21st we left the monastery.

AS: This must have been a very painful thing.

SR: Yes, it was very painful. And it was a kind of critical teaching of impermanence and the sorrows of samsara, worldly affairs.

AS: You were about 20 years old then, and very soon you were a schoolteacher.

SR: Yes. If I had remained in Tibet another ten years I would have completed my formal studies. But I came to India and in July of 1960, I was summoned to Dharamsala by His Holiness. I studied there for about six or seven months, then I was appointed a school teacher. I have been teaching ever since.

AS: How did you become involved in politics and in the government in exile?

SR: I came to it quite late. I tried to stay away from politics. Teaching work is good for me. So I taught in their schools as a teacher, as principal, from '61 to '70. In '71 I joined the university as a professor. For 30 years I taught university in Varanasi.

AS: I have read that you were deeply influenced by Gandhian ideas of nonviolence. How did that come about?

SR: I was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's teaching. As a Buddhist monk, of course, we believe in nonviolence. Nonviolence is not something Gandhi invented. It is an age-old teaching of Buddha and others. But until I read Gandhi, I didn't understand how nonviolence could be applied for political struggle and social change.

AS: As a method?

SR: Yes, as a method for national reconstruction and social justice. We had always thought that nonviolence was for spiritual authorities. We thought that certain kinds of violence were indispensable in society and politics to create the state. A state would have to maintain a military force, a police force, punishments, so on and so forth.

We never thought that any state could be free from all violence. So when I read Gandhi and he talked about nonviolence in every sphere, I thought, "Oh, this is a real new interpretation of Buddha's teaching of nonviolence." I became more and more interested, and read whatever material I could get. In 1959, just after I arrived in India, Gandhi's autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* was partially translated into Tibetan. I read that book. So that gave me a new approach to life. Yes, I could work for politics and social change as a monk.

AS: So that gave you an idea about a different basis for a government than a state and violence. And also, seeing this as a religious or spiritual practice, how a monk could actually participate.

SR: Yes. I thought that as a monk, as a Buddhist practitioner, I could not work for the government or for any social activity. I ought to remain in the monastery. But Gandhi's teaching showed me I could practice spirituality while serving the people, working in the society. I could even work for the state. That is what I learned from Gandhi.

AS: These are issues that I also discuss with Burmese monks, whose tradition of nonviolence is very deep. A monk is so connected to society that the suffering of society is their suffering,

and they feel responsible to it. Perhaps it is part of the bodhi-sattva vow.

SR: Yes, right.

AS: Were there people around that you could discuss this with?

SR: When I took this up, there was very little Gandhian literature available that I could read. For ten years or so, I was not able to advance my understanding. Then, when I went to Varanasi in 1971, I met many great people, particularly one person who worked in the Indian freedom struggle — Achyut Partwardhan. Later he gave up politics and studied with Jiddu Krishnamurti. Achyut Partwardhan and Jai Prsakash Narayan were both young leaders during this movement.

AS: They were followers of Krishnamurti?

SR: Yes, So I became friendly with Achyut, who introduced me to Krishnamurti. And then I became friendly with Krishnamurti.

AS: Personally?

SR: Yes, personally. So that is how I came to Gandhian literature and Gandhi's practical way of living. Later on I met many other Gandhian people.

AS: Did you ever feel a tension about the fact that your root was Buddhism and their root was Hinduism?

SR: Yes. I sometimes say this. If we look at Gandhi's way of life and our way of life, there is almost no common ground. Gandhi was a strong believer in a creator. We do not believe in the creator. Gandhi believed in atman. We do not believe in atman

But that doesn't bother me, because Gandhi talked about the application of nonviolence in day-to-day life. That is relevant to me. Gandhi might believe in the issuer or atman—let him

believe it. But he demonstrated how nonviolence can really be practiced in social justice. That is what I took from Gandhi.

AS: What is your mission? What did you come to the Bay Area to do?

SR: Actually I am meeting my people, the Tibetan people, in their diaspora. In New York City there were about 4,000 Tibetans gathered to listen to His Holiness and met with them. I am completing my tenure of political leadership next year. I wish to thank the people for their support and say goodbye. This is my purpose of coming here. The Tibetan community in the Bay Area asked me to come, so since I was in New York, I thought I should visit here.

AS: When you are talking with the Tibetan community in exile what is the substance of your talk? Are you talking about the realities of modern day life, the political realities of Tibet? Are you giving dharma teachings?

SR: Since I have been involved in politics for many years, I stopped giving dharma teachings. I talk about how the development and improvement of the Tibetan government. About the economic situation. About the need for democracy, administrative transparency, and the next parliamentary election. People wish to know about the status of our ongoing dialogue with leadership of the People's Republic of China. These are the subjects I come to talk about.

AS: And that's what they are interested in knowing.

SR: Yes, yes. We also discussed education for Tibetan children born in the West. Now there are only Sunday schools for teaching language and culture. How this can be improved?

AS: Do you find that children in diaspora are able to maintain connection with Tibetan culture?

SR: Tibetans in India, in Nepal and Bhutan are by and large living a community life together. They have their own schools. So there is no problem.

AS: So the religious forms are continued.

SR: Yes. They have local monasteries and schools. Right from the beginning they are taught in a Tibetan setting. But in the West, the Tibetans are scattered. They do not have a community life. Their children have to go to Western schools. So they are now losing their touch. This is a concern for parents and for all of us.

AS: Do you meet with young people?

SR: Not separately. I meet the whole community, and many of them very young. Yesterday there were about four hundred people together.

AS: So your term as prime minister ends next year. What do you see yourself doing after that?

SR: I have not yet decided. In India I am connected with two groups of people. One is the Gandhian followers, some called Sarvodaya and these people. Not Dr. Ariyaratne's Sri Lankan group, but Indian Sarvodaya. Their movement is not really flourishing. A majority in these groups is over the age of eighty. Not many young people are joining. But still a few young show up. So I might be working with them. Another I am working with the Krishnamurti Foundation.

AS: And are they active in India?

SR: They are quite active in India. There are many young people interested in K's teachings. We have about eight big schools running in India. And there are many study centers. So these two groups wish me to be part of their work. And of course, Tibetan education is also important for me.

AS: In the Tibetan community are you actively teaching non-violence?

SR: Not so much since I have been so busy. But when I was in Sarnath as a university professor, we offered many different teachings on nonviolence. I conducted several workshops and short courses by Professor Gene Sharp in India. And then I was also teaching nonviolence with Rabbi Everett Gendler and his wife Dr. Mary Gendler. They come to India every year for about a month-and-a-half or sometimes two months, going to various Tibetan schools, teaching a course in nonviolence. We have set up an NGO in Dharamsala, the Active Nonviolence Education Center. They conduct small courses through the year, in the Tibetan settlements of north and south India — in the schools, in the communities, and everywhere.

AS: I would love to see one of those.

SR: Now we have a new education policy. Nonviolence is a part of the curriculum right from preschool to class 12. So they get a new course every year. We are trying to do something to develop the mind of nonviolence in order to achieve a non-violent society.

AS: I think it's really important to begin young, and to make nonviolence be a practical effort, not just an intellectual idea.

SR: Yes.

AS: Are you mostly spending time in Dharamsala?

SR: In my present occupation, I travel around quite a lot. So, most months, I spend about two weeks in Dharamsala and two weeks traveling.

AS: I am very honored to have been able to talk to you today.

SR: Thank you. Thank you very much.

AS: I hope get rest on your travels.

SR: Rest is a little difficult.

Letter from Cadzand on Socially Engaged Buddhism

On 18-19 June 2011, the committee 'Buddhism and Society' of the European Buddhist Union organised an informal networking weekend, hosted by the Naropa Institute in Cadzand, the Netherlands. Socially engaged Buddhist networks from the United States, Asia and Europe were represented.

The purpose of the brainstorming weekend was

- to share ideas on how Buddhism can contribute to a better world

- to evaluate the links between Buddhist practice and social engagement

- to encourage communication and support among existing Buddhist initiatives worldwide

Over 2600 years ago, Siddhartha Gautama rejected all forms of social discrimination and institutionalized inequalities. Buddhism teaches that everyone, regardless of race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political ideology, nationality, social origins, property, birth status or other distinctions, has the potential to become enlightened. The global financial crisis reminds us that social and economic structures are fashioned by human minds, which also implies that they can be reconstructed.

No-self, impermanence and interconnectedness are inspirational core teachings that help us (with meditation and other contemplative practices) to identify suffering and the causes of suffering, and to act compassionately, with awareness of our own motivations.

Becoming aware of the suffering due to abuse, injury, pov-

erty, illness, imprisonment, oppression and war continues to be a source of action for many Buddhists. Many types of initiatives have been developed in different parts of the world.

The participants at the meeting in Cadzand came to the following conclusions:

1. Many socially engaged projects by Buddhists are not well known within the broader Buddhist community. The participants identified a strong need to share ideas and methods. It would therefore be useful to set up a directory and network, a sort of **World Forum for Socially Engaged Buddhism**, to facilitate global communication and cooperation. The participants intend to support informal networks via mailing groups and the construction of a website where existing initiatives, ideas and literature are easily accessible.

2. As a first step it would be useful to organize a **European symposium on Socially Engaged Buddhism** in the near future (Summer 2013). This will be the third in a series of major conferences on the topic, following a symposium on engaged Buddhism in the United States (August 2010 in Montague, Massachusetts) and a forthcoming conference on 'The Future of Buddhism: From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation' by the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) in India (October 26-29, 2011 in Bodhi Gaya). The proposed European symposium will highlight the activities of those who are already involved in engaged Buddhist initiatives and encour-

age cooperation among them. It will also bring together people who would like to do something and put them into contact with those who are already conducting projects.

3. Finally, we participants at the networking weekend in Cadzand **invite all Buddhist organizations** to reflect on existing or potential initiatives within their own communities. National Buddhist Unions in Europe might also consider appointing a national coordinator to gather information on local projects within their countries, and to forward that information to the international network. It is important that individual Buddhists and Buddhist organizations take a much more active role in responding to the ecological and social challenges that threaten our planet and its inhabitants. Our situation is urgent and time is running out.

4. We also welcome the various kinds of **support** you might be able to offer: sharing ideas, informing us about socially engaged projects, promoting such projects, administrative support, help with the construction and maintenance of a website, links to existing websites and social networking communities, etc.

May you who read this letter be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

May everyone you meet be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

May all sentient beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

Cadzand, 19th June 2011

Engaging the World Through Buddhism

Engaged Buddhism refers to Buddhists who are seeking ways to practically apply insights from their meditation practice and spiritual teachings to social, political, environmental, and economic suffering and injustice. While the roots of Engaged Buddhism may be found in the teachings and actions of the Buddha himself, and other great teachers of the past, Engaged Buddhism can also be understood principally as a movement that began in the late 19th century as a response to Western colonialism in Asia. It is best known through its political movements, such as the struggles by the Tibetan, Burmese, and Vietnamese Buddhists for self-determination, democracy, and peace.

Engaged Buddhism is not simply being a Buddhist and involvement in politics and social justice. Rather, Engaged Buddhists critically and creatively apply the Buddha's teachings to transform themselves and their societies. Thich Nhat Hanh of Vietnam, Ajan Maha Ghosanand of Cambodia, The Dalai Lama of Tibet, Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, and Ajan Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand are modern-day leaders who embody Engaged Buddhist principals and have guided organizations such as the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, the International Network of Engaged Buddhist, and the Zen Peacemakers.

When I first went to Tibet in the late 1990s, I was on a pilgrimage and did not intend to involve myself with politics in general, nor practice Engaged Buddhism. The roadmap for my pilgrimage was the far-ranging travels across Tibet by a 19th century mystic



known as Tertön Sogyal. I meditated among hermits in remote sanctuaries and slept in caves where Tertön Sogyal had experienced spiritual visions. On foot, on horseback, and in dilapidated buses, I crossed the same snow-covered passes that he had used to travel from eastern Tibet to Lhasa. I was searching out the living masters and yogis who uphold Tertön Sogyal's spiritual lineage and could tell me the oral history of his life and teachings.

But my pilgrimage took an unexpected turn.

The more time I spent in Tibet delving into the 19th-century teachings of Tertön Sogyal, the more often I met Tibetans who wanted to tell me their stories of frustration and suffering in what they see as Chinese occupation of their country. And the Tibetans spoke of their never-ending hope that one day the exiled Dalai Lama would return to Tibet. Traveling as a Buddhist pilgrim, I gained the trust of Tibetans. Political prisoners who had experienced abuse and torture in Chinese prisons showed

me scars. Monks and nuns who had been kicked out of their monasteries gave me their expulsion notices from the local security bureau. I was taken to meet a Buddhist leader who had been scalded with boiling water and then jailed for five years for publicly praying to the Dalai Lama.

Tibetans not only told me their stories, but early into my pilgrimage they asked me to spirit such firsthand accounts of human rights abuses out of Tibet and into the hands of Western governments and advocacy groups. I became a courier of often-graphic accounts of torture and abuse. This required evading China's vast security network of plainclothes security agents, undercover cops in monk's robes, and sophisticated cyber police. I began photographing Chinese secret prisons where Tibetan monks and nuns are incarcerated for their Buddhist beliefs. The decade-long journey in Tertön Sogyal's footsteps became a different kind of pilgrimage — one that became the dual narrative of the book *In the Shadow of the Buddha; Secret Journey, Sacred Histories, and Spiritual Discovery in Tibet*.

While I do not claim to have benefited anyone from my human rights work, I can say that I have tried to apply what the Buddha and my teachers have taught me about acting for the benefit of others. This is how I entered the path of Engaged Buddhism. I have given voice to what I have witnessed. I know in politics, ultimately, there are no winners, for every politician will die and every government will

eventually fall — the real question is not if a political system will survive, but when will it fail. Because everything is impermanent, including politicians and their governments, we have a responsibility to affect change that will bring about the conditions *right now* for others to find contentment and happiness. For me this is Engaged Buddhism.

Like many others who have been profoundly affected by Tibet's unique wisdom culture, I cannot let the world forget about Tibet. China wants governments and people around the world to forget about Tibet, to turn their backs on monks, nuns, musicians and bloggers who languish in

prison for their religious beliefs and their peaceful expression of political views. It is the responsibility of those who have the freedom to travel, to write, and express our opinions, to talk to our governments — and to not only bear witness but act to change injustice. This is why I documented China's human rights abuses in Tibet and why I wrote *In the Shadow of the Buddha*. I do not expect everyone to take up the Tibet issue. That is not my reason for writing. Rather, it is my hope that wherever we find ourselves in the world, we never lose hope and faith and a sense of responsibility to those who are suffering in our family,

in our community, or in other countries.

I believe progressing on our spiritual path means doing what each of us needs to do for ourselves to bring about true and lasting contentment, beyond suffering. And accomplishing the path of social engagement means creating the conditions for others to find that same lasting satisfaction. These are the commitments I've learned from my venerable teachers, and ones that I continue to take with me.

Matteo Pistono

8 July 2011

The Washington Post

Future of Buddhism : From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation

More or less the same day that Sulak Sivaraksa delivered his acceptance speech to receive the Niwano Peace Prize in Kyoto, the UN General Assembly adopted a unique resolution on happiness prepared by member state Bhutan. This historically significant parallel, rather than just a coincidence, challenges the world to “re-think” development.

The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on happiness. It says happiness is critical in advancing economic growth and social progress, news agencies report:

Calling the “pursuit of happiness” a “fundamental human goal”, the resolution recognised that it was a universal goal in the spirit of the UN Millennium Development Goals.



Bhutan's Ambassador to the UN Lhatu Wangchuk hands over the resolution to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon

The resolution called on a “balanced approach” to economic growth that can lead to sustainable development, poverty eradication, happiness and well-

being of the planet.

It also invited the world body to “pursue the elaboration of additional measures that better capture the importance of the

pursuit of happiness and well-being in development with a view to guiding public policies”.

Lhatu Wangchuk, Bhutan’s ambassador to the UN, whose country was a co-sponsor of the resolution, said it was “inspired by the belief that we need to begin discussing a topic whose moment has come, at the UN”.

He said Bhutan has offered to convene a panel discussion on the theme of happiness and well-being at the next session of the General Assembly to be held in September.

