

SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol.28 No.3

Sept.-Dec. 2555 (2012)



Peace is the Manifestation of Human Compassion

शैव्यादिपदं



*

SEEDS OF

C O N T E N T S

Editor & Publisher

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

Cover

Neranchala River at Bodh Gaya
 by *Nguyen Xuan Viet*

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: secretariat@inebnetwork.org
www.inebnetwork.org

Distributed by

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

Baht 100 per issue
suggested annual
subscription US\$ 50

Payment info

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

4 Editorial Notes

Country Reports

- 5 Malaysia: Towards a US-Sponsored "Regime Change" *Chandra Muzaffar*
- 6 India: Thousands Wish the Dalai Lama a Happy Birthday *Phayul.com*
- 8 ASEAN: South China Sea Disputes *Aileen Baviera*
- 9 Burma: Love Thy Neighbor—Thai-Burmese Relations *Aung Zaw*
- 12 Laos: Asia Europe People's Forum in Vientiane *Hans van Willenswaard*
- 15 Siam: M. L. Bunluea Theypasuwan : A Civilized Woman *Susan F. Kepner*
- 16 Siam: Secret Doctrine of Wat Phra Dhammakaya *Mano Laohavanich*
- 18 Japan: Japanese Buddhists' Increasing Involvement
in Anti-Nuclear Activism *Jonathan S. Watts*
- 21 Sri Lanka: Detainees and Detention Centers
- 23 South Korea: China Boycotts Religious Event Over Tibet Presence
- 24 Tibet: News from the Dalai Lama *Jonathan Mirsky*

INEB

- 26 Letter from the Secretariat Office
- 27 2012 INEB Executive Meeting and International Forum
- 28 Visions of an Empowered Future
- 31 Lesbian Couple to Take Vows in Nation's
First Public Buddhist Same-Sex Union *Dhamma Master Shih Chao-hwei*

Sulak Sivaraksa

- 32 Harmonizing Life with the Waterways
- 34 The Role of the University in the Promotion of Human Rights
in the Southern Provinces

Articles

- 37 The Cinderella Economy *Tim Jackson*
- 38 Destroying the Commons *Noam Chomsky*
- 43 The Buddha's Enlightenment for the Well-Being of Humanity *Phra Bhavanaviteht*

49 Letters

Book Reviews

- 54 The Lady and the Peacock *Hnin Wathan*
- 55 Happiness Beyond Measure *Jane Rasbash*
- 56 Powers That Be: Pridi Banomyong *Benedict Anderson*

58 Recommended Readings

* Monument of Charoen Wat-aksorn, the Thai commoner who fought nonviolently for land rights of the people and who was assassinated by the land lord.

PEACE

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

To contact *Seeds of Peace*:

666 Charoen-Nakorn Road
Klongsan, Bangkok 10600, Siam
Tel. (662) 860-2194
Fax: (662) 860-1277
email: spd@semsikkha.org
www.sulak-sivaraksa.org

INEB

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

The goals of INEB are to:

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

Spirit in Education Movement (SEM)

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

Why the Santi Pracha Dhamma Prize is Being Awarded to Mr. Phongcharat Ruayrum

Fifty-six-year-old Phongcharat Ruayrum was born on 20 October 1956 in Surat Thani province. He finished high school from Benjama Rachuthit Nakorn Sri Thammarat School and obtained his bachelor and master degrees from the Faculty of Law, Ramkhamhaeng University. He also was awarded with a certificate in conflict resolution from King Prajadhipok's Institute.

Phongcharat has led a diverse but coherent legal career. He started as a lawyer at the Seni Pramoj law office. Later, he served as secretary to Associate Professor Somsak Singhapan, who was then dean of the Faculty of Law, Ramkhamhaeng University. Subsequently, he had a political career during the Prem Tinsulanonda premiership. These diverse experiences made Phongcharat a legal expert with well-rounded and profound knowledge and gave him friends from all walks of life. Always hungry for knowledge, he reads voraciously especially in philosophy and often engages in lively debates with friends. These traits make him much more than an ordinary lawyer: he is also a seeker for justice.

Phongcharat is highly principled. He is especially concerned about helping the excluded, marginalized and oppressed in society. He is outspoken, direct and morally courageous particularly in the face of the powers that be. As such, he has been a dear friend to many of the oppressed and marginalized. For many, he has also been their best hope to win justice. For instance, the Buddhist Phongcharat has actively worked with Muslim compatriots in the Deep South of the country to end oppression and redress human rights violations in numerous cases. He has served as lawyer to several suspected insurgents and has worked to build trust between state officials and religious clerics in the South.

When Phongcharat was on the human rights subcommittee of the National Human Rights Commission he devoted his life to helping others in many ways. He initiated a program to provide suspected insurgents in the Deep South with basic skills for work and to win their hearts and minds in exchange for not being put on trial by the state. This program was initiated at great personal risk, but Phongcharat never deviated from this path.

At present, Phongcharat Ruayrum is serving as advisor to the 4th Military Region Command and to the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Thonburi Criminal Court and a guest lecturer at various universities.

Phongcharat Ruayrum has shunned wealth, fame and social approval. As faith in the country's laws is experiencing crisis, the presence of a principled and devoted lawyer like Phongcharat is like a candle of hope illuminating the way towards justice for many people in Thai society. It is thus highly appropriate to present him with the Santi Pracha Dhamma Award in honor of Puey Ungphakorn.

16 August 2555

Editorial Notes

Siam is supposed to be a Buddhist kingdom. Although Buddhism is not legally established as the national religion, the King is constitutionally a Buddhist and patron of all religions. The majority of the population also claims to be Buddhist. What does this mean? The Royal Thai Government did not allow the Dalai Lama or his sister to enter the Buddhist kingdom, which is apparently under Chinese regional hegemony. Do the majority of Thai Buddhists understand the essential teachings of Buddha? Do they know how to transform greed into generosity, hatred into loving-kindness and delusion into wisdom or real understanding—as these seem to be the essence of all schools of Buddhism? Many Buddhists are devout and learned but do they know how to tackle structural violence and how to live mindfully in a world dominated by consumerism and the round-the-clock media advertisements. How about the endless ceremonies on making Buddha images and sacred amulets which combine superstition with spiritual commercialism?

Since this year is the 2,600th anniversary of Buddha's supreme enlightenment (in May) and the first turning of the Wheel of the Dharma (in August), many celebrations are being held in most Buddhist countries. We suggest a humble approach from the Siamese perspective—a number of committed Buddhists including Bhikkhu, Bhikhuni, Upasaka and Upasika, should form a committee to: 1) select essential Thai books on Buddhism—from elementary to advanced—for ordinary people to read for basic understanding of the Dhamma; and 2) translate them into various languages such as English, French, German, Burmese, Laotian, Khmer, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Hindi, Tamil, Bahasa Indonesia, Tibetan etc. to share our Siamese understanding of the Dhamma with friends beyond the kingdom.

Further, we will recommend general books on Buddhism available in the Thai market for the study and practice of the Dhamma. These books may be written in Thai or translated into Thai from foreign languages. We should also recommend Buddhist books in foreign languages for the Thai public to read or to have them translated into Thai.

We are certain that there will be enough sponsors willing to provide the necessary time, energy and funds for us to accomplish this humble task in order to properly celebrate the 2600th anniversary of Buddha's enlightenment—as the gift of Dhamma is the best of all gifts.

**We regret to state that our good friend
JOHN LANE
passed away on 17th August 2012.
His obituary will appear in the next issue.**

Malaysia: Towards a US Sponsored “Regime Change” in Malaysia?

In his widely read blog (13 February 2012), the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, criticizes the politics of regime change pursued by the United States of America.

He is concerned that Malaysia may also be a target for regime change. And the US candidate to head the new regime, which will be in full, complete support of US policies, he says, is none other than the Leader of the Opposition, Anwar Ibrahim. Why should the US government seek regime change in Malaysia when the present Prime Minister, Najib Razak, has sought to further strengthen ties with Washington? He has even employed a Washington based public relations firm, Apco, to boost Malaysia's image in the US. Najib's personal relations with US President, Barack Obama, are supposed to be "excellent." And yet it is quite conceivable that the forces that shape Washington's attitude towards Malaysian politics and political leaders may prefer Anwar to Najib for a number of reasons.

One, while Najib may have some rapport with formal leaders and the formal state, it is Anwar who has intimate links with the “deep state” in the US system. It is the deep state represented by powerful interests such as the Zionist lobbies, the Christian Right, the big wigs on Wall Street, the oil barons, the arms merchants and the media Moghuls which is in effective control. To appreciate the distinction

between the two, one has to reflect on Obama's Cairo speech on 4th June 2009 which stated explicitly that “The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements” but in reality the formal leader has had to yield to the Zionists and the Christian Right who are enthusiastic promoters of Zionist expansion at the expense of the Palestinians. Anwar's entry into the deep state was through his close friendship with Paul Wolfowitz, the former US Deputy Secretary of Defence and one of the staunchest champions of Zionist power. It was mainly because of Wolfowitz that Anwar became the first Chairman of the Foundation for the Future in 2005, an organisation established ostensibly to promote democracy in West Asia and North Africa (WANA) whose real purpose is to perpetuate US-Israeli hegemony over the region. Even before this, in 1998, in the midst of the Asian financial crisis, Anwar was espousing an IMF type solution to the nation's economic woes thus revealing his political orientation.

This is why during his first two trials for abuse of power and sodomy between 1998 and 2004 and during his recent trial for sodomy, the mainstream Western media went out of its way to demand that the Malaysian authorities acquit Anwar. Wolfowitz and former US Vice-President, Al Gore, even penned a joint opinion piece in the Wall Street Journal on 4th August 2010

urging the US government to persuade the Malaysian government to “act with wisdom” in Anwar's trial. A day before he was acquitted, on 8th January 2012, The Washington Post in an editorial warned that “If the verdict fails that test (Malaysia's commitment to democracy and the rule of law) there should be consequences for Mr. Najib's relations with Washington.” This was an undisguised, unabashed attempt by one of the media pillars of the deep state to pressurize a sovereign nation to submit to its will. Two, if Anwar is the darling of the deep state in the US, it is partly because of his stand on Israel. In an interview with The Wall Street Journal on 26 January 2012, he reiterated his support for “all efforts to protect the security of the state of Israel.” It should be emphasised here that support for Israeli security—contrary to what he is saying now—was not contingent on “Israel respecting the aspirations of the Palestinians.” In the interview Israel's security stands by itself. It is diplomatic recognition of Israel that Anwar links to Palestinian aspirations.

Placing Israel's security on a pedestal is the sort of gesture that the deep state and Zionists the world over laud, especially if the advocate is a Muslim leader. For Israel's security has become the justification for all its policies of occupation, annexation and aggression in the last 63 years. Israel's security is the albatross around the neck of the dispossessed Palestinians and other

Arabs who have lost their land and dignity to the occupying power. It is obvious that by acknowledging the primacy of Israeli security, Anwar was sending a clear message to the deep state and to Tel Aviv and Washington—that he is someone that they could trust. In contrast, the Najib government, in spite of its attempts to get closer to Washington, remains critical of Israeli aggression and intransigence. Najib has described the Israeli government as a “serial killer” and a “gangster.” This has incensed the deep state. Anwar, on the other hand, told Zionist friends in Washington two years ago that he regretted using terms such as “Zionist aggression” (Jackson Diehl “Flirting with zealotry in Malaysia” The Washington Post 28 June 2010).

Three, Anwar is the choice of the deep state for another reason which in its own reckoning is becoming almost as important as Israel. This is the rise of China and what it means for US global hegemony. Elements within the deep state appear to have convinced Obama that China is a

threat to its neighbours and to the US’s dominant role in the Asia-Pacific. Establishing a military base in Darwin, resurrecting the US’s military alliance with the Philippines, coaxing Japan to play a more overt military role in the region, instigating Vietnam to confront China over the Spratly islands, and encouraging India to counterbalance Chinese power, are all part and parcel of the larger US agenda of encircling and containing China. In pursuing this agenda the US wants reliable allies—not just friends—in Asia. In this regard, Malaysia is important because of its position as a littoral state with sovereign rights over the Straits of Melaka which is one of China’s most critical supply routes that transports much of the oil and other materials vital for its economic development. Will the containment of China lead to a situation where the hegemon determined to perpetuate its dominant power seeks to exercise control over the Straits in order to curb China’s ascendancy? Would a trusted ally in Kuala Lumpur facilitate such control?

The current Malaysian leadership does not fit the bill. It has sustained and deepened the bond of friendship between Malaysia and China through increased bilateral trade and investments. China is Malaysia’s biggest trading partner globally and Malaysia is China’s biggest trading partner within ASEAN. China is most appreciative of the fact that Malaysia under the late Tun Razak was the first non-communist country in Southeast Asia to establish diplomatic relations with China in 1974. When his son Najib became Prime Minister in April 2009, China was the first country outside ASEAN that he visited. In a number of regional and international forums, Malaysia has maintained that China is not a threat to its neighbours and does not seek global dominance. These are views that do not accord with the deep state’s bellicose stance towards China. It explains why the deep state may be inclined towards regime change in Kuala Lumpur.

Chandra Muzaffar,
21 June 2012

Source: www.globalresearch.ca



India: Thousands Wish the Dalai Lama a Happy Birthday in Dharamshala

Thousands of Tibetans, Indians, Chinese, and foreign tourists filled the courtyard of the Tsug-la Khang, the main temple in Dharamshala today to wish His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his 77th birthday.

The celebrations began early morning with prayers for the long-life of His Holiness followed by an elaborate incense burning ceremony at Lhagyal-ri.

The Dalai Lama was welcomed at the official function by Gyalwang Karmapa Rinpoche, the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commissioners, Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay, Speaker Penpa Tsering and a host of Tibetan officials.

Kishan Kapoor, local member of the Legislative Assembly and Industries Minister of the state of Himachal Pradesh led a

battery of Indian dignitaries to receive His Holiness.

Speaking on behalf of Tibetans inside and outside Tibet and the Central Tibetan Administration, Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay, in his official statement, offered His Holiness “deepest reverence, prayers, and warmest wishes.”

“Today is the most auspicious day not only for the people

of the Land of Snow but also for the entire world,” Dr Sangay said. “Though Tibetans are confronted with an unparalleled tragedy in our history, we have still been able to establish and sustain a successful and an exemplary refugee community under the visionary leadership of His Holiness.”

The Kashag, in its statement, called on Tibetans and supporters worldwide to organise a global solidarity vigil for Tibet on August 8, coinciding with the one-year anniversary of the new Kashag.

“This international vigil will remember those Tibetans who have given up their lives for Tibet and show solidarity with every Tibetan in Tibet who continues to suffer oppression under Chinese rule,” Dr Sangay said.

Kalon Tripa further announced that a long-life offering will be also presented to His Holiness on behalf of the Tibetan people and administration during the four-day Special General Meeting to be held from September 25 to 28 in Dharamsala.

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in its statement noted that the situation inside Tibet has been “deteriorating from bad to worse” with the “intimidation and violent repression” of the Tibetan people on a “war footing.”

“As a result, the situation in Tibet today is so extremely serious that a state of de facto martial law prevails there,” Speaker Penpa Tsering said. “To sum up, the Chinese government is implementing in Tibet a policy of racial contempt, racial discrimination, and racial obliteration against the Tibetan people in a manner which is all too obvious and blatant to warrant any doubt.”

Representing the people of Himachal Pradesh and his gov-



His Holiness the Dalai Lama is greeted by well-wishes on his arrival at the Main Tibetan Temple at the start of celebrations in honor of his 77th birthday in Dharamsala, India, on July 6, 2012.

Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL



Tibetan Parliament in Exile Speaker Penpa Tsering and head of the Central Tibetan Administration Dr Lobsang Sangey welcome His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the start of celebrations in honor of his 77th birthday in Dharamsala, India, on July 6, 2012.

Photo/Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

ernment, Kishan Kapoor wished the Dalai Lama a long life and thanked him for making the Indian state his second home.

“It is because of your blessings that Dharamsala and Himachal Pradesh has found a unique place in history and I pray that you, Your Holiness, live for thousands of years,” the minister said.

In his brief speech, the Dalai Lama acknowledged the courage and fortitude of the Tibetan

people inside Tibet, who he said, despite many physical impediments, were celebrating his birthday in spirit.

The 77-year-old Tibetan leader who last year devolved all his political authorities to the elected leadership noted that he personally didn’t consider celebrating birthdays important.

“For me, every day is a new day, and every day is an opportunity to benefit others.”

Source: www.phayul.com

ASEAN: South China Sea Disputes: Why ASEAN Must Unite

After teetering on the edge all through the month, the ASEAN Humpty Dumpty abruptly fell off its wall on 13 July and broke into pieces. The grouping failed to issue a joint communiqué following the meeting in Phnom Penh due to differences on how to reflect discussions on the South China Sea disputes.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa had to fly to ASEAN capitals to try to put Humpty together again by issuing a ‘common position’. However, not only Indonesia but everyone in ASEAN—as well as China and the US—(and all the king’s horses and all the king’s men) would do well to come and help seal the cracks.

For the last 45 years ASEAN has issued a joint communiqué at the end of each of its meetings. There has always been bilateral friction between member states, but this friction is normally smoothed over in meetings. Member states generally agree that ASEAN is more than the sum of its parts, and the joint statement at the end of each meeting reaffirms that the organisation is more important than any single member. Even if it reflects only the lowest common denominator, the communiqué is still a symbolic affirmation of shared strategic interests. So there is more at stake in recent events than the statement itself. A few sentences acknowledging the recent tensions between Vietnam and the Philippines and China could have sufficed. Thus it is confounding that the chair, Cambodia, was unable to forge even a minimalist consensus, though some speculate that there

were promises made to a certain non-member of the ASEAN family—China.

It should come as no surprise that Indonesia’s Natalegawa was doing the troubleshooting after the Phnom Penh summit. Though technically this is the responsibility of the ASEAN Secretary General, Thailand’s Surin Pitsuwan, Thailand and Cambodia’s relations over the Preah Vihear temple remain frayed, so Indonesia would find it easier to approach Cambodia.

By breaking with the established practice of issuing a communiqué, ASEAN sends a message that some members do not recognise the ongoing existence of shared strategic interests. Then, it is right to ask, what is the purpose of ASEAN, and what is the purpose of their being an ASEAN?

ASEAN members do share a significant strategic interest: Southeast Asia’s small and medium powers need to collectively preserve their autonomy against any great power that would dominate the region. For decades this has been ASEAN’s reason for being, and explains why Cambodia’s perceived weakness in the face of Chinese pressure and enticements is so grave. By succumbing to China, Cambodia acts against ASEAN’s most important function.

On the other hand, the Philippines is perceived to be excessively and unabashedly enthusiastic over the prospect of US intervention in the resolution of territorial disputes. US intervention may serve the Philippines’ national interest, but it unnerves many in ASEAN—even those

who quietly support a robust US presence.

After all, both the US and China have the potential to dominate Southeast Asia. Moreover, China’s assertiveness is driven by the fear that the US ‘Asian pivot’ is directed against China and that ASEAN will become Washington’s co-conspirator.

If ASEAN cannot speak with one voice, it will struggle to remain relevant. The failure in Phnom Penh not only undermines ASEAN’s ‘centrality’; it calls into question ASEAN’s ability to negotiate with other countries as a collective actor. Disunity couldn’t come at a worse time than when ASEAN is preparing to negotiate with China on a code of conduct for the South China Sea. This coincides with China’s rapid modernisation of its military and growing assertiveness.

Code of conduct negotiations will be a critical opportunity for ASEAN to pursue conflict prevention measures with China. Such measures might include a moratorium on further military expansion, military exclusion zones around disputed land features, agreements on how to deal with fishing activities in areas where there exist overlapping claims, and hotlines between leaders. The outcome of these negotiations could spell the difference between peace and armed conflict in the South China Sea.

ASEAN’s most urgent task is to ensure the effectiveness of any new code—resolving ownership issues is a lesser priority at the moment. If ASEAN members who do not

have claims in the South China Sea feel burdened by the negotiations, they might consider abstaining. The claimants (the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei) and other interested stakeholders (such as Indonesia and Singapore) should consider establishing a separate framework for code of conduct nego-

tiations with China, one preferably still under ASEAN auspices.

ASEAN fancies itself the foundation of cooperative security architecture in Asia. At the moment, though, that foundation looks decidedly shaky. If ASEAN cannot make a solid show of unity before discussions on a code of conduct begin, it throws away a

major opportunity to develop this architecture. If this happens, ASEAN could end up abdicating responsibility for managing its own regional problems to big external powers.

Aileen S. P. Baviera,
26 July 2012

Source: www.eastasiaforum.org



Burma: Love Thy Neighbor—Thai-Burmese Relations

In the last two months, Thailand has received two prominent figures from its former pariah neighbor.

Burma's Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi visited in June and now reformist President Thein Sein has just concluded a trip focusing on trade collaboration.

Despite both being hailed as successful in their own way, each carried contrasting messages to the Kingdom.

Suu Kyi's visit was to attend the World Economic Forum held in Bangkok and she received full media coverage and attention. This was a rock star visit and a huge inspiration to many Thais and migrant Burmese.

At the forum, Suu Kyi's message was to warn investors against "reckless optimism" in Burma's political reform.

"Even the best investment laws would be of no use whatsoever if there are no courts that are clean enough and independent enough to be able to administer those laws justly," she said. "This is our problem: So far we have not been aware of any reforms on the judicial front."

Was she overly pessimistic as some observers suggested? At the very least, Suu Kyi definitely contradicted the nature of Thein Sein's visit this week.



On Sunday, the former general and protégé of Snr-Gen Than Shwe landed by special flight at Don Mueang Airport. Although his arrival was rather modest compared to Suu Kyi, Thai newspapers still treated it as front page news—a sign of Burma's newfound respectability.

Thai-language radio and

television also covered the visit with discussions focusing on Burma's recent political opening and, of course, newfound business opportunities in the mysterious once-hermit nation—a traditional enemy of Thailand's ancient Lanna and Siamese kingdoms.

Upon arriving in Thailand,

Thein Sein did not beat around the bush but went straight to visit Laem Chabang deep-sea port in Chonburi Province.

His visit was transparently all about boosting business between the neighbors and inviting more investment rather than preaching democracy and human rights. Activists were bound to be disappointed, even if they were perhaps not surprised, that these thorny subjects remained conspicuously absent from talks.

The fact is Thailand is the second largest investor in Burma—bilateral trade amounted to US \$6.1 billion in 2011 and was only beaten by China.

Since 1988, a flurry of Thai generals and businessmen frequently visited Burma despite its appalling human rights record and the thousands of political prisoners kept incarcerated. The bottom line is that Thailand never missed an opportunity to develop commercial relations.

