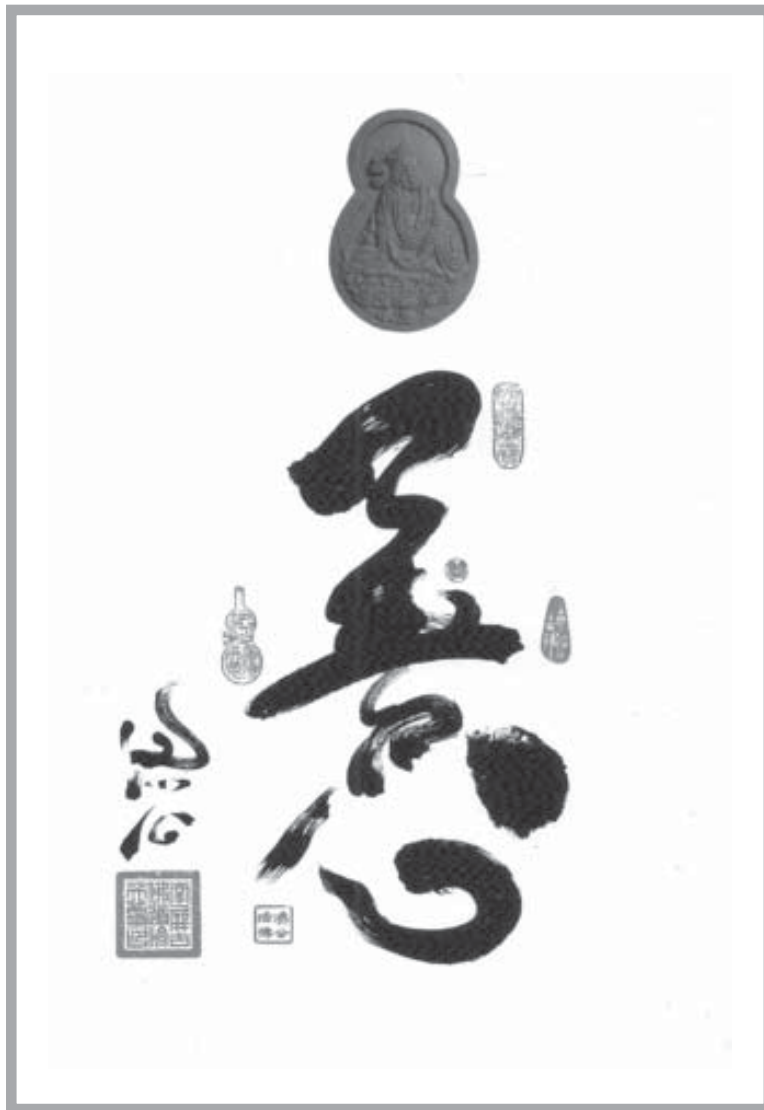


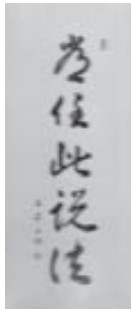
SEEDS OF PEACE

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Good Hearts :
Beginning of Decent Human Beings



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SEEDS OF

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PEACE

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

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The goals of INEB are to:

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

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Dr. Sem Pringpuangkaew

Dr. Sem Pringpuangkaew was born on 31st May 2454 (1911). He may reach his centenary this year. He is one of the most respectable persons—not only in the medical profession but also among the NGO movements in the kingdom.

He is a practicing Buddhist, full of compassion and wisdom. This means that he is also humble and selfless.

We started the Spirit in Education Movement 15 years ago by using the acronym to honor him as he is indeed a pioneer in alternative education—reminding students and teachers alike that they must learn from each other, as well as from the poor, the oppressed and nature.

The Buddha is our great teacher and our great medical doctor. The Buddha takes care of our welfare physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Dr. Sem follows the Buddha as a teacher as well as a medical doctor.

The Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation not only pioneered the Spirit in Education Movement but also started the Sem Pringpuangkaew annual lecture. Satish Kumar of Schumacher College in England gave the first keynote address. This year, the Venerable Phra Bhavanaviteht (Khemadhammo Bhikkhu) was the 17th speaker. His lecture “*The Angulimala program, Buddhism, and perspectival diversity*” was delivered on 22 January 2011.

Dr. Sem Pringpuangkaew will always be admired by all who care for social justice and nonviolence.

Editorial Notes

The Niwano Peace Prize has been awarded annually in Tokyo since 1983. It was named after Rev. Nikkyo Niwano, founder of the Risho Koseikai lay Buddhist movement in Japan. It was colloquially known as the Nobel Peace Prize of Asia, as the Right Livelihood Award is also known as the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize. The latter began in 1980 and is awarded by the Swedish Parliament. The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded in Oslo, whereas the other Nobel Prizes for literature, science, economics etc., are awarded in Stockholm.

The Nobel Prizes are over one hundred years old and are very prestigious. However, some of the Peace Laureates are not truly nonviolent such as Henry Kissinger. Moreover, the prizes are not always awarded to those who really deserved them. For instance Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi never received the Nobel Peace Prize despite the fact that no one deserved the peace prize more than the Mahatma did.

Alfred Nobel, the initiator of the Peace Prize, himself depended on violence and aggression to sustain his livelihood. Perhaps the Peace Prize was to ease his conscience whereas the founders of the Alternative Nobel Prize and the so called Nobel Prize of Asia led their lives nonviolently.

Unfortunately the announcement of the Niwano Peace Prize this year more or less coincided with the natural disaster in Japan—the worst since the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Karmically, the Japanese also received the bad results of their ancestors' aggression in China, Korea and the Second World War. People like Mr. Nikkyo Niwano tried hard to build peace—not only in Japan but in the world, but the powers-that-be in Japan have not yet cultivated seeds of peace in them. Besides, the Japanese, since their victory over the Russians, still maintained that they could master scientific and technological knowledge no less than the West. They have not really learnt that western successes also constitute their failures, while the West wants to overcome others—not only other human beings, but also other sentient beings. Mainstream western scientists believed that they could control nature. Now nature has shown to us repeatedly that it is beyond human control and imagination. The disaster in Japan was surely not the last but the latest and the destruction at the nuclear power plants in Japan shows that scientists and those in power, politically and economically, have never learned their lessons from, for example Chernobyl and Bophal, like most of us who think that death, old age and different kinds of suffering will not happen to us—only to others.

We need to learn to be humble, instead of being arrogant, to feel that we are all interrelated. We are not individual egos competing with others in order to overcome them but that we are in fact depended on them—including the trees, the earth, the water, and the air surrounding us. They are our fathers and mothers. We should respect them and be grateful to them, instead of exploiting them for short-term economic and political advantages. If we are able to do this we may be able to live more modestly and appropriately with other humans and nonhumans. Then Mother Earth will really care for us as nature will also care for us so that our future generations will have a chance to survive more meaningfully. We should all be more concerned about Gross National Happiness than Gross National Product.

Indeed each of us needs to cultivate seeds of peace within and apply them to the outside world. H.H. the Dalai Lama says that world peace depends on each of us cultivating peace within. Although this is very difficult, His Holiness maintains that it is the only way. We need to meditate on his advice seriously and give up violent ways of thinking and living forever.

International: We Demand Global Nuclear Phase Out Joint Statement on the Japanese Nuclear Disaster

The following is a Joint International Statement of Laureates of the “Alternative Nobel Prize” and Members of the World Future Council on Japanese Nuclear Disaster:

We extend our deepest sympathies to the people of Japan who have experienced a devastating earthquake and tsunami followed by severe damage to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. We commend the brave individuals who are risking their lives to prevent the escape of massive amounts of radiation from the damaged nuclear reactors and spent fuel pools at Fukushima Daiichi.

The disaster in Japan has demonstrated once again the limits of human capability to keep dangerous technologies free from accidents with catastrophic results. Natural disasters combined with human error have proven a potent force for undermining even the best laid plans. Reliance on human perfection reflects a hubris that has led to other major failures of dangerous technologies in the past, and will do so in the future. What has occurred as a result of the confluence of natural disaster and human error in Japan could also be triggered purposefully by means of terrorism or acts of war.

In addition to accidental or purposeful destruction, nuclear power plants pose other threats to humanity and to the human future. The large amounts of radioactive wastes that are created by nuclear power generation will

remain highly toxic for many times longer than human civilization has existed, and there is currently no long-term solution to dealing with the threats these radioactive wastes pose to the environment and human health. Further, nuclear power plants, with their large societal subsidies, have diverted financial and human resources from the development of safe and reliable forms of renewable energy.

Nuclear power programs use and create fissile materials that can be used to make nuclear weapons, thus providing a proven pathway to nuclear weapons proliferation. Several countries have already used civilian nuclear programs to provide the fissile materials to make nuclear weapons. Other countries, particularly those with plutonium reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities, could easily follow suit if they decided to do so. The spread of nuclear power plants will not only make the world more dangerous, but will make more difficult, if not impossible, the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world.

Nuclear power is neither the answer to modern energy problems nor a panacea for climate change challenges. There is no solution of problems by creating more problems. Nuclear power doesn't add up economically, environmentally or socially. Of all the energy options, nuclear is the most capital intensive to establish, decommissioning is prohibitively expensive and the financial burden continues long

after the plant is closed.

The tragedy in Japan has raised global awareness of the extreme dangers that can result from nuclear power generation. Grave as these dangers are, however, they are not as great as those arising from the possession, threat and use of nuclear weapons—weapons that have the capacity to destroy civilization and end most life on the planet.

The conclusion we draw from the nuclear power plant accident in Japan is that the human community, acting for itself and as trustees for future generations, must exercise a far higher level of care globally in dealing with technologies capable of causing mass annihilation, and should phase out, abolish and replace such technologies with alternatives that do not threaten present and future generations. This applies to nuclear weapons as well as to nuclear power reactors.

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Marianne Andersson
Dr. h.c. Shawn A-in-chut Atleo
Dr. h.c. Maude Barlow
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Dr. Tony Clarke
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Shrikrishna Upadhyay
Alyn Ware
Prof. em. Dr. h.c. Christopher G. Weeramantry
Francisco Whitaker Ferreira
Alla Yaroshinskaya

Angie Zelter
The Right Livelihood Award was established in 1980 to honour and support those “offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today”. It has become widely known as the ‘Alternative Nobel Prize’ and there are now 141 Laureates from 59 countries.

Right Livelihood Laureates



Korea: The Struggle for Religious Freedom

The War of 1950 ruined Korean society. Foreign Christian missionaries helped in the political, economic, and social restoration, but there was a price to pay. A number of Korean government officials became Christians and a close relationship was formed between Christianity and Korean politics. The relationship between politics and religion has been seriously problematic for Korean society in modern history. Although more than half the Korean population is still Buddhist, Christians (Catholics and Protestants) have an influence on society that is more than appropriate for their size, often affecting the Buddhist community adversely.

This uneasy situation has been dominating Korean society for years. In 2004, this took a more serious turn, when the current President Myung-Bak Lee, then the mayor of Seoul, publicly dedicated the city of Seoul to the



Christian god. Such conduct was in blatant violation of the Korea Constitution, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and was most inappropriate for a public official. In early 2005, the mayor of Pohang city initiated the Holy Club movement which makes a city a “Christian” city. Within the next few months other such Holy Clubs were announced in 27 other cities. Upon the forming of the Myung-Bak Lee administration in 2008, Protestant organizations and



political authorities conspired together to commit unconstitutional acts at an even more alarming rate. For instance, the national guide maps issued by the government listed even very small churches while omitting most of the major Buddhist temples, inevitably upsetting Buddhist sentiments. Recently (on March, 3, 2011) President Myung-Bak Lee sent shock waves throughout the nation when he knelt and prayed in Christian fashion at the public ceremony of the 43rd

National Prayer Breakfast. It has been held since 1968, every year the President has joined but nobody has knelt down except President Myung-Bak Lee. The President shouldn't kneel down in any case, especially for a certain religious prayer in public, because Korea is a nation of multi-religion. Not a single word of apology has so far been given.

The Korea Institute of Religious Freedom (KIRF) was founded in February 2005 as an affiliate of Buddhist Solidarity for Reform (BSR) to challenge these unconstitutional acts. Founded under the initiative of the Chief Representative Kwang-Seo Park, Professor of Physics at Sogang University in Seoul, it began with the recruitment of co-representatives including not only Buddhist personnel but also Christians who shared common views about religious freedom. Although the institute is an affiliate of BSR, a Buddhist organization, it is dedicated to establishing true religious freedom in Korean society, rather than promoting Buddhism. This spirit of openness and freedom is of the essence of Buddhist teachings.

There were many insults to the Buddhist community. In 2008, there were big demonstrations for some issues against the government. On 29th of July the policemen used force to search the car in which the President of Jogye Order was riding. The President of Jogye Order is officially

at a higher level than the central government administrators. The illegal car-searching reflected the offensive attitude of the government. It was considered as a kind of religious discrimination. After all, hundreds of thousands of Korean monks, nuns and lay Buddhists came over to central Seoul, and asked for the government's apology. The KIRF almost initiated and gave the Jogye Order some direction to react to the issue at that time.

They have had to devote considerable attention to abuse in the education system. There are many schools founded by Christians in the educational sectors of Korea. Such schools receive significant amounts of Korean government funding and are thus public schools rather than private schools; yet the schools customarily pressure the students to participate in Christian rituals. Then came the incident at Dae-Gwang High School in Seoul, where a student who revolted against such religious pressure by the school was expelled. He filed a lawsuit with the support of the KIRF and won in the Supreme Court, which, in April 2010, ruled that religiously founded private schools shall not impose their religion on the students. The outcome was historic and very important. Through the ruling, the Office of Education can supervise schools, and students have a free choice to participate in school religious

activities or not. However, religious pressure is still widespread in the education system. For example, some schools enforce their students to make a religious pledge at the time of entrance. Some impose schedules on the Buddha's Birthday which is an official holiday in Korea. One public school has religious activities in commemoration of Easter. The KIRF gathers reports of religious pressure from students, parents, and teachers and responds with public action.