Prior to this discussion facilitated by Bhutan in September this year at the United Nations, Sulak Sivaraksa will speak at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, in the framework of an international exchange platform during 25-27 August 2011, organized by the School for Wellbeing Studies and Research. The title of the platform is *Re-thinking Property: Pathway to a Well-Being Society Scenario?* Other resource persons will include Nicanor Perlas (Right Livelihood Award recipient, Philippines), Dasho Karma Ura (President Centre for Bhutan Studies), Ramaswami Sudarshan (UNDP), Ms Cheah Vannath (Cambodia), Sombath Somphone (Laos) and Takayoshi Kusago (professor of Social Systems Design, Kansai University, Japan). Earlier in August, a preparatory gathering will take place in Bhutan, organized by the Centre for Bhutan Studies, involving economist Jeffrey Sachs, UN Advisor on the Millennium Development Goals; Richard Layard, professor at the London School of Economics and author of the book *Happiness. Messages from a New Science*; and John Helliwell, expert in wellbeing studies from Canada. Among the

participants the School for Well-being Studies and Research is invited to present its views.

The *Re-thinking Property* exchange platform in Bangkok, later in August, will bring Asian scholars, activists and business leaders together, in a global context. The aim is to explore options for “alternative development” in light of the Bhutanese call to re-new attention for the universal pursuit of happiness. A leading thought behind this Bangkok experimental contribution to the global dialogue on happiness and wellbeing policies — a shift from the present unqualified economic bias — is, as tentatively formulated: distinct dimensions of happiness may resonate with archetypal attitudes constituting various property regimes.

In order to realize a “balanced approach” to economic growth that can lead to sustainable development, poverty eradication and wellbeing for the planet, as promoted in the Bhutanese resolution, we have to re-think the legal as well as cultural foundations of property regimes. The world is confronted with challenges in various fields. Among them the call of U.K. opposition leader Ed Milliband to re-think property regimes in the media-world, the raise of peer-to-peer networks in fields of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and social networking as new space for civil society action. Regarding land property an international coalition against “land-grabbing” was formed during the World Social Forum 2011 in Dakar. An interesting case is that regulation is in the making which would entitle the government of Thailand to hold all intellectual property rights on seeds: not really the answer local seed

breeders and farmers may expect to effectively counter the dominance of multi-national seed corporations.

The neo-liberal world view emphasizes and promotes a private property regime, favouring not only individuals but also corporations that are attributed the same rights as “free” individuals. While in communism or socialism public property (ownership by the state) is placed central to uphold its model of the “welfare state”. The global movement towards an alternative development path in contrast is recognizing more and more the centrality of common property. A key presentation during the Bangkok exchange platform on *Re-thinking Property* will be made by Silke Helfrich of the *Commons Strategy Group*, a global network of “commons” activists.

The three perceived dimensions of happiness corresponding with these particular property regimes are: *satisfaction of needs* corresponding with private property; contentment and detachment from outer conditions with state or collective ownership; and *happiness generated by fulfillment of meaning* and by altruism corresponding with common property.

None of the three property regimes can stand alone. However in the present world-economy private property and public property regimes have merged into one inter-locked system of “state-capitalism” (China) and “capitalism supported by the state” (USA) that denies enough space for emerging civil society networks based on common property principles. A “balanced approach to economic growth” requires that this space, enabling a civil society

driven economy, should be reclaimed and re-created, in order to keep private property and public property regimes in check. Pushing them back within the boundaries of where they are meaningful and supporting sustainable development, poverty eradication and wellbeing of the planet.

Within this “action-research platform” a re-newed role for Buddhist Economics is emerging. During the *Re-thinking Property* event in Bangkok Prof. Hisashi Nakamura (Japan) and Prof. Apichai Puntasen (Thailand) will open the debate on the contribution of Buddhist philosophy towards re-thinking world

economy.

Ultimately they will facilitate the dialogue on Buddhist Economics during the, what is expected to become, groundbreaking INEB conference *From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation* in Bodhgaya, October 2011. Forty years ago, in the late 60’s and early 70’s of the 20th century, wise leaders anticipated the problems that are surrounding us everywhere now. And they also pointed to solutions: E.F. Schumacher, inspired by the economy of Burma, wrote his book *Small is Beautiful. Economics As If People Matter*. Sulak Sivaraksa established the *Sathirakoses Nagapradipa*

Foundation already in 1968. The Club of Rome published its *Limits to Growth*. In France the *International Federation of Organic Movements* (IFOAM) was formed. And the King of Bhutan conceptualized Gross National Happiness.

Hopefully the coming decade will become the decade of personal awakening leading to global transformation. We have to join hands now to make happen what was foreseen as needed and possible by our wise leaders 50 years ago. In Buddhist terms: from Enlightenment to Maha Puja.

Hans van Willenswaard

A Futuristic Priest Whose Time Has Arrived: Rev. Hidehito Okochi

He has established a micro-credit “Future Bank”, is developing buildings and houses to last 100 years, and is now working for a nuclear free Japan to “recover hope within 300 years”. Rev. Hidehito Okochi is a forward looking Japanese Buddhist priest who has been ahead of the times for years. However, with the tsunami disaster of March 11 and the ongoing Fukushima nuclear reactor crisis, *his time* has arrived. Rev. Okochi has been a “socially engaged Buddhist” from his teens as a student activist and his 20s helping establish a Japanese “Buddhist NGO” for overseas aid work. What has differentiated him from most



other engaged Buddhists in Japan up to this time has been his commitment to go beyond social welfare to social transformation. Working to transform his own community as much as engaging

in overseas work, his agenda has often been too radical for most other Japanese Buddhist priests to understand or to join in. But the energy crisis that has hit Japan since the outbreak of the Fukushima crisis and the anarchic political struggle over the country’s future energy policy flows right into Rev. Okochi’s long held analysis of Japanese society and his vision for reforming society based on Buddhist values.

Growing up in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Rev. Okochi was strongly influenced by the Japanese student political movement of the era; a movement that is for the most part dead today. Instead of entering the Buddhist



Studies Department of the university affiliated with his denomination, Jodo Shu, he entered the Law and Political Science Department of the prestigious Keio University. Still, his ties to his family temple and his subsequent ordination as a priest, led him to search for the common points in his socio-political interests and his Buddhist path. He says, “Eventually I made the connection between the student movement ideals for political peace with Buddhist values for peace and social justice like no poverty and no discrimination. I also eventually saw how environment was connected to peace, and how I could work for society as a priest.”

In his 20s, he and a group of other like-minded Buddhist priests took several trips abroad to various regions of conflict, especially war torn Indo-China. These intimate encounters with the suffering of humanity led them to create AYUS, a Japanese Buddhist NGO focused on supporting small NGOs doing aid work in these areas. At this time, other Japanese Buddhist priests were developing similar concerns and a group of successful overseas aid Buddhist NGOs

sprouted up and continue their work today.

However, these initiatives were not enough to satisfy Rev. Okochi’s political sensibilities for social justice. Reflecting on the Buddha’s Four Noble Truths, Rev. Okochi went deeper into the nature of the suffering that he had encountered overseas. He could see that the Japanese economic prosperity of the 1980s was built on the back of the economic and environmental exploitation of South and Southeast Asia while piggy backing on the political exploitation of the United States in the Middle East. While other Buddhist priests may have also seen this second noble truth, almost all have been content in working on the first through social welfare and aid work overseas. Rev. Okochi has been a pioneer in the Buddhist world of Japan for not only engaging in activist and advocacy campaigns on these issues within Japan, such as his leadership of the Palestinian Children’s Campaign. More importantly, he has engaged in his own community to end the complicity with this overseas exploitation rooted in Japanese consumeristic lifestyles.

The critical consciousness developed in understanding the global system of economic, environmental, and political exploitation from engaging in the second noble truth led Rev. Okochi to the third noble truth. His endeavor to create a future vision of Japan comes from his own Buddhist ideals and values. He has drawn heavily on the founder of his Jodo Pure Land denomination, Honen (1133-1212). Honen brought Japanese Buddhism down to the masses by developing a faith based in the vow of Amida Buddha to abandon no sentient beings no matter how deep their transgressions and defilements. For Rev. Okochi, this means creating a world without discrimination and exploitation, especially one without a military and nuclear presence. In this way, Rev. Okochi has been part of a group of farsighted Japanese religious leaders who formed the **Inter Faith Forum for the Review of National Nuclear Policy** in 1993.

The second aspect of his vision derived from Honen is nurturing community based on trusting relationships and self-reliance. This was an endeavor he set about working on in his

urban temple community in Tokyo through the Edogawa Citizen's Network for Thinking about Global Warming and a host of other community NGOs. Beyond raising awareness on global environmental issues and campaigning for reducing energy waste, Rev. Okochi installed large solar panels on the roof of his temple in 1999 that generate 5.4 kw and another set of panels on an elderly home built on temple property in 2007 that generate 3.0 kw. This was enough to gain official recognition from the local government as the first of several-planned People's Power Plants in Edogawa Ward. However, due to laws that prevent the sale of surplus electricity directly to citizens, Rev. Okochi has not been able to deliver this energy to his community. Instead, he sells it back to the Tokyo Electric Power Company (the same company that manages the Fukushima reactors) and has used the profits to establish a local micro-credit bank called the Mirai "Future" Bank. Among other things, this money is used to help his community purchase more energy efficient, electrical appliances—a savings plan they discovered that actually outstrips the energy saving of solar panels at a tenth of the cost of the investment.

Another major aspect of Rev. Okochi's vision is developing a pure land here on earth through ecological living. In this way, he has joined together with a host a different small Japanese NGOs to build chemical free, long lasting homes for

urban dwellers. This vision extends to developing eco-villages where marginalized, traditional Japanese architects and carpenters help to plan the replanting of denuded Japanese forests with a diversity of trees suited for sustainable use in building. This project is part of the increasingly well known *satoyama* (village-mountain) policy for developing sustainable human communities living in coexistence with forests and marine environments. Another crucial aspect of these initiatives is the development of local electrical generation through the use of solar, wind, and micro-hydroelectric. As Rev. Okochi points out, the myth that Japan has no natural resources is part of the larger myth of the need for massive centralized electrical systems (which include nuclear power) to fuel an exploitative, consumer driven economy. Again, Rev. Okochi has lived this vision by completely rebuilding a second temple for which he serves as abbot in downtown Tokyo with four floors of chemical free, low cost apartments for urban dwellers with environmental values.

Since the triple disaster of March 11, Rev. Okochi's **Inter Faith Forum for the Review of National Nuclear Policy** has been busy offering their churches, temples, and other facilities as shelters for families who want to evacuate the areas around the Fukushima nuclear power plant. They also continue their advocacy work writing a series of ongoing editorials in the Japanese Buddhist newspapers. Before March 11, Rev.

Okochi was already supporting the dissemination of Helena Norberg-Hodge's film *The Economics of Happiness*, which points directly at the problems now facing Japanese society from years of following an exploitative, consumerist economy. At a showing of this movie in June at his alma mater Keio University, Rev. Okochi was struck by the political apathy to these issues, especially the nuclear one, by today's university students (although many of the "drop out" youth in Japan have been heavily involved in the nuclear protests). He feels that more than being apathetic, today's young "educated" Japanese seem ignorant of important social issues. They are so consumed by their own career paths and by the internet and other forms of social entertainment that they do not seem to have time for being concerned about social issues. It is to this ignorance, the root cause of all suffering as the Buddha taught, that Rev. Okochi has been spending his life addressing. Unwilling to stay ignorant to the second noble truth, he has been building a future in Japan that may hopefully be arriving sooner than expected.

Rev. Okochi presented his work at the 2009 INEB Conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and has since become active in the local JNEB group in Japan and the INEB Working Group on Environment and Climate Change.

Jonathan Watts
29 July 2011

A Conversation with the Dalai Lama

His Holiness on his reincarnation and his decision to step down as head of the Tibetan government

The sun is shining on Tsuglakhang temple, in the foothills of the Indian Himalayas, and hundreds of Tibetans have gathered in the courtyard for a feast. As Buddhist monks ladle out white rice and stewed vegetables, horns blow and cymbals crash. Such celebrations are common here—the monks often feed local villagers as an act of service to earn karmic merit—but the festive air seems to capture the mood of the man who lives next to the temple. The Dalai Lama, despite many heartfelt petitions by his constituents, has finally been granted his wish for official retirement from government duties.

The Tibetan Parliament had twice urged His Holiness to reconsider, but he had declined even to read a message from them or meet with legislators. His mind was made up. On May 29th, the papers were signed and the Tibetan charter amended. The act marks a remarkable and voluntary separation of church and state: For the first time in more than 350 years, the Dalai Lama is no longer the secular as well as the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people.

Although the Tibetan government-in-exile has been largely democratic for decades, the Dalai Lama still had the final say in every major political decision within the diaspora. He appointed foreign envoys, determined the scope and timing of negotiations with China, had the power to sign or veto bills and could even dismiss Parliament. Now, with his signature, his formal title has changed from “Head of Nation” to “Protector and Symbol of Tibet

and Tibetan People.” Many of his political responsibilities will rest on the shoulders of Lobsang Sangay, a 43-year-old Harvard legal scholar who was elected in April to the post of prime minister.

China, dismissing the transfer of power as a “trick,” has refused to meet with Sangay. The Communist government believes that the struggle for Tibetan autonomy will die with the Dalai Lama; all they have to do is wait him out. But by turning the reins of government over to the governed, His Holiness is banking on democracy’s ability to serve as an effective bulwark against Chinese oppression. At 76, he knows he won’t be around to steer the ship of state forever. Tibetans, he believes, must learn to steer it for themselves.

Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, was born in 1935, the son of a farmer in a small Tibetan village. In accordance with ancient tradition, the dreams and visions of high lamas and oracles eventually led a search party to the boy. At age two, he successfully identified people and possessions from his past life and was officially recognized as the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama. At four, he entered the capital of Lhasa and was named the spiritual leader of his people. At 15, he became head of state. In 1959, as tensions with the Chinese army reached a flash point, he fled to India, where he has led the Tibetan diaspora ever since.

Looking back over his 60 years of leadership, he has much to be proud of. He has established a successful and stable government in exile and stood firm against a brutal regime. As the first Dalai Lama to travel to the West, he has also extolled the virtues of nonviolence to millions, a lifelong effort that

earned him a Nobel Peace Prize. As the spiritual leader of Tibet, he remains the personification of his nation’s struggle.

I have known His Holiness since 1990, when I wrote *Kundun*, a movie about his childhood directed by Martin Scorsese. Since then, we have developed a lasting friendship. I continue to work as an activist for Tibetan autonomy and serve on the board of the International Campaign for Tibet. Every day I pray for Tenzin Gyatso’s long life.

When we meet on June 2nd in his reception area behind the busy main temple in the dusty Indian hill town of McLeod Ganj, he asks if he still looks as healthy as the last time we met. Yes, I tell him—even younger, if possible. But, I add, his eyes look older. “That’s right,” he says. He wishes to inform me, however, that he hasn’t needed to increase his eyeglass prescription—in part because he doesn’t use a computer. “I never even tried,” he says, breaking into his distinct, ebullient laugh. “I don’t know how!”

Let’s start by talking about the day, in 1950, when you became head of government in Tibet. You were only 15 and the Chinese had invaded your country.

It was a very, very difficult situation. When people asked me to take the responsibility, my reaction is, I am one who wants to follow the Dalai Lama traditions, which was to be enthroned at age 18. Age 15 is too early. Then they again asked me. Chamdo [a mountainous region in eastern Tibet] had already been taken over by the Chinese. There was a good deal of anxiety. So I took responsibility. When the Communist

Liberation Army reached Lhasa, my first act was to escape from Lhasa to the Indian border. So I think, bad omen or good omen? Almost my first act after I took responsibility is to escape from Lhasa! *[Laughs]*

So here we are 61 years later, and you've just retired as head of government. You have, in a real way, been preparing for this retirement—a separation of church and state—since you were a child. How was the seed first planted?

As a teenager, around 13 or 14, living in Lhasa, I had very intimate sort of contact with ordinary people. Mainly, the sweepers at the Potala Palace as well as at Norbulingka [the Dalai Lama's summer residence in Lhasa]. I always played with them and sometimes dined with them. I got the information from the servants as to what was really going on in Lhasa. I often heard of the injustices the people experienced. So I began to understand that our system—the power in the hands of a few people—that's wrong.

So soon after you took power, you decided you wanted to implement reform to the old system?

In 1952, I think, I set up a reform committee. I wanted to start some kind of change. But I faced a major reform obstacle—the Chinese officials wanted reform according to their own pattern, their own way, which they had already implemented in China proper. The Chinese felt that if Tibetan reform was initiated by Tibetans themselves, it might be a hindrance to their own way of reform. So it became difficult.

You traveled to China in 1954 and saw firsthand what Communist reform looked like. Was it what you had envisioned for Tibet?