More importantly, Thai leaders were the ones who broke Burma's diplomatic isolation under Gen Saw Maung after he staged a bloody coup in September 1988. Then Thai Army Chief Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh led businessmen on a controversial visit to Burma. He was not to be disappointed with the results.

So it is not surprising to see that Thai-Burmese relations remain strong despite occasional hiccups over the past decade.

On Monday, Thein Sein, who once served as commander of Triangle Command overseeing the Thailand, Laos and Burma border area, signed three Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) aimed at tightening economic links between Burma and Thailand.

The MoUs focused on the Dawei (Tavoy) deep-sea port on Burma's southwest coast as well as development cooperation in

Burma and joint energy sector projects. There is a plan to link Dawei with Laem Chabang to dramatically cut transport time between central Thailand and Chennai in India.

In a brief press conference in Bangkok, Thein Sein thanked Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra for her country's "ongoing support for political and economic reforms." During the press conference Yingluck did most of the talking and it was all about economic issues.

Thailand cannot readily afford to lose Dawei—the multi-billion-dollar port and special economic zone project is in doubt following Naypyidaw's rejection of a coal-fired power plant in the area and the withdrawal of domestic partner the Max Myanmar Group. Thai construction conglomerate Italian-Thai Development, which is the scheme's major backer, is reportedly struggling to raise the finance needed to make it happen.

But at the conference, Yingluck thanked Thein Sein for his "reaffirmed commitment to Dawei" and added that "both sides agreed to build connectivity between Dawei and Laem Chabang," referring to the Thai Gulf port 100 km southeast of Bangkok that Thein Sein visited on Sunday, and which will be linked to Dawei by road, according to current plans.

Thein Sein also met Thailand's top executives from Charoen Pokphand, Siam Cement Group and the Petroleum Authority of Thailand who will soon be investing more in Burma.

There is no doubt that Thai investors are upbeat as Western nations, including the US, ease sanctions on Burma as they know their neighbor still has plenty to offer. Although there is more discussion needed on how Thai-

land's business investments will be protected, Thais are quite optimistic that Burma's recent political and economic opening will not make an abrupt U-turn. There is even renewed interest among Thais to learn the Burmese language.

Burma's natural energy resources will be the biggest area of mutual interest between the neighboring countries. Yingluck visited Burma last year and deals announced at the time included two Burmese oil field concessions granted to Thailand.

Thailand has few domestic energy supplies and benefits greatly by having a source of natural gas sitting next door. As one Thai scholar puts it, Burma is "Thailand's energy lifeline."

There is also a political dynamic to this relationship—it is fitting to see Burma becoming more open as the Shinawatra clan reassumes power in Thailand. Their mutual economic and political interests will no doubt lead to a period of increased interaction.

Last year, ex-Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra visited Burma once again. During his visit, Thaksin had a chance to meet ex-junta chief Than Shwe despite no longer being officially involved in government business since retirement. However, there is little doubt that Than Shwe, though formally out of the picture, remains the key patron of the present regime.

When word of Thaksin's visit leaked in the media, the former Thai premier said that he traveled to "smooth the way" for his sister's trip—indeed, Yingluck subsequently visited Burma soon after her brother.

Thaksin, the billionaire media mogul-turned-politician-turned-fugitive, has had his eyes on the "excellent prospects" of Burma's tourism industry for

many years now. When serving as prime minister, he proposed the construction of a ski resort in the snow-capped mountains of Kachin State and the development of the unspoiled beaches of Arakan State. Lately, he was said to express interest in the Dawei project.

But despite the obvious economic incentives for Thailand, there are many areas the two countries need to focus on. The long border dividing the neighbors has been a source of tension for generations and remains so today as old grudges and prejudices remain.

In spite of the sweet handshake and exchange of smiles in Bangkok, historical pressures remain between the two nations.

Burma's sacking of the Siamese capital Ayutthaya in 1767 is still taught in Thai schools, and the Burmese are still portrayed as bad neighbors and socially inferior in Thai dramas and soap operas. There is no shortage of news on the ill treatment and exploitation of Burmese migrant workers in Thailand.

Conversely, the Burmese also remain distrustful toward Thais. In the past, the regime in Burma accused Thailand of harboring dissidents and rebels to stage attacks on Burma, and in return the Thais accused Burma of flooding it with speed pills and heroin.

Amid this quarrelling, Burmese ethnic minority insurgents operate in border jungles and around two million Burmese migrant workers are currently

employed in Thailand. Burmese refugees who fled civil wars live in the camps on Thai soil which Suu Kyi visited last June, and Burma's political exiles still search for a safe haven in Thailand.

The flow of drugs and the other illegal activities of armed groups including human smuggling remain a major source of concern.

Recently, around 80 Thai citizens were detained in southern Burma after they were accused of sneaking across the border. Burmese security forces seized timber-cutting machinery, bulldozers and trucks allegedly being used for illegal logging.

Indeed, the over 2,400 km border remains a source of tension. When relations reached their low ebb in the early 2000s, serious skirmishes broke out and the two countries engaged in a war of both words and rockets.

Both fired mortars into the other's border towns and military encampments, while the Burmese government published several articles openly attacking prominent figures in Thailand. It added further fuel to the fire by introducing a new history textbook for fourth graders that portrayed Burma's neighbors to the east as servile and lazy, and the Thais returned the favor by routinely discriminating against Burmese migrant workers inside Thailand.

Now, by contrast, Thais respect the names Suu Kyi and Thein Sein and, of course, relish doing business in resource-rich Burma. It is hoped that Thai-

land's attitude toward Burma will eventually change, and the Burmese will begin to understand how to co-exist with a neighbor.

As of now, deep-seated mistrust and uneasy feelings remain. But if Burma continues to open up and prosper there can be a new-found friendship between the two nations and a new dimension to Thai-Burmese relations will develop. Yet this remains hard to foretell at this stage.

Lastly, one should not overlook ethnic groups, many of whom are currently involved in peace talks with Naypyidaw, who also play a crucial role in the borderlands. They will not take kindly to being a pawn in these new business deals inked between governments.

Karen, Shan, Karenni and Mon leaders remain skeptical and cautious toward Burma's overtures and approach—they will undoubtedly be wary over increased business relations between Thailand and Burma. The question remains who will suffer from these megaprojects in ethnic regions? And similarly, who stands to profit?

Several bilateral projects including power plants, hydro-power dams and the opening of more border checkpoints will directly involve ethnic regions. These schemes require the restoration of stability and peace. More importantly, the people who live there must see a fair share of the benefits.

Aung Zaw,

24 July 2012

Source: www.irrawaddy.org

Did you renew your subscription?

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

Laos: Asia-Europe People's Forum in Vientiane, Laos PDR, October 2012

Every two years a meeting between heads of state from Europe and Asia (ASEM) is being held, by rotation in an Asian or European country. Independent civil society meetings are organized prior to these exchanges. This year the 9th ASEM will be held in Vientiane, the capital of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Sombath Somphone, Magsaysay Award recipient and founder of PADETC, a leading NGO in Laos, is the co-chairman of the civil society conference. Sombath presided in 2007 over the "GNH3" opening ceremony at Wat Hin Mak Peng, Nongkhai, at the border of the Mekong River just opposite Vientiane. The ceremony initiated the 3rd international conference on Gross National Happiness with shared inter-religious prayers and folk theatre. GNH3 participants from all over the world joined the symbolic *Loy Krathong* festival and floated flowers in the Mekong River to express concern for its eco-system under threat of commercial damming. According to Sombath, placing "happiness" policies on the ASEM agenda would help to transcend political and cultural differences towards a more visionary Asia-Europe cooperation.

The first ASEM was held in Bangkok, Thailand, in 1996. Sulak Sivaraksa delivered the opening speech at the initial Asia Europe People's Forum (AEPF) prior to the heads of state meeting. His speech was titled "Beyond Geo-economics. Reconceptualizing Euro-Asia Rela-



A TOA team visits Tha Tang Organic Farm in Paksé, Laos.

tions". His proposal for self-organized, civil-society driven exchanges on socio-economic development and political transformation in a perspective of cultural integrity, is still valid today. Sulak has been a long-standing partner of CCFD-Terre Solidaire, a major French NGO supporting the people's forum. During the upcoming AEPF in Vientiane, 16-19 October 2012, the *Towards Organic Asia* (TOA) project of the School for Well-being will conduct a 'strategic' workshop. The workshop will be opened with presentations of a group of young organic farmers from the Mekong + Bhutan ecoregion. Young organic farmers and activists are planning to gather at a PADETC farm in Paksé, north of Laos 11-15 October. From there they will travel to join the AEPF meeting in Vientiane. The farm is one of

seven PADETC farms started-up from the Magsaysay Award earned by Sombath Somphone. Tha Tang Organic Farm in Paksé is run completely by a group of young agriculturalists. The AEPF workshop will provide a platform for strategic planning to support a pro-active role of young people towards food security, seed sovereignty and the future of 'agroecology'.

The motto of the *Towards Organic Asia* (TOA) project boldly states: "organic agriculture is the heart of global transformation". Partners from Bhutan play an important role in the TOA project. Bhutan, land of Gross National Happiness (GNH), voices grave concerns regarding the glacier-ecosystem of the Himalayas and Tibetan Plateau where the Mekong River and most great rivers of Asia find their sources. Bhutan has



*Stéphane Hessel, author of Time for Outrage;
and Pierre Rabhi, poet, pioneer of agroecology in France and Africa.*

declared, in the light of climate change—and to strengthening community resilience to reverse urban migration—a **forward-looking “100% organic country”- policy.**

The *Towards Organic Asia Mekong region + Bhutan collaboration* (the start of a broader Asian network), with support of partner-organization CCFD-Terre Solidaire, has been initiated as a backbone for an innovative Asia-Europe cooperative network.

CCFD-Terre Solidaire is an NGO characterized by its domestic network of French—locally rooted—volunteers. From this perspective an international gathering is contemplated related to GNH and likeminded efforts in Europe aiming at transforming “development paradigms”, probably to be held in Grenoble, France, at the end of 2013. Grenoble is, similar to Thimphu—the capital of Bhutan—surrounded by mountains. It is situated in the Rhône-Alpes, a French region which mirrors the ecosystem of the Mekong River, the Tibetan Plateau and the Himalayas in Asia.

“Roosevelt 2012” in France

Recently Stéphane Hessel and Edgar Morin launched the ‘**Roosevelt 2012**’ campaign, supported by some 60 well-known French opinion leaders. Among them Patrick Viveret, philosopher, who inspired FAIR (= Forum pour d’ Autres Indicateurs de Richesse). The School for Wellbeing was invited by CCFD-Terre Solidaire to conduct a workshop, together with FAIR, on new ways of measuring “wealth”. The workshop took place at a Summer University held in Lyon. How to overcome growing economic inequality, share wealth, between groups within societies; and between countries? The Summer University, a national event with links to the World Social Forum, was a welcome opportunity to anticipate Asia-Europe collaboration towards “a new global social contract”, and a possible international “Forum Grenoble” in France in 2013. Pierre Rabhi, poet and pioneer of agro-ecology in France and North-Africa, closed the Summer University in his characteristic way.

Stéphane Hessel, author of the *Indignez Vous* (*Time for Out-*

rage), is a retired top-diplomat and former resistance leader. The social movement stirred-up by his book resonates with the *Occupy Wall Street* campaign. He calls for re-thinking the Bretton Woods conference, USA 1944, where world leaders agreed to the “Washington Consensus”. The “consensus” shaped the financial architecture still dominating our world economics today, albeit that in 1971 the ‘golden standard’—currencies pegged to real value of gold—was abandoned (under pressure of excessive spending on the Vietnam War). This left the world economy with no real common currency standard and with no universal indicator for progress but ‘Gross Domestic Product’, which was not designed for it. “GDP” as indicator of progress has been criticized repeatedly, lately by the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission, but no consistent alternative policy framework and adequate index for sustainable development has been generally adopted.

The “Bhutan Initiative”

Simultaneously a likeminded campaign to restructuring the



Prime Minister of Bhutan Jigmi Y. Thinley delivers the opening speech at the IFOAM's Sustainable Development Learning Event, Rio+20 (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements).

“Washington Consensus”, and to providing a new impulse for local economies, has been launched from a totally different corner of the world. After an incubation-period of some 40 years, and under the title “Well-being & Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm”, the “**Bhutan Initiative**” has been launched at the UN Headquarters in New York, 2 April 2012 www.2Apr.gov.bt, following unanimous adoption by the General Assembly of a Resolution (65/309 Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development) proposed by Bhutan.

GNH: defining a new economic paradigm

Some encouraging examples of GNH implementation-’ on the ground’ are: the provision of free medical services and free education; a pro-active anti-corruption policy; minimum land property for all extended families; the target of 100% electrification and free access to the media; a strict maximum to land ownership; and, extensive community forestry arrangements in

addition to radical preservation of forests in national sanctuaries. Restrictions on tourism. Bhutan decided, based on screening by GNH criteria, to not become a WTO member; and to not extend the practice of mining. In 2008 the ‘GNH Index’ was launched which monitors wellbeing through 9 domains and subsequent indicators.

From this practical approach, a discussion on universal governance principles regarding **Public Common Goods** is emerging. It was the major research question of the international exchange-platform *Rethinking Property. Pathway to a Wellbeing Society scenario?* organized by the School for Wellbeing at Chulalongkorn University in August 2011.

Bhutan’s position and transformational impulse has been articulated in the Rio+20 document *Time for a Sustainable Economic Paradigm*:

“And so, the Kingdom of Bhutan wishes to invite the nations, economists, and ecologists of the world to come together in hammer-

ing out a new international consensus on a new sane, sustainability-based global economic paradigm, based on the best available scientific and expert knowledge. It will be a new Bretton Woods to replace an outdated system that simply no longer works either for the planet or for people.

The new system will require new measures of progress and new national accounts that value our wealth properly and comprehensively (including natural capital and its depletion and degradation), and that properly account for the full benefits and costs of economic activity. And—just as Bretton Woods 1944 established the World Bank and IMF to manage the old growth-based economic paradigm—so the new Bretton Woods will require us to re-design and refashion these global institutions to manage and regulate the new system and ensure proper implementation.”

“Post-Rio+20” efforts towards a new development paradigm, and a global social contract, now address the negotiations regarding the **Millennium Development Goals Beyond 2015**. Recently three co-chairs of a High-Level UN Panel were appointed: David Cameron, PM of England, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia, 2011 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia. Civic action to guide this defining global policy development process is urgently needed. The NGO umbrella ‘Beyond 2015’ has nominated civil society rep-

representatives.

Within this context, Bhutan proposes to host in 2014 (to be confirmed) a high-level meeting on re-designing the Bretton-Woods system, and on establishing agreement on a sustainable economic paradigm. The country is well-equipped for such high-level international meeting that will urge stakeholders to look at global challenges from

different angles, including visions from the ‘least developed countries’.

The proposed conference in Grenoble, could provide the unique connection between the French ‘Roosevelt 2012’ campaign, and related independent organizations and persons, with the ‘Bhutan Initiative’, building a bridge between locally based movements in Asia and in

Europe, in a process towards a new global “Himalayan consensus”.

Hans van Willenswaard

Contact persons:

Thanapol Kheolamai,
TOA Coordinator, Thailand
thanapol@schoolforwellbeing.org
Stéphanie Genteuil,
intern School for Wellbeing, France
steph.genteuil@hotmail.co.uk

Siam: M. L. Bunluea Thepyasuwan : A Civilized Woman

M.L. Bunluea Thepyasuwan (1911-1982) was a revered teacher of literature, a novelist, and a leading contributor to the development of Thai education during the Thai twentieth century. Ajarn Sulak Sivarak could well have been describing her, when he wrote these words:

“The Duty of a Teacher”

I say that the ideal, the best teachers are those who work to lift the spirits of their students, and who serve society by struggling to impart the idea of taking responsibility in good times and bad. Their teaching encompasses all that pertains to honor and dignity between human beings. They are interested in issues of morality, [good] governance, and protection of the natural environment. It is no longer enough for a teacher to be focused only on the narrow world of the school and the classroom. The teacher must represent a connection between the school, and the world beyond; and between youths



<http://th.wikipedia.org>

and adults, in order to obviate the gaps that continue to prevail.

An interesting example of M.L. Bunluea’s efforts to teach beyond the classroom, through her fiction, is her unusual and controversial utopian novel, *Suratnari*, published in 1972. She said that her first objective was to tell an entertaining story in which shipwrecked men find themselves in a strange and exotic land that was very like

Siam in some ways, yet its opposite in others. But it was her secondary objective that interests us most, forty years later. The novel was to be edifying, and inspiring: readers would learn how Thai society could be improved, if they would build on the strengths of the Siamese past, including Buddhist ideals of personal conduct and national will. These traditional ideals could and should be melded with contemporary ideas concerning gender equality and the wise use of technology.

In the fictional kingdom of *Suratnari*, all positions of power and influence are held by women, while men’s lives are very like women’s lives in the Thailand her readers knew. But gender equality, or, in the Thai parlance of the 1970s, “wimmin’ lip,” was generally considered to be an unappealing Western concept, and few Thai women (to say nothing of Thai men) found the ideas behind the slogans to be compelling. Even in the pages of *Suratnari*, a scene in which Western women are described

portrays them as large, loud, graceless creatures. The leaders of Bunluea's imaginary kingdom, on the other hand, are graceful, attractive, and feminine—in a commanding way. Daughters are favored over sons, as illustrated in the following gleeful description of a typical Thai-Surat family on an outing, a reversal of typical family behavior in Thai-Siam:

When the Suratians go out as a family, the woman leads. Her manner bespeaks her role as leader. One can see that she is clever, and wise.... The sons are pushed back a bit, they walk behind, while the daughters stride forward to walk with the head of the family. Some of these heads of families carry small children in their arms, but when they tire, they give them to the older boys to hold. (Bunluea, *Suratnari*, Bangkok: Phrae Phitthaya, 1972, page 373)

In the novel's 841 pages, Bunluea shared a lifetime of reflections on relationships between Thai men and women.

She had just retired from the civil service, and some of her long-standing grudges related to her career, including a glass ceiling that no one denied, were reflected in the details of personalities and careers in the novel. However, some of the lady readers of Thailand were infuriated by the lady leaders of Suratnari. They did not expect the heroines of their novels to have high level jobs and opinions on national development, much less husbands—and “minor husbands.”

Beyond gender issues, Bunluea indirectly critiqued the Thai political and economic realities of the early 1970s, when the kingdom remained closely allied with the U.S., and was its ally in the devastating war in Thailand's neighboring nations. She made it clear that domestic Thai development projects were, in her estimation, becoming ever less attractive, and more worrisome. In *Suratnari*, women leaders worked diligently to improve the environment, and to protect the air, water, and land of Surat. In the Thailand of 1972, more immediate and materialistic

goals took precedence. It was an edifying, even a “speechifying” novel, and was the least popular of her books. She was disappointed that only a few literary colleagues were enthusiastic about it. Now, however, with the hindsight of four decades, Suratnari stands as an important source of social history, and I think that that would please her. Many of the imperatives that predominate in *Suratnari* are of great concern in Thailand today, particularly that of preserving and protecting the natural environment. It is often said that “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.” Occasionally, a teacher arrives before the students are ready for the lesson that has been prepared.

Susan F. Kepner
University of California,
Berkeley

(This article contains excerpts from a forthcoming biography: Susan F. Kepner, *A Civilized Woman: M.L. Boonluea Thepyasuwan and the Thai Twentieth Century*, Silk-worm Books.)



Siam: Secret Doctrine of Wat Phra Dhammakaya

Abstract

The exponential growth of the controversial Wat Phra Dhammakaya from a small group of Buddhists, disciples of the Venerable PhraMongkoltheppuni, the late abbot of WatPaknam Bhasicharoen, is phenomenal. Within three decades, the community which had about ten permanent members who settled in the district of Kloungloug, Pathumthani grew to thousands,

well-organized with over forty branches overseas and millions of followers worldwide. Throughout the period of aggressive expansion, the community has been shrouded with waves of controversies on various grounds. The secret teaching of meditation taught by the leaders of the community is behind the inspiration for thousands of young graduates, men and women, from various universities to sacrifice their

lives to serve their Master that Buddhism in Thailand or Theravada World has never seen before. What is the nature of this secret teaching? What is the source of its power? How is it taught? How does it develop? Why is it so appealing to the young minds to devote their lives and future to the authority of the community? What is the worldview of this community? These questions are discussed



and analyzed by first-hand experience of the author who was one of its founding members.

Introduction

The rise of Wat Phra Dhammakaya as a well organized urban Buddhist movements undeniable unique in the history of Thailand. After three and a half decades, the wat is now as a well established international centre of Buddhist movements. Apart from millions of followers in Thailand it has over forty branches overseas, two satellite televisions broadcasting in four languages and projects for constructing an international university. All these achievements were possible without governmental support. In fact they were gained through continuous struggles of the members of the *wat* under the leadership of Phra Chaiboon Dhammajayo. Most of the time these struggles were not only against the public criticism in the media, state interventions, juridical authority and even injunctions of the top administrators of the ecclesiastical community of Thailand.

During the first decade of the *wat*, when the Cold War in Thailand was at its peak, the military

was highly suspicious of its motives and involvement with communism as the community could attract a huge mass of students to join its activities. The second decade saw a massive expansion of the community into its neighbouring areas. Thousands of acres of land were purchased for wide scale expansion of its physical territory, incurring protest and demonstration from the local farmers. The third decade saw the *wat's* involvement with grandiose financial investments, massive fund raising and scandal over its mysterious administration. Until now, there has not been any Buddhist community in Thailand worse hit by such scandals than Wat Phra Dhammakaya and could manage more than just to survive.

Critics of the monastery often focus on the power of the financial management of the *wat* and the administration skills of the leaders of Wat Phra Dhammakaya as the source for its achievement, whereas the teaching of Dhammakaya meditation is simply judged as unorthodox. Those who shared enough experience in the community know that the authority of the community's leadership is solely allo-

cated to the charisma of Phra-Chaiboon Dhammajayo endorsed by the myths of secret teachings of Dhammakaya Meditation. Legends and secret anecdotes he selectively delivered to his core followers were the foundation of his identity that made him revered, and his words are taken as commandments.

Some of these legends, stories of miracles and secret teaching are parts of the original teaching of the late abbot of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen which is passed through Phra Dhammajayo. When they are combined with the community discipline employed by the leadership of Wat Phra Dhammakaya creates the strongest charisma of a Buddhist leadership ever walked on earth as perceived by his followers.