Although extremely understaffed (all this, including the fundraising, is managed by Professor Park, with just one full-time assistant), the KIRF keeps alive the spirit of the Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially in relation to religious freedom and the separation of religion and State, through newspaper columns, television interviews, as well as regular conferences and seminars. The conferences used to be held monthly with legal scholars, attorneys, and teachers. Without Professor Park's pioneering and devoted effort, the inappropriate relationship between religion and government and the religious discrimination pervasive in Korean society would be difficult to decrease.

Hesook Lee
(Member of the Buddhist Solidarity for Reform, Korea)

Siam:

WikiLeaks Depicts a Weak Thai King

The royalty's role in the tumultuous events of 2008

With Thailand's government in the hands of an ally of deposed Prime Minister Thaksin

Shinawatra in 2008, ailing King Bhumibol Adulyadej explicitly told the country's army commander not to launch another coup, an advisor to Queen Sirikit

told US Ambassador Eric John, according to a Nov. 4, 2008, State Department cable made available on the WikiLeaks Web site.

A coup in September 2006

ousted Thaksin, who was later convicted of corruption and fled the country. The palace has been implicated in supporting that coup by numerous sources.

In 2008, Army Commander Anupong Paochinda said publicly that there would be no further coups. However, it is believed that the military came close to moving against the government and subsequent events showed that even the King's nominal allies paid scant attention to his wishes for calm.

"What can I say?" said a well-placed source in response to the leaked cable. "The monarchy was directly involved in Thai politics and continues to do so. As much as the king has intervened in politics himself, some of his close aides often claim to act on his behalf even when the King knows nothing about it.

"But you must look at the monarchy as a network that also comprises the Privy Council, the military, and not just an individual."

While the political situation is undoubtedly calmer now, uncertainty remains. Thaksin is still outside the country exhorting his followers to demonstrate against the Democrat-led government of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva. Abhisit, who survived paralyzing pro-Thaksin demonstrations in Bangkok last year. Abhisit has promised to dissolve Parliament in May to prepare for general elections, probably in June or July.

Back in 2008, a long siege of violent protests by Yellow Shirt royalists first resulted in the ouster by a Constitutional Court of then Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej, a Thaksin ally, on the pretext of his having received money besides his government salary by appearing as

the host of a television cooking show.

Somchai Wongsawat, Thaksin's brother-in-law, followed Samak, who has since died. According to the cable, the palace thought highly of Somchai, who "had many qualities that made him suitable to be Prime Minister, including a sense of fairness and a moderate temperament."

The palace's favorable disposition towards Somchai, however, wasn't enough to save his government. The palace source told the ambassador that on Oct. 6, 2008, he had dined with a top figure in the anti-Thaksin People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) who said the yellow shirts were aiming to spark a violent clash that would lead to a second coup.

The PAD source, according to the cable, "explained that PAD would provoke violence during its Oct. 7 protest at the parliament. The unnamed PAD figure predicted [wrongly] that the Army would intervene against the government by the evening of Oct. 7. [The source] asserted to us that PAD remained intent on a conflict that would generate at least two dozen deaths and make military intervention appear necessary and justified."

The Yellow Shirt protesters had occupied Government House for months, paralyzed the middle of Bangkok and forced the closure of the city's international airports. Finally, in December 2008 the courts ruled that Somchai must dissolve parliament yet again. It is widely believed that the army influenced the decision and many have called the court ruling a coup in everything but name.

It is unknown what would have happened if Somchai had refused to go. But it demonstrates

just how tenuous the aging monarch's hold was on the political situation at the time. It stood in marked contrast to his role in 1992, when the leader of a military coup, Suchinda Kraprayoon, and Chamlong Srimuang who lead the Demonstration against him Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan were filmed on their hands and knees before a sternly lecturing king who told them to put an end to violence.

The cable also indicates that the US Ambassador's contacts at the palace said the monarch was frail and suffering from back pain. The palace source is not named.

The source's claim that the king instructed Anupong not to conduct a coup "is the strongest account we have heard to date about the King's opposition to a coup and his communicating this to Anupong," according to the cable. "It would explain why Privy Counselors Prem [Tinsulanonda] and Siddhi [Savetsila], both seen as opponents of the current government, gave recent assurances to the Ambassador that there would not be a coup."

In another indication of his waning power, the king also was said to be "highly irritated" by PAD's occupation of Government House and other disruptions during the tumultuous demonstrations that began in May of that year. But he was said to be unsure of how to quell them. According to the cable, the source told John that the King sent emissaries to convey his wishes for the PAD to leave Government House. One of them Disathorn Watcharothai, a long-time associate of the king, on Oct. 29 said publicly that "Thais who love the King should 'go home.'"

However, the cable indicates, Sondhi Limtongkul, the

media tycoon who had become a leader of the Yellow Shirts, “had become obsessed with his own sense of mission.” Sondhi was initially charged with lese majeste, but has never been prosecuted, unlike dozens of followers of Red Shirt protesters.

Subsequently, Yellow Shirt supporters also seized airports in three resort cities and blocked roads and highways. They occupied a government television station and several ministries, fomenting violence that left dozens injured and one protester dead. Their activities culminated in the seizure of Bangkok’s major international airports. The situation had become untenable.

After the Constitutional Court dissolved the Thaksin-aligned People’s Power Party

and banned its leaders from politics, Anupong is believed to have put serious pressure on the banned party’s members to defect to the Democrat Party. Abhisit was named premier and Kasit Piromya, a PAD co-leader, was made foreign minister. There has not been a general election since and it is believed the pro-Thaksin forces still have considerable electoral support in rural areas.

The cable also indicates that the palace regarded Queen Sirikit’s appearance at an Oct. 13, 2008, funeral for a young PAD supporter as a “significant blunder, jeopardizing the public’s perception of the palace’s neutrality.”

The source “claimed the Queen had been emotionally

affected when she learned that one victim of the Oct. 7 violence was a young lady about to be married, and that she had told her father she was going to the protest to defend the monarchy.”

The source said there had been no intention for the Queen to involve either herself or the monarchy in political matters, but, unfortunately, some members of the public could interpret the funeral appearance differently. In an effort to neutralize the effect of her appearance at the funeral, “the Queen later reached out to seriously injured police officers in an attempt to show her neutrality, but this signal went largely unnoticed.”

Asia Sentinel

Siam: Another Lese Majeste Case in Thailand

The Thai government has shown no signs of letting up on its campaign to shut down opposition websites. The latest is a ruling by the country’s Criminal Court sentencing web designer Thantawut Thaweewarodomkul to 13 years in prison, 10 of them for lese majeste and three for violation of the country’s stiff computer crime laws.

The February release on bail by Thailand’s Criminal Court of seven detained leaders of the anti-government United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD)—the Red Shirt movement—was regarded by observers as a move to ease tensions in advance of elections scheduled for May.

However, the government continues to go after bloggers and those who stick their heads

up too high. For instance, just hours before the seven Red Shirt leaders were released, Surachai Danwattananusorn, leader of a splinter group called “Red Siam,” was arrested for remarks made in December that have been deemed offensive to the monarchy.

The website Political Prisoners in Thailand estimates that the country’s computer crimes law has been used against more than 300 offenders since 2006, when the military, in a royalist coup, ousted former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The respected blogger Bangkok Pundit has compiled a list of offenders since 2006. They are contained in tables at the bottom of this article. As of December 22, when the Emergency Decree was lifted, 425,296 websites

had been blocked, 85 percent of them by Emergency Decree and 15 percent as a result of the computer crimes act.

Two weeks ago, the same court that granted the Red Shirt leaders bail agreed with an appeal against the lese-majeste sentence of Daranee Chanchoengsilpakul, better-known as “Da Torpedo,” who was jailed in August 2009 for insulting Thailand’s monarchy. Her case has been moved to the Constitutional Court after the original proceedings were deemed a mistrial.

Thantawut, the designer of a website titled “NorPorChor USA,” was arrested on Apr. 1, 2010 and has been held without bail since that time. He was sentenced for posting messages deemed to be offensive to Thailand’s royal family.

Thanthawut's lawyers argued that in fact he had only designed the site and had nothing to do with what was posted on it. However, according to the Thai website Freedom Against Censorship Thailand (FACT): "Tantawut's real crime was living in Thailand, making him an easy target, unlike NorPhor-Chor's real webmasters who all lived overseas. After all, someone needed to be punished to send a clear message to Thai netizens not to cross the imaginary lèse majesté line. 98 percent

of those charged with lèse majesté in Thailand are convicted simply because of blind justice. As he sought to prove his innocence, even after 10 months in jail without bail, rather than cave in and plead guilty."

Thai police alleged that three offensive comments were posted on the site on March 1 and 13 last year, and that an address belonging to Thantawut was connected to the website.

Defense lawyers sought bail for Thantawut with Bt1.3 million baht (around US\$41,000), as

was informed by court officials. However, the court later told the lawyer to submit the bail request with the Appeals Court instead.

Anon Nampa, the lawyer, said that he did not understand why this was to be decided by the Appeals Court, as the Court of First Instance always has the authority to do so. As a result, it will take a few more days to know whether Thantawut will get bailed or not.

Asia Sentinel,
16 March 2011

Siam: Doubts Linger About Reform Process

Most red shirts still oppose congress headed by Prawase and Anand despite claim of 'transcending political divide'

The three-day National Reform Congress concluded yesterday with its chairman Prawase Wasi boasting that the meeting, which drew some 2,000 participants, "transcended" political division and "united" people from all walks.

However, the truth remains that millions of red shirts oppose the process due to the fact the whole scheme received support and was initiated by the Abhisit Vejjajiva administration after the bloody military crackdown on red shirts, which led to 91 deaths in the middle of last year.

Besides being seen as opportunistic, the process is also dominated by many people who are aligned or play a key role in the yellow-shirt People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) movement.

At the congress on Saturday, PAD co-leader Piphob Thong-

chai was seen chatting in a relaxed manner with friends and a female journalist. The few red shirts who showed up are mostly very critical of the process they came to observe. Independent media sympathetic to red shirts like prachatai.com online newspapers didn't even think the congress was newsworthy.

Instead, prachatai.com ran an opinion piece by a commentator berating Prawase for failing to acknowledge the fact 91 people were killed just before the congress was initiated by the government or that the funding is seen as part of an attempt to appease red shirts, who are mostly poor people.

While many poor grassroots people participated in the congress, which came up with eight reform proposals ranging from land reform, better social security, decentralisation, greater gender equality and better treatment of handicapped people, the whole reform process, instead of transcending the political divide,

as Prawase claimed, has antagonised some red shirts further.

Many who this writer spoke to think Prawase and his followers are "shamelessly exploiting" a political opportunity to secure funding and push for reform in accordance with their moralistic view of what constitutes a good society. Others say they utterly failed to address the need for reform of those at the very apex of Thai society—namely the monarchy institution.

While many at the congress speak of the need for politicians and bureaucrats to think and work differently and not treat people with distrust or subjugate and exploit them, perhaps the same could be said about the reform process led by people like Prawase and former premier Anand Panyarachun, who were both appointed by PM Abhisit.

It seems they were not patient enough to build a process that is genuinely inclusive, and instead chose to exploit the situation by seizing the moment

to push for reform and secure funding and the blessing of the government while red shirts and others are in pain and grieve after the loss of life in May 2010. One is readily reminded of the social activists and NGOs who tacitly supported the military coup d'état in September 2006 which ousted Thaksin Shinawatra. Many of them regarded the post-coup Thailand as "a golden opportunity" to introduce a moralistic agenda to reshape Thai politics and society.

Ironically, one speaker at a panel on the first day of the congress said something about how many Thais don't respect other people's rights. The speaker, a medical doctor, said he went to a film-developing shop to have photos processed and while waiting a regular customer showed up and jumped the queue without any qualm. In matters of national reform, it is counterproductive if not foolish for the very people who claim to want to push for reform to antagonise a significant proportion of the population. But people like Prawase and Anand, and their supporters, have done just that.

Now that the Abhisit administration is about to call for a general election, the reform

congress resolved yesterday to continue its work for at least two more years and push their agenda to all political parties and any future governments, as they have secured funding and a mandate from the current administration.

There is no denying that most if not all the suffering aired during the congress was genuine but the reform process started badly and cannot be truly regarded as inclusive.

Prawase claimed the process was a "new paradigm" as he spoke at the end of the congress yesterday. While such a conclusion is debatable, one thing certainly new is that these people have succeeded in alienating and antagonising many red shirts in the name of a national reform that "transcends the political divide".

Perhaps it's time for a re-think on how to push for reform as well.

Key issues for reform

Eight major issues for reform were endorsed by the first National Reform Congress yesterday with the congress vowing to push for reform regardless of which party formed the government in future. The highlights

are as follows:

1 Land reform and introduction of progressive land tax for those owning more than 50 rai of land.

2 Enabling villagers to participate in the decision-making process over the handling of coastal water and resources.

3 Establishing a special court to handle the problem of poor farmers arrested for encroaching unused public or private land.

4 Expand coverage of the social security system and make it more transparent and participatory.

5 Set up various funds for the elderly.

6 Secure funding from national lottery income and use it to set up a fund to help people, like the physically handicapped.

7 Decentralisation of power and budget and enabling local people to have more say in selecting their leaders and the budget.

8 Use art and culture to heal society by establishing an art and culture commission with the involvement of artists. And also, set up the people's art and culture fund.

*Pravit Rojanaphruk,
The Nation,
27 March 2011*

Laos:

Activists Join Forces Against Xayaburi Dam Plan

Bangkok — A group of 263 non-governmental organizations from 51 countries has called on Laos to cancel its proposed hydropower dam project on the Mekong River in Xayaburi province, representatives of the group said Tuesday.