I went to China as one of the members of the Tibetan delegation at the Congress of the People's Republic of China. The parliament in Peking was very disciplined! I noticed that all the members barely dared make a suggestion. They would make a point, but only little corrections in wording *[laughs]*. Nobody really discussed meaning.

Then, in 1956, I had the opportunity to come to India. And here, too, I had the opportunity to visit Indian Parliament. I found big contrast. In Indian Parliament, lots of noise. No discipline. This was a clear sign of complete freedom of expression. Indian parliamentarians, they love to criticize their government. So I realized, this is the meaning of democracy—freedom of speech. I was so impressed with the democratic system.

You liked the messiness and noise of democracy?

In 1959, when we decided to raise the Tibetan issue at the U.N., I asked Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru if he would sponsor our cause. He declined. He felt there was no use to raise Tibetan issue. He told me that America will not carry out war with China over Tibet. Later, I met with Nehru again, and I was a little bit anxious *[laughs]*. But when I met him, he was completely normal! I learned, yes—this is a leader practicing democracy. Disagreement is something normal.

In 1960, after I reached India, many Tibetans came to Bodh Gaya for my teaching. It was there we decided on a representative government—the first step for democratization. Since then, as refugees, we go step by step toward full democratization. In the past 10 years, I have continued acting like a senior adviser. I called mine a semiretired position. Since 2009, on many occasions, I expressed, "Now I'm looking forward to complete

retirement." This year, on March 10th, I officially stated that now the time has come for me to retire; I'm going to hand over all my political authority to the Tibetan administration.

Most people around the world are anxious to get rid of their leaders. But the Tibetans have been very reluctant to let you retire. Why?

Emotionally, spiritually, still they look up to me. After I announced my retirement, they requested that I should carry responsibilities as I have, continuously. I declined. Then they asked if I would consider at least carrying a title, like a ceremonial sort of head.

A ceremonial role? I don't like it. To be like the British sort of queen. Of course, I personally very much admire her. Wonderful. But the system? *[Laughs]* If you carry some sort of ceremonial head, then you should do something! Otherwise, I would just be a figurehead. A statement is written by someone, then I just read? I know the word—a puppet.

Only since the fifth Dalai Lama, 350 years ago, has the institution taken on real political responsibility. The early incarnations were only spiritual leaders. I always believe the rule by king or official leader is outdated. Now we must catch up with the modern world.

So now I have handed over my political authority to an elected government. I feel happy. They carry full responsibility. I want to be just a pure spiritual leader. But in case my services are needed, I am still available.

Do you also have personal reasons for retirement?

I always tell people that religious institutions and political institutions should be separate. So while I'm telling people this, I myself continue with them combined. Hypocrisy! *[Laughs]* So what I am telling others I must

implement for myself.

Also, a more selfish reason. Before the Dalai Lama became a political figure, there was almost no controversy. Since the fifth Dalai Lama, some controversy — because of the political aspect, not spiritual. Now, after my retirement, the institution of the Dalai Lama is more pure, more stable. I felt we must separate political responsibility. The Dalai Lama should not carry that burden. So that is my selfish reason — to protect the old Dalai Lama tradition. It is safer without political involvement.

I have full conviction that Tibetans can carry all their work. Therefore I voluntarily, proudly decide this four-century-old tradition should end.

That does not mean the Dalai Lama ends. The institution remains, as a spiritual role. And not only for my generation. If the Tibetan people want the institution to remain, it will remain continuously.

Does your retirement mean your long-term goals have changed?

The rest of my life, I am fully committed to these things: Promotion of religious harmony. Promotion of human values. Human happiness. Like that.

So you will keep up with your daily routines?

I know that every morning you say a prayer for all sentient beings. When you pray for us, what is it that you want for us? I often tell people that this century should be century of dialogue. Peace will not come from thought or from Buddha. Peace must be built by humans, through action. So that means, whenever we face problem—dialogue. That’s the only way. For that, we need inner disarmament. So our work should make a little contribution to materialize a peaceful, compassionate world later this century. That’s my wish. It will

not come immediately. But we have to make the effort. This moment, it looks only like an idea. But every corner must make the effort. Then there is possibility. Then, if we fail in spite of that effort, no regret.

It might surprise people to know that you really are what you say: a simple monk.

A few days ago, in this very room, the Tibetan political leadership came together to see me. They brought all the amendments to the charter [regarding his retirement]. They explained what was written, and then they asked me please to read it. I responded, “Oh, even if I read it all, I will not understand fully. So, it doesn’t matter.” I just asked them, “Where I should sign?” [Laughs]

That’s very dangerous!

That’s a sign of a simple Buddhist monk!

Do you worry that some people think your decision to retire is wrong?

Well, some Tibetans, particularly young Tibetans, are very critical.

Is that just fear? Or is it based on a legitimate concern for Tibet?

Some people think that these decisions are taken somewhat in a hurry. They don’t know, you see, that I take these ideas step by step over the last few decades.

The Dalai Lamas have long relied on the state oracles for advice. Did you ask the oracles to go into their prophetic trance and advise on your retirement?

I did. They fully support my decision. I know these oracles. I ask them as a sort of adviser. They have observed the last four or five centuries of the Dalai Lama’s experiences, so logically, as human beings, I felt they might feel a little bit uncomfortable

with the decision. But they said it’s very timely. The right decision.

So you feel good about your decision?

Oh, yes. The 19th of March, after I offered a more detailed explanation to the public about my retirement—that night, my sleep was extraordinarily sound. So it seems some relief.

Now we are completely changed from the theocracy of the past. Also, our decision is a real answer to the Chinese Communist accusation that the whole aim of our struggle is the restoration of the old system [in feudal Tibet]. Now they can’t make that accusation. I am often saying that the Chinese Communist Party should retire. Now I can tell them, “Do like me. Retire with grace.”

Why do the Chinese demonize you by calling you things like a “devil” or a “wolf in monk’s robes”? Is there a reason they speak about you in such archaic language?

Generally speaking, such sort of expressions are childish. Those officials who use those words, I think they want to show the Chinese government that the Dalai Lama is so bad. And I think also that they are hoping to reach the Tibetans. They want 100 percent negative. So they use these words. They actually disgrace themselves. I mean, childish! Very foolish! Nobody believes them.

Usually, with human beings, one part of the brain develops common sense. But with those Chinese leaders, particularly the hard-liners, that part of their brain is missing. When I met with President Obama last year, I told him, “You should make a little surgery. Put that part of brain into the Chinese.” [Laughs]

What do you think Tibet would be like today if you had been its

leader for all these years?

Some change, some reforms would have happened. But it would not be easy. There would be opposition from within Tibet. Some officials are more modern in their thinking. But there are also some who have an old way of thinking. And then with the Chinese “liberators,” of course, there is no freedom at all [*laughs*].

I really feel that the last 52 years is very sad. Refugees. And the worst thing is the destruction inside Tibet. Despite some construction, some economic progress, the whole picture is very, very sad.

But I have no regret. The last 52 years, because of India’s freedom, I really feel that I found the best opportunity to make my life meaningful, to make a contribution. If I had remained in Lhasa, even without the Chinese occupation, I would probably have carried the ceremonial role in some orthodox way.

When you were still a young man, the Nechung Oracle prophesied about you that “the wish-fulfilling jewel will shine in the West.” Was the oracle right?

I think it seems that there is some truth. We escaped in 1959 and reached India. To Tibetans, that itself was the West. Then from India, mainly Europe and also America is our West. I have done one thing that I think is a contribution: I helped Buddhist science and modern science combine. No other Buddhist has done that. Other lamas, I don’t think they ever pay attention to modern science. Since my childhood, I have a keen interest. As far as inner sciences [science of the mind] are concerned, modern science very young. In the meantime, science in external matters is highly developed. So we Buddhists should learn from that as well.

You have said that Tibet’s**survival will depend on China changing from within. Are you optimistic that will happen?**

When President Hu Jintao expresses that his main interest is the promotion of harmony, I fully support that. I express on many occasions that real harmony should come from the heart. For that, trust, respect and friendship are all essential. To create a more harmonious society, using force is wrong. After almost 10 years of Hu Jintao’s presidency, his aim is very good. But the method—relying more and more on force—is counterproductive.

The first important thing is transparency. I am saying that 1.3 billion Chinese people have the right to know the reality. Then 1.3 billion Chinese people also have the ability to judge what is right or what is wrong.

On several occasions, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has expressed that China needs political change. On some occasions, he even mentioned democracy. And around Chinese intellectuals and artists, more and more say they want political change, more freedom. So therefore, it is bound to change. How long it will take, nobody knows. Five years, 10 years, 15 years. It’s been now 52 years. In the next 50 years, I think it is almost certain things will change. Whether I live the next 50 years, or whether I don’t.

If you had President Hu Jintao’s ear and could suggest how to deal with Tibet, what would you ask him to do?

I don’t know. I think it’s not much use to discuss such things [*laughs*].

Has there been any moment since 1959 when you thought the Chinese would leave Tibet?

Oh, yes. The 10th of March, 1959—the very day of the Tibetan uprising. I remember very clearly, there were a lot of Lhasa people who came to Norbulingka and

blocked all the doors. They were shouting, “You should not go to the Chinese military camp!”

So Tibetans were afraid that an invitation from the Chinese at this tense time was a trick to imprison or assassinate you?

Yes. That day, the sun was very bright. I expressed to Mr. Phala, the Tibetan Lord Chamberlain, “Maybe this day, maybe this is a turning point in history.”

“Turning” does not mean “hopeless.” In spite of some difficulties, you see a long tunnel—at the end there is light. That feeling has sustained our determination.

I understand you’re going to meet with a group of Tibetan spiritual leaders in November to discuss your succession. What issues will be on the table?

On the last few occasions when we get religious leaders together, I raised this issue. Chinese Communists are very much concerned about my reincarnation! [*Laughs*] So we need to discuss.

The concrete decisions are not yet finalized. One thing is quite sure. After all, the Dalai Lama reincarnation means my reincarnation, my rebirth. So logically, this is a matter of my decision. No one else—even spiritual leaders. My next life is entirely up to me.

But the Chinese government says they get to decide on all reincarnations, including yours.

This is quite controversial. The Communists are not only nonbelievers, but they also consider Tibetan Buddhism poisonous. So they deliberately try to minimize Tibetan Buddhism. Should people who try to minimize or eliminate Tibetan Buddhism interfere about rebirth? It’s quite strange, really. Quite funny. They are only thinking about political power

in Lhasa. That's silly. I think it is better for them to remain completely neutral. Or it would be more logical for the Chinese to say, "There should not be any reincarnation."

Does it bother you that people speak so much about your death?

No, not at all. In Newark last month, a French journalist raised the issue. I took off my glasses and ask him, "According to your judgment of my face, the reincarnation question is rather a hurry or not?" And he said, "No hurry!" [Laughs]

Do you find yourself leaning toward a more traditional method of selecting the next Dalai Lama — your reincarnation — similar to the way you were discovered?

At this moment, I feel I can wait another 10 years, 15 years, 20 years. Then we'll see the situation. If the Tibetan people still want to keep this institution, and want to follow the traditional way, then they will use past experience: a search for a young boy who has some special significance.

As far as where the boy is born, that I have made clear. If I die as a refugee, one still carrying the Tibetan struggle, then the reincarnation logically must be found outside of Tibet. The very purpose of reincarnation is to carry on the work started in the previous life. So logically, if the previous person dies outside of Tibet as a refugee, the reincarnation must be found that way. Otherwise, it creates more trouble.

Can you foresee the challenges your successor, the 15th Dalai Lama, might face?

By my resignation, I already made the role separate from the political world. So it will be much safer for the next Dalai Lama. Now, if the 15th Dalai Lama is

not fit to be head of government, no problem. Whatever he can do as a spiritual leader, he can do. Not very smart? OK! [Laughs]

Some traditions of Tibetan Buddhism suggest that a boy born before the death of a high lama could actually be his reincarnation. Do you believe that the 15th Dalai Lama could already be alive today?

It is possible. At least two modern lamas before their death said, "This boy who already is alive is my reincarnation." If it fits, after some investigation, then it is possible.

If in fact this boy is alive today, would you take part in his training?

If I'm too old, then I don't know! [Laughs]

You've been keeping a close watch on the uprisings in the Middle East. Do you think that the Arab Spring movement could have implications for Tibet?

That's difficult to say. Authoritarian systems are the same around the world. But in China, economic development really brings some benefit to large number of Chinese people. That is the difference.

Immediately after the crisis in Tunisia and Egypt, there was some sort of impact in the minds of young Chinese intellectuals. So the Chinese government has become very, very nervous. They see danger from within. But the Chinese authoritarian system is quite tight. Their domestic-security budget is more than their budget for national defense.

Many people believe that the coming generation of leadership in China—because of their young age, because of the Internet, because of large number of Chinese students studying abroad—that their knowledge about the out-

side world is much better. I think definitely things will change. Definitely. That is our view. And also many Chinese have that view.

Do you remember where you were the moment you heard that Osama bin Laden had been killed? What was your reaction?

Long Beach, California. I felt, of course, sad. Then, not that simple. Very complex.

Since my childhood, I feel very bad about the death sentence. In 1945 or 1946, when I was 10 years old, they hanged German leaders at the Nuremberg war-crime trials. I saw pictures in Life magazine. I felt very sad. Then some Japanese leaders also. These people were already defeated. Killing them was not as a sort of a precaution, but simply revenge.

Then when Saddam Hussein hanged, I saw the picture. Very sad. No longer a threat. Old, defeated person. Give mercy rather than kill, I really think.

So the same thinking with bin Laden, also a defeated person. Since the tragedy of September 11th, I express that if handling this problem goes wrong, then today one bin Laden, after some time, 10 bin Ladens, then 100 bin Ladens could be possible. On September 12th, I wrote a letter to President Bush, since I had developed close friendship with him. I expressed my condolences, sadness. Meantime, I also express that handling this problem, I hope nonviolent.

Of course, I know thousands of Americans were killed. Unexpected, in peaceful times. Really, very bad. I know. I can feel what they are feeling. So ordinary person, in the name of justice and also some kind of feeling of revenge, they feel very happy to some extent [about bin Laden]. Another way to look at it, a defeated person has been killed.

The best way to solve these problems is in the spirit of recon-

ciliation. Talk. Listen. And discuss. That's the only way.

Does evil exist in the world?

The seed of evil, from my viewpoint, is hate. On that level, we can say that everyone has that seed. As far as sort of potential of murder is concerned, every person has that potential. Hatred. Anger. Suspicion. These are the potentials of negative acts.

There is also the potential for mercy. Forgiveness. Tolerance. These also, everyone has this potential.

Evil means that the negative potential has become manifest. The positive remains dormant. Those people who actually love hatred, who deliberately always practice anger, hatred—that's evil.

Have you ever felt betrayed personally?

In 1954 and 1955, for at least six months, I lived in Peking. During that period, I met on a number of occasions with Chairman Mao. At first, I was very much nervous. Then—after the second time, third time, fourth time, I can't remember how many times—I develop real admiration for him. I really found him as a great revolutionary. No question. Very straightforward. And his personal behavior—very gentle, like an old farmer's father. Like that. Very simple.

He promised many things. On one occasion, Chairman Mao pointed to two generals who were stationed in Lhasa. Mao said, "I send these generals in order to help you. So if these generals not listen to your wish, then let me know. I will withdraw them."

Then, at my last meeting, at the last moment, he mentioned, "Religion is poison."

At that time, he advised me how to listen, how to collect different views, different suggestions, and then how to lead. Really wonderful sort of advice. He asked me to send telegrams on a

personal level, direct to him.

So I return to Tibet full of conviction. On the road, I meet a Chinese general coming from Lhasa. I told him, "Last year, when I traveled this road, I was full of anxiety, suspicion. Now I'm returning, full of confidence and hope." That was the summer of 1955.

Then, in 1956, there were problems in the eastern part of Tibet under Chinese jurisdiction. So I come to India. Month by month, things become more serious. More trouble. So after I return from India, I wrote at least two letters to Chairman Mao about the situation. No reply. No response. Then I felt, "Oh, his promise is just words."

There are murals in the Potala that depict important moments and people in the lives of past Dalai Lamas. Your life has been so different from the previous Dalai Lamas. Who and what do you imagine might be depicted in a mural of your life?

Ahh, I don't know. Of course, my mother at a young age. Then, my tutor. I never thought about this. That's up to other people.