Being once an insider and one of the leaders on the board of administration of the *wat* who have successfully reformed the structure of the organization in 1989 - 90, and also a scholar in Buddhism and history of world religions, I am both blessed and cursed in presenting this paper. Since I have realized the academic values in bringing up the secret teaching of Wat Phra

Dhammakaya, apparently a new body of knowledge, this material should be brought to the attention of international scholars and theologians. The information will greatly benefit the academic world. Nevertheless, I have also realized the burden of impartiality that I should take as a scholar, and the necessity to move away from prejudice and bias, pros and cons, in the issue which have deeply affected the course of my own life. This paper is, therefore, written with the intention not to discredit or to support Wat Phra

Dhammakaya and its leadership, but to present the content of teaching which once I so deeply shared with other members of the Dhammakaya community as impartial and objective as possible for academic purposes.

Mano MettanandoLaohavanich¹
(Formerly: Ven. Dr. Mettanando Bhikkhu),
Lecturer, Pridi Banomyong
International College,
Thammasat University

The paper was prepared to be delivered at the Thai Buddha Jayanti Festival,

marking the 2600 years of the Supreme Enlightenment of the Founder of Buddhism, organized by Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University in May 2012, but because of Wat Phra Dhammakaya's influence, the paper was not allowed to be delivered. However, one can read it in *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* ISSN 1076-9005 <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/> Volume 19, 2012

¹ The author was one of the top leaders of Wat Phra Dhammakaya and Dhammakaya Foundation who had 19 years of experience in the movement.

Japan: Japanese Buddhists' Increasing Involvement in Anti-Nuclear Activism

The massive, by Japanese standards, protest against the restart of the Oi nuclear reactors which took place Friday night (June 29) in downtown Tokyo in front of the parliament building and the official residence of the prime minister felt different, historic even, and perhaps a watershed in Japan's now two decade struggle to find a new post-industrial social paradigm. What was different that stood out was:

A marked increase in diversity of the participants

Most of the demonstrations I have attended since April of 2011, shortly after the Fukushima incident happened, have been dominated by long time social activists over the age of 50, often representing labor groups but also including the wide variety of citizens groups that have arisen over the last 15 years in Japan. Demonstrations that have been held in the western parts of Tokyo



*The Final Push Towards the Prime Minister's Residence
(Satoru Semba Asahi Shimbun)*

near trendy centers of youth such as Shibuya, Harajuku and Shinjuku have often been well attended by the increasing numbers of *furita/freeter*. These are young Japanese in their 20s and

30s who have dropped out of mainstream employment in companies and are developing various types of alternative lifestyles. Their numbers are estimated somewhere between 4

and 8 million people. However, within minutes of arriving at the protest site last Friday, I noticed a greater diversity, especially young working professionals who have generally kept quite a distance from previous demonstrations.

Although less conspicuous, I also noticed for the first time at an anti-nuclear demonstration a university students group which was acting as a coalition of groups from different universities. While many university students did become involved in volunteer relief work in the tsunami affected areas, they have generally shown no interest in becoming involved in the nuclear issue. They have appeared not only fearful of endangering their job prospects by getting involved in civil disobedience but also completely out of touch and apathetic with social issues that go beyond their own interests in personal advancement.

Real spontaneity and civil disobedience

For foreigners, especially Europeans accustomed to taking the streets about social issues, participating in a demonstration in Japan feels like a shocking mockery of the very concept of public protest and civil disobedience. Almost all demonstrations in Japan are planned in advance with the consent of the police. While providing assistance and tacit protection against small groups of right-wing fanatics, they also ensure that the demonstrations follow their prescribed routes and do not inconvenience the normal flow of traffic or public life in the streets. The demonstration on June 29 was my first experience counter to this.

As the numbers continued to



Buddhist Priests and Laypeople from AYUS & JNEB

swell from 5:30 to 7:00 pm, the protest could not be contained on the sidewalks or even one lane into the street. By 7:00 there was a dual push by the now massive crowd, probably in the neighborhood of 40,000 though estimates vary from 17,000 to 150,000. One group at the top of the hill surged into the road in front of the prime minister's residence forcing the police to move armored buses across it to block them. Meanwhile a second surge occurred at the bottom of the hill in front of the parliament building. And suddenly the entire street of some 400 meters in length had been taken over by the crowd, cutting off all traffic and leaving the police relatively helpless to re-establish order. While the protest did end in a timely manner at 8:00 with the typical civility of both police and protesters, there was some anger amongst the demonstrators themselves towards the organizers who cooperated with the police and used their loudspeakers to tell everyone to go home. Their reasoning was so that future protests would not be forbidden. However, many

felt with the restart of the Oi reactors only 48 hours away that the future was right now and voiced their displeasure to these organizers.

A coordinated Buddhist presence

From this writer's own personal interest, this demonstration was the first at which a coordinated group of Buddhists participated beyond the regular activism of the small Nipponzan Myohoji order. A small but not insignificant group of 8 Buddhist priests and at least 5 lay followers representing AYUS (a Japanese Buddhist development NGO increasingly involved in the nuclear issue) and the Japan Network of Engaged Buddhists (JNEB) gathered amidst the crowd and, holding high the Buddhist flag, maintained a presence throughout the demonstration.

From the moment I arrived at the site at 5:30, I quickly found a small group of Nipponzan Myohoji priests and lay followers through the sound of their drums. As a way of orienting myself to the situation, I followed

them through the streets as we chanted the *daimoku*, refuge to the *Lotus Sutra*. After connecting up with our other Buddhist friends, we camped out for an hour on the corner of Roppongi Avenue, the entrance to the street on which the parliament building and the prime minister's residence is located. Spontaneously connecting with a group of *furita*, we engaged, as did the entire crowd, in chants of "Against the Start Up", with one of our members Rev. Kobo Inoue, a Jodo Pure Land priest, grabbing a bullhorn and leading the crowd. By 7:00 we began to move up the hill and take part in the push to take over the entire street in front of the parliament building. Along the way, we met up with Rev. Hidehito Okochi, a Jodo Pure Land priest and longtime anti-nuclear activist and NGO leader, carrying his banner expressing the incompatibility of the Pure Land and nuclear weapons and energy. As we moved up the hill to the demonstration's peaked conclusion in front of the armored buses at the entrance to the Prime Minister's residence, I kept running into followers of the Nipponzan Myohoji and their endless chanting and drumming of refuge in the Lotus Sutra.

While our numbers may have seemed insignificant, our coordinated presence was symbolic of the Japanese Buddhist world's increased interest and activism in the nuclear issue. It took over 6 months for any Buddhist denomination to make a public declaration on the Fukushima incident and nuclear power in Japan. Subsequently, the Japan Buddhist Federation, representing all the traditional sects, made an official anti-nuclear statement on December 6, 2011.



Rev. Kobo Inoue leads the call "Against the Start Up"!

Since then, the monastic congresses of numerous Buddhist denominations (such as Soto Zen and Jodo Shin Otani Pure Land) made critical declarations in February of this year on the future use of nuclear power in Japan and also adopted platforms and specific regulations on the use of alternative energies within their own denominations. Jodo Shin Otani, one of the three largest traditional Buddhist denominations in Japan, also made a public appeal to Prime Minister Noda on June 12th to not allow the restart of the Oi reactors. Rev. Taitsu Kono—the present Chief Priest of the Myoshin-ji sect of the Rinzai Zen denomination and recently retired President of the Japan Buddhist Federation—has also become an increasingly popular figure in the media for his connecting the complicity of Japanese Buddhists in World War II to their complicity with nuclear power.

All these actions are very much in the wake of the leadership shown by the small Inter Faith Forum for the Review of National Nuclear Policy, of

which the aforementioned Rev. Okochi is a leader. The Forum has brought together Buddhist, Shinto, and Christian priests to grapple with the nuclear issue since 1993. In mid-April, they held a major three day symposium in Fukushima bringing together citizens, local activists, and Buddhist priests all working to cope with the ongoing crisis there. They also responded to the increased effort of the Noda administration to restart the Oi reactors by creating an ecumenical rally of 100 religious leaders at the Fukui prefectural offices on May 30 to petition the local government to reject Tokyo's push for the restart. This event was well covered by the mass media, which has a tendency to ignore the social efforts of religious groups.

Conclusions:

Whether the protest of June 29 becomes a watershed or not is still not easy to discern as the conservative center of Japanese society continues to appear unmoveable. However, now more than a year after the events of

3/11, the nuclear issue has not faded away. Despite an inconsistent civil protest movement since that time, there appears to be a continually growing sentiment against nuclear power, as seen in two-thirds of Japanese polled as against the restart of the Oi reactors. This sentiment is very symbolic of a much larger trend in Japan—a kind of social awakening, perhaps not seen since the mass disillusionment with the government at the end of the World War II.

A young housewife and mother at the June 29th demonstration was quoted as saying, “Japanese have not spoken out against the national government. Now, we have to speak out, or the government will endanger us all.” (*New York Times*, June 29) For some four decades, Japanese have thought nuclear power was safe, because the government and

the big companies—standards of this nation and its people—were operating it. This long held sentiment that the government and the big companies were looking out for the best interest of the people has been deteriorating over the last decade of economic failure and structural readjustment. Since the Fukushima incident, the public exposure of the nuclear village—the collusive alliance of government, big business, scientists and academics, and media—has seen this sentiment hit a new low. With or without its government, the people of Japan seem to be ready, and perhaps even eager, to move forward into a new future that not only ensures environmental integrity but also the lifestyle integrity and psycho-spiritual integrity that have been sacrificed over the last half century drive for industrial modernism.

A final image of this nascent new age was the live U-stream feed last night (Sunday July 1) from in front of the Oi nuclear complex as it began its restart. Hundreds of anti-nuclear protesters drummed, danced, and shouted, “Against the Start Up”! Who were these people? Yes, some appeared to be those old leftist activists, but for the most part they were *furita*. Not worried about being at work at 9:00 the next morning, they danced and drummed and shouted well beyond midnight. Will this growing number of “drop-outs” be given the space to help build the new Japan or will they just grab it instead?

Jonathan S. Watts

International Buddhist Exchange

Center (IBEC)

Yokohama

2 July 2012

Sri Lanka: Detainees and Detention Centers

“The treatment of prisoners should emphasize not their exclusion from the community, but their continuing part in it. Community agencies should, therefore, be enlisted wherever possible to assist the staff of the institution in the task of social rehabilitation of the prisoners. There should be in connection with every institution social workers charged with the duty of maintaining and improving all desirable relations of a prisoner with his family and with valuable social agencies. Steps should be taken to safeguard, to the maximum extent compatible with the law and the sentence, the rights relating to civil interests, social

security rights and other social benefits of prisoners. (No 61, Guiding Principles, Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners)^[1]

Introduction

The Government of Sri Lanka is currently holding approximately eight thousand individuals under administrative detention without charge or trial. They are alleged former associates of the LTTE and therefore required to undergo ‘rehabilitation’ under Sri Lanka’s 2005 emergency regulations.^[2] Hundreds of others have been screened and held separately for criminal prosecution.

Whilst not an emergency law per se the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act (‘PTA’) is relevant to the emergency laws in Sri Lanka. Adopted in 1979 as a temporary measure in response to growing political violence in the North, it contains broad security-related offences, and wide powers of search, arrest and detention. Shortly after the introduction of the PTA, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concluded that it “violates norms of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by Sri Lanka, as well as other generally accepted international standards of criminal procedure, by permit-

ting prolonged detention on administrative order without access to lawyers and the use of evidence possibly obtained under duress.” (ICJ Mission Report 1981, p75).”

Overcrowding. All these institutions come within the administrative purview of the prison department. According to data obtained from the Superintendent of Prisons, the number of closed prisons for convicted prisoners had increased to three, the number of remand prisons had increased to eighteen and the number of work camps had increased to eight. The estimated daily population at prison stood at 17,982 persons comprising convicted, unconvicted, detainees and condemned prisoners, as well as prisoners on appeal and those remanded under PTA. Out of this number, 76.9% prisoners are serving their sentences for non-payment of fines; the majority of prisoners are male and under 40 years of age; a total percentage of 63% of the convicted offenders are first time offenders; 75.4% of the detainees are short term detainees (in prison for a period extending from under 14 days to 6 months) and overcrowding of prisons is at the estimated rate of 461.7% for remanded prisoners. The number of prisoners has steadily increased throughout the years, thus in 2002, unpublished prison statistics revealed that the daily average number of prisoners was at 18,000. Currently, the prisons are estimated to hold more than 28,000 prisoners.

Inadequate Facilities & Inhuman Treatment. Most recent studies, including one from the Lawyers for Human Rights and Development, have found that the detainees are not provided with the most basic facilities

Rehabilitation Institutions in Sri Lanka

Category	Number
Closed prisons for convicted persons	03
Remand prisons[3]	14
Work Camps	05
Open prison camps	02
Training schools for youthful offenders	01
Correctional centers for youthful offenders	02
Drug rehabilitation centers	01
Work release centers	01
Lock-ups	28

such as mats, pillows, clothes, plates, cups and buckets etc, due to lack of funds. Remand prisoners complained, during a visit to the Welikada prison by a former Commissioner General of Prisons, that there was lack of ventilation and the prisons were infested with bugs and cockroaches.

There were also complaints of no electric light bulbs in good working order in the cells, and inadequate water for drinking and washing purposes. Sanitation facilities were also extremely inadequate. During the same visit, it was observed that there were only eight functioning toilets for the entire population of 1,400 remanded prisoners in the Welikada prisons.

Insofar as convicted prisoners were concerned, the lack of facilities was equally bad. Prison food was adequate, but of poor quality and was not prepared in a sanitized environment. It was also observed that prisoners complained about the inadequate medical facilities as the Welikada prisons, where a medical officer attended the prisoner for only two hours per day with insufficient time to examine the prisoners.

New Buildings and More Budget Needed. There are

three^[3] main prisons in Sri Lanka: Welikada, Bogambara and Mahara. These are over 125 years old, multi-storied buildings made of lime, sand and bricks and wooden floors and have long outlived their usefulness. It has become an extremely difficult task to keep these dilapidated buildings in a fit state for human occupation with the meager funds made available to the Department. These prisons were built to house the prisoners of the 19th century. They are definitely not fit to hold the prisoners of the 21st century.

Today the prisons have to be kept under high security conditions with various underworld gangs (sometimes with high political connection), foreign drug traffickers who are members of International Drug Syndicate, Kingpins of local drug trade, terrorists, and dangerous criminals among its occupants. The need is never felt more than now for at least two maximum security prisons to keep these dangerous types of offenders.

Overcrowding of remand prisoners has caused severe pressures in the 3 main prisons built only for convicted prisoners. For several years almost half of Welikada, Bogambara and Mahara Prisons had to be set

apart for remand prisoners. Overcrowding means not only a problem of space. It is a problem regarding water toilet facilities, recreation and other equipment. Facilities meant for 100 prisoners have to be utilized by over 300. It is therefore, a compelling need to start on a new building programme to develop a safe and effective prison system. Without such a building programme it would be impossible to solve the current problem of severe overcrowding and guarding of high security prisons.

Though the country has the experience of the establishment of several new police stations, court houses, which has resulted in more arrests and more remanding of suspects there have been no parallel increase in prison establishments. It is very unfortunate that successive governments have paid very little attention to the expansion of the prisons service.

Revision of Prison Laws has been a long felt need. A committee under the chairmanship of retired Supreme Court Judge, O.S.M. Seneviratne has concluded the revision of the Prison Ordinance and the subsidiary legislation. The report had been submitted to the Minister of

Justice over 2 1/2 years back (in 2009).

Major Issues

Large number of prisoners without trial

Inhuman degrading treatment in prisons and in detention centers

Overcrowding

Unofficial detention centers

Prisoners languish due to undue delay in court

Case of remand prisoners not followed up. As a result, some have even been in remand prison for nearly 50 years.

Challenge for Justice

Reliance on emergency regulations and counter-terrorism legislation that fall short of international law and standards effectively places detainees in a legal black hole. There is no recourse to an independent and competent tribunal to determine their rights. Obstructed access for independent monitoring further clouds these practices and has made it impossible to verify reports of enforced disappearance, torture and other ill treatment, or the continuing presence of children among the adult detainees.

| This publication is the first part of a series prepared by Hotline Asia Extension Work in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

[1] Adopted by the First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Geneva in 1955, and approved by the Economic and Social Council by its resolutions 663 C (XXIV) of 31 July 1957 and 2076 (LXII) of 13 May 1977

[2] "Emergency Regulations" enacted by the President of Sri Lanka in August 2005 have undergone a number of modifications and amendments since that date and the text shown here, consolidated by Gregory Norton, reflects all of those changes up to 31 July 2007.

[3] Persons awaiting trial or unconvicted prisoners, as well as convicted prisoners with short terms, are located in these prisons. Convicted prisoners with short terms attend to jail services including work in the preparation of food.

Asian Center for the Progress of Peoples
1/F, 52, Princess Margaret Road
Kowloon, Hong Kong
Phone: (852) 2714 5123 / 2712 3989
Fax: (852) 2712 0152
E-mail: hotline@acpp.org
Website: www.acpp.org



South Korea:

China Boycotts Religious Event Over Tibet Presence

Chinese delegates taking part in a religious event in South Korea abruptly flew home on Wednesday in an apparent protest against Tibetan participation, organisers said.

The 17 Chinese monks and officials invited to the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) conference ending this Friday

returned home a day after lodging a complaint about Tibet's presence, said a spokeswoman for the organising committee.

On Tuesday three Tibetan delegates were forced to leave a delegates' assembly meeting after Chinese officials threatened to boycott the meeting, she said.

"The WFB secretary-gene-

ral accepted the Chinese demand that the Tibetans leave so the meeting could go smoothly," she said, calling the decision by the WFB chief "embarrassing".

The three Tibetans are still taking part in other events at the five-day conference and the Chinese left South Korea Wednesday morning, she said.

About 400 delegates from some 30 countries are taking part in the two-yearly event in the southern city of Yeosu.

It drew attention after Seoul's government, in a rare move, approved a visa for Samdhong Rinpoche, an ex-prime minister of Tibet's government-in-exile.

South Korea has several times in the past refused to grant a visa for Tibet's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, apparently for fear of offending China.

Rinpoche, the highest Tibetan official to visit South

Korea, is a special guest at the meeting in addition to the three official Tibetan delegates.

Organisers initially sought to invite the Dalai Lama himself to the Yeosu conference but later ditched the plan out of consideration for China.

Beijing considers the Dalai Lama a "splittist", despite his calls for autonomy rather than independence for Tibet, and has stepped up pressure on world leaders not to meet him.



In this file photo, released by World Fellowship of Buddhists Korea Conference on June 11, Samdhong Rinpoche, a former prime minister of Tibet's government-in-exile, visits the Expo 2012 in the southern city of Yeosu ahead of the World Fellowship of Buddhists conference.

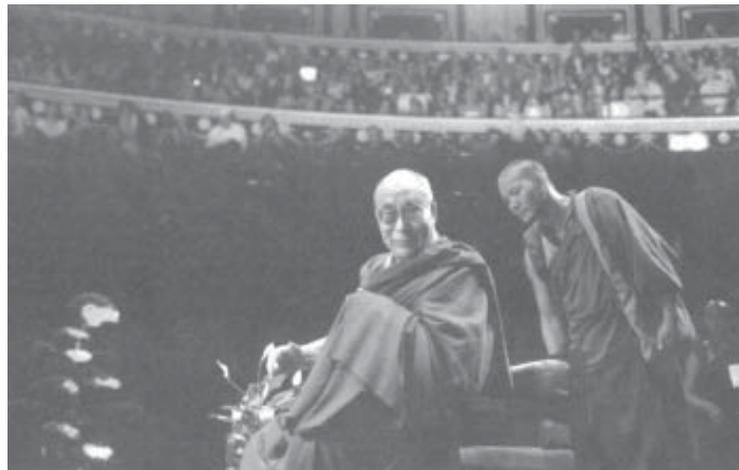


Tibet: News from the Dalai Lama

"I told President Obama the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party are missing a part of the brain, the part that contains common sense," the Dalai Lama said to me during our conversation in London in mid-June.

But it can be put back in. I am hopeful about the new Chinese leadership beginning late this year. The communist leaders now lack self-confidence, but I have heard from my Chinese friends that after a year or two the new ones will take some initiatives, so more freedom, more democracy.

The Dalai Lama, with whom I have been talking periodically since 1981, was in an ebullient mood even for him. He was referring to a meeting with Obama in 2011. I had asked the Dalai Lama about those national leaders throughout the world, from South Africa to Britain, who refuse to hold formal meetings with him because they fear Beijing's anger. President Obama declined to meet him in 2009, the first rebuff from an American



persistent since the Tibetan leader began visiting Washington in 1991.

Two meetings finally took place, in 2010 and 2011. Both were held in the White House Map Room rather than the Oval Office, after Beijing had warned against such an encounter: "We firmly oppose any foreign official to meet with the Dalai Lama in any form." In Britain, Prime Ministers Gordon Brown and David Cameron found other venues for their meetings, far

from 10 Downing Street. This June Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg held a brief, unpublicized meeting with the Dalai Lama, who was about to address several thousand admirers in St. Paul's Cathedral. All such meetings, including the one at the cathedral, are routinely condemned by Beijing as "hurting the feelings of the Chinese people."

"If these national leaders don't see me that's up to them," the Dalai Lama said. "But slowly

Chinese people realize they have been exploited, censored. The Communists tell them they don't need Western-style democracy and human rights.

In recent months, there have been reports of self-immolations by Tibetans in China and Tibet, and there are concerns that the human rights situation is worsening. Yet as in previous meetings, the Dalai Lama reflected without rancor on Chinese Communist rule over Tibet. "What has kept Tibetans going for 2,500 years? The Dharma." This is the traditional Buddhist view of the universe and its principles of human behavior and wisdom. "How old is the Communist Party? Less than two hundred years [it was founded in 1921]. Admiration for Tibetans throughout the world is always rising. Attitudes toward the Chinese Communist Party, inside and outside China, couldn't be worse."

He noted that the Party sees how Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese opposition leader and a fellow Nobel Peace Prize laureate, was admired throughout the world for more than twenty years when she was a captive in Rangoon and now, free at last, is welcome everywhere. She was in London in June, and Beijing cannot have been happy to see her meeting with the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama told Suu Kyi that he admired her courage.

The Dalai Lama said that the reason Chinese Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo is serving an eleven-year prison sentence for subversion is "because he is not just one individual. There are thousands of intelligent, thinking people in China who agree with him that change is necessary." This means more transparency, he insisted, an end to violence, and a real legal sys-

tem. "And there are also 1.3 billion other Chinese who because of their great culture have the brains to distinguish right from wrong. More and more they are aware of their rights." The Party fears them, he added, and Liu is supposed to be a warning—an example, he agreed, of the Chinese saying "Strike the reooster to frighten the monkey."