The coalition of environ-

mentalists and civil rights groups sent a letter to Lao Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong Monday urging him to shelve the Xayaburi Dam project at the upcoming meeting of the Mekong River Commission, scheduled for 25-26 March in Sihanoukville, Cambodia.

The commission includes the four governments of the countries on the lower parts of the Mekong River—Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.

Vietnam has already objected to the project in northern Laos on the grounds that it could adversely impact fisheries and

soil in its southern delta where the Mekong empties into the South China Sea. The coalition of NGOs also urged Thailand to cancel plans to buy electricity from the proposed Xayaburi hydropower plant.

“The Thai government considers dams as a type of project that can be harmful to the environment, so how can the Xayaburi Dam be built without questioning and fully understanding how it will impact millions of people basin-wide?” said Chanida Chanyapate Bamford of the group Focus on the Global South. Since 2009, tens of thou-

sands of people have submitted petitions and letters to the region’s prime ministers and to the Mekong River Commission, calling for the Mekong River to remain free-flowing and for Thailand not to purchase electricity from the dam.

“The Xayaburi Dam will trigger an ecological crisis of tremendous proportions,” said Shalmali Guttal of Focus on the Global South. “We urge the prime ministers of Laos and Thailand to show leadership by cancelling this project.”

The Xayaburi Dam is one of 11 large dams proposed for the

Mekong River’s lower mainstream.

China has already built four hydropower dams in Yunnan province on the upper mainstream of the Mekong, the longest-waterway in mainland South-East Asia.

According to past reports by the Mekong River Commission, the Xayaburi Dam threatens the extinction of more than 41 fish species, including the critically endangered Mekong Giant Catfish.

Focus on the Global South,
28 March 2011

Tibet: Why Doesn’t China Want to Let the Dalai Lama Resign?

At least one unelected lifelong world leader has decided to hand over power to his citizens, and it hasn’t come on the heels of protest in the streets. On March 10, the anniversary of the failed Tibetan uprising for independence in 1959 and of a wave of major protests that began in Lhasa three years ago, the Dalai Lama announced that he intends to retire from his political responsibilities. This will not change his spiritual role, or end his travels round the world. Nor will it avoid almost certain conflict over his reincarnation, as the Chinese government still insists only it has the right to choose.

But it is a major challenge for Tibetan exiles, because the Dalai Lama also made a radical demand to his exile parliament, based in Dharamsala, India: He asked it to change the constitution and replace his position with

“a democratic system in which the political leadership is elected by the [Tibetan] people for a specific term.”

This means that a 350-year era of Tibetan history will come to an end, and Dalai Lamas will no longer be the political leaders of the Tibetan people.

Instead, the leader of the Tibetan government, which now exists only in exile in India and is charged with “rehabilitating Tibetan refugees and restoring freedom and happiness in Tibet,” will be their prime minister. The last two prime ministers have been chosen democratically by the 150,000 exiles, and an election was held to choose the next one on March 20. (The front-runner is a 42-year-old Tibetan named Lobsang Sangay who graduated from Harvard Law School; however, the final results won’t be announced until late

April.) The winner would become the ultimate leader of Tibetan exiles if this proposal is accepted by the exile parliament, which alone has authority to change the exile constitution. But so far 42 of the 43 exile parliamentarians, meeting in northern India this week, are still insisting that the Dalai Lama remain in power.

Then again, the most important reaction to the Dalai Lama’s statement will come not from the exiles, but from the 5.5 million Tibetans in China, whose willingness to accept Chinese rule is at the root of the China-Tibet question. They constitute just 4 percent of China’s population, but, like Mongols in Inner Mongolia and Uighurs in Xinjiang, inhabit vast areas of China where the central government’s territorial claims are weakest. Each of these peoples has sup-

porters in large numbers among fellow ethnics living just across China's borders with India, Nepal, Central Asia, Mongolia, and elsewhere. As a result, their ability to draw the worried glance of Beijing and so impact Chinese politics is far out of proportion to their actual numbers. The authorities respond to even slight indications of dissent among these nationalities with disproportionate force and angry rhetoric.

Some of the government's defensive moves expose it to ridicule and exacerbate relations. Last week, for instance, the Party-appointed governor of Tibet, Padma Choling, told the international press that the region has been closed to foreign tourists for the remainder of this month because of "extreme cold" and lack of hotels. This might sound credible to ethnic Chinese audiences, but everyone in Tibet knows that the weather in Lhasa is not severe (the mean temperature minimum there in March is 27 degrees Fahrenheit, about the same as Chicago) and that the city has a glut of hotels. The real reason for the ban on foreigners is not a secret in Potala, the regional capital: Tibetans often stage protests on or around March 10 to mark the failed uprising of 1959.

Tibetans have already taken to the streets this March. On March 16, the anniversary of the shooting deaths of at least eight monks in a protest against Chinese rule in 2008, a 16-year-old Tibetan monk burnt himself to death in the local marketplace in Ngaba, an area of eastern Tibet now within Sichuan province. This is only the second time a Tibetan monk is ever known to have used this form of protest. Suicide breaches basic Buddhist

vows against self-harm and the Dalai Lama's policy of non-violence, but among ordinary Tibetans such an act is seen as the highest form of dedication to defending the community and its values. Last Wednesday more than 1,000 monks joined protests, which were disbanded by security forces wielding electric batons.

In these tense times, the Dalai Lama's decision to resign is likely to increase anxiety among many Tibetans, desperately worried about a future without a well-established leader. At the same time, his determination to introduce democracy to the Tibetan government in exile will increase his standing among Tibetans remaining within China. It will also remind them that China's leaders have done nothing to devolve the absolute power of the Communist Party despite constitutional promises of "multi-party cooperation." Just last week, Wu Bangguo, chairman of the National People's Congress, reaffirmed that China's leaders had "made a solemn declaration that we will not employ a system of multiple parties holding office in rotation."

The party has used two main methods to counter opposition in Tibet. The first is striving to better economic conditions. Over the last 30 years, it has directed billions of dollars worth of subsidies into Tibetan infrastructure and salaries to boost the region's economy (Beijing gave \$4.32 billion to Tibet in subsidies in 2007 alone.). This has helped push GDP growth rates to more than 12 percent annually for the last 15 years—higher even than the rest of China—and improved living conditions in Tibet.

But the second method has

been to increase restrictions on Tibetan culture and religion. These were stepped up in the mid-1990s, with bans on worship of the Dalai Lama, on any Buddhist practice among Tibetan students or government employees, on any increase in monks or monasteries, on any criticism of Chinese migration policies, and so on. Chinese officials apparently fear that these practices encourage Tibetan nationalism.

China's current development policies in Tibet have also added to the problem: They are perceived by many Tibetans as an attempt to erode Tibetan culture. In the past two decades, the authorities have openly encouraged Han Chinese traders to move to Tibetan towns; by the year 2000, more than half the males of working age in Lhasa were non-Tibetans, even according to the official census. In 2010, the government announced that Mandarin would replace Tibetan as the principal language of instruction in schools in eastern Tibetan areas, leading to protests by hundreds of Tibetan students.

These are some of the issues that the Dalai Lama has been asking Beijing for 30 years to resolve through face-to-face negotiations. Since 2002, Beijing has held nine largely fruitless rounds of talks with his representatives. It refuses to enter into full negotiations with the exile government, which it considers an illegal entity, or with the Dalai Lama, whom it terms "a political renegade"—claiming that he is secretly plotting Tibetan independence, despite his public utterances that he only wants Tibet's autonomy within the current Chinese system. Will the Dalai Lama's decision to hand over power to an unknown layman end any chance of a negoti-

ated settlement?

So far the Chinese government has denounced the Dalai Lama's planned retirement. Its spokesperson in Beijing described it as "tricks to deceive the international community," while the state-run newspaper in Lhasa declared that his "nonsense talk of retirement" had "laid bare the true face of the Dalai as a "political salesman" and "exposed the reactionary nature of the Dalai clique."

This denunciation contradicts the usual position of the Chinese authorities, who have always derided the Dalai Lama for retaining a political role. In principle, his new decision

should make it easier for them to talk with him. And buried in his statement to his exile parliament is a clue that the Dalai Lama may be trying to ease the path toward effective talks: In the last sentence of his statement, he announced that two declarations passed by the exile parliament in 1963 and 1992 that call explicitly for Tibetan independence would henceforth become "ineffective." Behind the scenes, Chinese officials have long been pushing exiles to nullify these two documents. If they are withdrawn, it would increase the credibility of the Dalai Lama's claim to be seeking autonomy (not independence) for Tibet.

The Dalai Lama's new proposals may increase anxieties about the future among some Tibetans. However, his proposals should also make it easier for Beijing to open negotiations with him or his government—especially if the last formal documents calling for Tibetan independence have been withdrawn. Beijing may soon find itself under increased pressure to consider serious talks with the Dalai Lama (if not with the Tibetan government) and grapple at last with the situation in Tibet.

Robert Barnett,
21 March 2011

Two Days with a Saint

Having an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a dream come true for many. A century ago only very few outsiders were admitted into the solitary esteemed presence. But more than 100 Thais gained admission to the current Dalai Lama's residence earlier this month on a visit to Himachal Pradesh—and it was just a few days after the 52nd anniversary of the Tibetan people's failed uprising against Chinese rule in Lhasa.

The devout Thais, who had paid Bt52,000 each for the nine-day trip, were enthusiastic about Tibetan Buddhism and felt lucky to hear more about it from its esteemed leader. They were there for two days of dharma sermons by the Dalai Lama on "The 37 Practices of the Bodhisattava" at the Tsuglakhang Temple in Dharamsala, His Holiness Indian home-in-exile since fleeing



An audience with the Dalai Lama isn't the rarity it once was, but it's still special because of the man.

Tibet so long ago.

The sermons were arranged for the Thais by the Bangkok-based Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation, which runs a year-round Thai-Tibet programme. The sessions also attracted 5,000 Buddhists from China, Vietnam, Burma, South Korea, Singapore and several European countries, as well as visiting Tibetans, who were hearing the Dalai Lama

speak in person for the first time in their lives.

To help the Thais with the sometimes-difficult passages of the sermons, especially those less familiar with the Tibetan faith, pamphlets were printed in English. The Dalai Lama spoke mostly in Tibetan, but there was simultaneous translation in English, Thai and other languages.

He delivered the sermons

with his usual wry humour, amid lots of laughter and smiles.

“I travelled to Thailand in the 1960s and was much impressed with your country,” he told us. “There were lots of monks and Buddhist statues and temples. The Hinayana monks were very good, very disciplined. We are all followers of the same teacher—the Shakayamuni.” His discourses centred on the relation between compassion and the training of the mind.

The Dalai Lama explained that the mind is central to dharma practice according to the Mahayana Sutras. People who wish to achieve omniscience quickly must first fulfil its causes and conditions.

To become omniscient, he advised, practise meditation, be compassionate and seek an awakening of the mind (*bodhdhichitta*). Begin meditation by thinking of a neutral person, and then the people you consider friends and foes. The aim is to develop equanimity toward all of them, regardless of your relationship.

And then you should meditate on “loving kindness”, he said. Once you have “irrigated the mind stream with loving kindness”, meditate on compassion.

“The compassionate mind has the nature of wishing for all suffering beings to be free from their suffering,” he said.

The Dalai Lama discussed the nature of suffering, wisdom and compassion, all tools in achieving a meaningful life based on morality, wisdom and concentration. Meditation, he said, is the easy part.

“Meditation on loving kindness begins with friends and other people you’re fond of. It has the nature of wishing that

they meet with happiness. Gradually extend the meditation to include strangers and even your enemies.”

“Habituating yourself with compassion, you will gradually generate a spontaneous wish to liberate all sentient beings. Then, having familiarised yourself with compassion as the basis, meditate on the awakening mind of *bodhdhichitta*.”

He stressed the essential first practice of “calm abiding”, in which the mind overcomes distractions and spontaneously and continuously returns to the object of meditation “with bliss and pliancy”.

“An unclear mind is like muddy water,” he said. “You need to clear the mind by learning how to meditate. The mind tends to follow habits. To experience compassion, you need to put effort into cultivating the mind and focusing your mind on meditation.” A trained mind fosters happiness, he pointed out, but like compassion it requires physical and mental effort. The other outcome is affection toward others, which is “so important in human life”.

“In Bangkok you can have a billionaire who is unhappy mentally. You Thais, when you have modernity in your country, you should not neglect the sacred Buddha teachings.” After the second day’s sermon there was a two-hour audience with His Holiness in his reception hall. He spoke at length on various subjects: his Bangkok visits in the 1960s, which included meetings with the Supreme Patriarch and the late monk Buddhadasa, the Four Noble Truths, the importance of being detached from worldly desires, and his interest in science and psychology.

“Compared to Buddhist psychology, Western psychology is like kindergarten,” he said.

Buddhism itself is scientific—it’s “not blind faith”.

The atmosphere at the reception was friendly and less formal than at the morning sermons. The Dalai Lama arrived in the company of security guards and brought several interpreters in case he became lost for words.

Laughter often filled the room as he answered questions, especially when a young Thai begged him, “Please tell me how to laugh.”

To laugh, the Dalai Lama explained, you have to depend on others. You need mutual understanding, trust, love and respect for other people.

“When I’m on my own I wouldn’t normally laugh. But if I’m meditating and suddenly start laughing, people will say I’m mad! Remember: Laughing has to depend on others.” His most important message involved his mission to promote human values.

“You know, I’m very popular in the West. Why? Because I promote human values, which is my main effort. Buddhist tradition promotes human values. I keep telling people that you need to reduce attachment in order to develop unbiased love and mercy. Detachment leads to compassion.

“We should develop a big ‘we’ in the world—not ‘we and they’. The world needs to have social harmony, compassion and love for humanity to co-exist. No matter where we come from, we are emotionally, mentally and physically the same.”