The important thing is that my daily life should be something useful to others. As soon as I wake up in the morning, I shape my mind. The rest of the day, my body, speech, mind are dedicated to others. That is compulsory as a practitioner, and also that way I gain some kind of inner strength. If I am concerned about my own sort of legacy, a genuine Buddhist practitioner should not think that. If you're concerned much about your legacy, then your work will not become sincere. You are mainly thinking of your own good name. Selfish. Not good. Spoiled.

Do you believe the day will come when you will be allowed to return to Tibet?

The Tibet issue is not an issue about the Dalai Lama. It is about six million Tibetans and

their culture. So unless the Chinese government addresses the real issues, talks about my return to Tibet are irrelevant. This is an issue of six million Tibetan people. I am one of them. So naturally, like every Tibetan, I also have the responsibility to serve.

When your time comes, will you be buried at the Potala?

Most probably, if change comes and it is time to return to Tibet, my body will be preserved there. But it doesn't matter. If the airplane I'm on crashes, then finished! Follow bin Laden! [Laughs]

You have said that Chenrezig — the Buddha of Compassion, of whom all Dalai Lamas are reincarnations — had a master plan for the first and fifth Dalai Lamas. Do you think that the past 50 years of Tibetan history is also part of his master plan?

That I don't know. In the early Sixties, before the Cultural Revolution, I met Chenrezig in one of my dreams at the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa. There is a very famous statue of Chenrezig there. In the dream, I enter that room and the statue of Chenrezig is winking and asking me to come closer. And I am very moved. I go and embrace him. Then he starts one sentence, one verse. The meaning is: Keep persevering. The continuation of effort in spite of any obstacle. You should carry all your work in spite of difficulties and obstacles.

At that time, I feel happy. But now, when I think of that, I think that was advice from Chenrezig: "Your life will not be easy. Some difficulties. Quite long period. But no reason to feel discouraged."

Melissa Mathison
21 July 2011

This is from the 4 August 2011 issue of Rolling Stone.

Why the 28th Niwano Peace Prize is Being Awarded to Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa

The Niwano Peace Prize Committee has decided to award the 28th Niwano Peace Prize to Sulak Sivaraksa. He is a remarkable and multifaceted Buddhist leader whose work for peace has been marked, over many decades, by the courage, determination, imagination, and the constant inspiration that are core principles of his Buddhist faith.

First let me review briefly the selection process for the 28th Niwano Peace Prize.

First, recommendations were solicited from about 620 individuals around the world. The invited nominators are religious leaders, scholars, peace activists and well recognized intellectuals in 125 different countries. Their recommendations, together with nominations from members of the Niwano Peace Prize Committee, resulted in 43 eligible nominees for the 28th prize. The Niwano Peace Prize secretariat screened these nominations and together with the Committee selected 17 for further screening. After much thoughtful reflection and exchange, and discussion at our Committee Meeting in October 2010, from among these worthy candidates, Sulak Sivaraksa was selected to receive the 28th Niwano Peace Prize.

Now let me comment on Sulak Sivaraksa and the qualities that led the Committee to select him.

Sulak is an example, in his life of dedication to peace and justice, to the principles of the Niwano Peace Prize. He has used his insights, his courage, and his persistent action, to change the views of political leaders, scholars, and young people, in Thailand, Asia, and the world. He encourages a new

understanding of peace, democracy, and development. He challenges accepted approaches that fail to give priority to poor citizens, men and women alike. He has, over a lifetime of dedicated service and unflagging commitment, given new life to ancient Buddhist teachings about non-violence and about peace and justice.

Sulak Sivaraksa was born in 1933 in Siam (as he prefers to call his country), to a family of Chinese ancestry. His education was in Thailand, England, and Wales, in law and other disciplines. He returned to Bangkok in 1961. Over his long career he has used his intellectual gifts to propel the concept and movement of Engaged Buddhism.

Sulak is truly a teacher. It is a mark of Sulak's approach that he has nurtured and supported younger leaders over the years. Many today are leaders of a wide range of organizations. He is also a scholar, publisher, and founder of many organizations. He has authored over a hundred books and monographs, in Thai and English. He promotes a spiritual education movement grounded in traditional culture and values.

Sulak never hesitates to speak truth to those in power, and he has always been an activist. To serve society truly, Sulak contends, one must stay in touch with poor people and the grass roots. Working to bring about change has embroiled him in many controversial issues. He approaches advocacy with a combination of knowledge, courage, and absolute commitment to nonviolence. He is widely credited with having mobilized Thai civil society, creating many social welfare and development organizations. All embody two

central themes of his work: rejection of consumerist development, and pursuit of development rooted in indigenous culture and socially-engaged religious traditions and beliefs. His organizations reflect an indigenous, sustainable, and spiritual model for change. Today, these organizations are active far beyond Thailand.

Sulak combines his insights into politics and spirituality. He appreciates that political and institutional change are needed to achieve peace and justice. Well aware that politics is important for Buddhism, he nonetheless has never strayed from the central role of spirituality. He has been in jail many times, due to his critical approach to numerous political and social issues and protests.

Sulak's intelligent advocacy for the environment is another important reason we choose to honor him. He speaks forcefully against environmental destruction, promoting environmental preservation and environmental justice. *Sekhiyadhamma* (Students of the Dhamma), a network of Buddhist monks, works in their communities to preserve local environments, principally forests that are so essential to village economies. Characteristic of Sulak's approach, the work combines education, teaching villagers better ways to conserve natural resources, and political action to protect local social, cultural, and natural environments from the encroachment of commercial, industrial, and urban development. Sulak's environmental ethics is grounded in a holistic understanding of the Buddhist principle of interdependence and a deep respect for nature. Knowledge of inter-be-

coming (a term he borrows from Thich Nhat Hanh), is achieved by developing mindful awareness. In contrast to more reflective and contemplative styles, he aggressively fights in the trenches for the cause of human and environmental justice.

Sulak uses the principles and practices of Buddhism as a personal and political resource. His life shows that the interior life of spiritual contemplation, and the exterior life of political action, need not be seen as opposites or hostile to each other. On the contrary, each can be used to illuminate and inform and encourage the other. He is a living example of simplicity, loving kindness, and compassion. Selflessness is at the heart of Sulak's universal vision.

Sulak extends the Buddhist Five Precepts into ethical guidelines that can forge a more sustainable, compassionate, and just global society. To refrain from killing today means an end to all modern forms of violence. To

refrain from stealing is a call for global economic justice. Not engaging in sexual misconduct calls us to examine all systems of male dominance which exploit women. Prohibiting false speech is a call for honesty at the international level. Avoiding intoxication is a call for global responsibility for drug and alcohol use and an examination of its causes. In Sulak's Buddhist vision of society, the individual is understood as a starting point for change: through individual spiritual growth, social justice is eventually achieved.

Sulak is a leading voice in global inter-religious dialogue and engagement, an acknowledged global leader for peace. Sulak always argues that interdependence is an essential, living concept. His is a voice of reason and ethics, speaking truth to power and highlighting tangible issues that touch on human dignity. He was one of the early leaders who brought the ethical challenges of caring for the envi-

ronment into global discourse. His voice carries far and has influenced thinking at many levels. This is reflected in admiration and recognition of his work, including the 1995 award of the Right Livelihood Award, also known as the alternative Nobel Prize.

For Sulak, Buddhism is a questioning process: question everything, including oneself, look deeply, and then act from that insight. He is among a handful of leaders world-wide working to revive the socially engaged aspects of spirituality. Whatever he does, however he does it, at the core of his work is a mission to build a new leadership for change at all levels, within his country and beyond. That is the essence of the spirit of the Niwano Peace Prize.

Katherine Marshall,
Chairman,
Niwano Peace Prize Committee
Kyoto, July 23, 2011



Twenty-Eighth Niwano Peace Prize Presentation Ceremony Address

I would like to offer my sincere expression of gratitude to the many distinguished guests present here today for attending the Twenty-eighth Niwano Peace Prize presentation ceremony.

The Niwano Peace Foundation is greatly honored to present this year's Niwano Peace Prize to the lay Buddhist leader the Venerable Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand, who is one of the founders of INEB, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists.

This year's ceremony was originally scheduled for May 19 in Tokyo. Taking into consideration the lingering affects of the Eastern Japan Earthquake of

March 11, we decided to postpone until today and to move the venue to Kyoto.

Despite the unusual circumstances of the earthquake and the subsequent postponement of the event, this year's recipient, Ven.Sulak, and all of you have come in large numbers to attend today's ceremony.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.

Many of you are well acquainted with Venerable Sulak, and know of his sharp intellect and great passion, as well as his dynamic energy. I often participate in the programs of the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP), and have

seen him from time to time at WCRP's international conferences. During the discussion period, he always speaks from the standpoint of the impoverished. as he advocates for the importance of religious leaders taking an active role in social planning. For many years, his advocacy, rooted in religious practice, has continued to provide valuable suggestions to the world's religious leaders.

Ven.Sulak takes action not only as a lay Buddhist leader, but also as a lawyer, teacher, scholar, author, and activist. He is extremely versatile in many fields including religion, culture, education, environmentalism, and so-

cial justice and public welfare.

In 1989, Ven.Sulak and a Japanese Nichiren priest named Teruo Maruyama put forth the proposal to establish the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) in Thailand.

With the goal of realizing a peaceful society with justice grounded in Buddhist principles, INEB is undertaking staff training, publishing, and network building among Buddhists who are actively engaged in policy planning regarding peace, human rights, and the environment.

Unfortunately, I must make a very sad announcement. Teruo Maruyama, one of the cofounders of INEB, passed away on June 13. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep respect for his many great achievements, and my heartfelt prayer that he may rest in peace.

I would now like to describe some of Ven.Sulak's current activities, which cover a broad range of fields. However, I have noticed a common theme running through them all—a fundamental inquiry into what it truly means to be rich.

After the Second World War, Asian countries followed the model of the advanced nations of the West and set their course on rapid economic expansion. Japan has been a prime example of this.

On the one hand, this path satisfies people's material desires, but on the other, it has spawned several serious problems, including an ever-widening gap in wealth distribution, destruction of the natural environment, and spiritual decay.

Ven.Sulak sounded a warning when he said, "We cannot realize the true development of human society as long as people are forced to live in poverty."

He has also given us the following invaluable advice:



"First, we must critically open our eyes to Western models of development, which encourage violence, capitalism, materialism, and centralization."

"Second, we must open our eyes to the value of our own cultural roots. In other words, we should show respect to the culture indigenous to our ancestors and our region by ensuring that traditional values are relevantly applied to the present-day and into the future."

On the international level, he advocates that, "We should encourage Westerners to pay more attention to their own spiritual development. In other words, when individuals change, they bring about social change, and in order to make that happen, they need to realize inner peace."

He has also noted that "For Buddhism to be more effective today, it must be relevant to modern industrial society, and be capable of adapting to problems on the global scale."

Ven.Sulak is the embodiment of the phrase "think globally, act

locally." With his rare intellect, he correctly perceives global problems, and is clearly showing the people of Asia the path to pursue from now on.

Buddhism is the essence of his principles and practical methods. Ven.Sulak is highly esteemed as an activist, of course, but above all else, he is known as a true "seeker of the Way."

While Ven.Sulak's numerous suggestions are primarily directed toward the people of Thailand, they are certainly applicable to Japan as well.

In the sixty years since World War II ended, Japan has evolved into one of the world's handful of economic powerhouses. In the process, though, many basic things have been forgotten as people have become obsessed with consumerism and materialism. A number of problems have become plainly evident.

And now, Japan has suffered an earthquake and tsunami that occurs only once in 500 years, or perhaps only once in 1,000 years.

Even in Tokyo, which is not directly in the devastated region, shortages of electric power and certain necessities are continuing to cause some anxiety.

On the other hand, some changes have become evident that we should pay attention to. Walking on streets dimly lit due to reductions in electric power, many people have realized that up until now, making nighttime so light was not normal. New customs are being born from conserving energy. For instance, people are cutting back on going out to eat. More people are packing their own lunches and eating at home in the evening, which in turn provides a good opportunity to reevaluate the importance of one's family and immediate neighborhood.

I think that the recent disaster has once again called upon me, as a citizen of Japan, to return to basics and reassess the right way to live.

And while it may seem ironic, due to this large-scale disaster, we Japanese may be regaining our humanity, little

by little.

From long ago, we Japanese have valued a lifestyle of helping one another and sharing, leading simple lives aimed at securing basic needs and reducing waste.

In ancient times, Japan was given the name "Yamato", which literally means "great peace" or "great harmony". A timeless, unchanging spirit of peace was thus the national ideal of our ancestors.

As I mentioned earlier, Ven. Sulak has indicated that we should open our eyes to the value of our cultural roots and adapt them to the present and the future, which I believe is one of the most important missions we have today.

No matter how materially wealthy we become, if we do not know how to be satisfied with what we have, then we will be driven by the feeling of always wanting more, and we will never find peace of mind. For me, this is further confirmation that the first step toward being truly "rich" is for each and every one of us to be grateful for what we

are now receiving and allowing the spirit of "wanting less and knowing how much is enough" to take root in our hearts and minds.

Four months have now passed since the Eastern Japan Earthquake. I believe it is extremely significant that, at a time in which Japanese are reevaluating the basics of daily life, Ven Sulak has come here to Japan to be honored at this presentation ceremony for the Niwano Peace Prize. At the commemorative lecture that will follow, I hope to learn more from him.

I would like to conclude by making today's presentation ceremony the opportunity to express my hope that more people will share in the wish and activities of Ven Sulak, and to offer my heartfelt prayers that his important work will meet with even greater success.

Thank you very much.

Nichiko Niwano
President, Risho Kosei-kai



Commemorative Address at the Niwano Peace Ceremony

When a tree falls, it makes a thunderous sound. But who listens to trees as they grow?

In the same way, we are bombarded by news of war, environmental destruction, market exploitation, income inequality, and most profoundly the recent earthquakes, tsunami, and ongoing nuclear disaster in Japan. When we hear news about actions for peace, freedom, and justice, we somehow feel threatened by it, as though our world is already the best of all possible worlds.



Notwithstanding our fear of change, peace movements continue to grow quietly, continuing the legacy of Gandhi's *satyagraha* (truth power) and *ahimsa* (nonviolence). The Sloth Club here in Japan is one example. They embrace the practice of Slow Is Beautiful in the spirit of E. F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful*—Buddhist Economics "as if people matter." Schumacher (whose centenary is this year) brought forth his book forty years ago, yet mainstream economists still act as though

unlimited growth is desirable and possible.

While engaging Buddhist principles, Mr. Nikkyo Niwano worked for world peace long before the era of Fritz Schumacher. Mr. Niwano manifested peace through both his words and his deeds, with the steadiness of a tree growing tall and strong. Rissho Kosei-Kai is an outstanding lay Buddhist organization, known throughout the world for uplifting individuals and societies. Mr. Niwano also helped create the World Conference on Religion and Peace and the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace, and both continue to play a vital role in promoting peace through interreligious cooperation and dialogue.

Mr. Inazo Nitobe is another leading Japanese man who dedicated his life to world peace confronting The Powers That Be. Although I never met him (he passed away the year I was born), I knew his disciple Mr. Shigeharu Matsumoto and his wife very well. Matsumoto-san established the International House of Japan to promote cultural exchange and intellectual cooperation between the peoples of Japan and those of other countries. As a socially engaged Buddhist and cofounder of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, I feel honored to stand in the shadow of these great figures. However, I feel that our movement should not be directly involved in politics, but should work on the spiritual level to benefit all members of the movement.

We need to be culturally sensitive, politically concerned, and socially committed and have the courage to tackle questions of the common good and to point out situations of abuse. To be able to

see clearly, to be truly aware of the state of the world, we must begin by deprogramming ourselves and be free of prejudice toward those we criticize. Working together with others of good will, we can identify and confront abuses of power. It is critical for people of all faiths and ideologies, as well as atheists and agnostics, to listen to each other as we promote justice and balance through nonviolent means. And we must uphold equality in all situations. It helps to stay in touch with the poor and oppressed.

To continue the work, we need to inspire the younger generation. We must help them develop freedom, self-reliance, contentedness, compassion, and generosity, to learn to collaborate rather than compete and to appreciate quality rather than excess. And the younger generation needs accurate information, not just the propaganda of governments and media. The present financial crisis is an opening for us to encourage these essential values.