Particularly interesting was what the Dalai Lama had to say about the eleventh Panchen Lama, the second-most-eminent religious figure in Tibetan Buddhism, who has been chosen by the Chinese leadership in Beijing, in an apparent effort to impose further control on Tibet. The authentic eleventh Panchen, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, was chosen by the Dalai Lama in 1995 while the Tibetan leader was in exile India. In accordance with tradition, he made the choice five years after the tenth incarnation died.

Beijing immediately denounced the choice as illegitimate, kidnapped the child and his family—who have never been seen again—and imprisoned for subversion the abbot of the Tashilhunpo monastery, the Panchen's traditional seat, who had first identified little Choekyi Nyima as a possible eleventh

Panchen. Employing "authentic" rituals, the Communist Party then chose its own boy, Gyaincain Norbu. It was only too plain that this rigamarole, as the Dalai Lama has remarked to me over the years, was a dress rehearsal for Beijing to select his own successor, the fifteenth Dalai Lama, who it hopes will be accepted by Tibetans, as their choice of Panchen has failed to be.

I was surprised, therefore, by the Dalai Lama's comments about the spurious Panchen. He mentioned 2008, when an uprising swept throughout Tibet proper and regions of China populated by many Tibetans. Chinese properties were destroyed, some Han were killed, and a number of Tibetans are estimated to have been killed at the hands of the Chinese police and army.

"Of course Beijing wanted the boy to denounce the uprising," the Dalai Lama observed. "But some of his friends have told me that he remains a Tibetan deep inside and preferred to remain silent. Beijing couldn't use him."

Jonathan Mirsky
from *The New York Review of Books*
August 16, 2012

Suksit Siam Bookshop

opened on 20th April 2510
at 175 Rama IV Road, Bangkok

has now moved to its new location
at 117-119 Fuang Nakorn Road, Bangkok 10200

Tel: 02-225-9536-8, Fax: 02-222-5188
email: suksit-siam@gmail.com
www.kledthaishopping.com

Open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Sunday.

English books on Engaged Buddhism are available.

Letter from the Secretariat Office

Dear INEB members and readers,

Over the past four months in Siam there have been a lot of Buddhist events to celebrate 2600 years of Buddha's enlightenment, and to celebrate the first sermon and establishment of the first ordained Buddhist Sangha. Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University here in Bangkok has been the main Buddhist institution organizing the ceremonies and seminars. Interestingly, they have invited President Mahinda Rajapaksa from Sri Lanka to be a key note speaker. As President during the civil war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), over 20,000 Tamil people were killed during his term in office. This gives pause to reflect on the dilemma of being Buddhist, and role and influence of Buddhist institutions in politics.

A few days after the International Vesak Day in India, Deer Park Institute, a partner of INEB, invited His Holiness the Dalai Lama to deliver the first ever teaching for the Indian Buddhists from the 6-9 June in Dharamsala. Over 1,500 Indian Buddhists attended the sessions with debriefing each day in Hindi by Ven. Samdhong Rinpoche, the former Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government in Exile.

These two contrasting events give us opportunity to explore, in terms of structural violence and ethical issues, how Buddhists are promoting and celebrating Buddhism 2600 years after the Buddha's enlightenment.

On a different note, INEB is continuing to empower youth through exchange and internships, with continued support from FK, Norway. For the next three years, we are planning for exchanges between the Youth Buddhist Society (India), Kalayana Mitta Foundation (Burma), Sewalanka Foundation (Sri Lanka) and SPERI (Social Policy Ecology Research Institute, Vietnam). We also plan to continue the Young Bodhisattva Training, to train young socially engaged Buddhist activists to serve society. If any one of you are interested in this training, please do contact the Secretariat office.

We are also very pleased to announce the set-up of **the Right Livelihood Fund**, which is ready to launch publicly. The Right Livelihood Fund brings people together to build more mindful and compassionate economic systems. It connects entrepreneurs, consumers, investors, workers, and citizens so that they can create new initiatives, and choose to work for, invest in, and buy from enterprises that share their values. For those who would like to work together on this, please do contact info@rightlivelihoodfund.org

The conference on **Inter-Religious Dialogue on Climate Change and Biodiversity Conservation** will host religious leaders, experts and practitioners at the Islander Centre, Anuradapura, Sri Lanka from the 23-27 September 2012. To date, we have confirmed about 80 participants from 20 countries with diverse religious backgrounds. For those who are interested to join us, please contact conference@inebnetwork.org. INEB will also host a high level panel discussion to address conservation scientists and national government decision makers at the IUCN World Conservation Congress on 8 September 2012. The focus will be on the role of religious leaders in promoting environmental sustainability, respect for life and a just approach to the use of resources. Participants in the panel will include a Bishop from Norway and South Africa, a Sultan from Niger and a Buddhist Monk from South Korea.

The 2012 INEB Executive Meeting and International Forum **The Wisdom of Inter-being and The Art of Happiness: A Buddhist Approach to Rebuilding Our Society and Ensuring Our Future**, will take place during November 6-10, 2012 at Kodo Kyodan Buddhist Fellowship, Yokohama, Japan. Approximately 30 INEB executive members from various countries will attend to discuss various issues, including : *Nuclear Power and Local Communities* (economic development, gaps between urban and rural areas, energy policy, environmental problems, etc.); *Suffering and Illness in Post Industrial Society* (society with no inter-being [mu-en], social gaps, alienation, social recluses [hikikomori], suicide); and *Japanese Buddhism Today: Problems and Potentials* (funeral Buddhism, public benefit issues, secular society, priests' identity, gender issues). On 10 November, we will have a Public Forum. If you are in Japan during that time, you are most welcome to join us for this special event, please see the poster of the event on the back cover of this issue.

Yours in Dhamma,

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

P.S. Please take advantage of reading *Seeds of Peace* online, where most back issues including the earliest ones, are available.

2012 INEB Executive Meeting and International Forum:
**The Wisdom of Inter-being &
 The Art of Happiness**
 A Buddhist Approach to Rebuilding Our Society
 and Ensuring Our Future

November 6-10, 2012
 KodoKyodan Buddhist Fellowship
 Yokohama, Japan

Background: Over the past decade, INEB has sought to support and enrich its national and regional partners by holding its bi-annual conference in different countries, which include to date: Sri Lanka (1999), South Korea (2003), central India (2005), Taiwan (2007), east India (2011), and the next planned conference in Malaysia (2013). In off years, INEB holds a separate Executive and Advisory Committee meeting to administer to the general affairs of the network. This meeting has always been held in Thailand where the INEB Secretariat is based. However, there has been a proposal put forward by the Executive Secretary of INEB in Bangkok to hold the next Executive/Advisory Committee in 2012 in Japan.

The principle reason for this proposal has been to extend a belated hand towards Japan after the experience of the catastrophic triple disaster of March 11, 2011—to both learn of its experiences in facing these disasters and to offer support and experience from people who have faced similar challenges in the larger network. A second reason is to further build relationships with Japanese engaged Buddhists. While being a long time member of the network, Japan is the only country in East Asia to not yet

hold a major INEB Conference. For both the future growth of the network and also to inspire engaged Buddhists in Japan to more deeply relate with the network, INEB feels this is a very opportune time to have a significant, and hopefully meaningful, interaction with Japanese Buddhists and the Japanese people in general.

Theme: The theme of the previous INEB Conference in Bodhgaya, India was “The Future of Buddhism.” For Buddhist Asia, Japan in many ways shows what the future of Buddhism as well as the future of these Asian societies might come to look like. Japan is perhaps the only Asian nation firmly established in a post-industrial, post-modern world. The service economy has replaced the industrial one. The family has fractured even beyond the urban, nuclear model to a transient “dormitory” one of members coming and going at all hours of the day and night. The meaning of life is increasingly elusive as the modern industrial dream of secure, well paid, full time work is giving way to increasing socio-economic gaps between rich and poor, young and old, urban and rural and increasing amounts of psycho-spiritual disease such as social

reclusivity (*hikikomori*) and suicide. The tragic triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown on March 11, 2011 has only heightened these problems.

Since Japan’s push toward modernization and “westernization” in the mid-1800s, Japanese Buddhism has been struggling to adapt. Its unprecedented step in Buddhist Asia of allowing its monks to abandon the monastic vinaya while developing massive modern lay denominations has been a revolutionary step fraught with problems but also filled with potentials. Today, Japanese Buddhism faces the major challenge of its marginalization in a highly secular, post-modern society. Mirroring the economic downturn and development of gaps between rich and poor in mainstream society, the traditional system of temples is in crisis, and Buddhism world is struggling to create a meaningful social role for itself in 21st century Japan. The trends and challenges in Japanese Buddhism offer important lessons to other Sanghas in Buddhist Asia as their societies are following similar paths of economic and social development.

In this way, the Japan Network of Engaged Buddhists (JNEB), with its many represen-

tative groups and individuals, looks forward to hosting the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) Executive and Advisory Committees for a three day study tour and interaction. We look forward to showing our international guests the realities of Japanese society and Japanese Buddhism as well as some of the very meaningful social activities that Japanese Buddhist priests and lay people are engaged in. We also very much look forward to our interactions with INEB's senior leaders and receiving further insights on how to further the work here in Japan. Finally, we hope this event will become the basis for collaborative activities on common issues of concern amongst us.

November 5 & 11: Arrival and Departure (Tokyo)

- Please choose either Haneda OR Narita International Airports. Haneda is closer to Tokyo and Yokohama where you will stay. For those wishing to arrive earlier or stay later, please consult with us about affordable lodging and other needs

November 6-7: Study Tours and Interactions (7-8 people per group)

Group 1: Nuclear Power and

Local Communities (economic development, gaps between urban and rural, energy policy, environmental problem, etc.)

- Leaders: Rev. Hidehito Okochi, Rev. Kobo Inoue, Prof. Hisashi Nakamura
- 6th&7th: Study Tour to Fukushima (radiation barrier areas, temporary shelters, destroyed temples, problems of rural society, etc.)
- Lodging: 6th: Fukushima temple; 7th: KodoKyodan (Yokohama)

Group 2: Suffering and Illness in Post Industrial Society (Society with No Interbeing (*mu-en*), social gaps, alienation, social recluses (*hikikomori*), suicide)

- Leaders: Rev. Masazumi Okano, Rev. Yukan Ogawa, Chisa Yamashita
- 6th: Meeting with members of the Association of Priests Grappling with the Suicide Problem at KodoKyodan (Yokohama)
- 7th: Meeting with priests and participating in a hot meal event for the homeless in Yokohama
- Lodging: KodoKyodan (Yokohama)

Group 3: Japanese Buddhism Today: Problems and Potentials (Funeral Buddhism, Public Benefit issue, secular society, priests'

identity, gender issue)

- Leaders: Rev. Yoshiharu Tomatsu, Rev. Yuzuki Matsushita, Rev. Jin Sakai
- 6th&7th: Tours around the wider Tokyo metropolitan area to visit temples and priests; to see the typical life style of a married temple family and their funeral and memorial services; and also to see a variety of new kinds of activities to revive the temple in Japan.
- Lodging: KodoKyodan (Yokohama)

November 8-9: INEB Executive and Advisory Committee Meeting

Site: KodoKyodan Buddhist Fellowship (Yokohama)

- 9th evening: group meal with JNEB members

November 10: Public Forum at KodoKyodan (Yokohama)

10:00-12:00: Small Networking Meeting (with 20-30 core Japanese engaged Buddhists)

13:00-17:00 Public Symposium

17:30-19:30 Farewell Party

- Lodging: KodoKyodan (Yokohama)
- Staff: Jonathan Watts, Naoyuki Ogi, Eka Shimada

Visions of an Empowered Future

Notes from the 2011 International Network of Engaged Buddhists Conference in Bodhgaya

The dusty little town of Bodhgaya has changed a bit since the first time I came as a pilgrim in 1999. At that time, Bihar was known as the most corrupt and impoverished state in India. We were warned by the *chai wallah* at each tea shop that travel was

very dangerous and that roving gangs threw nails into the streets so that they could rob stranded travelers when their tires blew out. The *chai wallahs* often asked, "Have you seen *Bandit Queen*?" referring to the 1994 film based on the life of Phoolan

Devi, a gang leader who roamed these plains. An overwhelming sea of beggars lined the gate of every temple. There was a palpable hunger and desperation in the air. Back then, it struck me that none of the locals seemed to smile.

Today, the town of Bodhgaya—where Shakyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment—is still dusty, but there are far fewer beggars, and the children grin at me on the street. Thanks to recent reforms in government and the work of organizations like the Mahabodhi Society and the Light of Buddhadharma Foundation, there are projects in the works to improve sanitation, waste disposal, and education.

It seemed fitting that a conference on the future of Buddhism be held in its birthplace, a site venerated by millions, once neglected but now full of hope. Last October, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, or INEB, focused its biannual gathering on “The Future of Buddhism: From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation.” The ambitious agenda matched its grand venue (adjacent to the sacred Mahabodhi Temple): the newly constructed Thai temple complex of Wat Pa-Buddhagaya.

Organized in partnership with Deer Park Institute, the Jambudvipa Trust, and Youth Buddhist Society of India, the INEB event brought together over 350 luminaries—a diverse range of monastics, scholars, artists, and activists from Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, and the Americas. The list of speakers included cofounder and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa, Roshi Joan Halifax, Hozan Alan Senauke, Venerable Dr. Tsering Palmo, and Venerable Bhikkhuni Dhammananda. Participants met in workshops, panels, and field trips to discuss Buddhist economics and social entrepreneurship, sustainability and climate change, war and conflict resolution, traditional art and new media, working with death and dying, challenges



facing the monastic community, youth issues, and dharma education.

The Tibetan Buddhist teacher Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche delivered the keynote address on the first day of the conference. He pointed out that the future of Buddhism hinges on its relationship with culture and money:

We need to look carefully at how culture and tradition—old habits that have metamorphosed into tradition—are hijacking the true buddhadharma. This is important not only to traditionally Buddhist places but also for new hosts....It is not that culture has to be discarded, but we have to realize that they are two different things. The teachings have to be delivered through culture, but their relationship is like the cup and [the] tea.

The future of Buddhism, he explained, relies not only on the sangha and religious heads. Patrons of dharma will play a critical role in shaping its future by determining how they give, to whom they give, and in what situations they choose to give. “We need a more intelligent economics and [a broader perspective on] success,” he said.

During a panel on “Dharma

for the Future,” Joan Halifax commented, “As a very polarized activist in the 60s, I recognized that the fire of my passion was being fed by a very disturbed internal process.” Her sentiments reflected a notable shift in the culture of social activism from a dualistic Us versus Them paradigm to one that evolves existing systems by working within them and developing new models that pose promising alternatives. Halifax went on to say:

We have to address the issue of structural violence, whether it has to do with the marginalization of the dalits or women or dying people or people who are impoverished, or even other species. We have a responsibility to engage in activities that are related to the transformation of our social and political system.

In this spirit, attendees witnessed the launch of an exciting initiative called the Right Livelihood Fund. Its goal is to mentor individuals and groups interested in building small businesses and social enterprise projects that are sustainable, ecological, and supportive of spiritual growth.

Matteo Pistono, author of *In the Shadow of the Buddha* and a forthcoming history on engaged



Buddhism, reflected on the conference participants:

What impresses me most is how this varied group collectively works to reduce within ourselves greed, hatred, and ignorance, while simultaneously combating how these poisons manifest in society as consumerism, militarism, and mass media.

In conjunction with the main conference, INEB organized two satellite events that focused on youth issues and Buddhist art. The International Buddhist Art Gathering's "Pilgrimage to the Roots of Our Heritage" invited 33 artists from China, Laos, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India, and the United States to transform the premises of another Thai temple, Wat Thai Buddhagaya, into a veritable arts village for seven days. I was among the artists who came to participate. The workshop culminated in an exhibition, shown at Tibet House in New York City last November, of over 35 original works reflecting both traditional and new media art forms.

The other event, "Young Bodhisattva Program for Leadership Training in Spiritual Resurgence and Social Innovation," hosted 35 participants from Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Burma, Sri

Lanka, and India at the Bodhgaya Cambodian Temple. A generation of young Buddhist leaders has emerged from this program over the last decade, including Prashant Varma, cofounder of the renowned Deer

Park Institute, a center for the study of classical Indian wisdom traditions in Bir, India.

Harsha Navaratne, INEB Executive Committee Chairperson and founder of Sewalanka Foundation in Sri Lanka, commended the young Buddhist leaders in his opening remarks:

The youngsters are our most valuable asset. They understand the challenges of the modern world, and they have shown enormous creativity and commitment as they search for innovative new ways of working. May they have the courage to take risks and the strength to learn from experience. The future of Buddhism is truly in their hands.

At the beginning of the conference, I found it difficult to wrap my head around "the future of Buddhism." It seemed such a vague and vast topic. But the INEB gathering imparted a sense of confidence that not only are we all—each and every one of us—contributors to our present circumstances, but individually and collectively we shape the future in very deliberate and simple, if ambitious, small steps. The conference demonstrated this with the launch of visionary programs like the Right Livelihood Fund, the inception of an intercultural Buddhist Art cen-

ter, and the development of local initiatives through the Light of Buddhadharma Foundation's Beautiful Bodhgaya program. Whether we are applying for a grant to start a social enterprise or lending our time to improving waste disposal systems at sacred sites, our power lies in our commitment to our ideas and in our ability to network with others who will support our endeavors. A sense of pragmatic optimism and collective solidarity pervaded every conversation I was a part of.

Addressing the congregation, Sulak Sivaraksa quoted the poet Rabindranath Tagore:

The time has come for us to break open the treasure-trove of our ancestors 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.

Seize the day. Indeed, seize the future.

One thing is for certain: the future holds the next eagerly awaited INEB conference, scheduled for 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. And if the changes in little Bodhgaya are any indication, that future will be clearer and cleaner once we take up a broom and simply begin to sweep.

Minette Lee Mangahas is an artist and writer who lives in Brooklyn, NY, and Asia. Learn more about her work at brushsong.com.

Photographs
by Minette Lee Mangahas

* The Buddhist review *tricycle* :
SUMMER 2012

Lesbian Couple to Take Vows in Nation's First Public Buddhist Same-Sex Union

The decision by a Buddhist master to host the event will help push awareness about sexual inequalities further into the public realm, the bride said

Two devout Buddhist women are to hold the nation's first gay Buddhist wedding next month as part of an effort to push for the legalization of same-sex marriages in Taiwan.

"We are not only doing it for ourselves, but also for other gays and lesbians," Fish Huang said in a telephone interview.

The 30-year-old social worker at a non-governmental organization said that marriage never crossed her mind until she saw a movie last year.

The film portrayed two lesbians whose ill-fated relationship concluded after one died and the other was left heartbroken over the denial of spousal benefits.

"It's so sad," Huang said, who plans to wed her partner of seven years on Aug. 11 at a Buddhist altar in Taoyuan County.

Both brides are planning to wear white wedding gowns and listen to lectures given by Buddhist masters about marriage, accompanied by a series of chantings and blessings from monks and nuns.

Although homosexual marriages are not legally recognized in Taiwan, Huang insisted on tying the knot because she wants to make her relationship complete and raise awareness about the difficulties faced by sexual minorities.

Alternative sexual orientation and marriage have yet to be widely accepted by the general public, despite years of effort by activists to secure equality in Taiwan.

The first public gay marriage in Taiwan took place in 1996



between a local writer and his foreign partner. The event drew widespread media attention and inspired many gays to follow their footsteps.

Huang's wedding, however, will be the first with a Buddhist theme.

While planning for her wedding, Huang found out, to her surprise, that some of her Buddhist friends were hesitant about attending the ceremony.

"They are not sure if it would break their vows and were very anxious," Huang said.

She messaged a Buddhist master on Facebook, asking her if she could find grounds in Buddhism for condemning the practice of homosexuality.

To Huang's surprise, the master quickly replied that Buddhism shows no bias toward homosexuality. In a demonstration of support, the master said she was willing to host the ceremony for the couple.

"It is meaningful to us that our wedding can give hope to other homosexuals and help heterosexuals understand how Buddhism views sexuality," Huang said.

The Buddhist master Shih

Chao-hwei (釋昭慧), who is also a professor at Hsuan Chuang University, said Buddhist teachings do not prohibit homosexual behavior.

Compared with Western religions, Buddhism on the whole is more tolerant toward homosexuality because there is no concrete rule banning the practice in Buddhist scriptures, Shih said.

"It's difficult enough to maintain a relationship ... how could you be so stingy as to begrudge a couple for wanting to get married, regardless of their sexual orientation," she said in a telephone interview.

However, Shih recognized there is disagreement on the issue both inside and outside Buddhist circles.

Shih noted that Huang and her partner could face criticism.

"The first step is always the hardest," Shih said.

Dhamma Master Shih Chao-hwei
serving as a Patron of INEB

Published on *Taipei Times* :

Sun, Jul 08, 2012 - Page 3

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2012/07/08/>

2003537249

Harmonizing Life with the Waterways



When we talk about body of waters we tend to think only of rivers, lakes, oceans and seas. Often, we overlook the fact that our body is also filled with various kinds of water ranging from mucous to saliva, blood to urine. Human beings are said to be composed of four essential elements: earth, water, wind and fire. These four elements will be in harmony when life is led appropriately. If any of these elements is lacking or in excess then our good health may be undermined.

In Buddhism, the wind element appears to be the most important one. Why? Because life is extinguished with our last breath, and because Buddhism stresses the importance of mindful breathing as practiced by Buddha in order to attain enlightenment. (Although water is less important than wind; without water life will also perish. However, we will survive longer without water than without wind.)

This year marks the 2600 years of Buddha's enlightenment. At the very least, we must bear in mind that Buddha attained enlightenment through the cultivation of mindful breathing and the overcoming of greed, hatred and delusion. More precisely, Buddha transformed greed into generosity, hatred into

compassion and love, and delusion into (holistic) wisdom. Also, Buddha combined wisdom and compassion or knowledge and love into one in a way that transcended selfishness, and thus enabling Buddha to struggle for the benefits of all sentient beings.

According to Buddha's life story, an army of demons appeared to obstruct his enlightenment. Buddha pointed his finger at the hair of a water goddess, draining water from it to flood the advancing demons. The demons were not killed by the torrent of water but were transformed into an army of the just. Their weapons were transformed into candles and incense sticks to venerate their conqueror. This story can be read as a way of saying that the wind element is more important than the water element, and that water may be used to defeat the demons of greed, hatred and delusion. Perhaps we should bear this story in mind when we pour ceremonial water after merit-making.