The Nation
Dharamsala

Letter from the Secretariat Office

Dear INEB members and readers,

INEB Secretariat and its network organizations and partners are very grateful and appreciative of the recognition from the Niwano Peace Foundation, who presented the Niwano Peace Prize to the co-founder of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa. After announcing the award on February 28, there were many emails to congratulate Ajarn Sulak directly, as well as through the Secretariat office. Here in Thailand, we will be organizing an event to congratulate him on the 29th of May at the Siam Society, along with the celebration of the 75th birthday of Mrs. Sivaraksa, his beloved wife, and the 44th anniversary of Suksit Siam, an outstanding and alternative book store founded by Ajarn Sulak. The honorary award will be presented to Ajarn Sulak in late July, due to the schedule being postponed because of the major earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters that struck Japan on the 11th of March.

INEB and its network are immensely saddened by the tragic incidents that have occurred, and continue to unfold in Japan. We hope that all beings are at peace. From a Buddhist approach, we are exploring how to deal with suffering by turning the nuclear tragedy into an opportunity for change. There are a number of world leaders and civil movements in many countries that are rejecting the global nuclear-power industry. The lessons learnt from Chernobyl in 1986 and Fukushima Daiichi this year are proof that the so called “clean energy” label given to nuclear power is highly disputable.

The incident in Japan also happened during a study trip to India for the Think Sangha group, which caused a lot of concern among the group members, especially for one of the key members of the team who is living with his family in Japan. Prayer, meditation and lamp lighting were organized to send good energy and deep spirit to all beings in Japan who suffered during this period.

The Think Sangha group had a good outcome from their trip to learn and focus on ‘sustainable community’ from Indian Buddhist movements, whose details are in their following report.

The INEB secretariat team is excited at the forthcoming INEB conference 2011 in Bodhgaya. A number of speakers, resource persons and Buddhist activists have confirmed to take part in the conference and the number of registered participants for this event is also gradually increasing. We hope that this conference can bring about “personal awakening to social transformation” in order to work together for the bright future of Buddhism and betterment of society. Please do join us by signing up at: conference@inebnetwork.org

Yours in Dhamma,

Somboon Chungprampree (Moo)
Executive Secretary
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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 give more, we would be very grateful for your generosity. Your money will go to supporting INEB activities for grassroots people in poor countries.

The Wealth of a Community Sri Lankan Reflections on What it Means to be Rich or Poor

When I was small, I didn't know that I was poor. My family lived in a small fishing village on the southern coast of Sri Lanka. We had rice from the paddy fields and fish from the sea. Our house was simple, but it kept us dry when it rained. The local temple was the center of social activities in the village. The children would meet there after school, and everyone, old and young, came together to observe important events: full moon days, new births, marriages, and deaths. We didn't have television, but there was plenty of entertainment. People sang and danced. There were drama performances, puppet shows, and festivals. I remember lying on the beach watching the stars at night. I remember old people and young people pausing to enjoy the sunset.

There were problems, of course, but we never felt alone. If we faced a difficulty, we knew others would be there to provide support. If someone died, the rest of the village would magically mobilize to provide food and take care of all of the funeral arrangements. The mourning family didn't have to worry about a thing. If a father was sick or injured, others would assist until the family was able to support itself. People looked after each other's children. Mothers would prepare extra dishes of favorite curries to share with neighbors.

In my village, there was a family that lived in a big house surrounded by a high wall. We

used to climb the wall to go and pick their mangoes. I don't remember envying that family. They were stuck behind the wall and didn't seem to be having as much fun as the rest of us.

When I was 12 years old, I took a national exam and earned a place at a big boarding school in the capital. My mother took me to the village temple on the way to train station, and I still remember the lecture I received from the head monk. He told me, "Today you are leaving your family, your temple, and your village to enter into a big school. You will meet new people and have new experiences, but do not forget where you came from. Never forget the values you learned here and never forget your daily spiritual practice. That's your wealth. You must protect it like your life."

It was only after I came to school in Colombo that I learned I was poor. Most of my classmates were from very wealthy families. My new friends were more concerned about what I didn't have than I was. They took me shopping for modern underpants and proper shoes. They paid for me to join them on trips and adventures.

The monk was right. I met new people, had new experiences, and learned about a confusing new value system. This value system was based on the accumulation of material things. In my village, there was a limit to needs. You can only eat so much. You can only sleep in one bed. You can only wear one set

of clothing at a time. But in this new system, there was no limit. People always wanted more: more money, more property, a bigger car, a bigger house.

The whole society was changing. It started in the cities. It started in the wealthy families of my school friends, but it began to spread. There were advertisements telling us about needs that we didn't even know we had. There were movie theaters with actors showing us the latest clothes to wear. Before long, television was bringing these messages right into our homes day after day. Expectations and aspirations were changing.

The political situation began to change as well. When the British withdrew from my country, they left behind a majority-rules electoral system in the hands of a wealthy urban minority. The people in power didn't have much in common with the majority of people in the country, but they needed these people's votes to stay in power. Initially, they did this by appealing to people's identity and sense of community. They spoke of traditional values and restoring Sri Lanka to its pre-colonial glory.

As people began to want and expect more and more, the link between material wealth and power became more visible. Political leaders used their money to provide material benefits in exchange for votes. You needed more money to get more votes. Money brought power. Of course, the equation

went the other way too. If you had a position of political power, there were many opportunities for personal profit through favors, contracts, and other channels. Power brought money.

When I was growing up, the monks taught that we are all interdependent. We are linked together with other people and with our environment. If I cause suffering, it will directly or indirectly have negative consequences for me. If I help others, it will contribute to my well-being. If I look after my environment, it will look after me. We were taught to consider the consequences on the broader community before taking action.

When some of my friends began to enter politics, I got a firsthand look at this money-power cycle. Even those who started with genuine motives rapidly got pulled into this system. It is difficult to compete against those who are motivated by personal gain without adopting some of their tactics. Political leaders were struggling for more resources and more power without considering the consequences for the broader community. The consequences emerged as violent conflict. People who did not have money to compete for resources and power began to compete with guns.

When I was a boy, my country was known internationally for its spices, its gems, its tea, its tropical beaches, and its Buddhist stupas. Today it is known for war. According to the international news, the war in Sri Lanka was an ethnic conflict, but it was never so simple. Our society was divided along many different lines. I have lost Sinhalese friends to Sinhalese gunmen and Tamil friends to Tamil gun-

men.

This experience has taught me an interesting lesson about wealth. A main driver of this new value system, this system based on the accumulation of material things, is the belief that material wealth and power will bring freedom, security, and happiness. If I have money, I can have my own vehicle and avoid the risks of public transport. If I have money, I can pay for big walls and security guards and alarm systems. If I have money, I can leave the country or send my children abroad. It's easy to get caught up in this way of thinking.

Of course, experience shows us that material wealth and power do not bring freedom, security, and happiness. In fact, they may bring the opposite. The wealthiest and most powerful people I know cannot walk freely on the street. They cannot go to their favorite roadside stand for a meal. They worry about kidnapping. They worry about robbery. They worry about losing their money or losing their power. They worry that their children will have less money and power than they do. They feel alone.

I think back to my childhood. We didn't have many material things, but we had a different kind of wealth. We could move freely from place to place without fear. If any problem arose, we knew that others would be there to provide support. We felt connected to each other and to our environment. There was a sense of belonging.

I may not have thought about poverty when I was young, but discussions on poverty and wealth have become part of my daily life. I work with a Sri Lankan organization called Sewalanka. In English, we are called a

non-governmental organization, an NGO, a non-profit, and a development agency.

We have a slightly different understanding of our role. The word *sewa* (or *seva*) originally comes from the Sanskrit word for string, and in ancient texts, it was used to refer to the connectedness of all things. In the two main languages of modern Sri Lanka, Sinhala and Tamil, the word *sewa* is commonly used to mean service, but in historical texts, the roots of the word are more evident. *Sewa* is selfless service, service that is done without any expectation of direct personal benefit. It is service that is motivated by the recognition that all things are connected. Sewalanka was formed to catalyze *sewa*: selfless service based on the awareness that we are all interdependent.

Sewalanka partners with many international development agencies to provide services to rural communities in Sri Lanka. For most of these organizations, success is measured in terms of material wealth and economic growth. A family is poor if their daily income is below a certain level. Because Sewalanka works with international development organizations, we have learned this terminology and the related tools like participatory needs assessments, capital studies, and wealth ranking. Our partners need quantitative measurements of success. They want to know the change in people's material assets or monthly income over time.

These numbers can be useful, but it is important to remember that they only provide a partial picture. According to income and asset measurements, my family was poor when I was a child, but we were happy. Our

basic needs were met. We had food and shelter. We had clean air and water, a strong social support system, and an enriching spiritual life. Many people in Sewalanka share my experience. They come from families that were poor by conventional measures but were wealthy in other ways.

People should have the space to define their priorities on their own terms. This is the rationale behind Sewalanka's mission statement: enhancing the capacity of rural communities to identify and address their own development needs. We focus on mobilizing voluntary membership organizations around issues of common interest. These issues vary over time and from

place to place. In a war or natural disaster situation, people will understandably be focused on basic needs like water, food and shelter. In a more stable context, priorities are not limited to material needs. Groups may decide to organize a religious event, build a community center, host a sports meet for children, or come together for an environmental clean-up.

This type of collective action rebuilds social networks that have been broken apart by decades of violent conflict and competition over material resources. With each new achievement, people become more confident and more motivated to take on new issues like funeral aid services or community banks.

By working together, they learn how to resolve internal conflicts, take decisions, manage resources, and motivate others to volunteer their time and sewa.

These activities may not always increase personal income or assets, but they contribute to a deeper community wealth, the kind of wealth that the head monk from my village tried to explain to me so many years ago.

Harsha Kumara Navaratne
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 Chairman,
 Sewalanka Foundation
 and
 International Network of
 Engaged Buddhists

Think Sangha in India, March 2011



Think Sangha member 2011



Group photo with Nagaloka's member and students

As long as I can remember I have yearned for community. Most living beings, human or otherwise, have the same yearning. The Buddha recognized this, creating the fourfold sangha as a ground for liberation. Over the last twenty or twenty-five years I have been living in the Berkeley Zen Center community, and finding home, work, and close friendship at Inter-

national Network of Engaged Buddhists and Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

After the 2009 Chiang Mai INEB meeting some old friends spent two days at Ouyporn Khuankaew's Mae Rim center, talking informally about the nature of sustainable community and socially engaged Buddhism. We began to plan an INEB "Think Sangha" study tour of

India, where we might investigate the particularities of Indian Buddhist communities, taking time, as well, to reflect on our inner experience and our own lives in community.

Think Sangha evolved in the mid-90s as a Buddhist social analysis group emerging from INEB. Over the years we have met physically a number of times in Thailand, Japan, and Hawaii,

maintained friendships and community with visits and internet banter, and published a number of periodicals and two books. Membership is informal and diverse, with women and men from across Asia and the West.

The challenge was to look at sustainable Buddhist community, externally and internally. That is: community we are involved in, and diverse communities in India including Dalit Buddhists, other expressions of a new Buddhist “revival” in the land of Buddha’s birth, and Tibetan communities in exile. We hoped, also, to create a kind of community among ourselves as we worked and traveled together, embodying harmonious qualities of sangha that live at the heart of our vision.

In March we came together for a two week study tour in India—as we had planned at our Mae Rim meeting—with Somboon Chungprampree (Moo—INEB’s executive secretary), Jill Jameson, Ven. Kalupahana Piyaratna Thera, Ouyporn Khuankaew, Anchalee Kurutach, David Loy, PaPa Phyto, Poolchawee Ruangwichtorn (Nong), Rev. Alan Senauke, Wintomo Tjandra, Ven. Paisan Visalo, Jon Watts, with Mangesh Dahwale in Nagpur and Prashant Varma at Deer Park—representing India, Thailand, Australia, Japan, Burma, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the U.S.

We met in Mumbai, a dizzying maximum city of impossible contrasts: sprawling slums and garish wealth. On our first evening we divided into two groups, each going to a different Buddhist slum settlement in the city. After driving north and a little east in nerve-wracking traffic towards the edge of the city, we arrived at a streetside *vihara* in the poor community of Bhand-

up. The “temple” is a cement box, about 8ft by 10ft, with a small Buddha and a larger bust of Dr. Ambedkar, the Buddhist liberator of India’s untouchables. It seemed to be an unlikely place for a gathering, but within minutes people streamed in.

Ven. Kalupahana and I made offerings in the *vihara*. The children chanted passionately and full-voiced. It brought me to tears. We moved outside to offer brief dharma words and meet with the larger community. Several hundred people had gathered, three or four generations in their fine clothes: women in sari or *salwar kameez*, men in slacks and dress shirts.

After *puja* and talks we went around a corner, down a four-foot wide alleyway into a warren of houses and intersecting alleys. Each narrow doorway opened into a family residence. The rooms were no more than 10ft by 10 or 12ft. Some homes had a second storey as a sleeping loft. Four to six or seven people might live in this space. The homes were immaculately clean and supremely organized with mats for sitting, space for cooking on a single gas burner, neatly stacked metal plates, bowls, cups, and cooking utensils. We were welcomed from house to house for an hour. People were proud to show off their children—all avidly pursuing education. The walls were painted bright colors with Buddhist posters, and each home had an altar with Buddha images and family photographs.

Many of these families came to Mumbai and Buddhism over the last 40 years to change their social identity—hence their lives—by escaping the rigid caste oppression and violence that still marks rural life. Buddhism means social and spiritual liberation for them. You can see this in the joy and generosity we

encountered despite circumstances of poverty. Poverty is one thing. Dignity and self-respect are something else. They do not have to contradict each other.