For our children to realize their potential and come forth as leaders of their generation, we ourselves must be good models. We must be *homo sapiens*, not *homo hypocriticus* or *homo oeconomicus*. We must see through neoliberal economics and free market fundamentalism. Today in Greece, austerity measures, which means privatizing the commons, are being implemented, not for the benefit of the people, but for the super rich to own even more. We must help the next generations develop the critical thinking we have lacked and the capacity for reflection taught by the Buddha to build a sustainable future. We must confront our own greed, hatred, and delusion and transform our

societies into models of justice and peace.

Buddhist meditation teaches proper breathing as the most important element of life. When we learn to breathe in and out mindfully, greed, hatred, and delusion naturally transform into generosity, compassion, and wisdom. We are all connected to one another and we can learn to breathe from that place.

Throughout the ages, nature has caused a lot of suffering, but today natural disasters are exacerbated by the arrogance of industrialists and scientists. We must respect nature and not regard other living beings as resources to be exploited. Technological developments are not always in our best interest, as seen so clearly with the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, and we must learn to discern what advances to accept and apply, and which ones to monitor closely or discard.

With humility and caring, not just for ourselves but for the next seven generations, we can bring about an era of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*. We can learn from Gandhi, Prince Shotoku, and even Emperor Ashoka. Gross National Product was once the universal measurement of economic well being. Today, Gross National Happiness is gaining wider acceptance, with Bhutan, Ladakh, and Kerala leading the way.

Although the economic theory of unlimited growth and nonstop accumulation of capital continues to dominate the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, and nearly every government, in recent years, there have been high-profile defections. Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz, Jeffery Sachs, and others have expressed

their recognition that mainstream economics, if left unchecked, will destroy the world and its peoples. Last year the organizers of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, invited Matthieu Ricard, a French Buddhist monk, to deliver a keynote address on Gross National Happiness. Let us hope this was more than a public relations stunt by the rich and powerful. A think tank at Schumacher College has joined with the New Economic Foundation in London to propagate the idea that Buddhist economics be taught at the university level. The University of Pennsylvania is considering including Gross National Happiness in its masters' curriculum. Chulalongkorn University and the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation in Bangkok collaborate with Bhutan Studies Centre in Timphu established a School of Wellbeing with much concern on Gross National Happiness.

The Powers That Be will not give up their privileges voluntarily. They will defend them to the bitter end. Violent structures will not crumble by themselves. They need to be pushed—nonviolently. The way forward requires refraining from violence, even as a means to an end. The U.S. in its perpetration of violence in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and elsewhere; China in Tibet and Xinjiang; the military dictatorship in Burma; and other perpetrators of violence are on the wrong side of history. Like Aceh, the three southernmost provinces of the Thai kingdom must be granted a greater degree of self-rule. There is no other way to bring this about except through nonviolence.

Mahatma Gandhi employed *satyagraha* to expose the lies of the British empire. China and many other countries still de-



ceive their people, but the deceitfulness of the ruling classes cannot last forever. Although the mass media as a whole brainwashes us to be addicted to capitalism and consumerism, new technologies offer opportunities for new sources of information, and a world beyond capitalism is possible.

Although he came to power through armed struggle, Fidel Castro now condemns mindless violence and has stated that he prefers nonviolence. Despite decades of American terrorism against Cuba, Castro still sees the American people as friends of Cuba and sees young Americans tilt toward nonviolence as a move in the right direction.

Former president José Ramos-Horta of Timor Leste also upholds the virtue of nonviolence and forgiveness. He is willing to forgive and even cooperate with Indonesia despite the latter's bloody invasion and occupation of his country. He is inspired by Nelson Mandela, who was ready to forgive the crimes of apartheid. Former president of Indonesia Abdurrahman Wahid declared that Gandhi

was his role model.

The politics in Cambodia, as in many other countries, are full of violence and deceitfulness. But the Dhammayatra movement, founded by the late Maha Ghosananda, a Cambodian Buddhist monk and Niwano Peace Prize laureate, is a vital and influential force in his country. We can also refer to the Saffron Revolution in Burma when Buddhist monks struggled for democracy and responded to the military dictatorship's counter-revolutionary brutality with deep meditation and prayers. Likewise in Tibet, monks have nonviolently resisted the Chinese occupation for more than five decades, and the Dalai Lama recently embarked on a path to democratize Tibet nonviolently.

In the academic world, many books have followed along the trail blazed by Schumacher's Buddhist economics, such as Glenn Paige's *Nonkilling Global Political Science* and David Loy's *A Buddhist History of the West: Studies in Lack*—not to mention the works of the Mind and Life Institute under the guidance of the Dalai Lama to shed

light on the common insights of science and spirituality.

Globalization, the latest phase of capitalism, is a facade of neo-imperialism. More than ever we need self-rule—beginning with personal transformation—and the creation of a new collective subject. To bring this about requires, first of all, internal spiritual change. If we are able to transform greed into generosity, hatred into loving kindness, and delusion into wisdom, we have self-rule. Peace in the world requires the cultivation of seeds of peace within. As the Dalai Lama points out, this is difficult but it is the only way to achieve world peace.

I would like to end my commemorative address with a quote from the Dalai Lama's *Toward Compassion and Equality*:

Peace and survival of life on earth as we know it are threatened by human activities that lack a commitment to humanitarian values. Destruction of nature and national resources

results from ignorance, greed and lack of respect for the earth's living things. This lack of respect extends even to the earth's human descendants, the future generations who will inherit a vastly degraded planet if world peace doesn't become a reality and if destruction of the natural environment continues at the present rate.

Our ancestors viewed the earth as rich and bountiful, which it is. Many people in the past also saw nature as inexhaustibly sustainable, which we now know is the case only if we care for it. It is not difficult to forgive destruction in the past that resulted from ignorance. Today, however, we have access to more information. It is essential that we re-examine ethically what we have inherited, what we are responsible for, and what we will pass on to coming generations.

Clearly this is a pivotal generation. Global communication is possible, yet confrontations take place more often than meaningful dialogues for peace. Our marvels of science and technology are matched, if not outweighed, by many current tragedies, including human starvation in some parts of the world and extinction of other life forms. Exploration of outer space takes place at the same time the earth's own oceans, seas and freshwater areas grow increasingly polluted, and their life forms are still largely unknown or misunderstood. Many of the earth's habitats, animals, plants, insects and even microorganisms that we know as rare may not be known at all by future generations. We have the capability and the responsibility. We must act before it is too late.

Sulak Sivaraksa
delivered at Kyoto
23 July 2011



Lese Majeste

A group of writers has recently petitioned the government for the modification of Article 112 of the criminal code. As someone who had been charged with lese majeste before perhaps you are in a good position to comment on this issue. What are your thoughts on this matter?

SS: Yes, you can say that I've had the privilege of being charged with lese majeste for three times. The first time happened in 1984 and involved

General Arthit [Kamlangek]. It was in the context of the rivalry between Arthit and General Prem [Tinsulanonda]. Arthit wanted to depose Prem when the latter was both physically and politically weak. In any case, my book was still at the printing house, and they came to arrest me there on the charge of lese majeste.

The lesson of this story is that politicians would attempt to reap the most personal benefit out of the Article.

The second time was due to

General Suchinda Kraprayoon of the National Peace-Keeping Council (NPKC). It concerned a speech that I gave at Thammasat University in which I pointed to how bad the first six months under the NPKC were. I claimed that General Suchinda's action constituted an act of lese majeste because it violated the Constitution, which was signed by the King. He retaliated by charging me with lese majeste, forcing me to flee the country in exile.

As for the latest incident, it

was due to Thaksin Shinawatra. I faced three lese majeste complaints, concerning *Same Sky* magazine and my speech at Khon Khaen University. The authorities came with an arrest warrant to my house, and I had to travel to Khon Khaen. It was 2am before I was out on a bail. Subsequently, I had to travel to Khon Khaen every month [to report to the authority]. Abhisit [Vejjajiva] telephoned me and said that he would do his best to help clear the cases. But in the end he didn't do a thing.

Wasn't Article 112 essentially designed to protect the monarchy?

SS: Article 112 states, "Whoever defames, insults, or threatens the King, the Queen, the Heir-apparent or the Regent shall be punished with 3-15 years imprisonment." Here "protecting" means that "respect" must be paid to him or her. But in reality the anti-defamation laws should already suffice—no special law is necessary.

The special law was the product of the military dictatorship. During the time of absolute monarchy, the punishment for lese majeste was up to three years imprisonment. During the (Field Marshal) Sarit (Thanarat) dictatorship, it was increased to be up to seven years. In 1976 during the Thanin Kraivixien premiership the punishment was 3-15 years imprisonment. At least three years imprisonment was unprecedented! This also means that there will be no suspension of the punishment because the suspension only works for crimes that face up to 2 years imprisonment.

In other words, one has to go straight to prison. The military removed Thanin from power a long time ago, but the draconian law is still with us.

Why? Because the Article is useful for politicians to attack their opponents. The Article is not useful for the King. The King is well aware of this fact. Remember one of his royal addresses on the eve of his birthday several years ago? He stated clearly that filing a lese majeste complaint is tantamount to mistreating the King and offending the monarchy. Everybody says that they are his loyal subjects. But no one takes the King's warning seriously.

During the Chuan Leekpai premiership, Sanan (Kachornprasart) served as the minister of interior. He told me that the King had even requested him to tell the police not to imprison anyone involved in a lese majeste case. But the King's request fell on deaf ears because the police are like a state within a state. For instance, the last time I was arrested the police were on Thaksin's side; they were not with the government.

...It is clear that every political party wants the country to be a democracy with the monarch as the head of state. But none of them cared to elaborate on what role the King or monarchy should play in this kind of democracy. What does it mean to have a head of state who is a monarch that is governed and bound by the constitution? Should we use Japan as our model? The Japanese monarch is merely a titular ruler with little if any powers.

Or should we refer to the

British model? In England, the Crown still owns a lot of property. But the Crown must pay taxes too. Also, the Queen's royal addresses to the public are drafted by the government. Even the Queen's annual speech at the State Opening of Parliament is drafted by the government. And so on. Do we want our monarch to play this kind of role?

An important issue is whether or not the monarch is considered to be divine or sacred; that is, above ordinary human beings. King Chulalongkorn abolished the practices of crawling, prostrating, etc. before the monarch. He considered them to be backward and uncivilized as well as in violation of the spirit of equality. He didn't want the country to look 'barbaric' in the eyes of Westerners....

How then did we regress to the way things were before?

SS: The simple answer is Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat. When he came to power through a military coup d'état in 1957 and threw away the constitution, he needed something to help sustain his legitimacy. Aided by his chief propagandist Luang Wichit Wattakarn, Sarit resorted to the protection of the monarchy and religion as his primary source of legitimacy....

There have been several appeals to modify Article 112. There was one or two years ago signed by a number of internationally prominent academics and intellectuals such as Noam Chomsky.

SS: Yes, they sent their appeal. But Abhisit did not do

anything. He established a commission led by the permanent secretary of the ministry of justice. But the commission also did not do anything. My case was terminated when this commission convened a meeting after the King had expressed his wish not to pursue further legal actions. The commission is merely a rubber stamp.

The problem is that no one wants to confront the truth in Thai society. The problem can only be solved when you are not afraid of the truth. Khun Anand (Panyarachun) is a very nice person. He recently appeared on a television show. He was very diplomatic in his remarks and comments. He did not touch on the truth at all. He said that modifying Article 112 is a little too radical, too “red”—because from allowing anyone to lodge a lese majeste complaint it would make no one able to do so. No one will be able to protect the King. He did not care to tell us who should be in the position to do so.

Does this mean that someone or a group of people should be given this task?

SS: We have several choices or candidates here. The commissions led by Khun Anand, Ajarn Prawase (Wasi) and Khun Kanit (na Nakorn) are still around. Pick one. Let’s say we want Khun Kanit’s commission to do this job. It is mostly made up of lawyers or legal experts. The government can issue a decree stating that any lese majeste complaint must first be evaluated by this commission. The commission will then decide whether or not to pursue legal

action. But the commissioners must be courageous.

....

If we can freely discuss about the monarchy how can we be sure that this freedom wouldn’t be abused?

SS: The anti-defamation law should provide a sufficient guarantee.

The important point is whether or not there’s truth in any criticism of the monarchy. The idea is to maintain proper conducts at all times so as not to be the target of vicious criticisms or insults. If there’s truth in the criticism then proper redress must be made. If not, then the accuser or critic is at a fault.

Moreover, the King is at the summit of society. It is thus understandable that the King is often the target of criticisms. People will find faults with him.

King Rama VII fully realized this basic fact. When asked whether or not he feared public denunciations, he replied that the Thai people reproached their monarch all the time for all sorts of reason. When it didn’t rain according to the season, the King was to blame. And so on. In fact the title of Phraya Raek Na (the Ploughing Lord) was created to shield the King from being criticized by farmers. For instance, if the harvest was bad, then they could blame the Phraya Raek Na instead.

Does the monarchy have a future in Thai society?

SS: If the monarchy wants to be a part of Thai society in the future, it must undertake reforms. For starters, the recom-

mendations provided by Somsak (Jeamteerasakul) in *Same Sky* magazine are really good. If the monarchy is able to reform itself along this line, then it will be able to coexist in Thai society.

For my part, I think that the Crown Property Bureau (CPB) should be taken over by the state. It should be placed under the Ministry of Finance. The King shouldn’t involve himself in the operations of the CPB. As to how many percent the Crown takes from the revenues, it should be agreed in advance....

What are your thoughts on the modification of Article 112?

SS: I agree that it must be done. But I propose a “compromised” version. In the short run, the severity of the punishment must be drastically reduced. As it stands, Article 112 is a threat to the monarchy’s survival. I suggest that the minimum three years imprisonment clause be revoked. And a maximum sentence of three or seven years imprisonment should more than suffice. In the long run, however, the meaning of having a democracy with the monarch as the head of state must be carefully and clearly unpacked. The people must be clear about the monarch’s role, duty, etc. The point is how to make the monarchy most beneficial to the people. We have many existing models to learn from—e.g., those of Japan, England, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, etc.

Translated
from *Krungdep Dhurakij*
21 June 2001

Traditional Village as Eco-village

You must treat the earth well.

It was not given to you by your parents.

It is loaned to you by your children.

Kenyan Proverb

Mabu has lived in traditional Karen villages and refugee camps on the Thai-Burma Border. He joined the Thai EDE in 2011. He speaks of his experience:

'EDE was such an enriching and inspirational course that has given me confidence to continue and improve my community development work for the oppressed Karen people.'

The eco-footprint of a Karen forest village like Mabu's is far less than the most cutting edge northern eco-village. The elders tell stories of a wonderful cosmology, the untrained eye would not notice that the forest is held sacred providing food and medicine with centuries old herb gardens, healing areas, burial grounds and place for placentas of new born children.

All over the world traditional villages and indigenous communities have lived close to nature with sustainable social, ecological and economic structures for millennia. As the juggernaut of modernization sweeps through the world these ancient, sustainable ways of life are in grave danger. Climate change, desertification and other disasters including consumerism are creating a new kind of refugee. Complex political and economic dynamics mean many vulnerable people in Africa, Latin America and Asia are displaced, in debt, migrant workers, in military or refugee camps. There is huge rural-urban migration as tradi-

tional ways cannot cope with these onslaughts. People lose the sacred connection with their land and aided by the machinations of sophisticated western media they become entranced with consumer goods and believe their looks, wisdom and traditions are ugly and obsolete. *'Please help us we are so behind'* whispered Ja Bawk an ethnic Kachin women when she first came to the Grassroots Leadership Training (a predecessor to EDE), later she became empowered and proud of her roots managing many community eco-projects.

Development policies advocate sustainability yet rarely address deep social and cultural aspects. The eco-village movement marries well with the traditional sustainable way of life in the South. An approach that encourages traditional villages to empower themselves to learn from eco-village ethos and alternative technology can stem the flow of migrant workers to the urban slums, desperate living conditions and consumer-led culture. GEN has been leading the way drafting guidelines to this end along with the elegant roadmap of Eco-village Design Education that encompasses the four pillars of sustainability — ecological, worldview (cultural), economic and social with modules in each area. The curriculum can be easily adapted to local conditions facilitating revaluing traditional wisdom

thus increasing self-esteem, self-determination and pride in cultural roots. In addition cutting edge, locally appropriate technologies and sustainable practices are introduced. Burning questions around the pros and cons of modernization and what constitutes sustainability and resilience in the longer term are explored in the four areas.

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS —WHY ECO-VILLAGE IN THE CONGO?

Lua Bashala, from the Congo at the recent Global Eco-village Network (GEN) conference at Tamera, Portugal, moved the audience to tears as she spoke eloquently of

'a people paralysed by war — women victims of mass war rape — street children without hope or homes'

She went on to talk of her hope when she met with the eco-village concept and the EDE curriculum.