The point of intersection between the water and the wind elements in the body is called "bindhu." This is a very important point. We must learn to regulate "bindhu." It will help us in the mindful preparation for

death and the afterlife. Wisely regulating the water and wind elements thus plays a crucial role in the cycle of life, death and rebirth. Unfortunately, most people in contemporary society have neglected this dimension in life.

If we lack spiritual or religious depth, our ability to control the external body of waters will also be deficient or ineffective. For instance, it will not be holistic enough. Sadly, the annual Loy Krathong festival has been thoroughly commercialized and manipulated by the tourism industry. Thus, it has deprived contemporary Thais of an important moment to grasp the spiritual dimension of a way of life that is in harmony with the body of waters; that is, a way of life in which goodness, beauty and leisure are harmonized. Our ancestors had led this way of life.

....

I believe that in order to harmonize life with the body of waters, we must attempt to understand the traditional wisdom of our ancestors. We must learn to build on this body of wisdom in order to have sufficient strength to counter the mainstream currents of globalization that are dominated by

capitalism, materialism and consumerism and that are lacking in spiritual substance, thereby transforming human beings into economic animals.

....

Likewise, many contemporary Indians have adopted the worldviews of mainstream globalization. Huge dams funded by the World Bank were built to generate electricity. A good example is the Sardar Sarovar Project on the Narmada River—once seen as a sacred waterway for more than a thousand years. (Narmada was deemed as even more sacred than the Ganges River.)....

Fortunately, local Indians and civil society groups have risen up to oppose this blind faith in technology. They have formed a Narmada river conservation movement called “Narmada Bachao Andolan.” This movement has successfully arrested the dam project, relying on traditional wisdom and spiritual values and knowledge of modern science and technology, which are never neutral but always serve capitalist and statist interests.

The story of the Narmada river conservation movement provides us with a valuable lesson: any successful opposition to mega-development projects done in the name of modernization must be based on a profound understanding of and respect for traditional wisdom and values.

The recent mass flooding in Siam, the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown in Japan last year, and numerous natural disasters worldwide are sufficient signs telling us that we cannot conquer Nature. The latest scientific and technological advancement cannot subjugate Nature. Perhaps, this is a sufficient reason to question the Newtonian and Cartesian world-views.

We should then proceed to ask how to regulate the body so that mind and heart are harmonized; that is, mind/heart. We must first learn how to breathe, to make the breath consonant with the fluid flowing in the body. Only then will we be able to serve others—all sentient beings and Nature—with humility and increasing selflessness.

The kingdom of Ayutthaya lasted for over 400 years. Its capital was situated on an island. Numerous waterways passed through the kingdom as well. Our ancestors relied on boats and rafts for transportation. They depended on the body of waters in the kingdom for livelihood as well as for leisure and religious ceremonies.

Burma unsuccessfully invaded Ayutthaya several times. The kingdom’s system of waterways proved to be a formidable and impenetrable shield against the Burmese troops. The fall of Ayutthaya was above all due to the lack of internal cohesion.

Our ancestors in Ayutthaya never dreamed of defeating or conquering the body of waters in the kingdom. Rather they had lived alongside them. Our ancestors respected the waters surrounding them. They benefited from these waters. They also saw in these waters a source of beauty....

With the establishment of a new kingdom with Bangkok as the capital, members of the ruling class did not forget their roots. They wanted to make Bangkok a replica of the old capital in Ayutthaya. The first three kings of the new dynasty in Bangkok continued to see and call themselves as King of Ayutthaya. This practice changed during the Fourth Reign whereby the Thai monarch became King of Siam. In part, this was done to pander to foreign interests. New

roads were subsequently built in accordance with the wishes of westerners. We began to cut our roots and increasingly tilted westward. The more we tilted westward, the more problems we had to encounter subsequently....

We must also be reminded that the full name of Bangkok contains references to Ayutthaya. We tend to forget this fact when we use the abbreviated name for Bangkok in the Thai language.

As mentioned earlier, Bangkok was essentially seen and created as ‘New Ayutthaya.’ Like the capital of Ayutthaya, Bangkok had an intricate network of waterways and its residents lived in harmony with the natural environment. Small wonder that westerners used to call Bangkok the ‘Venice of the East.’ But then we eradicated our roots. Paved roads took the place of many if not most canals. We removed the trees along the rivers and streams. We polluted the waterways. And we began to place blind faith in science and technology, believing that they are able to solve every problem. The mass flooding last year further increased our faith in the magical power of science and technology. Here we should learn from Japan instead. Many Japanese have opposed their country’s reliance on nuclear power to generate electricity.

....

A white elephant once adorned the Thai national flag. Elephants were considered an important animal in the kingdom....When we changed our national flag to the tri-colored one as used in the present, the more we obediently followed the West. When we changed our country’s name to ‘Thailand’, it became clear that we had lost our way. Subsequently, we became a satellite of the American empire,

especially since the late 1940s. In our quest for modernization based on American social science we abandoned our agrarian roots and became an industrial-based society. We think that we can defeat nature and began to live like economic animals. We are always insecure, worrying that others will not see us as modern. And so we have tried our best to travel closely along the footsteps of the West.

However, we must respect the 'backward' people throughout the country who are living in harmony with nature and opposing runaway capitalism and globalization. We must identify with their struggles. We must struggle to reclaim our roots and the stream of life as envisioned by our ancestors.

consumerism and moving toward a new socialism and environmentalism. Everything around us should unfold naturally and simply. The gap between the rich and the poor must be radically reduced. We must respect and be persistently humble in our relations with nature.

....

This can only be done by subtracting from capitalism and

*The Thailand Research Fund
21 June 2012*



The Role of the University in the Promotion of Human Rights in the Southern Provinces

A point that must never be forgotten, especially among the ruling elites and those with important administrative positions at the national and provincial levels and in the private and public sectors, is that as a society we have a penchant for self-delusion. Often, we would turn away from the truth. Also, we have been almost completely eradicated from our roots. It's often said that we have successfully and wisely blended the universal with the local and adapted foreign ideas to the local context. But is this really true? Have we been able to carefully discern the strengths and weaknesses of Western civilization and prudently appropriate the features that are most suitable for our society? To what extent do we really understand 'democracy'—and not to say of human rights?

Universities often portray themselves as a model of democratic governance and as accountable and transparent institutions. But have university presidents become too powerful? Have university councils become too dictatorial? Hasn't the pa-

tron-client system flourished in university councils? A recent spate of maleficent acts by university presidents and councils, ranging from Srinakarinwirote to Ramkhamheng Universities, Thammasat to Chulalongkorn Universities, have thrown the picture of universities as a bastion of democracy into serious doubt.

What is the social function of the university? Is it to produce capable graduates for the job market and for life in the capitalist world? If the university is conceived in this way, then it is not radically different from a driving or computer school.

Thai universities are modeled after Western universities. Many if not most of their top-level administrators proclaimed to be Buddhist, but have they ever heard of the University of Nalanda or Takshila? Oxford and Cambridge are reputedly the two best universities in the UK. But are we aware that William Blake once condemned these two universities for producing graduates who went on to exploit and oppress the peoples in the British colonies? Nehru was a

leading figure in the Indian independence movement. However, when he became prime minister he governed India like an English colonist. He was a byproduct of the English education system; Harrow School and the University of Cambridge had brainwashed Nehru to see himself as superior to his fellow countrymen. To what extent have our Oxford-educated prime ministers been better than Nehru? For example, the Pramoj brothers and Abhisit Vejjajiva were Oxford graduates. Anand Panyarachun graduated from Cambridge. Was he a better prime minister than the rest of the British-educated ones? Isn't Tanin Kraivixien, a Barister-at-law from London, one of the worst prime ministers in Thai history thus far?

This doesn't mean that all British universities are bad or have always been bad. Tony Judt recalled that during his time at Cambridge, professors there were truly knowledgeable in their areas of expertise and devoted their lives to cultivating the academic excellence of their students. They did not aspire for fame, wealth and political power.

But then Judt conceded that today most professors at both Oxford and Cambridge no longer adhered to this selfless position.

The top university in the US is Harvard. Its motto is “*veritas*”, which is Latin for truth. I have a Canadian friend who was a Harvard student during the Vietnam War. He didn’t see Harvard professors siding with the forces of *veritas*. Rather they gravitated toward serving (imperial) power in an ethically blind manner. A good example is Henry Kissinger who was a Harvard professor before he became National Security Advisor and Secretary of State. Kissinger presided over the destruction of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Another notorious Harvard professor was the late Samuel Huntington who preached about the clash of civilizations between the West and the Rest and who fanned fear of the ‘Muslim’ world.

Students from universities throughout the US came out to protest against the Vietnam War. But campus culture at Harvard, Yale and Princeton was much less radical, if not outright reactionary. Can we really say that these universities stand for “*veritas*”, justice and human rights?

My Canadian friend turned to Buddhism to overcome the hatred he had for his alma mater. After graduating from Harvard, my friend became professor at a university in Canada. He introduced the study of nonviolence (especially as taught by Gandhi) into the university’s curricula. He told me that every time he returned to Harvard he felt nauseated by its hypocrisy and ethical blindness.

This is no small matter. But how many Thais graduates from Western universities have actually stood steadfastly for truth and justice, sided with the most

marginalized and vulnerable social groups, lived in harmony with nature, and dedicated their lives to the social good?

Only a few names come across my mind: Pridi Banomyong from France, Puey Ungphakorn and MC Sittiporn Kridakorn from England. The ruling elites had betrayed both Pridi and Puey, and they ultimately had to spend the rest of their lives in exile. Prince Sittiporn spent 11 years in jail.

The next question is why is it very difficult if not impossible for Western-style universities to teach their students to be good, ethical, compassionate and willing to serve the marginalized and vulnerable in society?

Erasmus had already pondered on this question at the time when Protestantism broke with Catholicism. The former accused the latter of exerting absolute control over knowledge, thought, goodness and morality. Therefore, the people had no space for freedom. Protestants began to ask daring questions that Catholics couldn’t answer. In the end, there was a huge pile of questions without answers. This gave rise to the creation of numerous denominations, which provided answers to (some of) these questions.

Erasmus stood with Catholicism or the status quo. Nevertheless, he contended that it must be open to the new ideas raised by Protestantism. Erasmus was a significant figure who advocated the reorganization or reform of university education. He saw the importance of creating a college system within the university structure. The university and its colleges would be responsible for providing knowledge to students. But the colleges would have an additional function. They would be responsible for fostering the culture and practices that

were necessary for the cultivation of truth, beauty and goodness. For example, the practice of professors and students praying together at the college chapel should be promoted. And so on.

Put another way, the university would lead in the provision of worldly knowledge. But the colleges would provide guidance in terms of ethical and moral development. College dons who served this function were called “moral tutors” or “*in loco parentis*”, which literally means parents of students.

Students were often influenced by their tutors. Tutors thus could act as the *kalyanamitta* of students. As long as they still believed in God and His Commandments, both professors and students could flourish as good Christians. As for worldly knowledge, it became a separate sphere.

When the belief in God became increasingly challenged because it could not be scientifically proven, education in the college system simply became ceremonial; that is, it became devoid of spiritual or moral substance. Modern science since Galileo and Newton had turned its back to religious teachings. And with the advent of Cartesian Reason, thought became the judge of all things. For instance, the more one is able to think or the deeper one’s thought the more one is seen as dominant—the more one is seen as superior to other human beings and animals—and even to nature as a whole.

This mainstream way of thinking cannot talk about the good. G.E. Moore of the University of Cambridge had clearly stated that the good cannot be defined, proven and concretely taught. Religion has also become less effective in teaching about the good. Moreover, mainstream

thinking became embedded with capitalism and consumerism. Therefore, in mainstream culture people are inclined to be more power-seeking and sociopathic. As such, the excluded and marginalized in society became more vulnerable and oppressed. Nature is increasingly destroyed. Although Marxism is different from capitalism it is still not conducive to *santi pracha dhamma*.

Mainstream knowledge is also compartmentalized. For instance, medical science is only about the body that is delinked from the mind. The mind is disregarded because it is not a concrete organ. Medical science has also been attached to the interest and profit of transnational corporations. This fact must be fully exposed and critiqued. Another example is that the study of geography is detached from the issue of Earth rights as enshrined in the Earth Charter. We must respect the Earth. We must be humble in our relationship with Mother Earth.

The history that is being taught in the classroom is highly nationalistic. It often legitimates the violence and oppression of the powerful. Often, it provides hagiographies of great men, leading to for instance the uncritical adulation of King Narasuan. People's history as popularized by the late Howard Zinn is not taught. Thai history also tends to depict our neighbors and ethnic minorities in the kingdom in a horrendous light. Where are equality and human rights in all this?

I will not go into the details, but it seems that every discipline produces compartmentalized knowledge. Mainstream economics promotes greed. Mainstream political science nurtures hatred. Mainstream science promotes delusion. We must try to understand this in order

to understand the role of the university in society.

There are however good signs here and there. We have more alternative sources of education. For instance, Schumacher had trailblazed the study of Buddhist economics. Venerable P.A. Payutto further developed it, and now even mainstream economists like Amartya Sen and Joseph Stiglitz have picked up on it. Stiglitz has warned that runaway capitalism will end up destroying the world. Today, the concept of Gross National Happiness is gaining currency. At the beginning of this year, an international conference on "The Economics of Happiness" was even held in the US. Glenn Paige has pioneered the study of a non-violent political science in his book *Political Science without Killing*. The Mind and Life Institute under the patronage of H.H. the Dalai Lama is also experimenting with Buddhist science. And so on.

So we are back to the question "what is the role of the university in the promotion of human rights in the southern provinces?"

To answer this question, we must first find out whether or not university presidents and especially university councils clearly understand the role of the university. Do they really know how to transform their rhetorical allegiance to truth, beauty and goodness into concrete results? Are they morally courageous and willing to open the university to be a place for the exchange of views and dialogues between academics and the most vulnerable groups in society?

An environment must be created to enable professors and students to serve as one another's *kalyanamitta*. They must have mutual respect for and be willing to learn from one ano-

ther. They must see each other as equals. If this spirit is successfully cultivated, it will be an important foundation on which selflessness and humility can be built.

This spirit can then be spread beyond the university. As our *kalyanamitta*, individuals from other walks of life, cultures, religions, etc. can broaden our horizon. We must be willing and ready to learn from them with an open mind and heart. From this point, we will be able to develop human rights concretely, not only theoretically.

If we understand that local wisdom is not necessarily inferior to academic knowledge, then this will be an important groundwork for democratic governance, which is not reducible to holding periodic elections and having a government led by the party winning the majority of votes.

Real democracy means absolute power of the people. Economic inequality in society must be drastically lessened.

Basic human rights entail the respect for one another; that is, mutual coexistence, the majority respecting the rights of minorities, unity in diversity, etc.

In the country's southern provinces, most people are of Malay ethnicity. Most are also Muslims. We must pay special respect to them—to their culture, religion, and language. If we openly admit that the Thai state and ruling elites have long exploited and oppressed these people, there is still a possibility they will come to understand and trust us. This will not be easy. It will require a lot of patience and perseverance. We must first admit that we were in the wrong.

Excerpted from a speech delivered at Thaksin University, Songkhla campus, on 29 June 2012.

The Cinderella Economy: An Answer to Unsustainable Growth?

As worldwide Governments blindly attempt to support unlimited growth using limited resources, Tim Jackson believes the answer to true sustainability may lie on the economy's fringes

Society is faced with a profound dilemma. To refrain from growth is to risk economic and social collapse. To pursue it relentlessly is to endanger the ecological systems on which we depend for survival.

For the most part, this dilemma goes entirely unrecognised. When reality starts to impinge on the collective consciousness, the best suggestion to hand is that we can somehow *decouple* growth from its material impacts and to continue to do so even as the economy continues to grow indefinitely. The green economy—as this idea is often called—was all the rage at Rio in June.

The reasons for such blind utopianism are easy enough to find. The modern economy is structurally reliant on growth for its stability. When growth falters, as it has done recently, politicians panic. Businesses struggle to survive. People lose their jobs and sometimes their homes. A spiral of recession looms. Questioning growth is deemed to be the act of lunatics, idealists and revolutionaries.

But shooting the messenger won't evade the dilemma. With oil prices clinging tenaciously to the once-inconceivable \$100 a barrel mark and carbon emissions rising faster than ever before, we need something more than wishful thinking to avert the calamities ahead. The policy

mantra 'growth equals jobs' is frankly unhelpful when growth itself is not just unlikely but sometimes positively unpalatable.

More to the point, this mantra turns out to be false in general. The relationship between growth and jobs isn't straightforward at all; it's mediated by something called labour productivity: the amount of output delivered (on average) by each hour of work in the economy. When labour productivity stays constant, then sure, an increase in output leads to an increase in employment. But if labour productivity increases faster than output does, then unemployment can rise even with a rise in the GDP: it's quite possible for this to lead to 'jobless growth'. Conversely of course if labour productivity stabilises or declines then it's possible for employment to rise even without a rise in the GDP.

At first sight this doesn't seem very comforting either. We've become so accustomed to see labour productivity as the engine of progress in modern capitalist economies. It's our ability to generate more output with fewer people that's lifted our lives out of drudgery and delivered us the cornucopia of material wealth—iPhones, hybrid cars, cheap holiday flights and plasma screen TVs—to which we would all very much like to become accustomed.

Let's leave aside here momentarily that one of the ways in which we've achieved this remarkable feat is by substituting capital (lots of clever technology) and material resources

(fuel and other minerals) for people's time. And that in the process we've created a lot of the ecological problems we now have to solve. My point here is rather to draw attention to the structural demands imposed by ever rising labour productivity.

Put simply, the obsession with labour productivity means that if our economies don't grow, we risk putting people out of work, even without increases in the population. Higher unemployment generates rising welfare costs. Higher public spending leads to unwieldy levels of sovereign debt. Higher debts can only be serviced by increasing tax revenues from future income. We're literally hooked on growth.

This unhappy dynamic has recently prompted the revival of an old idea. If there's less work to be had in the economy, for whatever reason, then perhaps we should all just work less and enjoy it. As it happens, we've always taken some of the labour productivity gains in the form of increased leisure time. Working hours in the UK declined by 15% between 1970 and 2005.

Reducing working hours further is the simplest and most often cited solution to the challenge of maintaining full employment with declining output. And it has a surprising pedigree. In an essay called simply '*Economic possibilities for our grandchildren*' published in 1932, John Maynard Keynes foresaw a time when we would all work less and spend more time with our family, our friends and our community. Every cloud has a silver lining? It's certainly a strategy worth

thinking about, when growth is hard to come by.

But simple arithmetic suggests another powerful option for keeping people in work when demand stagnates. What happens if we relinquish our fetish for labour productivity? Sounds crazy at first. We've become so conditioned by the language of efficiency. Output is everything. Time is money. The drive for increased labour productivity occupies reams of academic literature and haunts the waking hours of CEOs and Treasury Ministers across the world.

In some places, this still makes sense. Who would rather keep their accounts in longhand? Wash hotel sheets by hand? Or mix concrete with a spade? Between the backbreaking, the demeaning and the downright boring, labour productivity has a lot to commend itself.

But there are places too where chasing labour productivity doesn't stack up at all. What sense does it make to ask our teachers to teach ever bigger classes? Our doctors to treat

more and more patients per hour? Our nurses to rush from bed to bed no longer able to feel empathy and offer comfort. Compassion fatigue is a rising scourge in the caring professions, hounded by meaningless productivity targets. Or to take another example, what—aside from meaningless noise—is to be gained by asking the London Philharmonic to play Beethoven's 9th Symphony faster and faster each year?

Trivial though this example seems, it has its roots in another famous economic essay by the nonagenarian economist William Baumol. Analysing the dynamics of the cultural sector, he identified a general trend in modern service-based economies to slow down over time. Why? Because services require irreducible inputs of people's time. The phenomenon has come to be called 'Baumol's cost disease'. Low productivity growth sectors are the scourge of modern economies. In formal terms these enterprises barely count. They represent a kind of Cinderella economy that sits neglected at

the margins of consumer society.

Yet, people often achieve a greater sense of well being and fulfilment, both as producers and as consumers of these activities, than they ever do from the time-poor, materialistic, supermarket economy in which most of our lives are spent. And here perhaps is the most remarkable thing of all: because these activities are built around the exchange of human services rather than the relentless throughput of material stuff, there's a half decent chance of making the economy more sustainable.

In short, achieving a green economy may be less to do with *sustained growth* and technological utopianism and more to do with building an economy of care, craft and culture. And in doing so, restoring the value of human labour to its rightful place at the heart of the society.

Tim Jackson,
27 July 2012

Source: www.theecologist.org

Destroying the Commons How the Magna Carta Became a Minor Carta

Down the road only a few generations, the millennium of Magna Carta, one of the great events in the establishment of civil and human rights, will arrive. Whether it will be celebrated, mourned, or ignored is not at all clear.

That should be a matter of serious immediate concern. What we do right now, or fail to do, will determine what kind of world will greet that event. It is

not an attractive prospect if present tendencies persist—not least, because the Great Charter is being shredded before our eyes.

The first scholarly edition of Magna Carta was published by the eminent jurist William Blackstone. It was not an easy task. There was no good text available....

Blackstone's edition actually includes two charters. It

was entitled *The Great Charter and the Charter of the Forest*. The first, the Charter of Liberties, is widely recognized to be the foundation of the fundamental rights of the English-speaking peoples—or as Winston Churchill put it more expansively, “the charter of every self-respecting man at any time in any land.”

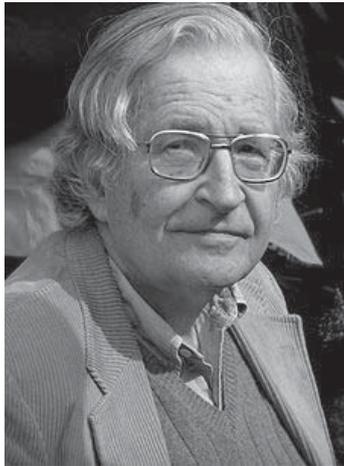
....

The Second Charter and the Commons

The significance of the companion charter, the Charter of the Forest, is no less profound and perhaps even more pertinent today.... The Charter of the Forest demanded protection of the commons from external power. The commons were the source of sustenance for the general population: their fuel, their food, their construction materials, whatever was essential for life. The forest was no primitive wilderness. It had been carefully developed over generations, maintained in common, its riches available to all, and preserved for future generations—practices found today primarily in traditional societies that are under threat throughout the world.

The Charter of the Forest imposed limits to privatization. The Robin Hood myths capture the essence of its concerns.... By the seventeenth century, however, this Charter had fallen victim to the rise of the commodity economy and capitalist practice and morality.