From Mumbai we flew to Nagpur—India’s geographical center—staying five days at Nagaloka, the Nagarjuna Training Institute on the city’s outskirts. Students and staff met us at the gate with garlands and showers of blossoms. Nagaloka is a school for sixty or seventy youth from oppressed communities around India learning the essential teachings of Buddhism, training in meditation and *puja*, studying social work and the basics of community organizing. The school’s atmosphere is quiet, cool in the evenings, with a sixty-foot golden striding Buddha as the focal point of the campus.

The students are young and bright,—averaging 20 or 21, full of fun, eager to learn and simply to connect with us. Our sessions were punctuated by songs and play. Nagaloka emphasizes a strong sitting practice with very good posture. Meditation is usually *anapansati*/mindfulness of breathing or *metta bhavana*/cultivating lovingkindness. The daily liturgy is chanted in *pali*—refuges, five precepts, and several other recitations, sung or recited in strong voices. Men and women each have separate dharma halls, coming together on special occasions.

Over four days we led workshops, practiced, and hung out with the Nagaloka students. On the first day we heard a presentation on the history and condition of India’s Dalit/untouchables, as well as the development of Ambedkarite Buddhism since the 50s and the formation of Nagaloka. Then we heard from

the students themselves.

Story after story echoed each other. The students are mostly from rural areas all over India. Few of them have had any previous experience of Buddhism, coming from nominally Hindu families—although local temples back home were off limits to them. Many of the students from Tamil Nadu and other areas with strong local culture and language came to Nagaloka with no fluency in Hindi, the school's operating language. On arrival they had to get up and running in a new language, new religious practices, new food, and new companions. Those who find their way to Nagaloka aspire to education and another kind of life, one of service to society. They are clearly in the flow of personal transformation

On another day each of us from Think Sangha had a chance to talk about our lives and our respective work. We included Lama Rangdral—a visiting Tibetan teacher from the West to join the presentations. As an African-American, he spoke from the heart about the destructive and still-present realities of racism in the west, and what we can learn from the groundbreaking work of Dr. Ambedkar on caste and discrimination. That afternoon we organized topical small groups on gender justice, Buddhist economics, transforming anger, living an engaged Buddhist life, and social mobilization—as much learning from the students' experiences as “teaching” them.

For support and hospitality we thank Mangesh Dahiwal, Dh. Lokamitra, the Nagaloka staff, and the bright students of Nagaloka. Their generosity is so great and natural.

We flew from Nagpur to

Delhi; in the evening we boarded the overnight Jammu Mail Express At Pathankot, close to the border with Pakistan, four cars carried us to Deer Park in the small North Indian town of Bir. Bir is in Himachal Pradesh, Kangra district, about two hours south and east of Dharamsala, right up against the first towering wall of the Himalayas.

There is a Tibetan colony in Bir, one of the largest in north India. Monasteries are visible near and far, brilliantly painted gold or red, adorned with rainbow ornamentation. In late afternoon, monks of all ages fill the streets and shops. Tibetan merchants run small groceries, western clothing stalls, internet cafes, and tea shops. With its dramatic landscape and prevailing winds, Bir has become a famous spot for paragliding. Huge nylon contraptions—hybrid of kite and parachute—prowl the skies each afternoon.

Deer Park Institute was founded in the mid 2000s by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, the multi-talented teacher, writer, and filmmaker. It is a self-described center for the study of India's wisdom traditions. Deer Park's orientation is inclusive and eclectic, representing Dzongsar's wide mind and interests. There are programs on meditation, photography, writing, textual study, the environment, and engaged Buddhism.

Our INEB friend Prashant Varma is director. He is a student of Dzongsar and a man of great energy and capacity. At Deer Park while we were there, Prashant seemed to be everywhere at once as host, administrator, internet fixer, and travel agent. Prashant is 33, from a well-to-do Bombay family, married to Jennifer Yo from Taiwan, one of those fortunate relationships that flowered at an INEB conference.

We stayed at Deer Park for nearly a week, which included three days of program with fifteen or twenty people from various Indian Buddhist communities. Our dual task was to learn about their practice and situation, and to share our understanding of socially engaged Buddhism, considering its actual and potential place in modern India. This all went very well, and strong links were forged, particularly with young Indians. We strongly encouraged people to join us at this October's INEB conference in Bodhgaya.

We also had a chance to visit nearby Tibetan monasteries. The sprawling monastery in Chauntra, a few miles from Bir, was completed in 2004, replacing the older monastery which then became Deer Park. More than 400 monks here study and debate Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. We went to Dongyu Gatsal Ling, an inspiring nunnery run by the charismatic Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo. Originally from Great Britain, Tenzin spent thirteen years living and practicing alone in a mountain cave, summer and winter, emerging to become a powerful teacher and a voice for Himalayan women and nuns.

Leaving Bir we stopped for lunch and conversation with Lama Karma Dechen at Jangchub Samten Ling, a small training center for nuns in the Kagyu tradition. Her monastery is now in its seventh cycle of traditional three-year retreats. Karma Dechen and I met at a 1999 INEB conference in Sri Lanka. I clearly recall her physical presence, her joy and blunt speaking. Twelve years later, she is much the same ... and more.

Our group began to dwindle as people left for home. But seven or eight of us had a last night and day in Dharmasala, a fascinating place. Narrow streets

are lined with shops selling all manner of Tibetan goods. Monks and nuns are everywhere. The nearly vertical town has a makeshift and temporary feeling, appropriate to the Tibetans' guest status in India. Western trekkers and dharma bums are much in evidence. It was easy to leave Dharmasala; not so easy to say goodbye to our Think Sangha friends.

In the course of investigating Indian Buddhism we found there are really many Indian Buddhisms: various Dalit/Ambekarite Buddhists (which includes our TBMSG friends in Maharashtra), exiled Tibetans in the north and south, other Himalayan groups practicing in the Tibetan tradition, Goenka-based vipassana practitioners, the Young Buddhist Society in Uttar Pradesh, the Mahabodhi Society, middle class Buddhists in Mumbai, Delhi, and Chennai, and on and on. Such diversity, which is the nature of Indian society, is invigorating. But the challenge is that the Buddhist revival in the land of Buddha's birth is factionalized and often mutually suspicious. Of course factionalism is not endemic to India. Still, given the marginal status of

Indian Buddhists here, greater cooperation would serve people better.

Difference here is not so much in dharma practice itself but in beliefs and social factors: caste, gender, culture, poverty and wealth (hence access to resources), lay/monastic, etc. In each place, one or more of these factors is foremost. Different groups have opinions and judgments about each other. This is not what the Buddha had in mind. His early sangha was open and egalitarian. But there is an unfortunate human proclivity to form circles and institutions which inevitably have an inside and an outside. India's ancient profusion of cultures and its jarring disparities of rich and poor are hard to bridge.

I know that what we saw are still first impressions. I don't expect to get my mind around çIndiaé in this lifetime. It feels like India is wrapping itself around my mind. So the Think Sangha did not come to conclusions. We do, however, wish to be allies to our Indian friends. To listen to them, advocate for them, find practice resources they can make use of, and skillfully offer what we understand from our own lives and practice.

But there was more to this journey than just talk. Most days we had time to take walks, drink milk tea, hang out, laugh, and simply be friends—letting new friendships take roots and old ones ripen. We also mourned for the people of Japan, as earthquake and tsunami led to a nuclear crisis that remains unresolved. All of us were deeply affected by the crisis.

This is the basis of Think Sangha—*kalyanamitta*. Real friendship grounded in shared dharma, unhindered by nationality, Buddhist tradition, or chronological age. Although I am not always at ease with circumstances or with myself, these two weeks of travel together have been remarkably harmonious. No visible squabbles among our group, even in the turmoil of Old Delhi station, or the dry dust of a four-hour drive on winding mountain roads. Practice is revealed in how each of us takes responsibility for our own irritability and pain. If there is a way one of us can help, help is offered. If someone needs to step back for space and recollection, we all understand that. Each of us has moments like this.

Hozan Alan Senauke

Youth: Towards a Global Culture

The Inter-Civilizational Youth Engagement Program (JUST IYEP4) was organized by the International Movement for a Just World on 26-30 November 2010 in Melaka, Malaysia. The theme of the fourth IYEP was "Youth: Towards a Global Culture". It reflected the sentiments of many youths around the world today who are searching for identity through their inherited culture, while at the same

time creating their own contemporary culture. The program has brought together some 50 youths between the ages of 21 and 25 of different nationalities and religions to reflect upon inter-civilization relations in today's world, based on the growing challenges to cultures in today's societies. The purpose was to explore and voice their concerns on culture as a part of their community and the future inheritors of the earth.

The JUST IYEP's principal objectives are to initiate and foster closer relationship and rapport among youths from different civilizational backgrounds, develop a deeper understanding of global challenges and how the young can help in their resolution, to identify and examine universal spiritual and moral values that can contribute towards justice, peace, harmony among the different communities and



nations of the planet, and to create a core group of youths who through words and deeds will advance the cause of a just and compassionate universal civilization. More specifically, the primary goal is to establish a spiritual and intellectual foundation for a JUST world.

Chandra Muzaffar, the President of International Movement for a Just World gave a speech emphasising that the global cultural crisis is arising from greed which is a reflection of self-centered and global capitalism across the entire human family, and is even reflecting in the realms of spirituality. To overcome that we need to use different ways to change, specifically in four sectors which are economic, politics, education and spirituality with a foundation of consciousness and the transcendental, so we have to go beyond our religion to know the true level of God is God itself. God means consciousness which is the relationship with nature, animals and people. The role of youths is to develop awareness and knowledge. Youth should bring awareness and action in using technologies with respon-

sibility to share ideas and information, network with groups and individuals and participate in public campaigns, study groups, and actively participate in organisations, getting involved in politics, and so on.



I was selected to represent Dharmajala, Indonesia, while also joining as an intern in International Network of Engaged Buddhist (INEB). As a result, I got inspiration to share knowledge and views with my communities and organization about dimensions of global culture that are manifestations of the global crisis, the underlying causes and consequences, how to overcome the crisis and the proper role of youths. It's helping me to acquire new knowledge on alternative education.

Also I will encourage and inspire youths to participate in the next Just IYEP program in order to assimilate values and attitudes that will enable them to serve as effective bridge-builders between different civilizations, religions and cultures, and so they can bring awareness and action to society. I also learned about facilitation and coordination from the last batch participants, helping me to be a good facilitator and build networking among youths from different countries.

The five-day programme participants were from Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Jordan, Indonesia, Kosovo, Malaysia, Maldives, Nigeria, South Africa, and Sri Lanka. The activities included learning and discussion on “The Relationship Between Culture and Society”, “The Different Cultural Expressions of Our Age”, “How Youths can Shape a Global Culture in the Future”, and “The End of The Sensate Global Culture: The Beginning of a Spiritual—Moral Global Culture”, and action learning which included visiting the Portuguese museum, team building activities, and visiting on orphanage for children with mental disorders. The outcome of these programs were sharing the ideas and contributions on the issues of culture in today’s world to spread cultural consciousness, news and analyses of the workshop on a website, blogs, or other channels communication, establishment of networks among youth groups and a memorandum to youths within our society that embodies our concern about the emerging global culture.

Vian/Eka Ritawati

The Future with Nature, Love and Sustainability

“What makes a community? What binds it together? For some it is faith. For others it is the defence of an idea, such as democracy or the fight against poverty. Some communities are homogeneous, others multicultural. Some are small as schools and villages; others as large as continents. What binds us into an international community? In the broadest sense there is a shared vision of a better world for all people. Together, we are stronger.”

- Kofi Annan- UN Secretary General

We joined the 2011 Thailand EDE (Ecovillage Design Education) and TOT (Training of Trainers) in Wongsanit Ashram, with 20 people from different cultures and backgrounds: Cambodia, Scotland, India, England, Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, Canada, Thailand, South Africa, and Bangladesh. This course promotes people to take an active role in change in their community and our selves, to bring important transformations on Earth.

EDE was more than what I expected. We learned so many things and I gained a lot of inspiration. Now I start to think about my community how its inhabitants can understand their problems, and know the cause of those problems. So I am also inspired by my community because after EDE I understand so much more. EDE gave me a way to think and see with a new vision and a new mind.

The course started with community building. We are from different cultures and back-



Group photo with Sulak Sivaraksa after a talk about engaged Buddhism and spirituality

grounds but during community building, we all helped each other like old friends with a lot of open mindedness. This helped to give us new spiritual power, a step closer to being enlightened. Every day we had morning and evening meditation and deep relaxation for understanding our minds and sufferings. We also had a weekly well-being circle, where we all participated by sharing from and listening with our heart. It really impacted us deeply. Some cried, some laughed, some had no power to share, and some we could read their face and knew how they are feeling.

A key topic I learned about was the Transition Town movement. It is a small step for change in the world. People talk about changing the world but most people do not take any step towards that. EDE can help us to understand. If we want to understand we have to be with nature then we can understand the problem and we can feel how

much nature is suffering. Nature is suffering more than us, so now this is the time for us to do something for nature.

During the course I also learned about how to use our resources in the best way, and how can we save and conserve our natural resources. We visited some places like Surin province in the Northeast to see some of the practical steps already taken by people and their communities—Green market, local economy, organic farming—that really opened up new possibilities.

Lastly in the course, we had Design studio, where we used our EDE learning for practical application. This was really effective for us, to practice with the support of one EDE designer Max, who was such a wise man. He is the founder of Crystal Water eco-community in Australia.

I learned how to respect other cultures and other people's thoughts and ideas different from my own. How we can live with different cultures and ideas

with harmony. EDE gave me so much energy to stand in this world and do something different. To do something for nature and our Mother Earth, how I can take my first step and how I can walk that step. That is what I learned from EDE.

EDE is one of the candles of change in the world. I know we are not alone because of all the EDE friends around the world, trees, animals, sunlight, spiritual power, spiritual people and also our mother Earth. So our job is to burn this candle and spread the light of EDE in this world.