'I had tears for a month — I could not believe what I had found — I recognised this as the answer — being close to nature — spirituality and consciousness'

In May 2011 she presented the EDE approach at the Congo GEN conference where it was recognised by her people : *'this is the way we used to live'*. Her dream of building an eco-village demonstration centre in the Congo with street children and women rape victims was inspir-

ing to all she aspires to create ‘*a light in the darkness — that will expand to a bonfire*’.

EMERGING GEN AFRICA: Senegal is leading the way with eco-villages forming the core of its development policy with a plan to transition thousands of villages in the next 5 years. They are experimenting with a pictorial EDE Mandala devised by Marian Zeitlin that stimulates discussion amongst villagers in the four dimensions. This is a groundbreaking way to work with oral cultures where many do not read or write. EDEs are planned in South Africa, the Congo and Senegal working with traditional villagers and the curriculum adapted accordingly. Adama Ly from Senegal is at the helm of a pilot participatory process supporting the emergence of GEN Africa as an independent entity. This will lead to a GEN Pan African conference where GEN Africa will be launched with a mission to benefit sustainable development, climate change adaptation and mitigation along with maintaining African cultural identities through EDE and eco-village methodologies. An exciting upcoming GEN Africa project is a five-country wide bio-diversity project in West Africa that will have corridors linking national parks for wildlife and endangered species, sustainable development and climate change mitigation. On the peripheries of the parks traditional villages will transition to eco-villages using EDE methodology. Solar cookers will be introduced, reforestation, micro-credit and alternative sustainable livelihoods for the many big game poachers in the area.

SOUTH & SOUTHEAST ASIA: In Thailand there have been four EDEs in association with Wongsanit Ashram, an engaged Buddhist community near Bangkok. These are primarily for community workers from the region. This EDE has meditation as part of the daily schedule, holds streams for traditional and intentional communities and includes design studio and training of trainers using a participatory, empowerment approach. The design studio uses both participatory action research (PAR) where villagers map their communities and prioritise their needs as well as permaculture design processes. This has gone on to inspire emerging EDEs for villagers and NGOs in China and marginalised communities in the region including the Philippines, Bangladesh and more. Mabu is dreaming of bringing Deep Ecology and EDE to the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border.

In India the first EDE with tribal people was held in Orissa earlier this year, Kosha Joubert who was instrumental in this tells of:

‘inspiring images of a women’s movement: women taking an oath over fire as they step into leadership — pledging to safeguard pledging to their communities, their forests, their children; climbing on tables and pitching speeches to each other; in political protest to counter the potential of Monsanto to destroy seed heritage’.

The group largely consisting of villagers and NGO leaders witnessed how the reintroduction of village technology, communal land cultivation and seed banks is increasing solidarity, building on traditional wisdom and moving towards eco-com-

munities. Orissa alumni are planning an EDE in local language and several pilot eco-villages in the near future.

EDEs in traditional communities are unique as they are informed from the indigenous values particular to the area and harvest the knowledge of the participants. This resurges and reconstructs a wealth of sustainable social, cultural and economic practices as well as ecological and most significantly is a tool of empowerment. There is much the intentional northern communities can learn to reduce their footprints, fire their hearts and soothe their souls. The EDE is a wonderful tool for merging and sharing of traditional wisdom and cutting edge sustainability if used in a participatory way. It is inspiring that rather than a centralized authority imposing from above there is space in the curriculum for the contents of EDE to be enriched by the flows of wisdom from all traditions of the world. This can move all of us towards resilience, sustainability and conscious pathways for our children, grandchildren and future generations to grow up happy, healthy and whole.

‘It takes a village to raise a child’.
(African proverb)

Jane Rasbash
July 2011

(Jane Rasbash has worked in sustainable community development largely in South East Asia for 15 years, teaches Findhorn and Thailand EDE courses and serves on the Board of Gaia Education)

The next EDE at Wongsanit Ashram will be January to March 2011 — for more information see www.gaiaeducation.org www.gen.ecovillage.org

Is the Military Really Protecting Our Monarchy?

A recent article in New Mandala about King Chulalongkorn's abolishing the practice of prostration before the king in 1873, has been the subject of online discussions. A similar article in Asia Sentinel is blocked by at least one internet service provider and replaced by a blank page bearing the familiar address.

It seems that our ever-zealous internet censors don't want the Thai public to ponder over the enlightened act of Thailand's most highly-regarded king and ask why his act of reform was undone over 80 years later.

In the New Mandala article, Pavin Chachavalpongpun, a research fellow at Singapore's Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, translates excerpts from the Royal Gazette of 1873 in which King Chulalongkorn is quoted as saying, "The practice of prostration in Siam is severely oppressive. The subordinates have been forced to prostrate in order to elevate the dignity of the *phuyai*. I do not see how the practice of prostration will render any benefit to Siam."

The Royal Gazette announced that the practice of prostration was to be replaced by bowing and standing respectfully before the king. The fact that King Chulalongkorn abolished prostration is mentioned among many of his reforms in Thai history textbooks. However, the significance of this act and the reasons given by the king are not discussed.

Naturally, the online discussions of the New Mandala article led to the question: Why is this

"oppressive" practice still carried out today, 138 years later?

The answer can be found in an article by Wat Walyangkurn in *Khao Sod* dated Oct 24, 2010. Wat describes how the military coup of Sept 16, 1957 which brought Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat to power, ended an era of relative cultural freedom in which democracy, human rights and social equality were common topics in literature and popular songs.

After the coup, many cultural reforms carried out since the times of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn were reversed, including the reinstatement of prostration before the king, in efforts to reestablish the sacredness, power and mystique of the ruling elite as a means of silencing opposition and reinforcing the legitimacy of the military regime.

It has always been the military that has been keen to enforce absolute reverence towards the monarchy, and all military coups in recent history have cited alleged threats to the monarchy as justification for military rule.

It is the kings themselves who, from time to time, have made attempts to reform the monarchy to be more in line with democratic society.

On the one hand, the maximum prison sentence for lese majeste was increased from SEVEN to 15 years after the military coup of 1976; while on the other hand our present king is on record in his birthday speech of 2005 as requesting that lese majeste be used judiciously and that criticism of the king should

be allowed.

So how should we regard recent developments in which the military establishment led by Gen Prayuth Chan-ocha vowed to protect the monarchy and filed charges of lese majeste against a number of red-shirt leaders and against historian Somsak Jeamteerasakul, who has been demanding abolition of the lese majeste law? As Warangkana Chomchuen says in her excellent NBC News article entitled "Will Thailand's military allow free elections?": "Thailand's military has a long history of meddling in politics."

The present actions of the military are clearly intended to influence the results of the elections by once again implying that a threat to the monarchy is involved. In their actions, they have moved the boundaries of lese majeste accusations to an extreme never reached before at a time when demands for reform of lese majeste law are reaching a peak. This is a very tense and explosive situation which, as history clearly tells us, cannot possibly be beneficial to the monarchy. It is a situation in which Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva has acted as a bystander, either helpless or unwilling to make any positive intervention to lower the political confrontation.

For years, critical comments among academics and intellectuals on the monarchy as an institution have been tolerated. This is why Sulak Sivaraksa has never gone to prison for his consistently outspoken observations. Now, there seems to be no refuge left.

The unfairness of the lese majeste law is that anyone can file a complaint and there are no guidelines as to the interpretation of the law. What did the people charged by the military actually say to earn them the charge? The media is not allowed to let us know. Is it considered lese majeste to advocate the abolishment of the lese majeste law, or to criticise institutions under royal patronage? No one knows the boundaries of interpretation.

The only peaceful solution to the political explosion that is building up as more and more

people are charged and sentenced under Article 112 of the Criminal Code, is to reform the lese majeste law and the monarchy as an institution in line with democratic principles.

I'm sure that there are many politicians on both sides of the political divide who recognise the dangers and would like to introduce political reforms to ease the situation.

The reason why they don't dare to do anything about it, however, is that they are afraid of reprisals from the royalist movements such as the People's Alliance for Democracy, the

multi-coloured shirt activists and, in particular, the military establishment.

It is the avowed protectors of the monarchy who are actually destabilising the monarchy and preventing the reforms badly needed to sustain the monarchy. Will the military establishment recognise this fact in time and learn to stop meddling in Thailand's political affairs?

Jon Ungphakorn
Bangkok Post
18 May 2011



Uthai Thani

Boonrob Pattanothai, 73, has been living aboard a houseboat on Uthai Thani's Sakaekrang river since she was nine, and she can't complain.

"There's never been a fire, I've never been robbed and I leave the doors and windows open every night so it's nice and cool," Boonrob said. "Nowadays, if I sleep in a hotel room with the air-conditioning on it gives me a headache."

Boonrob, a former high-school school teacher in the city of Uthai Thani, 192 kilometres north of Bangkok, is arguably a member of a disappearing breed from old Siam, the country's name before former dictator Pibun Songkhram decided to change it to Thailand in 1939. Pibun, keen on Westernization, was opposed to the widespread practice of houseboat living which once characterized the river-laced, central plains and Bangkok, rimmed by the Chao-

phraya river.

"When Thailand came under Pibun he ordered all Thai people to stop living on river boats because it was uncivilized," said well-known social critic and historian Sulak Sivaraksa. "So now only Uthai Thani and Ayutthaya have houseboats, with a few in Pitsanulok, but in Bangkok he ordered them all out," Sulak said.

Uthai Thani, perched on the Sakaekrang river that flows into the Chaophraya, once had about 300 registered houseboats, or "pae" as they are called in Thai.

"Now there are fewer than 200 houseboats left," Boonrob said. "The younger generation mostly move to Bangkok for work and are not interested in living on houseboats anymore, so when the old folks die sometimes the houseboat is abandoned."

Uthai Thani's houseboats

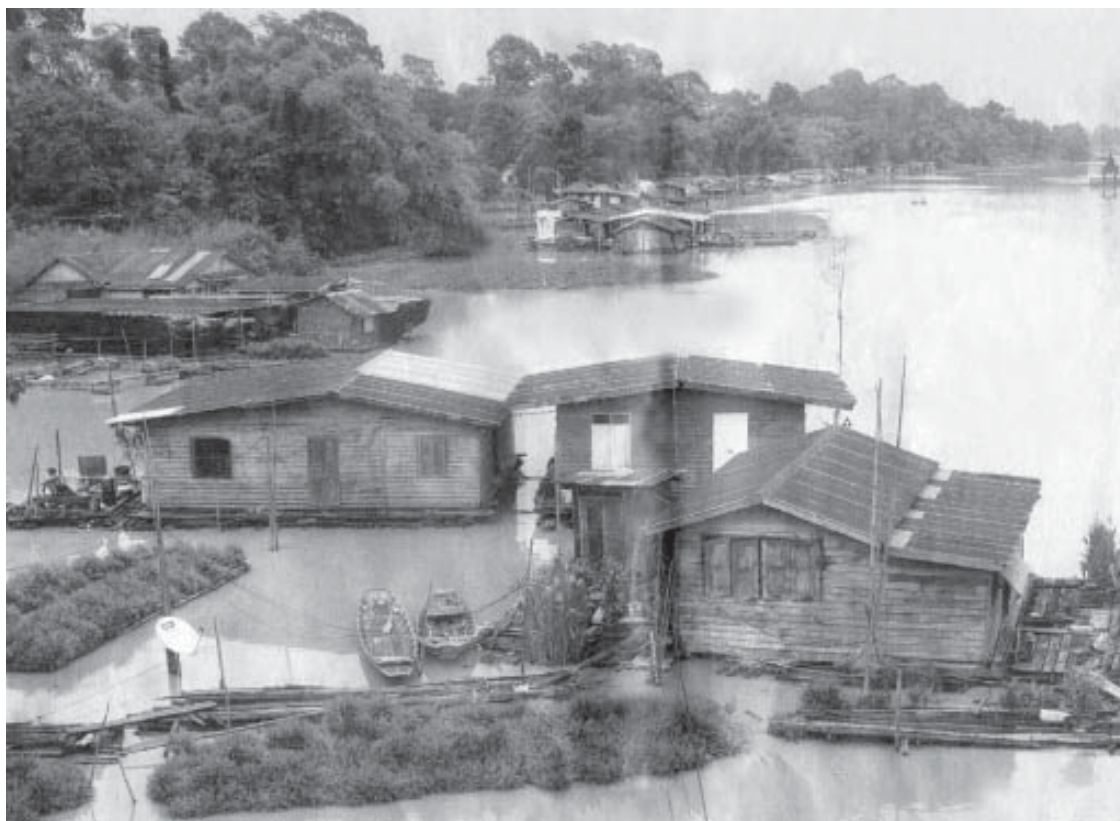
are much like their land-based neighbours. They have registration papers, a mailing address, electricity and more recently, portable toilets that the municipality empties out once a week.

"A lot of people still prefer to use the old toilets, because they are more convenient," Boonrob said. The traditional houseboat toilet is a hole in the floor that provides direct access to the river below.

Uthai Thani, never one of Thailand's most popular destinations, only started to attract visitors a decade ago as Thais and foreigners sought out new attractions off the main tourist map.

"Thai tourists come here to visit the temples, but foreigners come to take a river boat tour and look at the house boats," said Krittaphon Pornpiboon, the owner of the Payamai Resort in Uthai Thani.

Besides regular hotel rooms,



Payamai Resort also offers two authentic river houseboats which have been renovated and spruced up, minus the original toilets.

Sombat Poonsawat, a roti vendor at Uthai Thani's main market, has opened the first houseboat "home-stay," charging 200 baht (6.60 dollars) per person per night, but it is perhaps too authentic an experience for the average foreign tourist.

"My place boasts the biggest bathroom in town," Sombat joked, pointing to the river flowing past his houseboat. For most tourists, a ride aboard one of the barges of the Sakaekrang River Cruise Company provides a sufficient glimpse of houseboat living.

The Sakaekrang river used to be Uthai Thani's commercial lifeline. A century ago, the province was famed for its high-quality

rice, which was floated by barges down the Chaophraya river to Bangkok. River transport, however, became more difficult after Thailand built its first huge dam on the Chaophraya in 1957 at Chai Nat, about 50 kilometres south of Uthai Thani.

The dam provided better irrigation for rice fields in Chai Nat, which thereafter outperformed Uthai Thani's crop, and made deliveries from Uthai Thani more difficult.

"Uthai Thani's rice business has been in the decline for decades," said Manote Pornpi-boon, whose family once owned the city's biggest rice mill. "Nowadays, everything is transported by road, not river."

The province's second main attraction for foreign tourists is Huay Kha Khaeng, Thailand's

largest wildlife conservation area which was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991.

Although much of the conservation area is restricted to tourists, requiring prior permission before one can spend the night in a designated camping area, one can travel by car to the park's main office in Lan Sak district, about 80 kilometres from Uthai Thani city.

A very tastefully done memorial has been built at the park's headquarters to honour Sueb Nakhasathian, a former head of the Wildlife Conservation Station who took his own life in 1990, allegedly out of despair over the rampant poaching and illegal logging in the park.

Peter Janssen

Dr Sem Dies at Age 100

Dr Sem Pringpuangkaew, a devoted physician and champion of health care for rural people, died yesterday morning at Rajavithi Hospital. He was 100. Sem's son, Chatchawal Pringpuangkaew, said his father died of old age.

Throughout his career which spanned more than 70 years, Sem was actively involved in promoting health care and medical services. A total of 137 health organisations held ceremonies for Sem's 100th birthday on May 31.

Sem's contribution to the development of public health included the establishment of hospitals and nursing schools and initiating basic health care programmes in rural areas.

He played a crucial role in the establishment of Rajavithi Hospital and Queen Sirikit National Institute of Child Health.



He also pushed for the establishment of Thailand's first blood bank in 1950. Sem is remembered for his success in performing the surgical separation of conjoined twins at the Children's Hospital in 1955, the first successful operation of its kind in Thailand.

He took national health care development to a higher level when he served as deputy public health minister from 1973 to 1975 and public health minister from 1980 to 1983.

His 1981 initiatives, the

national policy on medicine and the national list of essential medicine, resulted in the National Drug List, which promotes the proper and reasonable use of drugs.

Sem was also recognised for health care reform that combined illness prevention and treatment services. The national health care structure he advocated is still being used today.

Bathing rites were held yesterday at the Rajavithi Hospital, where he was admitted last October to have clogged arteries treated.