With the commons no longer protected for cooperative nurturing and use, the rights of the common people were restricted to what could not be privatized, a category that continues to shrink to virtual invisibility. In Bolivia, the attempt to privatize water was, in the end, beaten back by an uprising that brought the indigenous majority to power for the first time in history. The World Bank has just ruled that the mining multinational Pacific Rim can proceed with a case against El Salvador for trying to preserve lands and communities from highly destructive gold mining. Environmental constraints threaten to deprive the company of future profits, a crime that can be



Noam Chomsky

punished under the rules of the investor-rights regime mislabeled as “free trade”....

The rise of capitalist practice and morality brought with it a radical revision of how the commons are treated, and also of how they are conceived. The prevailing view today is captured by Garrett Hardin’s influential argument that “freedom in a commons brings ruin to us all,” the famous “tragedy of the commons”: what is not owned will be destroyed by individual avarice.

...

The grim forecasts of the tragedy of the commons are not without challenge. The late Elinor Olstrom won the Nobel Prize in economics in 2009 for her work showing the superiority of user-managed fish stocks, pastures, woods, lakes, and ground-water basins. But the conventional doctrine has force if we accept its unstated premise: that humans are blindly driven by what American workers, at the dawn of the industrial revolution, bitterly called “the New Spirit of the Age, Gain Wealth forgetting all but Self.”

Like peasants and workers in England before them, Ameri-

can workers denounced this New Spirit, which was being imposed upon them, regarding it as demeaning and destructive, an assault on the very nature of free men and women. And I stress women; among those most active and vocal in condemning the destruction of the rights and dignity of free people by the capitalist industrial system were the “factory girls,” young women from the farms. They, too, were driven into the regime of supervised and controlled wage labor....

Controlling the Desire for Democracy

That was 150 years ago—in England earlier. Huge efforts have been devoted since to inculcating the New Spirit of the Age. Major industries are devoted to the task: public relations, advertising, marketing generally, all of which add up to a very large component of the Gross Domestic Product. They are dedicated to what the great political economist Thorstein Veblen called “fabricating wants”....

The process of shaping opinion, attitudes, and perceptions was termed the “engineering of consent” by one of the founders of the modern public relations industry, Edward Bernays. He was...much like his contemporary, journalist Walter Lippmann, the most prominent public intellectual of twentieth century America, who praised “the manufacture of consent” as a “new art” in the practice of democracy.

Both recognized that the public must be “put in its place,” marginalized and controlled—for their own interests of course. They were too “stupid and ignorant” to be allowed to run their

own affairs. That task was to be left to the “intelligent minority,” who must be protected from “the trampling and the roar of [the] bewildered herd,” the “ignorant and meddling outsiders”.... The role of the general population was to be “spectators,” not “participants in action,” in a properly functioning democratic society.

And the spectators must not be allowed to see too much. President Obama has set new standards in safeguarding this principle. He has, in fact, punished more whistleblowers than all previous presidents combined....WikiLeaks is only the most famous case, with British cooperation.

Among the many topics that are not the business of the bewildered herd is foreign affairs.... Domestically, the rabble should not hear the advice given by the courts to major corporations: that they should devote some highly visible efforts to good works, so that an “aroused public” will not discover the enormous benefits provided to them by the nanny state....

...

The Three-Fifths People

Pursuing these important topics further, we see that the destruction of the Charter of the Forest, and its obliteration from memory, relates rather closely to the continuing efforts to constrain the promise of the Charter of Liberties. The “New Spirit of the Age” cannot tolerate the pre-capitalist conception of the Forest as the shared endowment of the community at large, cared for communally for its own use and for future generations, protected from privatization, from transfer to the hands of private power for service to wealth, not needs.

Inculcating the New Spirit is an essential prerequisite for achieving this end, and for preventing the Charter of Liberties from being misused to enable free citizens to determine their own fate.

...

The most famous part of the Charter of Liberties is Article 39, which declares that “no free man” shall be punished in any way, “nor will We proceed against or prosecute him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers and by the law of the land.”

Through many years of struggle, the principle has come to hold more broadly. The U.S. Constitution provides that no “person [shall] be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law [and] a speedy and public trial” by peers. The basic principle is “presumption of innocence”—what legal historians describe as “the seed of contemporary Anglo-American freedom,” referring to Article 39; and with the Nuremberg Tribunal in mind, a “particularly American brand of legalism: punishment only for those who could be proved to be guilty through a fair trial with a panoply of procedural protections”—even if their guilt for some of the worst crimes in history is not in doubt.

The founders of course did not intend the term “person” to apply to all persons. Native Americans were not persons. Their rights were virtually nil. Women were scarcely persons. Wives were understood to be “covered” under the civil identity of their husbands in much the same way as children were subject to their parents. Blackstone’s principles held that “the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that

of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and *cover*, she performs everything.” Women are thus the property of their fathers or husbands. These principles remain up to very recent years. Until a Supreme Court decision of 1975, women did not even have a legal right to serve on juries. They were not peers. Just two weeks ago, Republican opposition blocked the Fairness Paycheck Act guaranteeing women equal pay for equal work. And it goes far beyond.

Slaves, of course, were not persons. They were in fact three-fifths human under the Constitution, so as to grant their owners greater voting power. Protection of slavery was no slight concern to the founders: it was one factor leading to the American revolution. In the 1772 Somerset case, Lord Mansfield determined that slavery is so “odious” that it cannot be tolerated in England, though it continued in British possessions for many years. American slave-owners could see the handwriting on the wall if the colonies remained under British rule....

Post-Civil War amendments extended the concept *person* to African-Americans, ending slavery. In theory, at least. After about a decade of relative freedom, a condition akin to slavery was reintroduced by a North-South compact permitting the effective criminalization of black life....

This new version of the “peculiar institution” provided much of the basis for the American industrial revolution, with a perfect work force for the steel industry and mining, along with agricultural production in the famous chain gangs: docile, obedient, no strikes, and no need for employers even to sustain

their workers, an improvement over slavery. The system lasted in large measure until World War II, when free labor was needed for war production.

The postwar boom offered employment. A black man could get a job in a unionized auto plant, earn a decent salary, buy a house, and maybe send his children to college. That lasted for about 20 years, until the 1970s, when the economy was radically redesigned on newly dominant neoliberal principles, with rapid growth of financialization and the offshoring of production. The black population, now largely superfluous, has been recriminalized.

Until Ronald Reagan's presidency, incarceration in the U.S. was within the spectrum of industrial societies. By now it is far beyond others. It targets primarily black males, increasingly also black women and Hispanics, largely guilty of victimless crimes under the fraudulent "drug wars." Meanwhile, the wealth of African-American families has been virtually obliterated by the latest financial crisis, in no small measure thanks to criminal behavior of financial institutions, with impunity for the perpetrators, now richer than ever.

...

Sacred Persons and Undone Process

The post-Civil War fourteenth amendment granted the rights of persons to former slaves, though mostly in theory. At the same time, it created a new category of persons with rights: corporations. In fact, almost all the cases brought to the courts under the fourteenth amendment had to do with corporate rights, and by a century ago, they had determined that these collectivist legal fic-

tions, established and sustained by state power, had the full rights of persons of flesh and blood; in fact, far greater rights, thanks to their scale, immortality, and protections of limited liability. Their rights by now far transcend those of mere humans....

Domestically, recent Supreme Court rulings greatly enhance the already enormous political power of corporations and the super-rich, striking further blows against the tottering relics of functioning political democracy.

Meanwhile Magna Carta is under more direct assault. Recall the Habeas Corpus Act of 1679, which barred "imprisonment beyond the seas," and certainly the far more vicious procedure of imprisonment abroad for the purpose of torture-what is now more politely called "rendition"....

The concept of due process has been extended under the Obama administration's international assassination campaign in a way that renders this core element of the Charter of Liberties (and the Constitution) null and void. The Justice Department explained that the constitutional guarantee of due process, tracing to Magna Carta, is now satisfied by internal deliberations in the executive branch alone. The constitutional lawyer in the White House agreed....

The issue arose after the presidentially ordered assassination-by-drone of Anwar al-Awlaki, accused of inciting *jihād* in speech, writing, and unspecified actions. A headline in the *New York Times* captured the general elite reaction when he was murdered in a drone attack, along with the usual collateral damage. It read: "The West celebrates a cleric's death"....

Presumption of innocence

has also been given a new and useful interpretation. As the *New York Times* reported, "Mr. Obama embraced a disputed method for counting civilian casualties that did little to box him in. It in effect counts all military-age males in a strike zone as combatants, according to several administration officials, unless there is explicit intelligence posthumously proving them innocent." So post-assassination determination of innocence maintains the sacred principle of presumption of innocence.

...

The most famous recent case of executive assassination was Osama bin Laden, murdered after he was apprehended by 79 Navy seals, defenseless, accompanied only by his wife, his body reportedly dumped at sea without autopsy. Whatever one thinks of him, he was a suspect and nothing more than that. Even the FBI agreed.

...

Executive Terrorist Lists

...

The record of the terrorist list is of some interest. For example, in 1988 the Reagan administration declared Nelson Mandela's African National Congress to be one of the world's "more notorious terrorist groups," so that Reagan could continue his support for the Apartheid regime and its murderous depredations in South Africa and in neighboring countries, as part of his "war on terror." Twenty years later Mandela was finally removed from the terrorist list, and can now travel to the U.S. without a special waiver.

Another interesting case is Saddam Hussein, removed from the terrorist list in 1982 so that

the Reagan administration could provide him with support for his invasion of Iran. The support continued well after the war ended. In 1989, President Bush I even invited Iraqi nuclear engineers to the U.S. for advanced training in weapons production—more information that must be kept from the eyes of the “ignorant and meddling outsiders.”

...

Who Will Have the Last Laugh?

A few final words on the fate of the Charter of the Forest. Its goal was to protect the source of sustenance for the population, the commons, from external power—in the early days, royalty; over the years, enclosures and other forms of privatization by predatory corporations and the state authorities who cooperate with them, have only accelerated and are properly rewarded. The damage is very broad.

If we listen to voices from the South today we can learn that “the conversion of public goods into private property through the privatization of our otherwise commonly held natural environment is one way neoliberal institutions remove the fragile threads that hold African nations together. Politics today has been reduced to a lucrative venture where one looks out mainly for returns on investment rather than on what one can contribute to rebuild highly degraded environments, communities, and a nation. This is one of the benefits that structural adjustment programmes inflicted on the continent—the enthronement of corruption.” I’m quoting Nigerian poet and activist Nnimmo Bassey, chair of Friends of the Earth International, in his searing expose of the ravaging of Africa’s wealth, *To Cook a Continent*, the latest phase of the Western

torture of Africa.

...

More recently, the U.S. has recognized that it, too, must join the game of exploiting Africa, along with new entries like China, which is busily at work compiling one of the worst records in destruction of the environment and oppression of the hapless victims.

It should be unnecessary to dwell on the extreme dangers posed by one central element of the predatory obsessions that are producing calamities all over the world: the reliance on fossil fuels, which courts global disaster, perhaps in the not-too-distant future. Details may be debated, but there is little serious doubt that the problems are serious, if not awesome, and that the longer we delay in addressing them, the more awful will be the legacy left to generations to come....

Meanwhile, power concentrations are charging in the opposite direction, led by the richest and most powerful country in world history. Congressional Republicans are dismantling the limited environmental protections initiated by Richard Nixon, who would be something of a dangerous radical in today’s political scene. The major business lobbies openly announce their propaganda campaigns to convince the public that there is no need for undue concern—with some effect, as polls show.

...

In his State of the Union speech in January, President Obama hailed the bright prospects of a century of energy self-sufficiency, thanks to new technologies that permit extraction of hydrocarbons from Canadian tar sands, shale, and other previously inaccessible sources. Others agree. The *Financial Times*

forecasts a century of energy independence for the U.S. The report does mention the destructive local impact of the new methods. Unmasked in these optimistic forecasts is the question what kind of a world will survive the rapacious onslaught.

In the lead in confronting the crisis throughout the world are indigenous communities, those who have always upheld the Charter of the Forests. The strongest stand has been taken by the one country they govern, Bolivia, the poorest country in South America and for centuries a victim of western destruction of the rich resources of one of the most advanced of the developed societies in the hemisphere, pre-Columbus.

After the ignominious collapse of the Copenhagen global climate change summit in 2009, Bolivia organized a People’s Summit with 35,000 participants from 140 countries—not just representatives of governments, but also civil society and activists. It produced a People’s Agreement, which called for very sharp reduction in emissions, and a Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth. That is a key demand of indigenous communities all over the world. It is ridiculed by sophisticated westerners, but unless we can acquire some of their sensibility, they are likely to have the last laugh—a laugh of grim despair.

Noam Chomsky
23 July 2012

Source: Full text available at
www.tomdispatch.com

The Buddha's Enlightenment for the Well-Being of Humanity

May I say what a privilege it is to be addressing such a vast and august company of fellow Buddhists at this celebration to mark the 2,600th anniversary of the Buddha's Enlightenment, surely the most important and significant event in the history of humankind. And what a worthy response this gigantic gathering is to the Buddha's advice to meet often and in large numbers as a means to ensure our prosperity and prevent decline. I am so pleased to have this opportunity to make new friends as well as to be once again amongst some old friends, in particular I'm delighted by the presence of representatives of the World Buddhist Scout Brotherhood of which I am an adviser. It is my pleasure to introduce the theme of our gathering, "The Buddha's Enlightenment for the Well-Being of Humanity", which will be occupying our hearts and minds particularly over the three days we are spending together.

Traditionally Vesak or Vesakha Puja celebrates the Birth, the Enlightenment and the Passing of the Buddha and in Theravada countries especially it is these three great events that we remember at this time. The Theravada despite its antiquity is now of course one of many for, since its beginning, Buddhism has grown into a large and diverse family that embraces a host of separate but related movements, movements that are differentiated not only by the nature of the various lands and cultures in which they have taken root and grown but as well by their traditions and rituals, and even by



*Ven. Chao Khun Bhavanaviteht
(Luangpor Khemadhammo)*

their particular doctrines and interpretations of doctrine and discipline. But for all that is different and that separates us there is much that binds us and there is one thing in particular that unites us, our common origin, the Buddha's Enlightenment. All that we have now that is described as Buddhism and all that is known as Buddhism has come from that unique and amazing experience, an experience that transformed a former prince who had become an ascetic wanderer to such a degree that from that day to this he has been known as the Buddha, the One who Knows, the Fully Enlightened One. Had that Enlightenment not taken place there would have been no Buddha and no Buddhism and this great gathering would not be happening; without the Buddha's Enlightenment this great family would never have taken birth and most especially, had the Enlightenment not taken place and there'd been no Buddha and no Dhamma, we would be living a life without hope and without a way out of our suffering.

I've been reading again lately how until about two to three hundred years ago the early

Buddhist history of India had been lost and forgotten, then, thanks mostly to colonial administrators, educated and cultivated men who were also amateur archaeologists and orientalists, India's glorious Buddhist past was gradually uncovered. Living as we do now in an age when facts can so easily be looked up and information disseminated quickly, easily and accurately it is hard to imagine a time when little was known of the history of the world and the history of humankind. In fact it's only fairly recently that we've been able to explore and investigate our past and develop a sophisticated scholarship and reliable body of literature backed up with archaeological discoveries that practically every day reveal more about our history and the origins of our species. Even as more details emerge about the great changes that have swept our planet and affected humanity over the centuries, the marvellous civilisations and empires that have risen and fallen, the material, medical and technological advances that have taken place, the languages, philosophies, customs, works of art, drama, music and ideas that the human mind has spawned, one cannot help but be struck by the fact that just as it's always been, so we continue to lead precarious lives dependent on conditions over which we can have little or no influence, dependent too on inner attitudes and mental states that we don't understand and which we can't control. What is it that human beings have done repeatedly from as far back as we can see? From that day to this,

whatever love, kindness, compassion, generosity and loyalty they might have felt and expressed, people have still fought each other, they have sought to take from each other, to prey on each other, to fear and abuse each other and in short they have treated each other with terrible inhumanity, not to speak of how they've treated other living creatures. And still it goes on: in this very day there are still wars being waged, terrified human beings languishing in torture chambers and animals being abused and grossly maltreated. And why? Because of perverted minds, minds infected by greed and hatred, corrupted by ignorance. The history of mankind is a history of discontent. And still, despite all the advances and improvements to our material well-being people generally are still not happy and remain burdened by gain and loss, happiness and suffering, praise and blame, sickness and health. Despite all the changes and improvements, life is still difficult, for many purposeless and for most disappointing. So much has changed and so little has changed: life is suffering.

One particular characteristic of Buddhism that I think never fails to impress those of us who have been used to the dogmas of other religions, and especially, speaking personally, those of us brought up in Europe and the West, is the invitation to see for ourselves and to question the principles and indeed practically everything that Buddhism teaches. There are many advantages to such an attitude, not least of which is the willingness on the part of Buddhism to explain itself and answer its many critics, some of whom just cannot understand a religion that rejects the

notion of a Creator God, others who cannot see the point in what they might perceive as a selfish and inward-looking approach to life, yet others who have no idea what we mean by suffering and still others who are not yet ready to take responsibility for their own lives. And these days the young, the humanists and the materialists are all questioning the need for religion of any kind at all. So I welcome this opportunity for us to clarify for ourselves and for our critics and indeed for the world at large the benefits that the Buddha's Enlightenment has brought us and the rewards of living and practising as sincere Buddhists. We Buddhists are not proselytisers and I have no wish to support or encourage religious coercion but still we do have a responsibility to make Buddhism known and when we look around and see so much violence, poverty and hardship, so much suffering, I'm sure that with one voice we would all want to proclaim that the world desperately needs Buddhism.

Before we go on to examine the nature of the Buddha's Enlightenment and its benefit for humanity let us just pause to remind ourselves of how it came about. Amongst Buddhists in the West much is made of the fact that the Buddha was born a man, a human being just like the rest of us. Never mind that the circumstances of his birth might have been rather different from our own or that one might or might not accept the stories of his long preparation over many lifetimes, he was a man, a human being, who like us was subject to all the aches and pains of ordinary life, who could no more stop himself ageing than the rest of us, who could become ill just as we can and whose life, just like ours,

would one day end in death. But it wasn't until the young Prince Siddhattha, the Bodhisatta, the Buddha to be, realised this of himself and of all those and indeed of everything that surrounded him, that he decided to renounce the world to try and find a way out of the unsatisfactory and painful predicament in which he found himself. That search came to a head six years later when we find him after years of hardship and rough living, emaciated and weather-beaten, seated under a great tree beside the River Neranjara. Had we been living then and passing by we might not have taken much notice—holy men then as now were not uncommon in India and we would never have imagined that what was about to take place there under that tree would be one of the most extraordinary and meaningful events in the history of humankind. Had we crept closer we might have overheard him intoning to himself his firm determination not to rise from that seat, 'though skin sinews and bones wither away, though flesh and blood of my body dry up' until he had attained whatever was attainable by manly perseverance, energy and endeavour. And so the stage was set for the Enlightenment. It was the night of the Full Moon of the month of Vesakha. As the Bodhisatta sat, alone and resolute, through the three watches of the night successive realisations unfolded in his mind until by the time the dawn broke it was all over, his full and perfect Enlightenment was complete and he was the Buddha.

He had begun his sitting as a man, a human being, with a mind not unlike ours, a mind that knew greed, hatred, delusion and he had risen from that seat no lon-

ger, as he explained later, a human being, but a Buddha, a mind transformed, a mind utterly cleansed, a mind far distant from these defilements of lust, hatred and delusion. Now, you might well say, “That’s great, that’s all very well, I mean he obviously has benefited and he must now feel a great relief but what about anyone else?” And the scriptures tell us he did feel extraordinarily blissful and peaceful and he couldn’t bring himself to do anything but sit close to that tree, that base where he had sat and attained his Enlightenment. In the weeks that followed he moved to various places nearby but always within sight of that tree. And during that time he reflected on what he had understood, what he had learnt while he had sat there. For a while it began to look as though that was going to be it. He seemed to have no inclination to talk to anyone, to teach anyone, to express his new found understanding at all because he felt that what he had learnt, what he had understood was so difficult to attain that it was unlikely anyone really would have the patience and perseverance to follow him. Then Brahma Sahampati, concerned that the benefits of the Buddha’s Enlightenment to humanity might be lost, decided to intervene and so he managed to put into the mind of the Buddha that there would be those with but little dust on their eyes who would understand. And then it occurred to the Buddha that human beings are like lotuses in a pond, at varying stages of development, some still in the darkness and mud of ignorance but others already rising to the surface, and some about to break through and blossom.

Reflecting on this the Buddha decided that he would, after

all, teach. And we know now that he taught for a very long time and that many people benefited by that. We have a great body of teaching and instruction that has come down to us from those days. But, just think, if he hadn’t taught at all, would there have been any benefit in his Enlightenment other than for himself?

Clearly there was a benefit to him because we all know that greed, hatred and delusion are painful. If we are greedy, if we are possessed by greed, if for example we go shopping and see something we like, then inevitably what follows that liking is desire, we want it, we must have it. People become intoxicated with that desire, they must have that thing, that handbag, that pair of shoes or whatever it is, and if they can’t have it or just as they are about to buy it someone else buy it, pain! Then if they get it, the next thing that enters their minds is attachment, which means that if they lose it or it breaks, pain again! This is really trivial stuff but still, people suffer; and this is not to speak of the big things that people desire, the big things that people and even whole nations claim as theirs, and the pain when they lose them or their loved ones to whom they are so deeply attached. Now why is there pain? Because of desire and attachment. It’s perfectly normal, it’s just how people are. This is the dukkha, the suffering that the Buddha was continually pointing at. So when you can free yourself from greed and attachment, when you can clear out your aversion, it must be wonderful to look upon things with complete and utter equanimity, to be undisturbed by anything, mindful of everything. It has to be wonderful. So there is this obvious benefit for the individual. But

then, what about other people?