- pappu -

Joining the Ecovillage Design Education and Training of Trainers courses helped me build up the knowledge, skills and self-awareness to care, love and be responsible, using critical thinking and taking action in society—at the national and international levels. Through these lessons, practicing and sharing, my understanding of the personal, community and institutional levels deepened.

In the EDE, I learned to understand my self, others, and the environment in order to connect and communicate with the needs, willingness and skills in me and around me. It helped me to see and reflect more on the *life* aspect of society and the world and how to change and be a change or supporter for others. Starting from knowing there is a problem, to understanding the cause of the problem and possible solutions, to knowing how to bring these solutions to all four dimensions of life—the worldview, society, economy and ecology.

In the worldview aspect, I learned how to understand and analyze the value of the para-

digm or belief system that shaped me. I learned about the modern paradigm—scientific—and the traditional paradigm—culture, religion, etc. Since I have been conditioned by my parents, teachers, media, culture and institutions. These things made me blind and ignorant to my inner world and the world in general. We are consumers of ignorance due to the fact that we are disconnected from one another. So, we really need to have a holistic world-view, linking spiritual, material and cultural values in order to bring people into interconnectedness and sustainable living. In the social aspect, I learned about living in community by building relationships, non-violent communication, self-awareness, involving process and having common goals. In the economy aspect I learned how to build up the foundations of a community with spiritual values, stability and sustainability in eco-friendly production systems, counterbalancing consumerism and capitalism. In the ecological aspect, I learned about introducing biodiversity in farming and about permaculture vs. monoculture, creating sustainable and regenerative systems.

The EDE inspired me to integrate and build connections to what I've learned to walk in my life. I learned that I can make my dreams happen. With commitment to learning, practicing and sharing, and the confidence to facilitate and raise other's awareness, these experiences can be transferred into action among family, friends and community.

- Vianty -

I learned about Eco village concept and Eco design studio



Participants attempted to lift a body with one finger.

for increasing my knowledge and skills, and for using those skills effectively in my community. To facilitate community transition to a new paradigm, I learned building and embracing diversity, Transition Town movement, deep listening and reconnection with nature, green building, so many more things.

This training has given me encouragement to pursue knowledge in many new aspects. Many aspects and topics of the training were new to me. Now I have learnt those things, along with learning how to facilitate community and raise awareness. I have also learned ecological design and eco-sustainable life. I learnt new practical ideas like how to make organic probiotics. I also know the importance of building community and embracing diversity: building community means making deep relationships within a community among its members. No discrimination, no violence, no competition, but to have unity for helping each other.

- Trilock -

Some detailed information on the EDE course:



1. Worldview:

A new understanding of the natural laws of the world, seeing the world as a whole, understanding why we have an influence on the whole. What does a socially committed spirituality which gives us the power we need to make our contribution look like?

2. Social Issues:

The emphasis in Tamera (an Ecovillage in Portugal) is on community knowledge, developed over more than thirty

years' experience. The students will learn and experience the basics of communication in community, truth, the creation of trust and conflict resolution: What are meaningful structures for a new co-habitation? How can we develop an understanding/communication which creates truth and trust—also in the core areas of community, in love and sexuality? The world needs models in which people really live together without continually reproducing war on the inner human scale so that a new culture of peace on earth can develop.

3. Economy:

How do we deal with the issue of money in a healing way? How can we direct money into the development of sustainable systems instead of war and consumption? We will study the themes of Spiritual Economy, Barter Systems and Alternative

Currencies.

4. Ecology:

The material building blocks for the construction of new models: We will study in practice—based on existing examples for all areas, as well as in theory and get to know the areas of Ecology (Permaculture, particularly according to Sepp Holzer), new Technologies (Solar Technology - particularly according to Jürgen Kleinwächter) and sustainable building (particularly loam construction.)

For more details on EDE (Ecovillage Design Education) courses see below:

http://www.gaiaeducation.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=62
http://gen.ecovillage.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=124&Itemid=219
<http://www.tamera.org/index.php?id=99>



The Komol Keemthong Foundation at 40

On this day four decades ago Komol Keemthong was not the only person who was murdered by the communists. Also killed were a local guide who took him to the communist-controlled “red zones” and Rattana Sakulthai. Rattana was a budding professor at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. She possessed exceptional talents and was unorthodox, especially in ways that challenged the mainstream. Initially, some of us planned to establish a Komol Keemthong and Rattana Sakulthai Foundation to pay homage to both individuals. But the elders in the Sakulthai family did

not like the idea, and the plan was scrapped. The proper name “Rattana Sakulthai” thus gradually faded through time.

I was not the one who came up with the idea of establishing the Komol Keemthong Foundation. Rather the idea belonged to Komol's friends who came to his funeral at Wat Prayoon. They wanted to set up a foundation that would help to promote the virtues represented by Komol such as will, courage, confidence, and selflessness and create local community schools that would provide education for emancipation.

They asked me to be respon-

sible for setting up the foundation and wanted Ajarn Puey Ungphakorn to play a role in it as well. They saw in Ajarn Puey a lot of selflessness and utopianism as well as broadmindedness. At the same time, they also wanted the foundation's activities to attract the interest of the king.

I told them that if they wanted the king to be interested in the activities of this new foundation they better request Ajarn Sanya Dharmasakti to serve as president. At the time Ajarn Sanya had just assumed the position of privy councilor. He had also successfully requested for a special

royal sponsorship of Komol's funeral. Forty years ago this was considered to be of great honor to the family of the deceased. This is not the case nowadays, however. For instance, the family of Wanida Tantiwittayapitak steadfastly objected to the royal sponsorship of her funeral.

Thus anyone who has read the books or materials published by the Komol Keemthong Foundation would find that Ajarn Sanya was named as one of its founders and president and Ajarn Puey as its vice-president and co-founder. An important name is missing and needs to be mentioned here: Udom Yenruedee. He was the one who asked me to send Komol to a youth camp in Surat Thani province. Subsequently, Komol went to teach at a school set up by Udom's mining company. Komol felt that teaching at a small provincial school better served his interest in experimenting with education for emancipation than being a civil servant and professor at his alma mater, the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University. Moreover, Udom shouldered all the costs of Komol's funeral service and paid for the publishing of his cremation book. I asked all copies of the cremation book to be sold rather than given freely to the guests because I wanted to use the money earned as a start-up fund for the foundation. (I still remember that there were two uninvited guests—both ministers—at Komol's royal-sponsored cremation service who paid 1,000 baht each for the cremation book.)

The present Supreme Patriarch who was back then known as Phra Sasanasophon also delivered a sermon at Komol's funeral. He even donated the money offering for giving a ser-

mon to help establish the foundation. Bhikkhu Payutto did likewise.

Back then in order to legally establish a foundation one needed to have at least 100,000 baht in the bank account. When the foundation was created, I asked the board members—mostly comprised of the younger generation—to come up with the necessary activities and projects. The foundation was situated at Suksit Siam store in the Samyarn area. The first donor that we approached was the Asia Foundation. It had also financially supported the *Social Science Review* (SSR) since 1963.

Although the Asia Foundation was allegedly infiltrated by the CIA, it had never interfered with our activities—of both the *Social Science Review* as well as the Komol Keemthong Foundation. The latter is now 40 years old. The former came to an end as a result of October '76. But it must be pointed out that SSR was not “murdered” by the police or the military but by the so-called “intellectuals”.

Komol Keemthong grew up reading the student edition of SSR and taking part in its discussion group, which was regularly held at Wat Boworniwes. This was of course during the time of the military dictatorship, and it was illegal to have a gathering of more than five persons. Therefore, we had to rely on the *paramié* of the abbot to protect any gathering of our discussion group.

As the power of the dictatorship began to loosen its grip and the members of the SSR discussion group completed their university education a new discussion group, which was also based in Suksit Siam store, was formed. It targeted primarily

young university graduates.

Suksit Siam store's badge of honor is its history of fighting against dictatorship; for instance, through the progressive books that it sold and the anti-elitist activities that it held. Its staff also distributed political leaflets that helped catalyze the 14 October 1973 episode.

When Komol Keemthong was editor of the commemorative volumes of the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, he made the unconventional move of excluding the king's picture from the books. Wichai Chokwiwat had done likewise with the commemorative books of Siriraj when he was editor. Both of them also included interesting materials that were beyond the convention of ordinary commemorative books.

Jitr Phumisak of the Faculty of Arts must be credited as the first person who used Chulalongkorn University's publications to challenge the mainstream. He was later shot dead by the Thai military in 1966. Another figure from the Faculty of Arts who was likewise destroyed by the military was Tiang Sirikhan. He played a vital role in the Seri Thai Movement and was devoted to the cause of uplifting the Thai people as well as the inhabitants of Southeast Asia.

Chulalongkorn University, however, had failed to properly recognize these three individuals—to say the least. Once we held the annual Komol Keemthong Lecture at the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University. Only five people showed up to listen to it. When we wanted to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Komol Keemthong Foundation at the same faculty, the university

politely rejected our request....

The Suksit Siam store was home to two foundations: Komol Keemthong Foundation and Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation (SNF). The latter was established a few years before the former. There was a time when I ran both of these foundations. It was not difficult because both of them had clearly different objectives. The Komol Keemthong Foundation aimed to foster utopianism or idealism among the younger generation and sought to promote an alternative education system. The SNF promoted cultural activities and artistic excellence in various genres. It sought to detach the arts from commercialism.

Initially, the Komol Keemthong Foundation did not have its own printing house. It was more geared towards publishing occasional papers. The very first material that it published was Russell Johnson's "America's Policy in Asia", which I had translated into Thai. It was an indictment of American imperialism in Asia. Another material that we published, which had a lot of impact, was Senator Fulbright's speech. I also translated it into Thai and it was first reproduced in *Social Science Review*. The gist of the speech pointed to the fact that the Thai kingdom was an American satellite during the Vietnam War, providing the US with numerous military bases and acting as a Rest and Recreation hub for its military personnel. This fact flew in the face of the Thai foreign minister's assertion at the time that the country was a fully independent ally of the Free World. Controlled and suppressed by the military dictatorship, the mainstream mass media

dared not expose these facts. When Senator Fulbright's speech was published as a Komol Keemthong Foundation occasional paper, it was widely circulated. Many student magazines in various universities and teacher's colleges asked us for the permission to reproduce it. Another work that first made its appearance as one of the foundation's occasional papers was E.F. Schumacher's "Buddhist economics." Ajarn Sanya Dharmasakti who was then the newly minted 12th prime minister wrote its foreword. This paper also helped to lay down the groundwork for Bhikkhu Payutto's detailed examination of the same subject. Now Buddhist economics, especially in the form of the Gross National Happiness concept, is fast gaining international recognition as a potential alternative to the seriously flawed Gross Domestic Product. SNF is actively collaborating with the New Economics Foundation and the Centre for Bhutan Studies on the Gross National Happiness project.

The point I'm trying to convey is that the Komol Keemthong Foundation had initiated several progressive and cutting edge activities and projects. It has helped to lay down the proverbial first brick in several situations (as Komol Keemthong himself would have wanted).

The foundation is now four decades—old and has its own printing house. It's therefore high time to engage in self-reflection and—critique. What have been the foundation's failures? What are its weaknesses and flaws? Has it always maintained fidelity to its stated mission? To what extent do the published books reflect the idealism and objectives of the

foundation? To what extent can it be seen as a trailblazer in its respective field? In which direction is it trailblazing? Is the foundation's publishing house distinct from the other independent publishing houses, including the Garden of Fruition company which is under SNF? Are the board members qualified and devoted? Are some of them using the foundation's name to pursue their own pet projects? Are they cultivating seeds of peace within? Are they making virtuous companions to enable them to engage in critical self-reflection? And so on....

Organizing the Komol Keemthong Lecture annually is a good idea. Admittedly, this initiative was not the first of its kind. The Christian community in Chiang Mai was arguably the first to do so with their Thomson Memorial Lecture. It was very well organized, and the speakers included luminaries such as Bhikkhu Buddhadasa and Ajarn Puey Ungphakorn. However, the Thomson Memorial Lecture was eventually terminated—only to be revived recently. On the other hand, the Komol Keemthong Lecture has continued without interruption. It was immune to the October '76 crisis and despite the fact that every dictatorial government saw the foundation as a thorn to its side. The quality of its speakers has also been consistently high. Ajarn Puey was the first person to deliver the Komol Keemthong Lecture. And it is often seen as an honor to be invited to deliver the annual lecture. Subsequently, the foundation has also granted awards to individuals from various professions for their outstanding deeds. This is a worthy practice that must be kept going provided that the selection pro-

cess is thorough.

The foundation is also involved in the important task of setting up alternative schools. Alternative education is at the heart of Komol Keemthong's thought. Phipob Dhongchai, a board member of the foundation from the very beginning, has developed this initiative with his wife and created the internationally recognized Children's Village School in Kanchanaburi province almost three decades ago. My question is: does the foundation still have an important role to play in this endeavor and if so in what respect?

....

As mentioned earlier, Ajarns Sanya Dharmasakti and Puey Ungphakorn were named as the two founders of the Komol Keemthong Foundation. Both were highly and widely respected in contemporary Thai society. And they truly deserved this respect. But there are important differences between these two individuals. Ajarn Sanya devoted his life to the protection and maintenance of the status quo in society, which rested on the monarchy as the ultimate pillar. He was more than willing to sacrifice his life for the preservation of the monarchy. He never explicitly stated how the monarchy was to serve the people or how a constitutional monarchy should function in practice. Ajarn Puey, on the other hand, devoted his life to the cause of "santi pracha dhamma". The monarchy was seen as only a (f)actor in the construction of "santi pracha dhamma" in society; its role is to facilitate not obstruct "santi pracha dhamma".