Mr Chatchawal said Sem's body will be moved to Wat That Thong today for religious rites. Funeral services will be held for seven days.

Bangkok Post,
9 July 2011



Closing Remarks on Sem Pringpuangkaew's 100th Birthday Anniversary

Dr. Sem is one of our truly venerable contemporaries. However, society at large has not sufficiently acknowledged this fact. In this case, we are the exception. Many of us have long respected him. We realize that our social contributions thus far are merely a fraction of his. He is thus an inspirational role model for those of us who are struggling for justice and the public good

with moral courage and nonviolence. Moreover, many of us find Dr. Sem's simple and humble lifestyle worth emulating for he has always shunned the limelight.

Dr. Sem once told me that if I want to give a talk I should simply read out what I've prepared—not improvise or speak freely. He was afraid that I would get into more trouble be-

cause of my mouth, in particular because of the lese majeste law. He would help sustain me medically as well as mentally every time I was charged with lese majeste or faced other worldly sufferings. I'm certain that to a much greater extent several others have also been beneficiaries of his good will and support.

We've already heard a lot today about Dr. Sem from vari-

ous speakers. I'm sure that more will be spoken about him in the future. I have nothing substantial to add aside from my personal impression of him.

I perceive him as first and foremost a good Buddhist who has grasped the essence of the Dhamma. On the contrary, most self-proclaimed Buddhists today merely focus on its superficial or ceremonial practices.

Grasping the essence of Buddhism entails taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. The Threefold Refuge will be absolute for us, will guide and sustain our daily life. We may be awakened like the Buddha. We may touch upon the Good like the Dhamma. And we may lead a life based on fraternity and egalitarianism like the Sangha. With these we will be able to emancipate ourselves from greed, hatred and delusion. We will live far more meaningful lives beyond the endless competition for greater wealth and property as advocated by mainstream society.

Dr. Sem upholds the Triple Gem in a way that many people in contemporary society will not understand. He thus gives more than he takes. He is always forthcoming and filled with kindness rather than anger and hatred. He's also a very wise man who understands things holistically rather than in a compartmentalized manner.

Dr. Sem has led a life following the footsteps of the Buddha, who was both a teacher as well as a physician. In Vajrayana Buddhism there is a Bhaisajaguru Buddha statue to remind Buddhists of this fact. Put differently, a good teacher learns from herself, others, and nature. A good student is therefore also in a position to be a good teacher. A good teacher will not teach something that is beyond her knowledge and experience. Any knowledge taught must also go hand in hand with good conduct. This is something that mainstream education seriously lacks. If the teacher is not someone who is willing to give, learn, and be humble then she will bring more harm rather than benefit to her students.

The same logic applies to medical doctors. In the Thai language the word for physician (*Baidya*) is synonymous to the word for real knowledge (*Vidya*). In Pali this word is *vijja*, which is the antonym of *avijja*, meaning ignorance and false attachments. This often comes in the form of arrogance or priding oneself for being more learned or having higher education than others. Sometimes being educated abroad is a source of this arrogance. If physicians are filled with *avijja* then the consequences are likely to be catastrophic. We must also not forget that the medical science

is dominated by capitalism and consumerism. For instance, big pharmaceutical corporations pose a major threat to the medical science.

Physicians should realize that *avijja* is often linked with greed. Small wonder that many doctors are excessively wealthy. The medical science in general is further connected to hatefulness in the form of the quest for control, dominance, and power over. This helps to explain why many physicians are now occupying major administrative positions such as presidents of universities. Many physicians are also developing close personal connections and working relationships with politicians and military figures. Some of them are preparing their children to become future politicians. Do all these physicians recognize the pitfalls of *avijja*, greed, and hatred?

In lieu of conclusion, I want the audience to think seriously about the issues that I've made. I also want all of us to closely examine the life of Dr. Sem to see that he is both a good teacher and a good physician. Throughout his long life he has taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

Sulak Sivaraksa,
31 May 2011,
Main Auditorium Hall,
Chulalongkorn University



Rev. Teruo Maruyama (1933-2011)

One of the leading founders of INEB, Rev. Teruo Maruyama, passed away on June 13th from a sudden heart attack. Rev. Maruyama was the leader of INEB Japan, a group of priests brought in by Ajahn Sulak to help form

INEB back in 1989. Rev. Maruyama was known in Japan as a fiery social critic and journalist who campaigned against American military presence in Japan and the influence of Soka Gakkai, a large evangelical Buddhist

group which has become powerful in Japanese politics.

Rev. Maruyama was born the son of a Buddhist priest of the Nichiren denomination amongst a group of temples at the foot of the denomination's holy moun-

tain, Mt. Minobu, near Mt. Fuji. The sudden death of his mother due to tuberculosis at the end of the war and his denominations sudden about face from actively supporting the war to becoming active in praying for peace led the young Maruyama to deeply question his existence and seek for understanding himself and society on his own terms. The subsequent shift of Japanese society away from democratization in the late 1940s and support for American efforts in war on the Korean peninsula further radicalized the young Maruyama to join the Communist Party at age 17 in 1950. He became an influential young leader among other Buddhist priests active in the party as well as working to reform his own Nichiren denomination. Ultimately, the party could not tolerate his concern and loyalty for Buddhism and he was kicked out of the party in 1955.

In the late 1960s, his activities focused on reforming the Nichiren denomination rather



than social issues. At this time, his main concern was to try to see Marxism from a Buddhist standpoint, a struggle which led him to a deeper examination of Nichiren and how to modernize his thought for present society and to understand the implications of his ideas for modern society. In this way, he noticed how Christians had developed a theology to confront our modern crisis and had subsequently built international networks to realize this vision. This recognition led to his interest in developing a similar movement in Buddhism and thus his participation in the

building of INEB.

INEB Japan was a very important member organization in the first decade of INEB's history. It provided very important financial stability to the INEB Secretariat with generous annual donations. It also took keen interest in INEB members in the most difficult situations in Burma, Bangladesh, Nepal, northeast Thailand, and Cambodia and sought to educate Japanese on their suffering and campaign to relieve it. Unfortunately, INEB Japan could not develop into a nationwide network in Japan and has largely become defunct, while INEB has caught along with a new generation of socially engaged Buddhists in Japan in the new JNEB group. Still, Rev. Maruyama will be remembered for his passionate energy for social justice and his devoted work to build INEB in its first decade.

Jon Watts



Roshan Dhunjibhoy

(30 March 1931 — 24 April 2011)

Roshan Dhunjibhoy was born into a Parsee family in Calcutta, India. She had a cosmopolitan upbringing and was educated in theatre studies in Boston and Political Science at the Sorbonne before living in Cologne, Germany. She spoke at least seven languages and travelled the world bearing witness to the effects of political, social and cultural issues often sharing her insights in various forms of media. An avowed Marxist dur-

ing her filmmaking years she later embraced Buddhism. With her German husband Regi she made documentaries on diverse influential people including Mao Zedong, Bob Marley, Kim II Sung and the Shah of Iran. Her renowned yet eclectic career was underpinned by an immense sense of justice, compassion and political awareness and she became a role model and mentor for many concerned with the state of the world.

She worked for several decades in media initially in radio and was a journalist in France and later in the 1960s became the Indian anchor discussing cutting edge issues on German television. She directed political, cultural and historical documentaries working in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, taught film making in Jamaica, mass communication techniques in Zimbabwe, Sudan and Germany and studied political move-

ments and culture. After her husband's death she championed the plight of poor and exploited women in Pakistan. In 1993 she changed focus moving to work with the newly founded Heinrich Boll Foundation where she served on the Board of Directors and later Representative and Director for Asia / South Asia where she opened their first regional office in Lahore. As projects multiplied she moved to Chiang Mai where she opened a second regional Asian office. Heinrich Boll is affiliated with the Green Party in Germany and they support projects with values of empowerment, participation, cross cultural understanding and environmental awareness all close to Roshan's heart.



approach included working with local government and communities to promote animal and humane dog population control in a non-violent way. She became well-known and inspirational as the Dog Lady of Chiang Mai.

I met Roshan in 1995 whilst working with Spirit in Education Movement in Thailand on a pilot programme on Buddhism and

Development that was funded by Heinrich Boll Foundation. This was the forerunner of the groundbreaking Grassroots Leadership Training programme for marginalised people in South East Asia. Heinrich Boll under Roshan's direction supported the initiation of both programmes. I remember Roshan as a colourful character with a huge presence, passion, a sharp intellect and ready wit. She had a profound affiliation with Buddhism often discussing deeply with Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa, founder of SEM and many other Thai NGOs.

Roshan touched the lives of many as is evidenced by the masses of tributes from around the world that flew in after her unexpected passing in April. She will be sadly missed by her many friends, colleagues and students and of course the canine population of Chiang Mai.

Jane Rasbash

17 May 2011

Dear Ajahn Sulak:
Happy Wisakha Bucha.

I am very honored to join Harsha and Moo at your ceremony in Kyoto. Thank you for inviting me. I feel grateful for having met both Moo and Harsha. They are both dynamic, forward thinking intellectuals and I have nothing but the highest respect for them both.

I read the review of your *The Wisdom of Sustainability*. I did not want to monopolize time at the lunch at your house with Harsha and the Art professors, but I had made so many side notes when I read your book in March of this year.

Economic globalization is something I strongly feel is destroying our environment, economy and ultimately, individual happiness. I was recently at a meeting in NYC where a group of salesmen were trying to foray into a small Asian country. They bastardized the term "sustainable" to equate it with renewable resources.

These Western salesmen wanted to link "high end U.S. designers" directly with the Asian factories. They would not follow the complete supply chain, and therefore, would not be involved in the environmental footprint, or the social effect of their value chain. They did not know if these goods would be purchased at fair trade prices. They cited Target and Wal-Mart as the end consumer, stating that this could create a plethora of jobs in this particular Asian country. They did not know the GDP of the target country, or even the population size. In my opinion, they had finished exploiting the larger Asian countries, and were now moving toward the smaller ones.

Although that is true that jobs would be created in this venue, in the end it perpetrates the hyper-consumerism that plagues the United States and now China, as the middle class swells in a post-manufacturing era.

In the end it ultimately depletes the natural resources of the Asian country. Alternative economics is something I very much want to impart to my fellow Americans—that simple globalization cannot be the answer. The West and East are interdependent, as are all things in nature, but by no means subject to identical models of economics, time, or intrinsic values.

This is already happening with the collapse of the UAE’s economy, as they purchase more land in Vietnam to have a means to feed the Arabic population. What about the Vietnamese and their need for food?

I was very happy to find your book on alternative economics, as there are not many out there. I look forward to learning from you in the future, either directly or indirectly through my work with INEB. I hope you are not offended by my strong opinions—it’s something that caused me to leave my job and strike out on my own right livelihood.

With my supreme respect,

Lisa Bratt
Stephens Village
www.stephensvillage.com

21 June 2011

Ajarn Sulak,

I attended the panel discussion at the FCCT some weeks ago. It was very crowded and there were many people wanting to connect with you. So let me please just say what a privilege it was to hear you speak, and how your voice and perspective are so clear and compelling. I hope that those who can change things in Thailand really hear what you are saying and that they take it to heart. Your courage and wisdom are inspiring. Thank you.

Best wishes,
Mona Khan

23 June 2011

Dear Sulak,

Thank you for sending me the New Year greetings for 2011.

Belatedly, I offer best wishes to you, with health, liberty and happiness.

Thank you also for sharing with me *Seeds of Peace*. I am always glad to catch up with your life.

Interestingly, I have recently been asked to give a lecture at UNSW on our Peoples Tribunal on Tibet. When I do this, I will be thinking of the happy days I spent with you so long ago.

I hope that we will meet before the end of our present lives.

With admiration and good wishes
Michael Kirby

Level 7, 195 Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Tuesday, 28 June 2011

Dear Sulak,

Just received your letter of June 16th, together with the review of your latest book: *The Wisdom of Sustainability*. I am looking forward to seeing it : not the Dutch edition, though!!!

I am getting very old now...Having got over my 90th birthday, I feel that eye sight and hearing are

problems and walking a burden, though I don't use any walking stick; slow and careful is my policy.
Not sure we shall even meet again.
I am now thinking of retiring in a house for the elder brothers.
Anyhow I will never forget the happy years spent in the Siam with so many dear old students.

So long
Bro. Vic
8, Av. Reny Rene-Bazin 85290, St. Laurent/Sevre

28 June 2011

Respected sir,

WE have met in ASTANA during the "World Forum of Spiritual Culture"
I have seen your full interview on BBC on 28th June 2011 in INDIA at 2.00pm.

As mentioned by you I also agree with you that the Capitalistic movement has started annihilation of the poor masses of the world. Materialistic approach of the capitalistic movement has created a sense of fear in the minds of the people all over the world along with its uncertain behavior towards the humanity which benefits only 10% people of the world.

I have spoken in my speech in ASTANA in Kazakhstan regarding this problem and after a mindful thought I have come to the conclusion that Buddhism is the only answer for all the wrong doings of this Capitalistic movement.

But I still wonder how Buddhism and Monarchy can go together as far as liberalization of Mind is concerned?

Can you please explain it in detail to me by email?

Best regards

Milind R. Gaikwad.
205, Imperial C.H.S. LTD.
Ashar Residency, Near Lok Hospital, Pokhran Road No.2, Thane, Maharashtra State India

28 June 2011

I am watching Sulak being interviewed on BBC International Hardtalk program. I agree with what Sulak has to say.

I am a 63 year old Canadian living in Aswan Egypt. I worked over 40 years in the IT and retail industries in Canada. I am sick to death of capitalism and consumerism.

People in the west are trapped in an endless cycle of stress and debt and have no time to 'breathe properly' in order to stop this terrible treadmill they are on.

I spent two years attending Tibetan Buddhism gatherings and what I learned has never left me. I guess I am a Buddhist at heart.

I think every country needs what Bhutan has done — appoint a Minister of Happiness.

Sandra Baumgartner

28 June 2011

Dear Sir,

I was fortunate to be able to watch parts of the BBC World TV Hard Talk program by Stephen Sackur, this morning, and am pleased to say that I was most impressed with your ideas and thinking. I will try to watch the whole program, once again, this evening hopefully since I was only able to catch parts of it this morning since I was preparing myself for work.

I am a Sri Lankan, male, 63 years of age, born to Muslim (Ceylon Moor ethnicity) parents in Colombo and enjoyed a very lucrative career in information technology since 1970. My family and I moved to take

up expatriate employment in Saudi Arabia where we have been living and working since 1979.

Having worked for Citibank Technology for 20 years and other private sector corporations in the region for another 10, I retired my day job in 2008 and now concentrate on executing private IT consulting projects for local corporations in the region, being located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

During the past decade I too have been pondering a lot about the situation of the nations on our planet and the many violent and oppressive situations so many nations, peoples, and communities are being forced into, even though humanity has advanced in leaps and bounds in the areas of science, technology and education. There has to be a primary cause for this sad state of affairs within the hearts and minds of the peoples of this planet?

My contention, at its infancy stage, is that it is religion that causes all this chaos and mayhem. And all these religions are also based, mainly on, myth, folklore, superstitions, man-made rituals, fear, and forced subversion, so that those in authority could wield power, strength, prosperity, and contentment, while the rest suffer in silence.

Would like to discuss this thought with you if you do have the time and inclination.

Kind Regards
Fazli Sameer
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

30 June 2011

Dear Sulak,

Just a happy word of congratulations to you: my wife and I saw you on the BBC world service television program last night. How rare to see something actually interesting on the news! I think you had the poor interview guy wondering what to ask next. He's usually a tough questioning fellow, but you had him admiring you.

Very happy to see it. We hope everything is going well there. Haven't been to Siam/Thailand for a while now, although I was working on a new book in India last year. In dharma,

Trevor Carolan
Vancouver

1 July 2011

Yes, I believe what Roberts is saying is true—"Neo-Nazis [(in the form of the Neoliberal Global System and its acolytes posted at the various centers of the system—including China—but primarily in Washington, DC)] won the Cold War."

That's the last line of a not-so-good poem I wrote about 6 years ago in the same series as the ones I've publishing recently.

Danny Schechter, "The Media Dissector," pointed out a couple months ago, Corporate Control (it already controls the mainstream media) of government, and bolstered by the Supreme Court "Citizens United" decision—that is, the problem of economy RULING politics, not the other way around, as it should be: what we have, in Shambhalian terms, is The Horse Riding The Rider!—: Tibetans, and one Tibeto-American in particular, are asleep at the wheel on this, as they were about events swirling around them in Old Tibet before the Chinese took over.