Well, we all know, don’t we, how we can be affected by people we meet. If you bump into someone who is very angry, you are on your guard; if you meet someone who is very severe and appears to have a lot of aversion, you are very careful, you might be quite afraid. If you are faced with someone who is smiling, and warm, you are attracted, you want to be with that person. If you meet someone with whom you feel there is no threat, then you are at ease, you trust them, you have no concerns at all about them. So, obviously, we are affected by the way people are and the way we are affected other people. Which means we ought to be aware and careful how we affect others. We know from the scriptures that people were both affected and deeply impressed by the Buddha. One extraordinary example is that of Angulimala, the killer who became an Arahant. I love this story very much. You will have read or heard that in England I head the Buddhist Prison Chaplaincy, an organisation that is devoted to making Buddhism available in the prisons of the United Kingdom. When we founded it 27 years ago we decided to call it after. Angulimala: Angulimala, the Buddhist Prison Chaplaincy Organisation. At first I wasn’t sure that it was a good idea to call it Angulimala. I thought people would find that word, that name, a bit too difficult but to my surprise that hasn’t been the case and now Angulimala is well known in our prisons. Whenever I have the opportunity I tell that story, because it’s an important story. I tell it to prisoners—it gives them hope. I tell it to staff—it gives them some understanding of the people they are dealing

with and reminds them that even people who have behaved badly, who have harmed others and offended against society can change. Now we have no one in our prisons who has killed as many people as Angulimala. But nevertheless we do have in our prisons some very dangerous people and people who have done terrible things and are having to live with the consequences of awful crimes that they have committed. The Angulimala story focuses on the meeting between Angulimala, probably the world's first great serial killer, and the Buddha. You all know the story. Angulimala was set on obtaining a thousand right hand human little fingers and the day when he had nine hundred and ninety nine on a cord round his neck the Buddha walks into his forest. So he quickly arms himself and dashes out to murder the Buddha and take the last finger. But then he finds that however fast he runs he can't catch the Buddha who, quite unconcerned, alone and unarmed, is quietly walking through his forest. Finally, he calls out to him to stop. And without the slightest sign of fear or aversion, the Buddha turns to him and says, "I have stopped, now it's your turn." Now there you have on the one side a man full of rage and hate, intent on taking life at all costs, a powerful, athletic figure; and on the other you have the Buddha, unarmed, alone, in a remote place with no one about, facing an extremely dangerous man. And what happened? The Buddha totally disarmed Angulimala. And how and why? Because the Buddha stood there with no sense of self or ego, with no hatred whatsoever, with no aversion and no fear. Angulimala was staggered by this. He had never

in all his life met someone like this. He was used to people being terrified of him. He was used to them hating him. He could cope with that, he knew how to deal with that: pull out the sword, kill 'em! But here he was faced with someone who was unmoved by him, who didn't hate him, not at all, not even a little bit; someone who was able to smile at him, who had no fear of him. What could he do? He was totally disarmed, totally taken aback, dazzled by the Buddha's metta, his loving-kindness. The weapons fell from his hands. He was helpless in the presence of this extraordinary person. And we know how the story unfolded: how he ended up going back with the Buddha to the monastery and spending the rest of his life there, and in time becoming one of the Arahants. So, without giving any formal teaching at all, with hardly a word spoken, the presence of the Buddha could bring out the best in people, it could change people for the better. There was an obvious benefit to the world and to humanity. His presence and conduct, the result of his Enlightenment, were an inspiration that brought peace and happiness wherever he went.

An important lesson we learn from this is that when you live the Dhamma you benefit not only yourself but just about everyone you come into contact with. If we aspire to making the world a better place then first of all we have to make our world a better place. We have to begin right here with our own hearts and minds. And how do we do this? Like a lot of youngsters I was brought up to be kind, to love my neighbour and generally to be a good little boy and I could see that it was better to be good than bad but I couldn't always see how

to be good, particularly if I was angry, or jealous, or overcome by any of those horrible emotions or attitudes. This is a critical point: you can't just tell someone to be good, you've got to be able to tell them how. Fortunately, right from the beginning, in his very first sermon when he explained the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha has told us how. The means, the way he offers us is the Noble Eightfold Path, a path of morality, meditation and wisdom. The very same path he had discovered and travelled himself, so he knew it well. Didn't he once liken himself to a traveller who had found the way to a wonderful city that had been lost and then having found that path, thereafter the way to that city was then open and available to any who might want to take it and go there. The Buddha's Dhamma—the way to Nibbana, the way out of suffering, is there, open and available. The Buddha has shown the way and if we want to we too can now go that way, out of our suffering and all the way to Nibbana. This is what the Buddha taught and of course he expanded and adapted what he had to say to suit all classes and all sorts of people: monks and nuns, householders, business people, the rich and the poor, from kings to road sweepers. His advice was wide-ranging, teaching people how to live peacefully and manage their lives, how to relate to each other harmoniously, how to respect parents, teachers, employers and religious leaders, how to understand their duties and responsibilities to these as well as their own spouse, children, servants and employees. The society that he advocated was a harmless one: one in which no one hurt another or themselves and a society that was

then no threat to any other. The foundation of such a harmless society is of course morality, expressed basically and principally as precepts: the detailed and complex Vinaya for the Sangha and the simpler but equally profound Five Precepts for the laity, five great gifts, as the Buddha praised them, of security that individuals give themselves and that they then give to others. From there, established on a firm moral foundation, we have the techniques of concentration and awareness that can take the mind on a great voyage of discovery that bring the practitioner to a personal and direct realisation of the true nature of things and with that the ending of craving and the stopping of suffering. This is no mere faith-based belief system but a practical way of training and method of dealing with one's defilements and ignorance, something each of us can work on and do for ourselves.

Speaking earlier as I did of an ideal society, a special association of people, we must now come to the Sangha, a most important institution that the Buddha established and the third of the Three Jewels. A monastic institution, the first of its kind in the world, that not only offers the opportunity to live a disciplined life and practise the Buddha's way out of suffering intensively and full-time but which for 2,600 years has cared for, taught and preserved the Buddha's legacy. This has been no mean feat. We should not underestimate for one minute the value and importance of that contribution. Already in the West where, apart from the Asian communities, the spread of Buddhism has been largely lay led, we are beginning to see a fragmentation and dilution of the

Buddha's message. Amongst some groups of Western Buddhists it's not uncommon to feel the Sangha, or the monastic Sangha as it's sometimes cast, marginalised and dismissed as an outmoded, hierarchical, and authoritarian body that doesn't matter any more. The effect when that respect for traditional guidance and leadership is undermined is for views and opinions that are not Dhamma to proliferate as if they were Dhamma and when that happens and with a weakened Sangha the prospects for the Buddha-Dhamma's continuing survival are poor. I am reminded of the late great Ajahn Chah (Phra Bodhinyanathera) once saying to us that we must be prepared to bend ourselves to the Dhamma and not try to bend the Dhamma to suit ourselves. In reality the Sangha is a tremendous storehouse of wisdom and experience and at its best it offers teaching and guidance and opportunities for training like nothing else. Yes we know most Sangha members are not yet perfect, we know there are bad apples, we know that not everyone who joins succeeds or even lasts very long but that doesn't mean that the Sangha is all washed up any more than the presence of a few delinquent students means that a great university is useless. The Sangha is a great field of merit and support for the preservation of the well-being of humanity that radiates from the Buddha's Enlightenment. And let us remember too that the presence of a Buddhist temple and the example and leadership of the Sangha still make a huge difference to the quality of life and prosperity in many a village and community throughout the Buddhist world.

Now having said something

about each of the Three Jewels or Refuges and the direct benefit of the indirect or concealed benefits of the Buddha's Enlightenment.

Although in the past travel was a very difficult and dangerous enterprise, many adventurers nevertheless left their homes and villages to risk life and limb in pursuit of their dreams, in hope of finding unimaginable treasure, or of winning land and territory, or simply to trade or even just to satisfy their curiosity. People have always been moving. We know about some of the riches and material gains they brought back, even about some of the plants and drugs and the people they enslaved and brought home with them. What we don't know much about are the ideas and philosophies they encountered, how well they might have understood them and how much of these rubbed off on them and came back with them to influence their own civilisations. But it must have happened and it seems very likely that the Buddha's Enlightenment may have had a hand in shaping Western civilisation. We know how Buddhism spread and developed throughout Asia but in ancient times did it ever reach Europe? Well, through the Greek presence in India following Alexander the Great's invasion it's almost certain that Buddhist ideas found their way back to influence the ancient Greek philosophers. And it's possible that Buddhism might have influenced the rise and spread of Christianity. It's pure speculation but it's just possible that in those missing years between the ages of twelve and thirty when there's no record of where he was or what he was doing that Christ might just have been in India sitting at the feet of Buddhist masters. We will probably

never know but there it is, there are sayings and stories of Christ that suggest a Buddhist influence. Certainly it's been observed that the origins of early Christian monasticism were strongly influenced by the Jewish Therapeutae who lived an austere life in forest hermitages and practised meditation just like the Theravadan Buddhist monks who they seem to have modelled themselves on. In our own time when travel is so much more comfortable, quick and cheap many people are taking their holidays far from home and many are coming to the beaches and islands of Thailand where they encounter Buddhism and are often impressed by the aura of peace and harmony that emanates from it. And then there are the pacifist and patient examples of Buddhist leaders in exile and under arrest that the media reminds us of again and again. Even on the walls of a high security prison that I visit I see pasted the images and inspirational words of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Aung San Suu Kyi. And lately in the West the medical profession has discovered the benefits of mindfulness. Mindfulness techniques are being used to help patients deal with persistent pain and with mental problems like depression. In fact mindfulness has become big business with several universities and a number of individuals teaching mindfulness and teaching people to be teachers of mindfulness. Then, a few weeks ago a famous comedian and actor was giving evidence to a Parliamentary Committee set up to inquire into policies on drugs and drug addiction. In his evidence this actor advocated an "abstinence-based recovery" approach, telling MPs this was how he over-

came his addiction to drugs. "Abstinence-based recovery"—doesn't that sound remarkably like what the Buddha taught? Not doing, stopping and abstaining from harmful actions! Isn't that just what the Five Precepts are? And so all sorts of people in different ways, sometimes without realising it, are discovering the benefits of Buddhist teaching and practice.

It's well known that in former times the great Emperor Asoka of India after his conversion to Buddhism set up the world's first welfare state and offered protection to all faiths. Buddhist monarchies since, like here in Thailand, have tended to follow that example and promote tolerance and understanding between religions. And it almost begins to look as though this has begun to rub off on our British royal family. The King or Queen of England is known as the Defender of the Faith, meaning Christianity, and he or she is also the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. First, it was Prince Charles who a few years ago made it known that when he inherits the throne he would like to be the Defender of Faith, meaning all faiths and then it was Her Majesty the Queen who this year at the beginning of her Diamond Jubilee celebrations surprised us all by saying in a speech at Lambeth Palace, the home of the Archbishop of Canterbury, that the Church "has a duty to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country." Whether or not these pronouncements own anything to Asoka I don't know but it's just possible they are also examples of the unusual and indirect benefits to humanity of the Buddha's Enlightenment.

As I mentioned at the begin-

ning of my address, when speaking of the conditions that are conducive to welfare and that prevent decline the Buddha praised meeting frequently and in large numbers. The number meeting here today is almost certainly far greater than any he had in mind at the time and while once a year might not be thought of as frequent, when we consider how many have come here and from how many countries and how many hundreds and thousands of miles have been travelled to be here it is practically inconceivable that a meeting like this could be organised any more frequently than once a year. So, thanks to the organisers, the volunteers and all those who have made this grand meeting possible, one of those conditions of welfare and prosperity has been met. But there are others, and another that we can all contribute to and which I trust we will all observe is to conduct our business in harmony and at the end of our stay to go our separate ways in harmony. And furthermore I hope we will go our separate ways inspired by what we have heard and experienced, determined and energised to practise with even greater commitment what the Buddha taught: for that I am sure is the most certain, if not the only way of ensuring that the Buddha's Enlightenment continues to exert its influence for the well-being of humanity for generations to come.

Thank you,

Ven. Chao Khun Bhavanaviteht
(Luangpor Khemadhammo) OBF.
Wat Pah Santidhamma—
Santidhamma Forest Hermitage
Lower Fulbrook
Warwickshire CV35 8AS
U.K.
May 2012/2555

July 6, 2012

Sulak,

Thank you so much and I do hope you are well! I was at a meeting with Matt Weiner last week, and he said you would be in the US again soon. I will keep your wise proposals in mind. For the 2013 prize the nomination process is closed but I will make sure they are in the process for next year.

I send you warm wishes on this the Dalai Lama's birthday. His inspiration spreads far and wide across our world. And I will pass on your kind note to my sister who is always overjoyed to have your remembrance.

Very best,

Katherine Marshall
Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs
World Faiths Development Dialogue
KM398@georgetown.edu

July 1, 2012

Dear Sulak:

It's safe to say that, if you're reading this, you would like to see more peace in our world. And it's probably not a stretch to say that you love to help bring that peace to our world.

But how do you do that? How do you become an instrument of peace?

Gandhi opened a doorway to the big picture when he encouraged us to "Be the change we wish to see in the world."

But in addition to this encouragement, we also need the practical steps and actions we each can take to create peace within ourselves and in the world. So what are those steps?

No one can say what those steps and actions are for you. Only you can know that. But if you want to learn hundreds of insights, ideas, possibilities and practices that can help you create more peace in your life and in the world, I encourage you to join me for the Summer of Peace 2012.

I'm a featured speaker in this FREE 3-month series of live and online events that will empower you (and thousands of others in this growing, global movement!) to create peace from the inside out.

Get all the details here:

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?SarvodayaUSA/f80bc2950f/c0f298d493/14ab959826>

The Summer of Peace features inspiring peace leaders including Arun Gandhi, Alice Walker, Jack Kornfield, Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, James O'Dea, Belvie Rooks, spiritual leader Matthew Fox, international peace activist Azim Khamisa, Civil Rights activist Bernard Lafayette and many others.

You'll learn from these remarkable peace pioneers, and find out how you, too, can participate in the birth of a new human consciousness rooted in the principles of peace, compassion, and equality for all.

The Summer of Peace is a must-have experience, if you want to... Experience inner peace and the physical, emotional and spiritual ease that blossoms from that harmony. Create harmonious relationships with your family, friends, coworkers and community members.

Discover new ways of communicating that create deeper trust, love and intimacy in all your relationships.

Learn how to forgive people who have harmed you in the past.

Learn how to forgive yourself for harm you have inflicted on others.

Heal painful wounds within yourself, family, community and nation.

Make a commitment to peace and to become a beacon of peace in the world.

...And so much more!

Featuring more than 80 of the world's leading peacemakers, the Summer of Peace is your opportunity to become a beacon of peace and discover the actions that YOU will take to be the change you wish to see in the world.

You can listen to the Summer of Peace calls from the comfort of your home or office, and the live calls are completely free.

So what are you waiting for? Make a commitment to a world of peace and sign up for the Summer of Peace NOW: <http://cts.vresp.com/c/?SarvodayaUSA/f80bc2950f/c0f298d493/64c5d18d3d>

Yours truly,

A.T. Ariyaratne

P.S. During the Summer of Peace, you'll also find out about community actions and local projects you can get involved in. Together, we're birthing a new human consciousness—rooted in peace, justice and equality for all living beings! Join me here: <http://cts.vresp.com/c/?SarvodayaUSA/f80bc2950f/c0f298d493/4984059824>

June 1, 2012

Dear Sulak,

I hope this letter finds you feeling better than the last time we saw each other—in Chiang Mai about two years ago after you had just had an eye operation, if I remember correctly.

The occasion of this message is to invite you to an event here at Union Theological Seminary which I suspect will interest you greatly, and to which you will be able to contribute importantly. On April 18-20, 2013 we will assemble here at Union an international Buddhist-Christian conference, entitled “Enlightenment and Liberation: Engaged Buddhists and Liberation Theologians in Dialogue.”

The conference will gather leading Engaged Buddhists and Christian Liberation Theologians from around the world (young and old!) for a mutual exploration of how Buddhists and Christians can learn from each other, challenge each other, and work together for the greater well-being of sentient beings and of our planet. Our dialogue/diapraxis will focus on the following topics: 1) Racism, 2) Sexism, 3) Classism/Economic injustice, 4) War and violence/Empire, and 5) Eco-suffering. Our time together will also include meditations, talks for the wider public, and artistic presentations.

All expenses (accommodations and meals for all participants and airfare/airport transportation for those coming from abroad), as well as an honorarium, will be provided by the conference hosts.

While I send this letter also in the name of my colleagues and co-organizers of this conference, Profs. Chung Hyun Kyung and John Thatamanil, it comes with a very personal note: In May of 2013 I will be retiring from teaching here at Union Theological Seminary. This conference is also, I feel, a fitting way for me and friends/colleagues of many years to say goodbye. I would be honored and delighted to have you here for this occasion.

I do hope that you can be with us here in New York next April.

Palms joined, wishing you well,

Paul F. Knitter
Paul Tillich Professor of Theology, World Religions and Culture
Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York
3041 Broadway at 121st Street, New York, NY 10027
Tel.: 212-280-1363
E-mail: pknitter@uts.columbia.edu



May 21, 2012

Dear Sulak,

Only last night, I realized that another year of your lifetime has been replaced by the beginning of a new decade! But even a bit late, we hope that you could finish your 79th start your 80th in reasonable good health and spirit. For the days to come we convey our best wishes and that you may always be filled with passionate love and strength of body and mind!

Hope, you had a happy day with the family and friends. Are you planning to travel to Europe? We still have a place for rest and meditation in our house! Remember! Cordial Greetings from the Blackforests, yours,

Inge and Wolfgang Schmidt
WRS533@t-online.de



July 31, 2012

Dear Sulak,

How kind of you to write to me with your most encouraging words and blessings. We do our best to publish *Resurgence* every two months and it is good to know that our efforts are appreciated by friends like you.

The merger of the *Ecologist* with *Resurgence* is a new challenge but we are very keen to make it a successful union. Your blessings are very important to us. Unfortunately John Lane is unwell, he has suffered a severe stroke and is bed bound, he is being well looked after by Truda and his family.

June and I recently had lunch with Claire and Roger and they are both very well. Schumacher College is going well and June is a regular visitor to Plum Village to practise meditation.

Thank you again for your words of encouragement.

With all good wishes

Satish Kumar

May 15, 2012

25 Years Schweisfurth Foundation

Dear Sulak,

The Schweisfurth Foundation was officially established in 1986. 25 years later in 2012, we look back upon our years of committed service for organic agriculture and food production and sustainable ways of working with the land and cultivating our rural landscapes.

We proudly look back upon our work with so many exceptional visionaries, social and ecological innovators and activists with whom we have been able to test and launch new approaches.

The enclosed anniversary volume gives an overview of our most important partners and projects. We hope you will enjoy checking out and reliving the many different scientific, economic, political and cultural impulses and incentives which the foundation—as part of the German ecological movement—has been able to provide.

Our main focus in the immediate future will be directed toward social innovations in rural communities, business ethics and sustainable activities in rural areas; while we, our partners and alliances will continue to adhere to organic, fair, slow, regional and artisanal goals and values.

Our achievements of the past will encourage our efforts of helping shape a liveable and lovable and lovable future.

Best wishes
Franz-Theo Gottwald

May 11, 2012

Dear Sulak

I am sending you my latest novel, *The Feet of Juan Bacnang*, under separate cover if only to illustrate to you that this 87 year old hack is still writing. I haven't been to Bangkok in ages as you very well know because if I will go there, you will absolutely be sure that I will be in touch with you to bum not just a roof over my head but that most memorable lunch at that sidewalk stall before the King's temple. I doubt if you remember it but I always do because it really was the best meal I ever had in Thailand.

I was in Singaproe last year for their writers' festival and as usual, I saw Willy and Lena. Muhammad was also there last year and they stayed—he was with IOmee, his wife—in the house for one night. Below is his address.

I have lost touch with the children of Ivan but I did connect with Larry Stifel's son David; he is in Africa for some international organization.

Tesie is fine—she is 82, and she continues to manage the book shop and the household. My oldest son has retired from Kodak in the US and he is now home as our extradriver, caregiver, repairman etc. He is divorced and his two daughters are in the US. All the six children are there doing very well so I don't have to worry about them. I have now 11 grandchildren and one great granddaughter. One of my grandchildren joined the Marines, was stationed in Iraq and will get married in September and hopefully, we will try to attend his wedding there.

Pardon the lousy typing. I am still using a typewriter, writing in longhand, too, and I never got to used the laptop. My secretary sends my email and prints my email for me.

Yes, I get your *Seeds of Peace* and envy you for your continued publishing and for that handsome award you got in Japan. I worried, too, about the lese majeste charge against you but I always knew you as a survivor so I stopped worrying because I know it will take more than lese majeste to get you down on you knees, my dear Sulak.

Any chance of your coming to Manila very soon? You are always welcome at the house, of course, and it is still there. I have not yet gotten enough moolah to move to a flashier district. The bookshop is now being surrounded by skyscrapers and I tell friends it will be the last wooden structure in Manila.

Do you know Seth Mydans who was NYT Times correspondent for Southeast Asia based in Bangkok. He is an old friend. I hope you will get to meet him.

Write in case you need anything from here and I hope Nin is healthy, too. Give my best wishes to Nilawan.

Frankie José

Prof. Muhammad Hajji Salled
254 Jalan Enam, Taman Sekamat
43000 Kajang, Malaysia
Tel: (603) 873-67057

June 25, 2012

Dear Sulak,

I send greetings from your old friend in Australia.

Thank you for continuing to send me *Seeds of Peace*.

Thank you for your ongoing work for love and kindness in the world.

I still remember the Peoples Tribunal on Tibet on which we shared the experience together. I am proud of our work there.

I am also proud that your journal has included the excellent article by Kulavar Prapornpipat on sexual minorities in Thai Buddhism.

Please thank the Author and Editor for including this essay.

Once, when I had a privilege of an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, I mentioned the pain and hurt caused by his negative statements about gays. He said that it was painful to him too as many of his best and strongest supporters in the United States were from sexual minorities. But he felt constrained by the scriptures. The same is true in Abrahamic religions. However, it is necessary to read old scriptures with new eyes, enlightened by modern scientific knowledge.

This is what the essay in your journal has done. I offer my admiration and thanks. With every good wish and with a message of friendship.

Sincerely,
The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG

Level 7, 195 Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
Website: www.michaelkirby.com.au
Telephone: +61 2 9231 5800
Facsimile: +61 2 9231 5811
E-mail: mail@michaelkirby.com.au

May 23, 2012

Dear Sulak:

I wanted to let you know that I will be stepping down as Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The formal announcement may be made sometime in June, so kindly keep this confidential until the announcement is made by the Central Tibetan Administration.

It has been a great honor and privilege for me to hold this position and I am very grateful to His Holiness for entrusting me with such a responsibility. I have made my best efforts while serving in this capacity and believe that I have made some worthwhile contributions to advance the cause of Tibet. However, I leave that judgment to others.

As the lead interlocutor in our contacts with China, I not only headed the delegations during the formal talks but also spent a great deal of time and effort in building international support for our work, including in making

governments and policy makers understand our position. I was fortunate to have the wise leadership of His Holiness and the unwavering support of Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, who was the Kalon Tripa for most of the time when the formal talks with the Chinese leadership occurred.

Furthermore, I had the advantage of having Envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen as my colleague in this difficult and challenging task. I have immense pride in the staff that assists the Envoys in our talks as well as those who help maintain the Task Force Secretariat in Dharamsala. These are people with professional skills that match the Foreign Service officers of any government. Their dedication and loyalty are unparalleled.