Ajarn Puey founded the Foundation of Rural Rehabilita-

tion in 1967 (four years before the establishment of the Komol Keemthong Foundation). At the time, non-governmental or private actors engaging in social development were virtually non-existent. Any development project had to be state-directed. This was partly because of the fear of Communism: only communists, the reasoning went, were trying to mobilize the people and subvert them with the vision of a better life. To carry out his work Ajarn Puey, however, had to make several compromises. He had to rely on the capitalist system, not dismantle it. He had to befriend many wealthy capitalists, not dispossess them. He used his friends and connections as a protective shield to pursue his development projects in the rural areas without the interference of state and local authorities. A lot of young people also worked in these projects. Later, Ajarn Puey set up the Graduate Volunteer Center to train graduates in volunteer and development concepts and learn the virtues of self-sacrifice and social responsibility. The Graduate Volunteer Center also collaborated with the bureaucracy especially the Ministry of Education; it had to rely on the latter to facilitate its development work in the rural areas.

At the very least, these two organizations helped to catalyze a subjective transformation among the younger generation. Many in this generation came to identify with the poor and were devoted to the cause of rural development in various provinces throughout the country. The ruling classes however always kept a wary eye on Ajarn Puey despite the fact that he had served under successive dictatorial governments from P. Phibunsongkram

to Thanom Kittikachorn.

Ajarn Puey also had a major plan to develop the Mae Glong river basin. He was worried by the increasing trend of rural migration into urban areas, especially Bangkok. For instance, although Samutsongkram province had a higher per capita income than many provinces and is close to the capital city, its inhabitants migrated in large numbers to live and work in Bangkok. Therefore, the development of the Mae Glong river basin would serve as a pilot project that could be implemented later in other river basin areas in the country.

Ajarn Puey sought the assistance of three universities to carry out this pilot project. Thammasat University would be involved in social work, Kasetsart University in agriculture development, and Mahidol University in public health. The Rockefeller Foundation funded the project in the initial stages.

The Mae Glong river basin project served as a concrete and distilled form of Ajarn Puey's dream of realizing "santi pracha dhamma". However, many bureaucrats in the Ministry of Interior saw the project as a threat to their power and authority, which was based on centralization and clientelism. They did not want the people to be empowered and autonomous, for instance. Thus they painted the project as a national security threat. Ajarn Puey was accused of mobilizing the people and creating a vanguard party that would realize his political ambition, which was essentially about toppling the constitutional monarchy by replacing it with communism. After all, the reasoning went, Ajarn Puey was a student of Ajarn Pridi Banomyong, who brought

an end to absolutism in the country and who was also accused of being communist. Moreover, like Ajarn Pridi Ajarn Puey was also rector of Thammasat University. To cut a long story short, the reactionary forces brought an end to Ajarn Puey's dream of "santi pracha dhamma". He was compelled to step down from the position of rector of Thammasat University. On 6 October 1976 he narrowly escaped being lynched to death by an angry mob. He ultimately fled the country and lived in exile in England for the rest of his life.

The Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation has chosen to continue the struggle for the cause of "santi pracha dhamma"

in the country. The Komol Keemthong Foundation's assistance in this endeavor would be much appreciated. What does struggling for this cause today entail? This would require a critical interrogation of the role of the monarchy in our constitutional monarchy. Is the monarchy under or above the constitution? Buddhism needs to be rejuvenated and "updated" to meet the challenges of contemporary society. Social structures that are violent and inegalitarian need to be dismantled. The danger of blindly waving the banner of Thai-ness must be carefully dissected and mapped out. Questioning the 'Thai-ness' of one's opponent is an easy way to

squash democratic dissent. A society that is always consensual cannot be said to be democratic. For instance, my 'Thai-ness' was automatically thrown into doubt when I honestly criticized the monarchy. I was depicted as a 'Thai-hater'. The (global) commons must be defended against privatization and must be managed for the benefit of all. Far from being exhaustive, these pointers indicate the daunting tasks that await us.

Excerpts of Sulak's speech made at the Sri Burapha Conference Hall, Thammasat University, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Komol Keemthong Foundation, 22 February 2011.

Impermanence 1

Earthquakes, tidal waves,
volcanoes erupting,
Wake us to the fact that what
lies beneath the surface
Is unstable.

So with society.
Unease, unrest, disease,
resentment,
Stirring revolution, both civil
and uncivil.
Disrupt our little plans.
We can only be certain of
uncertainty.
To live each day according to
changing conditions,
Just to live with that.
To die each day
Just as each day dies,
Begin anew.

Venetia Walkey

Time

Time is sleeping
In the painted breasts of
these stones
Time is singing
In the breaded hair of
the forest lake
Time is dancing in the soft
lips of the waves
Time is waking up
In moments of our embrace

In our Time
It is our fate
That we run with Time
We dance and make Time
dance
But Oh Friends
Come to the million breasts
of Love, Nature and History
Where Time is sleeping and
snoring
In yoga nidra

Oh friends
Let us sleep with Time
We press our head and hand
Put oil in our tired bodies
and souls
We breathe slowly
We put our hands across our
hearts

Sleeping with Time
We weave many quilts
We cover us with quilts
We make each other warm
We weave many threads
Of connections
Many new yogas.

A. K. Giri

Saluting a Pillar of Buddhism

For decades, Venerable Phra Brahmaganabhorn has offered a guiding light to Thai society through his writings on Theravada Buddhism

Although not in the best of health, Venerable Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto) continues to write whenever he can summon up the energy, intent on pressing on with a mission that has consumed many years of his life: propagating a clearer understanding of the Buddha's teachings and of how followers can better integrate these into their daily lives.

For three months now, this revered intellectual, whom devout Thais usually address as Than Chao Khun Prayudh, has been afflicted with a severe stomach-related ailment. Doctors have so far been unable to come up with a definitive diagnosis. The elderly monk is receiving treatment for his symptoms but his stamina has suffered and he apparently finds it difficult to concentrate on his writing projects. Still, whenever he's having a good period he resumes the task and can often be found working at odd hours like 10pm or 2 o'clock in the morning.

During a recent two-day conference at Thammasat University, the deputy abbot of Wat Nyanavesakavan revealed how his superior has been coping with his condition.

"The sickness aside, he has a strong sense of determination to carry on his work," said Phra Khru Palad Suwattanaphrommakhun. "There are so many things he would like to do. He said he does not have much time, so he'd better work against [with] the time he has."

The conference at Thammasat was intended as a tribute to a



man who is widely respected as the authority on contemporary Thai Theravada Buddhism. The low turnout, with only a couple of hundred participants attending the two-day event, does not reflect on the vast contribution the 72-year-old has made to Thai society and Buddhist scholarship. Over the course of several decades, Venerable Payutto has penned more than 300 titles on the relevance and applicability of Buddhism to numerous fields of study and current social issues.

Buddhadhamma, a comprehensive tome on the Tripitaka (Buddhist canon) which has been constantly revised and expanded since its first print run, is considered a classic of its kind. Phra Khru Palad Suwattanaphrommakhun revealed that his abbot is still considering whether to add two or three more chapters to *Buddhadhamma* and that he also wants to write a pocket-sized edition of the Tripitaka since this is the only one of three long-cherished book projects that he has yet to turn his hand to. The other two—*Thammanoon Cheewit (Constitution of Living)* and *Ammaritta Pojjana (Words of Wisdom in Buddhism)*—have already gone into several reprints. For these, as for all his other publications, the author has

declined to accept any royalties.

A life devoted to Buddhism: Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto) has striven tirelessly to demonstrate the value and relevance of Lord Buddha's words through the hundreds of books he has written and the many dharma lectures he has given on a wide range of subjects, including education, the environment, politics and science.

The primary drive behind this prodigious literary output is clearly not financial reward; it is a strong desire to raise the institution of Buddhism and Thai society in general from the state of decay into which both have sunk. Every sector of our society, inside as well as outside monastery walls, has become steeped in moral decadence to the point of corruption. But neither his frail health nor his scholastic background has ever prevented Venerable Payutto from standing up for what he believes to be the correct interpretation of Buddhist tenets. During the course of several crises in the religion in years past, he has employed his profound knowledge of Buddhist scriptures to serve as a voice of reason and thus a guiding light for the parties at loggerheads with each other.

Jayasaro Bhikkhu, another much-respected monk, had this to say of him:

“The Venerable is a pacifist. He never shows any vengefulness. But in performing his duty to protect Buddhism, he has sometimes had to make statements that may displease some people. Like when he pointed out the distortions by certain schools [of thought] ... for that he had to adopt straightforward language. However, in all of his cautionary statements we can sense only his love of rightfulness. There is no hint whatsoever of condescension towards or abhorrence of those who have committed wrong deeds.”

“His etiquette and proper choice of content and language make him a great communicator. As a representative of the Thai Sangha [Buddhist monkhood] in doing the analysis [of certain issues], he was occasionally subject to slander; however, he took it in his stride as some thing that may happen to those who perform their duty, and he did not retaliate and make things worse. For the Venerable, one’s personal image is not as important as the [integrity of] Dharma.”

Another area which Venerable Payutto deems to be of the utmost importance is the manner in which the basic concepts of Buddhism are inculcated in lay people, especially the young. He has frequently decried the lack of religious instruction from a Buddhist perspective in the Thai education system. In several books and talks on dharma he has also called attention to the large number of Thais who profess to be Buddhist yet have a very poor grasp of the tenets of their religion—not to mention an inclination to put the teachings into practice in their own lives.

Buddhadhamma has received wide recognition as one

of the most significant texts ever produced by a Thai Buddhist. Its author has revised and expanded the book several times since its first print run back in the early 1970s.

For Venerable Payutto, education is key to human development and thus the betterment of society. But what he means by “education” is not just the amassing of knowledge, piecemeal, for reasons of personal advancement, often at the expense of others. In recognition of his outstanding contributions in this field, UNESCO presented him with its Prize for Peace Education back in 1994, making him the first Asian to be so honoured.

During the recent conference at Thammasat, administrators from three Bangkok schools who have pioneered the incorporation of *withee Phut*—“the Buddhist way”—into the curriculum, took turns sharing their experiences and insights.

Prapaphat Niyom of Roong Aroon School conceded that the new generations have changed greatly in their outlook and way of life because many of them have become accustomed to material comforts and instant gratification of their every need. What her school has tried to do, she said, is instil in young minds an awareness of the interconnectedness between individuals and the world around them through real-life situations. She gave as an example the fact that, during the last major spate of flooding, her students joined a team of volunteers to help victims of the disaster. Every year, the older students are taken on an environment-themed outing to Chaiyaphum to raise awareness of the need to conserve the Lampathao watershed. There, they are exposed to the hardships endured by people living outside their immediate social circle, Prapa-

phat continued, and so they usually return from the trip with a better appreciation of things they used to take for granted.

An approach like this can work well if there is close collaboration between teachers and parents, noted Buppasawat Ratchatanant from Thawsi School. Parents are expected to attend several dharma training sessions organised by her school every year and to play an active role in the long-term process of educating their offspring. Buppasawat pointed out that students absorb lessons better if the information is integrated in a natural way into their daily life and thus at her school every little detail has been designed to encourage pupils to be self-reliant while also being more ready to offer help to others. Even kindergarten tots are trained to take care of themselves, be it making up their own day-beds or feeding themselves at lunchtime. She observed that her young charges seem to have lots of fun but also exhibit more self-respect and self-discipline, especially when using modern technology.

Anintitra Posakrissna from Siamsaamtri School noted that it was a lot easier to take the *withee Phut* approach with younger than with older children. Very young children have the potential to learn even the highest level of dharma, she cited the late Buddhadasa Bhikkhu as once saying. In Anintitra’s view, a Buddhist approach to education would be the best way to develop a future generation of young people that will be able to withstand the tides of self-interest and consumerism and live peacefully with others. So far, she said, about 20,000 schools around the country have adopted the so-called Buddhist curriculum to varying degrees.

Bangkok Post
1 February 2011

How We Should Act to be Truly Human

Introduction

The following translation of Achan Buddhadasa's Dhamma talk delivered to an audience of students and teachers strives to capture both the flavor and meaning of his remarks. A few paragraphs of the Thai text are omitted; some are translated more or less literally; while I have rendered others exegetically. Expository translations such as this run the risk of sacrificing the literal meaning of the words on the page in the attempt to convey the deeper meaning or sense intended by the author. I acknowledge the conceit that in translating Buddhadasa exegetically I have been able to convey the deeper meaning of his words that Buddhadasa refers to as the "truth-language" (*phasa tham*) level. I leave it to readers of the Thai text and this translation to judge whether or not my rendering of Achan Buddhadasa's Dhamma talk captures his intended meaning or distorts it; hopefully, it is the former rather than the latter.

In an effort to convey the oral/aural flavor of Buddhadasa's lecture I have retained some of his contextual asides such as his opening remarks about the audience's differential understanding of the Dhamma; that his listeners should consider his talk as a New Year's gift; his wordplay between the Thai terms for "ripe" ("suk") and "happy" (sukh); his provocative charge toward the end of his lecture that the students in the audience should "wai" themselves as a sign of self-respect.

More difficult is the chal-

lenge of capturing the deeper meaning of seminal terms such as "nathi" and "phocai." In general parlance, "nathi" is understood as "duty," e.g. "It is my nathi (duty) as a citizen to vote." However, to translate "nathi" as "duty" in this conventional sense (*phasa khon*) misses the deeper significance of Buddhadasa's meaning as suggested, for example, by the word, "norm" as I have rendered the term. "Pho (sufficient, enough)-cai" (heart, mind, center portion), perhaps the most important term in this Dhamma lecture, is conventionally understood as "being satisfied, or contented with," as, for example, "I'm satisfied with my job." This ordinary language understanding of "phocai," suggests, but does not encompass, Buddhadasa's deeper sense of being truly human; of being fully aware of oneself in the present. "Phocai," in this deeper sense is *not a feeling* but *a total way of being* in the world. It is fundamental to what Buddhadasa means by "pen manut" or being human. The Pali equivalent is *upekkhā* (equanimity).