They seem think China becoming capitalist/Neoliberal with some fake democracy thrown in, like we have here—a facade—is the way to "get Tibet back": pathetic!.

Anyway, as Roberts reminds us and Mussolini pointed out decades ago, Corporate Control IS fascism! If Americans woke up like those brave Egyptians in Tahrir Square or the ones in Tunisia or Greece and Great Britain today, and took to the streets, they be mowed down just like those others were (maybe rather than on camelback, jackassback)—because DC IS the center of the system.

But the counter-revolution has already won the so-called Springtime in the Middle East (and is preparing to rollback the "spring" in Latin America, too, amongst the ALBA nations, the U.S. about to proclaim Venezuela a "terrorist state"), it appears: plug in a new face in the center(s) of the essentially FASCIST system, like is happening in Egypt via throwing those brave individuals acting collectively a

“democratic” bone, with Fascists still running those (police state) countries behind the democratic facade. (It’s that phony set-up we wish to impose on Iran and Syria, as well.)

Anyway, in Buddhist-Shambhalian terms, RUDRA RULES, the embodiment of “dualistic-fixation”/ “center-periphery polarization.” (And the Tibetans seem to have taken up residence in Rudra’s “marsupial pocket,” where they think it’s “safe.” Wise? Or, more likely, cowardly and ignorant—in the bigger picture?)

Jim

<http://www.counterpunch.org/roberts06292011.html>

4 July 2011

Dear Sulak,

I read your *Seeds of Peace*, especially of course, the articles you write or about you. It is a joy to know that you are still teaching and influencing so many people around the world with your good humor and common sense. Are you able to keep up your many activities or like me, doing a bit less and enjoying some free time to myself?

America is not doing well right now. Greed and money seem to be the Gods that are worshipped here and more people are out of work and losing their homes. One of our programs at work is to counsel people who are in danger of losing their homes to foreclosure. It is a sad program as the lenders are totally unwilling to help people who have lost jobs and the value of their homes.

As I have said many times, you are welcome in my house whenever you can come — as I am sure you are in many homes around the world. Until then, be well and may you and your family be blessed.

Love,

Nancy Kanyon
San Francisco

4 July 2011

I watched with great interest, your recent interview on the BBC.

You are young and vigilant, quickly and appropriately responding to piercing questions.

There is a change of Government after the elections and you are having a woman prime minister.

I wish the Thai people about whose welfare your heart is after, the very best.

Kind regards

Please keep in touch.

Maravanpulavu K. Sachithanathan

5 July 2011

Dear Sulak,

I would like to send you my hearty congratulations on your being awarded the 2011 Niwano Peace Prize. You certainly deserve this distinguished prize more than anyone else. I am pleased that what you have accomplished as a Buddhist leader, social reformer and intellectual leader have been recognized and to be honored by the Niwano Foundation. As a long standing friend of yours, I am pleased and proud of you. Your devoted wife, who helped you through many difficulty times may deserve at least half of the award and I hope you feel the same way.

As the award presentation ceremonies will be in Osaka, I shall not be able to attend, but I look forward to seeing you very much while you are staying at the International House.

Sincerely yours,

Mikio Kato

The International House of Japan, Inc.

18 July 2011

Dear Sulak

I have seen you on the BBC and I like you very much.

I was a member of the Thai Buddha Sangha at Section 5, Wat Mahadathu in the 1980's, mostly interested and practicing the science of Dhamma in its utter simplicity of noticing, knowing and seeing. A wonderful base, out of which all what makes life dignified flows.

I write to you from Mauritania, being an anthropologist researching the bases of Oneness of the different Faiths. It shows that Islam and Dhamma are fully compatible, adaptations to different climates and environments.

It takes a lucid mind.

It would be wonderful to get together when I visit Siam (we have much in common, I am a traditionalist, and have kept calling Mueng Thai as such)

Namo,

Marc
(Formerly Buddhinao Bhikkhu)

—
Cansado
Mauritania
Tel. 00 222 22 48 87 55

21 July 2011

Dear Sulak,

Many thanks for the copy of your book *The Wisdom of Sustainability*. It has been read to me from cover and I very much appreciate your combination of enthusiasm and clear thinking. I hope the book will have a wide circulation in many languages.

You will, I think, be interested to know that the other week the hundredth birth anniversary of Dr Schumacher was celebrated at the Palace of Westminster with a special meeting at which many prominent people spoke. The radio programme was also devoted to Dr Schumacher's life and work. It would appear that his ideas are being regarded with increasing respect in this country. I hope this is not just a temporary phenomenon.

Under separate cover I am sending you copies of three of my own books, namely *The FWBO and 'Protestant Buddhism'*, *The Priceless Jewel*, and *Know Your Mind*. It is a mixed bunch, in keeping with your own varied interests!

Our mutual friend Lokamitra will be in Birmingham in a few days time, and I am sure your name will come up in the course of our discussions.

With all good wishes, yours in the Dharma,

Urgyen Sangharakshita
Madhyamaloka
U.K.

Breathe In, Breathe Out, and Drop the Coke

Buddhist economist Sulak Sivaraksa has advice for Western capitalist societies. Sholto Byrnes slows down and listens

If David Cameron wishes to take fresh advice on how to increase happiness, now that the American psychologist who inspired his well-being index has admitted that the theory needs some adjustment, he might find it fruitful to study a new book by Sulak Sivaraksa.

The 78-year-old Thai Buddhist, twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and a winner of the Right Livelihood Award (considered the “alternative Nobel”), has been called “one of Asia’s leading social thinkers” by Burma’s Aung San Suu Kyi. It is possible, however, that if the Prime Minister were to leaf through *The Wisdom of Sustainability: Buddhist Economics for the 21st Century*, some of Sivaraksa’s conclusions might strike Cameron as a little strong.

“Globalisation,” he writes, “is a demonic religion imposing materialistic values,” and “a new form of colonialism”. If Cameron is fond of the odd cola on the beach, he’d better stop. “To drink Coca-Cola or Pepsi-Cola in Siam is not just to ingest junk food, but to support exploitative values.” Economic crises such as those that hit the West in 2008 and East Asia a decade earlier are “heavenly messengers” to “encourage us to seek alternative” models—as Sivaraksa told a no doubt startled James Wolfensohn, the former president of the

World Bank.

These may be tough words, but Sivaraksa is not one for thinking great thoughts from a monastic seclusion that means he never has to try them out in practice. Over four decades, he has set up numerous NGOs in Thailand, taught at universities across the world and advised the government of Bhutan on how to implement its famed concept of Gross National Happiness. His efforts have been recognised with numerous awards, the latest of which is the Niwano Peace Prize, which comes with a cheque for around £150,000. (The ceremony was due to take place in Tokyo this month but has been delayed because of the tsunami.)

He also had to go into exile twice, when his forthrightness about the coups that occur frequently in his country led to threats on his life. “The first time was accidental,” he tells me in his leafy garden, which is a miraculous hidden oasis amid the concrete chaos of Bangkok. “I was in London, and found out from the newspaper that I had been arrested in absentia. They burnt all my books. They would have burnt me alive too, so, like a brave man, I stayed away. The second time, the coup leader was very angry with me. He would have done anything.” The School of Oriental and African Studies in London and Cornell University in New York provided a safe haven on each occasion.

Sivaraksa’s outspokenness originally stemmed from a desire to bring Western-style freedoms to his country. He was educated

in the late 1950s at what is now the University of Wales, Lampeter, where he was one of very few foreigners: “Once, in Carmarthen, two ladies saw me. One said to the other: ‘Black man!’ I turned to her and said, ‘Not quite, madam.’” When he returned to Thailand, he thought he had “the Western answer”: “We, the elite can change the world. The plebs will follow us.” However, after working with the poor he began to follow their example instead. “I learnt from those who suffer.”

Sivaraksa’s view is that true happiness is not to be found in material gains or in the constant pursuit of unlimited growth, but starts with the search for inner calm. “You in the West have been indoctrinated by the Cartesian concept of thinking: I think, therefore I am. But the ego, the ‘I’ – it’s not real. We are all inter-related.” His path is not “cogito ergo sum” but “I breathe, therefore I am”.

“We breathe all the time, yet we are not taught how to. Are we so arrogant that we ignore the most important element in life? Once you learn how to breathe properly, respect the air, cultivate peace within, that is the beginning of Gross National Happiness.”

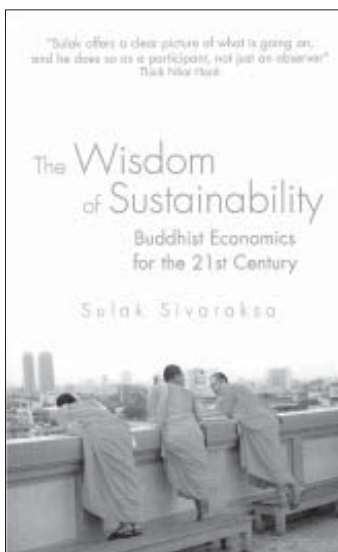
It also means doing away with what he considers the West’s “mania for success”: “Real success is not to conquer others, not to have more cars and money, but to appreciate what you have, how to share with others.”

He admits that what he proposes may strike some as “Eastern garbage”. Neither would

all find it easy, or even desirable, to follow one example he gives of a friend in America: "He noticed that when a man he knew missed a bus, he would say, 'Wonderful! I have more time to contemplate.' The same when the train was late. My friend asked how he had this attitude, and he said: 'I'm a Buddhist.'"

Instead, Sivaraksa stresses that the West has its own traditions that he thinks we should revisit. "You need to go back into your spiritual past, to those such as Francis of Assisi. In my opinion, that's very close to the Buddhist approach." For Sivaraksa, a rationalism that only accepts what can be proven scientifically has led us to ignore riches from our own culture. "The West took Plato, Socrates and Aristotle only on the intellectual level. Plato's the man! Everything else is footnotes. But in Plato, there is also mysticism—being in the cave, talking to the gods. You dismissed all that."

Sivaraksa suggests that the West should open itself up to "cognitive diversity", to truths from different cultures. "As Gandhi said, 'Any wind coming through.'" Or, as Sivaraksa puts it in his new book: "We uncritically accept 'established knowledge' ... It is time for us to



question the fundamentals of the Enlightenment in order to become truly enlightened."

How, though, I ask him, can governments incorporate these ideas into practice? "You don't persuade a whole society to become humble," he responds. "That is a very Western approach. With GNH you have to start with personal happiness, with helping others and the feeling that others are more important than us. You have to ask yourself, how will this tree be happy? When people change, then the governments will change."

If we do not turn to a less I-driven future, Sivaraska says, we will reap the consequences. "Even nature suffers because of

our arrogance. We think we can control it. But look at Japan, at Chernobyl, and Bhopal. If we don't bring a spiritual essence into our lives ... bang, we're finished."

He is pleased that in Europe, less materialist notions of well-being are being considered more seriously, with Richard Layard, Geoff Mulgan and Anthony Seldon setting up their Action for Happiness group, and the Nobel laureate economists Amartya Sen and Joseph Stiglitz advising the French on how to look beyond GDP. Still, Sivaraksa cautions that "the West needs to be more qualitative than quantitative". We have a long way to go, he thinks. "Stiglitz is a very nice man," he says, "but I'm afraid even he has not learnt how to breathe properly yet."

The Wisdom of Sustainability: Buddhist Economics for the 21st Century by Sulak Sivaraksa (Souvenir Press £10)

"Capitalism brainwashes us through advertising and the skewing of priorities We need economies that promote human values, seek to limit suffering, and are committed to democratic principles, rather than ones dependent on global trade and a blind commitment to neo-liberal economic policies."

from *Sunday Independence*
8 May 2011

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Mother Teresa, CEO
Ruma Bose & Lou Faust
(Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco)

Nearly all Buddhists would, I think, agree that you don't have to be a Buddhist to be a Bodhisattva. It could well be claimed that Mother Teresa was one of the outstanding Bodhisattvas of our time, but one of the great business leaders of the 20th century? Mother Teresa? That idea would not occur to many people however much they admired her. But this is exactly what Ruma Bose and Lou Faust set out to demonstrate and they produce convincing statistics to prove their point. Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity in 1948 with just twelve nuns. By the time she died in 1997 it had grown to a multinational organization operating in over one hundred countries with a full time work force of four thousand plus over a million volunteer team members. And even after her death it continues to grow. Building such a huge and globally respected organization dollars involved raising billions in capital. It is hard to

deny that these achievements point to Mother Teresa having managerial skills that the most successful CEO of multinational companies would envy.

Ruma Bose, a Canadian whose parents were Hindu Bengali immigrants, writes with first hand of Mother Teresa's management style because as an idealistic young teenager of 19 she went to work as a volunteer with Mother Teresa in Calcutta. Now as a CEO herself she has been looking back on the lessons she learned from Mother Teresa and has identified and articulated, with the help of her co-author Lou Faust, the eight guiding principles that governed all of Mother Teresa's decisions in growing her organization. Faust, who also has experience as a CEO of a large commercial undertaking, and Bose together make a strong case for the relevance of these principles in organizations today. It is almost certain that if these simple principles were, for example,

put into practice by the leaders of the Sangha in Thailand there would be a renaissance of Thai Buddhism. And if the newly elected government of Thailand were to put them into practice the future of the Kingdom would look a lot brighter than it seems to look now.

What are these eight simple principles? It would be counter-productive for me simply to list them here. You really need to read the book. Some of them might seem obvious such as "Communicate in a language people understand." And in a country where everyone is encouraged to spend daily time in meditation the principle "Use the power of silence" should be well understood. But to see the full eight principles together with the clear expositions and examples given by the authors you really need to read this book. Anyone who aspires to leadership needs to go and get a copy.

Ian Mayor-Smith

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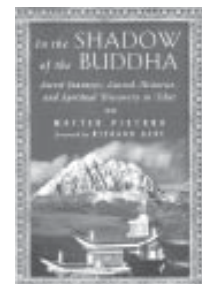
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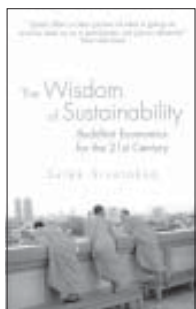
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Published by Dutton, 2011



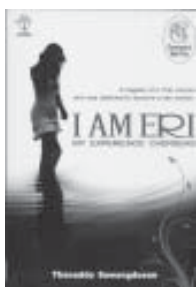
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By Sulak Sivaraksa
Published by Ediciones Dharma, 2011

Sergio Regazzoni, la solidarité n'a pas de frontières
By François Bellec
Published by La Toisan D'Or, 2011



The Wisdom of Sustainability: Buddhist Economics for the 21st Century
By Sulak Sivaraksa
First published in Great Britain in 2011 by Souvenir Press Ltd.

The Wisdom of Sustainability: Buddhist Economics for the 21st Century (Japanese edition)
By Sulak Sivaraksa



I am Eri: My Experience Overseas
A tragedy of a Thai woman who was destined to become a sex worker.
By Thanadda Sawangduean
Translated by Mimi Grachangnettra
Published by Woman Publisher, 2011

Voies de l'orient
n° 118, janvier,
février, mars 2011





The Niwano Peace Prize

is hereby presented to

Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa

With deep faith in Buddhism and over a lifetime of dedicated service and unflagging commitment, you have given new life to ancient Buddhist teachings about nonviolence and about peace and justice.

You have presented a new understanding of peace, democracy, and development and thus have helped to change the views of religious leaders, political leaders, scholars, social activists, and young people, in Thailand, Asia, and the world, and have helped promote their activities.

The Niwano Peace Foundation, deeply impressed by your extraordinary dedication as a Buddhist to the achievement of global peace, therefore takes great pride in presenting to you the 28th Niwano Peace Prize for your outstanding service to humanity.

July 23, 2011

Nichiko Niwano
President
Niwano Peace Foundation

Kinjiro Niwano
Chairperson
Niwano Peace Foundation

表 彰 状

スラック・シワラック 殿

あなたは、仏教への深い信仰にもとづき多方面にわたる社会活動、平和活動を実践し、非暴力、平和、正義を教えている伝統的な仏教に新たな生命を与えました。

あなたは平和、民主主義、そして開発についての新たな理解の方法を提示し、タイをはじめ、アジア、そして世界の宗教者、学者、社会活動家そして若い人々に影響を与え、さらに彼らの活動の発展に貢献してきました。

庭野平和財団は、仏教徒として世界平和の実現に活躍するあなたの比類ない献身に深い感銘を受け、人類に対する傑出した貢献に対し、第28回庭野平和賞を贈呈いたします。

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