The devolution of power by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Tibetan people is a milestone in the history of Tibet. My relinquishing of the position of the Special Envoy is part of the devolution process. However, taken into consideration the delicate nature of our relationship with the People’s Republic of China, I stayed on for some time with the hope to help smoothen the transition and to assist in keeping the dialogue process alive.

In close consultation with Kalon Tripa Dr. Lobsang Sangay, and at his direction, I made several efforts to resume the dialogue process, but without any positive result. Looking at various aspects of the situation, I do not see any possibility of an early resumption of the talks, and therefore see no purpose in my continuing in my present position.

My stepping down as the Special Envoy does not mean that I will cease working for Tibet and the Tibetan people. It is my obligation and duty as a Tibetan to continue to serve my people in whatever way I can. I have offered to stay on as an active member of the Task Force if the Tibetan leadership finds some usefulness in having me in that position. On a day to day basis, I will continue to serve as the Executive Chairman of the Board of the International Campaign for Tibet, an organization with which I am very proud to be associated.

I thank you for your support, advice, and friendship over the years.

With regards,
Lodi Gyari

July 29, 2012

Dear Honorable Mr Sulak Sivaraksa,

We, the undersigned Thên tri thức (Good Dharma Friendship) Cultural Company Ltd, would like to express our deep gratitude toward you.

We also send you some copies of the Vietnamese version from your book with the title WISDOM OF SUSTAINABILITY--BUDDHIST ECONOMICS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY as “Minh triết của sự bền vững - Kinh tế Phật giáo cho thế kỷ 21” with your kind permission, in the purpose of spreading your deep message to the Vietnamese readership.

With the perennial tradition of Buddhism and its spirit of compassion, wisdom, and fearlessness absorbed in our daily life, our thought, and all our activities the Vietnamese people are practicing the teaching of the Buddha. Therefore, your book is a precious and urgent gift, especially to the youth of our country, offering them a penetrating and reflective view in confronting the degraded realities in ethics, spirituality in the struggle with the trend of consumerism that is tearing out every individual, every family of our nation.

We expect that those who have the good fortune to meet with your book with its clear-cut, concise, and warmhearted argument and logic would receive a great inspiration to return to and improve their selves, and together help to build up a peaceful, happy, and upward world.

We dare hope to have the good chance to introduce the other important books from you and your friends to the people of Vietnam for the benefits of our country.

Through the kind intermediary of lacquer painter Nguyễn Xuân Việt, on behalf of the Vietnamese readers, we would like to send you and your family our wishes of good health and well-being.

Sincerely yours,

Thientrithuc Cultural Company. Ltd.
Vice-Director
TRẦN VĂN DUY

The Lady and the Peacock

Burma has been in the limelight for the past few months. A number of reforms have been carried out by the quasi-civilian government led by reformist President Thein Sein, including the release of political prisoners and Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy being entering Parliament.

The response from the international community has also been rather optimistic with the easing of economic sanctions by the United States and European Union. Many foreign companies including General Electric and Coca Cola have made moves to invest in Burma.

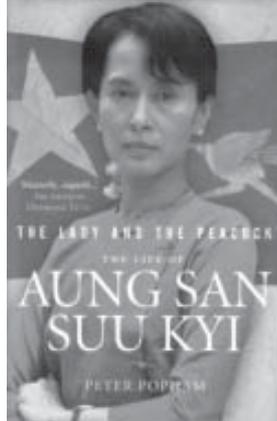
And, of course, when people talk about Burma, it is impossible to leave out Suu Kyi, who spent much of the last two decades under house arrest.

In Burma, people throng to listen to her speeches and to catch a glimpse of her visits. The Nobel Laureate's picture is now regular features in Burma's media—as if it guarantees increased sales—and also widely posted in social networks such as Facebook.

Wherever Suu Kyi travels, she is embraced with warmth, love and admiration—not only by Burmese people but also the international community. More than ever, she has become a global icon after being able to travel outside Burma for the first time to attend forums and officially accept her Nobel Peace Prize in Norway.

A number of books have been written about the 67-year-old and her role in Burma's political struggle. *The Lady and the Peacock* by Peter Popham—the latest biography on Suu Kyi—takes on a more personal outlook of her life.

Popham includes journal entries of Ma Theingi who was



Suu Kyi's personal assistant and companion during her arduous election campaign tour of 1989 and with whom she later fell out. Those journal entries were recorded at the request of Michael Aris, Suu Kyi's husband, and were made available to the author through an anonymous friend.

By dividing the book into five parts—Suu Kyi's father Gen Aung San; her years growing up in India; her life in England; her involvement in Burmese politics from 1988 to 2002; and after 2002—Popham attempts to analyze Suu Kyi's and how her family background and the historical events in Burma have shaped who she is today.

He does a fine job of depicting the different stages of Suu Kyi's life: from her formative years, to a student, then a housewife and finally an inspirational political leader for the Burmese people.

Many of Suu Kyi's attributes are also excellently portrayed in the book: her sense of duty for being "her father's daughter;" her strong morality regarding Burmese traditions and culture despite growing up in foreign countries; and her sense of discipline with her children.

Popham also describes her resolute determination and cour-

age when sticking to her goals despite being subjected to physical and mental hardships—the house arrest for most of her years in Burma; the denial of a visa to her dying husband; the brutal attack on her life in Depayin in 2003 when many of her supporters were killed trying to protect her.

Through interviews and comments made by Suu Kyi's close friends in Oxford, rare snippets about her are included. Like many others in life, she studied a course in which she was not interested at the insistence of her strict mother and ended up with an underwhelming third class degree albeit at prestigious Oxford University. Popham is such an accomplished storyteller that most people will be caught up in his description and narration about events in Suu Kyi's life.

A list of references on articles and books, written about Burma and Suu Kyi, at the end of the biography indicates the level of extensive research Popham carried out. Yet, whenever he tries to provide an analysis of events in Burma, as a Burmese person myself, I do not feel that he possesses enough in-depth understanding about the myriad underlying issues in the country—the history of ethnic conflicts, national reconciliation and the reform process, to name but a few.

In contrast, Bertil Lintner, a veteran journalist who has written seven books on Burma and has reported on Burmese issues for over two decades, is able to give a concise and yet thought-provoking analysis in his offering *Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's struggle for democracy*.

Two critical points cast a black cloud over the credibility

of Popham's book.

First is a statement, included without any source, that now-retired Snr-Gen Than Shwe "admitted [to] ordering the massacre, with the aim of 'eradicating' Aung San Suu Kyi." Never has such admission been recorded and it is unimaginable for Than Shwe to so brazenly make such a claim.

Second is Popham's accusation that Ma Theingi was responsible for his repatriation from Burma during a visit. It seems that his close association with Michael Aris, who regarded Ma Theingi as being disloyal, clouded his view of her.

Without any credible proof, he agrees with accusations of Ma Theingi having "gone over" to the junta's side after she became vocally critical about Suu Kyi and her party's policies.

I also wonder about Popham's intention to include an assumption by Suu Kyi's friends about how she fell in love with a Pakistani student, who later worked in the Pakistani Foreign Service and who declined to be

interviewed for the book, during her second year at Oxford. Was this just an attempt to sensationalize Suu Kyi's love-life during her younger days?

He also seems as star-struck when he likens Suu Kyi, giving her first political speech to an audience while in her mid-40s, to a 17-year-old girl. Without a doubt, all of us will agree how youthful Suu Kyi appears even now. However, just from seeing Suu Kyi's picture from that time, it is clear that comparing her to teenager is a gross exaggeration.

At times, the book tends towards being unnecessarily longwinded with exhaustive details about political events in Burma. Popham could have just included the concise versions of those events which are significant for Burma's history and Suu Kyi, but then he would not have been able to fill up all those 398 pages.

For those who have read other books written about Burma or Aung San Suu Kyi, the only new or interesting material is the entries from Ma Theingi's

journal. Although the quotes provide readers with a rare glimpse of the intimate details into Suu Kyi's life, it would have been better not to include quote-after-quote, containing a repetitive and sometimes trivial details like what Suu Kyi wore and what she ate, continuously page-after-page.

Popham states that his story on Suu Kyi is not "just the story of a courageous woman who challenged a military junta and lost"—an assertion that Suu Kyi herself never made—but of someone who has a more "complex and interesting" side.

No doubt that Ma Theingi's journal entries and the chapter on Suu Kyi's childhood years are interesting, enhanced by the good storytelling skills of Popham, and contain details other prior biographers have left out. Other than that, Popham might have been too presumptuous about his aims for his book and his understanding on his subjects—Suu Kyi and Burma.

Hnin Wathan

Source: www.irrawaddy.org



Happiness Beyond Measure

'Be kind whenever possible, It is always possible'— these simple words from the Dalai Lama illustrated by sunlit clouds leave me feeling peaceful. This beautiful book matches profound quotes from Buddhist and other Eastern spiritual masters to contemplative photographs with a simple message to inspire happiness and compassion in the reader. Opening the book randomly will feast the eye through images that both calm the mind and excite the senses. Often using a wide-angled lens some pictures spread the full width of two pages offering mountain vistas, countryside and nature views, shimmering reflections and



misty horizons. Other pictures show the faces of old and young practitioners with wisdom and compassion in every pore. Temples, stupas and Buddha images feature some photographed from unusual angles often with pilgrims deep in practice in the foreground. Gandhi quotes to a background vista of misty purple mountains *'Happiness is when*

what you think, what you say and what you do are in harmony'. Contemplating this and other pages the combinations of image and word produces a resonance of inner harmony. Bhanuwat Jittivuthikarn, compiled the book after six years travelling through South and South East Asia meeting and photographing Buddhist pilgrims. It is clear to me he is a committed practitioner and the book is his way of sharing his practice. The tome represents Buddhist life in many facets from Thai monks on a boat collecting morning alms to young novices at Mandalay and old Tibetan pilgrims. The author clearly moved by his experience states

that smiling faces of his subjects share their joy and 'become an old friend who teach me compassion is the secret of survival in our harsh world today'. As I slowly turn the pages reading the wise words of spiritual teachers from Dhammapada to the Dalai Lama, Ajarn Chah to Lao Tse I get drawn into the photos and

feel a profound sense of inner stillness. My one criticism might be a lack of words from female masters although women are well represented in the images! The essence of this book is perhaps epitomised on a page featuring young novices radiating happiness to the words of Thich Nahat Hanh saying—

'Smile, Breathe and Go Slowly'. I imagine any reader will embody this message after dipping into this gem of a book that clearly shows how image and word put together by a practitioner can be a teaching itself in finding inner peace.

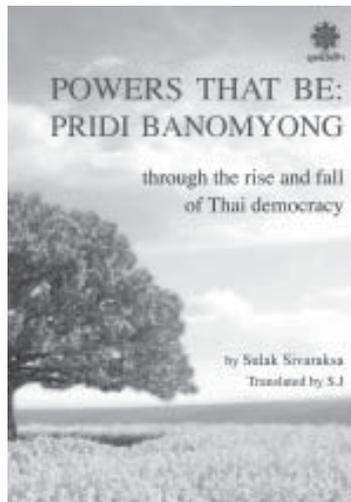
Jane Rasbash



POWERS THAT BE: PRIDI BANOMYONG Through the Rise and Fall of Thai Democracy

The title of this remarkable book is a bit misleading. Fortunately, however, its author, Sulak Sivaraksa—Siam's best-known maverick intellectual—writes frankly: *...I do not attempt to write a biography of Pridi. Rather, this work is about my changing perceptions of him. In part, this essay is intended as a mea culpa. In part it charts my arduous and tumultuous intellectual journey from an advocate of conservative elitism to that of meaningful participatory democracy. Directly or otherwise, Pridi played a central role in this journey.* Generally speaking, the mea culpa is avoided by prominent academics and public intellectuals; confessing their past stupidities, prejudices, gullibilities, and shallowness is acutely embarrassing and shameful. But Sulak has the rare courage to be honest with us all.

One has to bear in mind that Sulak was born in 1932, the year in which the absolutist monarchy was bloodlessly overthrown, in the name of democracy, constitutionalism, and popular nationalism, through a coup d'état engineered by military officers and civilians (whose leader was 32-



year old Pridi). He was much too young to understand Pridi's impressive achievements as minister of the interior, minister of finance, and perhaps most strikingly as foreign minister, when he negotiated the end of extraterritoriality by the imperial powers—something which the monarchy had never managed. Sulak was only 14 when the boy-king Rama VIII was shot to death under mysterious circumstances, and only 15 when Pridi, slandered by reactionary conservatives, elderly relatives of the monarch, and ambitious, cynical generals as the master-mind be-

hind Rama VIII's violent death, was forced into lifelong exile first in China and finally in France. At the same time, the Cold War in Asia began, which allowed Pridi's enemies to cast him as a communist sympathizer, while attaching themselves to the hegemonic United States. When Sulak was 18, he was sent to the United Kingdom to study law, returning only when he was 26. The UK had then most prestigious constitutional monarchy in the world headed by the young Queen Elizabeth II. It is not surprising that Sulak's thinking became solidly monarchist. Meantime, at home, the military dominated the government dressed up in a series of ephemeral constitutions. Sulak's return coincided exactly with the onset of Marshal Sarit Thanarat's absolutist dictatorship, which tried to legitimize itself by 'reviving' the monarchy in the form of the young Rama IX. Readers of this book will thus understand why the blossoming young intellectual swallowed the incessant rightwing newspaper campaign to blacken Pridi as a traitor, a communist, and a regicide.

The second crucial part of

the book discusses the social circumstances that for a long time kept him hostile to democracy. Sulak regularly castigates the political apathy, conservatism, and social-climbing of his own class—the bourgeoisie of Bangkok. But there is one obvious lacuna in his explanation: the fact that in the early post-World War II era this bourgeoisie was overwhelmingly Chinese. Sulak describes his own family as the product of the huge wave of Chinese immigrants from the middle of the 19th century, who, over the generations confined themselves to private family businesses and service in the offices of great foreign enterprises. But he does not really look at the Chinese as a whole. The community was by no means united: over against the rich and successful bourgeoisie was Bangkok's pretty miserable working class; ethnic conflicts were frequent between Teochiu, Hokkien, Hakka, Cantonese, and Hainanese; assimilated Chinese were in competition with non-assimilated; sympathies were split for Chiang Kai-shek's decaying Kuomintang apparatus and for the victorious (in 1949) Chinese Communist Party. For most of its life the Thai Communist Party was led by working-class Chinese—with close ties to Peking.

At the height of the Cold War, Siam's military and militarized police often used the Red Scare to arrest Chinese, bleed Chinese businessmen, and invade their boardingrooms. This menace was by no means new. Rama VI had published two tracts describing the Chinese as the Jews of the East. In the late 1930s, the government of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram enacted laws which were clearly discriminatory. Until the mid-1960s

there were only 3 universities in the country, so that most Chinese had no tertiary education, and many still spoke Thai with heavy accents. (To a substantial degree, therefore, the high bureaucracy, and the officer corps were off limits). In this climate of insecurity, it is no wonder that most Chinese 'laid low,' ('apathy'), were worried by jingoistic Thai nationalism, and felt the need for protectors. One way to be protected was to attach themselves to the Bangkok 'aristocracy' by helping out with loans or donations, intermarriage, and aping this aristocracy's manners, arrogance, hostility to and contempt for the Thai peasantry, as well as dozens of non-Thai minorities. The monarchy was also attractive, since the new bourgeoisie found it easier to be a 'subjects' like everyone else, rather than second class 'Thai citizens'.

In this book, Sulak shows how he gradually became a champion of Pridi after careful reading of his works—wise, democratic, anti-feudal and dedicated to the education of commoners. But it is likely that he felt other affinities with the elderly statesman. The two men were of partial Chinese descent and also commoners. Pridi created the first genuinely democratic constitution for the country and served also as the country's first commoner Prime Minister. He was the founder of Thammasat University in the late 1930s which opened its doors to every youngster. In 1963, the year Sarit died of alcoholism, Sulak boldly created the *Sangkomsat Parithat* (*Social Science Review*), really the first high-quality intellectual journal in Thai history, also open to most opinions and commoner writers and academ-

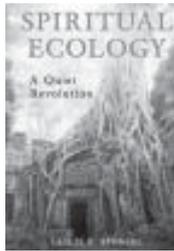
ics. In 1946, Pridi had tried to create a Southeast Asian League binding Siam to its neighbouring new anticolonial republican governments. Sulak in turn built close friendships with Mochtar Lubis in Jakarta and Frankie José in the Philippines, who also created wide-open critical intellectual journals quite similar to *Sangkomsat Parithat*.

Sulak also records, very briefly, his horror at the military's brutal attempt to repress the vast crowds of ordinary people demanding the restoration of a decent constitution and participatory democracy. The savage killing of unarmed civilians finally led to the fall of the dictatorship in October 1973. For almost three years thereafter, democracy prevailed, with fairly honest elections which for the first time made room for leftwing and liberal parties. But on October 6, 1976, the sickening savagery recurred—this time aimed at Pridi's Thammasat University and its radicalized students. He was also aware that while the monarch had intervened on the side of the democrats in 1973, in 1976 he was allied with the military. Although Sulak does not say so directly, it is pretty clear from this book that these ghastly events, made him a confirmed supporter of Pridi's participatory democracy as the solution to the country's deep problems, and a strong critic of those sectors of Thai society which still clung to the military, the conservative aristocracy, the authoritarian aspects of the monarchy.

His book is thus an extraordinarily honest political-intellectual autobiography as well as a touching in memoriam for Pridi, covering eight decades of every kind of turbulence in Siam.

Benedict O. Anderson

Recommended Readings



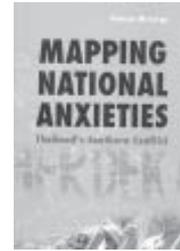
Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution

Edited by Leslie E. Sponsel

Published by Praeger An Imprint Of ABC-CLIO, LLC

Mapping National Anxieties : Thailand's Southern Conflict

Edited by Duncan McCargo
Editorial work by Pauline Khny
Published by Nias Press, 2012



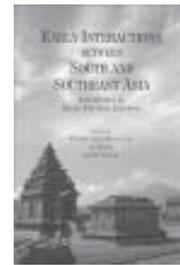
The First Fifty-five Years of the International House of Japan: Genesis, Evolution, Challenges, and Renewal

Edited by Kato Mikio

Published by I-House Press, 2012

Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on Cross-cultural Exchange

Edited: Pierre-Yves Manguin, A. Mani and Geoff Wade
Published by The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011



Minh Triết Của Sự Bền Vững; Kinh tế Phật giáo cho thế kỷ XXI

Edited by Sulak Sivaraksa

Vietnamese Translation by Nguyễn Tấn văn

Published by Nxb. Tri Thức 2012

BUDDHADASA “Quyền Sách cho Nhân Loại”

Edited by Hoang Phong chuyên ngữ
Published by Nhà Xuất Bản Phương Đông 2012



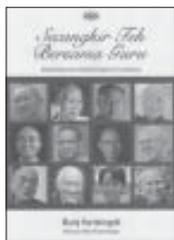
The Feet of Juan Bacnang

Edited by F. Sionil Jose

Published by Solidaridad Publishing House, 2011

Understanding Confluences and Contestations, Continuities and Changes: Towards Transforming Society and Empowering People

Penang Workshop Proceedings by 2009/2010 API Fellows
The Nippon Foundation
Published by API Regional Coordinating Institution, 2012



Secangkir teh bersama Guru

Edited by Maria Hartiningsih

Published by Ehipassiko Foundation

Pha One Keo Siththivong, “Great monks of Luang Prabang from 1840 to 2007”.

Lao and English versions, photographs by the Buddhist Archive of Photography

Publications of The Buddhist Archive of Photography
Published by Anantha Publishing LLC, Luang Prabang and New York



Les guides de l'état du monde ‘Thaïlande, histoire, société, culture’

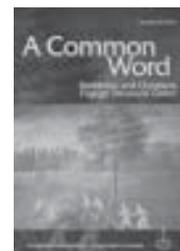
Edited by Arnaud Dubus

Published by La Découverte

A Common Word: Buddhists and Christians Engage Structural Greed

Edited by Martin L. Sinaga

Published by Lutheran University Press and Lutheran World Federation, 2012





***Bhikkhuni Education in Contemporary Society:
Proceedings of the 2009 International Conference
on Buddhist Sangha Education***

Edited by Xiang guang ni zhong fo xue yuan.
Published by Taipei Shi :
Cai tuan fa ren qie ye shan ji jin hui, Minguo 99 [2010]

Journal of the Siam Society (JSS) Volume99(2011)

Edited by Kim W. Atkinson
Published by The Siam Society 2011

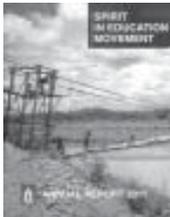


***Incomplete Urbanism :
A Critical Urban Strategy for Emerging Economies***

Edited by William S W Lim
Published by World Scientific Publishing Company
(November 30, 2011)

***Resilience:
Celebrating the Lives of Cambodian Peace Builders***

Edited by Seng Sakara
Published by Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies



***Spirit in Education Movement
Annual Report 2011***

***Light of Buddhadharma Foundation
International Annual Report 2010-11***



***Living Vision:
Schweisfurth Foundation-Celebrating 25 Years
of Service for Organic Agriculture and Food Culture***

***Vision Leben: 25 Jahre Stiftung Schweisfurth
Fünfundzwanzig Jahre Schweisfurth-Stiftung***



***The Royal Photographic Society of Thailand (RPST)
No.12 July 2012***

Journal of International Buddhist Studies (JIBS)

Edited by Dr.Phramaha Suthit Aphakaro
Buddhist Research Institute,
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University



Step by Step
by Maha Ghosananda
Burmese Translation by U Thant Lwin Maung (Ko Tar)

***Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World:
A Survey of the Buddhist Situation against a Historical Background***
Edited by Phra Brahmaganabhorm (P.A.Payutto)



東日本大震災は、現代社会における経済開発中心主義が行き過ぎてしまったことを露呈した。

近代化が進んだ日本社会で、人々が宗教に求めるものは何か。

仏教的価値観は、今の社会に何を提示することができるのか・・・。



2012 INEB

Executive Meeting and International Forum:

The Wisdom of Inter-being & The Art of Happiness

**A Buddhist Approach to Rebuilding
Our Society and Ensuring Our Future**

**November 6-10, 2012
KodoKyodan Buddhist Fellowship
Yokohama, Japan**

参加費
500円

費予約

<問い合わせ・予約先>

E-mail: inebevent@gmail.com

主催 Japan Network of Engaged Buddhism (JNEB)
協力 季道教団