As agent provocateur, this Dhamma talk illustrates Buddhadasa's deconstructive-reconstructive challenge to being conventionally religious, or an ordinary language understanding of Theravada Buddhism. "What is your understanding of the Dhamma?" Buddhadasa asks his audience. The Dhamma, he expounds, has a much more profound meaning than the conventional understanding of the Dhamma as the words of the Buddha inscribed in the *tipitaka*

or preached by the monks, the doctrine of *kamma*, the Four Noble Truths, or the enlightenment of the Buddha. The Dhamma is what it means to be truly, fully human (*pen manut*). But how do we achieve this condition? In answer to that question, Buddhadasa devotes the bulk of his remarks to delineating five practical principles that both generalize and contextualize the Dhamma for his audience: self-knowledge, self-confidence, self-control, self-contentment, and self-respect.

He concludes his remarks but phrased in a way to startle his audience: "The Buddha said, 'Whoever sees Dhamma sees me; whoever sees me sees the Dhamma.' Today we have the Dhamma and the Buddha. Regardless of whether or not we are someone of great importance, if we realize the Dhamma we are the Buddha. To achieve our fullest potential as human beings is to become Buddha."

Donald K. Swearer
Chiang Mai, Thailand

Kankratham Thi Thuk Dong Kae Quam Pen Manut

The term, Dhamma, is of great value and its meaning has been widely debated. Everyone has the sense that the Dhamma is something superlative. If Dhamma were not so regarded—something that is excellent, precious, and valuable—then it would not be so widely discussed.

(p.1) I assume that all of you at this lecture have some ac-

quaintance with the topic of the Dhamma; that some of you know the Dhamma and others do not; or that some of you know a lot about the Dhamma and others very little. Therefore, I will summarize the Dhamma so that it will be relevant for all of you [regardless of your previous knowledge].

Consider my remarks as a New Year gift since in two or three days, it will be the New Year. This is an opportunity for me to impart knowledge about the Dhamma as a New Year gift to all of you. Make the Dhamma more important in your lives in the New Year, not in the sense of repeatedly going around in circles but, rather, systematically going forward. The years pass by and we mark the time without truly understanding the Dhamma. Therefore, I am going to address the topic of the Dhamma so that you can more clearly understand it and progress in your knowledge of the Dhamma rather than simply going around in the same old circles.

I have often spoken about the meaning of the Dhamma, but some have not listened; others have forgotten what I have said; some may remember about half or perhaps a bit more. Be that as it may, however, I am concerned that you have not really grasped the meaning I have tried to convey, which is this: (p.3) *The Dhamma is being human in the fullest sense. The Dhamma is acting in accord with the highest norm of what it means to be human.*

“What is the Dhamma?” may be a question some of you are asking yourselves at this very moment and thinking in terms of what you have heard before or believed. For example, that the Dhamma means the

words taught by the Buddha or what monks preach from the pulpit. Such an understanding is inadequate; it is not the Dhamma as truth or in principle. If each of you gathered together here today can help one another to remember the principles of the Dhamma, then the Dhamma will become increasingly part of your lives.¹

Dhamma is acting as we should act in order to be truly human throughout all the stages of our lives; Dhamma means to realize our fullest potential as individual human beings. This way of understanding the Dhamma may sound odd in comparison with what you have previously heard or believed, for example that the Dhamma only means the words taught by the Buddha. What is most important is to realize that the Dhamma is not simply “knowing,” but also “acting” in the truest sense of what it means to be human. It means integrating knowing and acting. It requires study to be able to act correctly in order to maximize our fullest humanity in every stage of our development. (p.4) We continuously develop from the time of our birth to the present moment and so on until we enter the next life.

We can divide our present existence into stages: childhood, adulthood, and old age. We should be and act in each state so as to realize our fullest human capacity. This is the answer to the question, “What is the Dhamma?” The main principle is that we should strive to become truly human at every stage of our development. (p.5) When you review your life, consider whether at each stage you have progressed on the path of becoming fully human, or more specifically when you were one,

two, or three years old until you reached fifteen or sixteen, twenty, thirty, fifty, or sixty years old. If you cause someone to weep, or make things difficult for your parents or neighbors, then you are not acting according to the highest norm of what it means to be human.

Using a pure mind, you should test yourself honestly. Being self-centered and selfish is not the Dhamma. You must understand the Dhamma as it is: as a fundamental principle of life [rather than as speculation, hearsay, or mere words]. There is an endless debate about the “correct” understanding of the Dhamma. The debate should conclude with the rule that “correct” should be that which is useful (Thai: *prayot*)² to both *oneself and others*. If the Dhamma does not have such an inclusive relevance, then the Dhamma has not been correctly understood. (p.6) “Useful,” in this sense, means *that which brings happiness, resolves the problematic of suffering (dukkha), and promotes peace.*

Our personal existence is inherently linked to the utility (Thai, *prayot*) of others. *Our own happiness and wellbeing is bound up with the happiness and wellbeing of those around us. Our peace and happiness and the peace and happiness of the world are interdependent. We conjointly share in the fundamental quest of magga-phala-nibbāna.*³ Consider for a moment, the meaning of happiness. Is it a state of being characterized by equanimity (coolness) or by heated agitation? In terms of the Thai language, is our happiness spelled with a “kh” (Thai, *sukh*, rest, peace, well-being, happiness) or with a “k” (Thai, *suk*, cooked, ripe).⁴ Is our happiness the result

of being satisfied with having enough (Thai, *phocai*), or is it being bloated and overstuffed (Thai, *uet-at*)? Is it the fire of passion, hatred, fear, jealousy, and foolish stupidity that cannot be quenched or restrained? (p.7) If it is, then this is *suk* with a *k*: to be enflamed. One must closely scrutinize oneself to determine whether one's happiness is with a "k" or a "kh," based upon whether it is satisfaction associated with bloated, enflamed desires or the cool of equanimity, enoughness, and sufficiency.

Our world today is stressed out (Thai, *khried*) in virtually all aspects of life—health, economy, community, and politics—competition among individuals and groups, destructive envy, jealousy, and hatred. Our world lacks the beauty that brings joy. The daily newspapers are full of stories about wars that rage throughout the world, conflict, poverty, and chaos. On an individual level, these conditions are a result of a sickness of the spirit (*viññāna*), mind and heart (Thai, *cit-cai*)⁵ that lacks purity, illumination, calm, and equanimity; that brings about anxiety and fear; that causes chronic, untreatable mental and physical illness. This unrest of the heart and mind leads to mental illness that, for example, affects the body's ability to assimilate sugar and this leads to diabetes and other serious, chronic illnesses such as cancer or tuberculosis.

(p.8) We tend to be oblivious to the connection between bodily illness and the imbalances in the mind and heart. Imbalances in the blood weaken our ability to fight disease, because the mind and the heart have been crippled by anxiety, mental stress, and a hunger and thirst that leaves one with a feeling of emptiness.

The disease of the mind and spirit is the primary cause of bodily illness. At its foundation is the absence of Dhamma. The Dhamma dispels anxiety, fear, mental stress, and the affliction of mind and heart. The correct alignment of the mind and heart helps eliminate these conditions.

It is important to keep in mind that Dhamma is not only a matter of mind and spirit, but includes all aspects of life: mind and spirit, the physical body, and contact with everything around us—home, wealth and property, animals, rice fields, and so on. In essence, the *Dhamma means the correct way of relating to everything*—one's total lifestyle—how we live, eat, dress, and so forth. (p.9) Body, mind, and spirit are inherently connected so that when a person is properly balanced according to mindful understanding (*sati-paññā*) all aspects of one's life—personal, physical place, home and family—are in proper alignment. But how can we know and live Dhammically, or in the Dhamma?

In case you have forgotten let me repeat: the Dhamma means to act according to the highest norm (Thai, *quam thuk dong*) of what it means to be human in all respects of every stage of our development—body, speech, heart and mind, spirit. But how can we know precisely what this norm or principle is? It is not simply a matter of accepting what we have heard. Rather, we must test (Thai, *na-long*) the Dhamma for ourselves before committing ourselves to it.

As a memory aid, especially for the students in the audience who are taking notes, I shall briefly summarize five practical principles for living Dhammically (1) understanding oneself; (2) hav-

ing confidence in oneself; (3) being able to restrain and control oneself; (4) being content (Thai, *pho cai*) with oneself and living according to the principle of enoughness and sufficiency; and (5) having self-respect.

The first principle is self-understanding. Do we really understand ourselves at different stages of life? Do the elderly who are approaching the end of their lives truly know who they are and what their lives have amounted to? Without mindful understanding (*sati-paññā*), even those who have reached the age of eighty do not really have a deep self-understanding. At whatever age, we should look back over our lives to consider our condition. Do we see our past as full of frustrations? As a battle between right and wrong? Are we able to look ahead and contemplate the meaning and direction of our lives?

Do not make pondering such questions overly complicated. Consider the simple yet profound questions, "Who Am I?" "Do I understand what it means to be fully human?" These are the basic questions we need to consider, whether we are male or female, child or adult. Whoever we are, we have the responsibility to realize our true humanity. We should not squander the opportunity to be fully human and live in the Dhamma.⁶ To realize the Dhamma in this sense, however, demands an elevated heart and mind, namely, that one lives according to insight-wisdom. To achieve this state of being is not an insignificant matter. It is difficult to explain, but from this perspective we can say that being human in the fullest sense is having an elevated heart and mind (Thai, *cit cai sung*). (p.10) This means

one has transcended suffering (dukkha). One who has not achieved this condition of heart and mind is subject to suffering, but one who has realized this state of heart and mind is like the Buddha. For us as Buddhists this means that we take the Buddha's essential teaching as the fundamental principle of our lives. (For those of another religion, it means that they take the essential teaching of their tradition as the fundamental principle of their lives.)

"Buddha" means simply, "one who knows," "one who has awakened," "one who is filled with boundless joy" (Thai, *buekban*). The basic meaning is "one who has awakened," not in the sense of being jolted awake by fear or a loud bang, but awakening from sleep, opening eyes that were closed. When we are awake, when our eyes are open, we can say that we are "Buddha." In ordinary language, being asleep or having our eyes closed, or being awake with our eyes open is understood in a literal sense. However, in the language of Dhamma or truth language, being asleep or with our eyes closed means the affliction (*kilesa*) of ignorance (Thai, *quamngo*; Pāli, *avijjā*). To dispel the affliction of ignorance is to wake up, to become "Buddha." When we are awake in this sense, we are filled with peace and boundless joy.

(p.12) If we are not asleep in a Dhammic sense and have a deep self-understanding and correct knowledge, we overcome suffering and attain a state of boundless happiness and the satisfaction (Thai, *phocai*) that accompanies equanimity. This is what it means to be Buddha: one who knows, one who has awakened, one who is suffused with

boundless happiness. This is what it means to have an elevated heart and mind (Thai, *cai sung*). May all of you achieve this depth of understanding whether you are a child, an adult, or an old person. Living in the Dhamma requires self-understanding, wisdom (*paññā*), and right knowledge (*sammāditthi*). First and foremost, being truly human (Thai, *pen manut*) requires self-understanding.

(p.13) Second, we must have self-confidence or faith in ourselves (Thai, *chu'a tua eng*). The meaning of the term, "having faith in oneself" is problematic. In a Dhammic sense that is informed by wisdom (*paññā*), it means being truly human or realizing our full human potential. "Confidence" or "faith" as used in Buddhism often refers to belief in *kamma*, the consequences of *kamma*, and the Buddha's awakening. But this is insufficient, for it must also include belief or confidence in oneself. Without confidence in oneself there can be no confidence in *kamma* or the Buddha's awakening. Faith in oneself is fundamental to being truly human. Do we truly believe in our humanity or are we confused and uncertain? The cultivation of our humanity requires self-confidence, the confidence that we can become fully human. Confidence that overcomes ambiguity, uncertainty, and confusion is the very basis of human flourishing.

(p.14) Third, we must exercise self-control. Confidence in oneself without action is insufficient. Not to act is an affliction (*kilesa*). In acting to realize one's highest potential as a human being, the *kilesa* of the mind (*citta*) is transformed by wisdom (*bodhi*). This is what is meant

by self-discipline: controlling the negative poisons by means of mindful understanding (*sati-paññā*) that prevents one from being truly human.

Thama (Thai) [dhamma in the verbal sense] means the self-control by which the *kilesa* of the mind is transformed by *bodhi* that enables one to realize one's fullest human potential. *Thama* means to tame, train, or command—to tame the negative poisons so that we may achieve our true humanity. The Buddha taught human beings the way to the Dhamma, and he, himself, exemplified the self-control necessary to realize the Dhamma. He was a "tamer of human beings," but we cannot simply rely on the Buddha to tame us. We must tame ourselves.

(p.15) All of us should tame ourselves every moment of every day. Unless we do, we inevitably make mistakes, are inattentive, walk in the wrong direction, and fall over the brink. Rather than thinking that self-discipline is no fun (Thai, *sanuk*),⁷ we should be content (Thai, *phocai*) knowing that self-control is required to realize our fullest potential as human beings. If we do not exercise self-control, then we smoke, drink, and act in various other kinds of detrimental ways that destroy our ability to maintain ourselves. However, if we exercise self-discipline and self-control, we will have sufficient material resources to live on, our lives will improve, and we will develop in the right direction.

It is not unusual to think that taming ourselves is difficult or painful. Deciding to exercise self-discipline and self-control, and not just going out and having fun requires endurance and patience. Many people come to

Suan Mokkh to stop smoking. But without self-discipline, one cannot give up smoking. When the craving to smoke arises, one must persist in resisting the craving. Before long, the urge to smoke will cease and one will be freed from the craving. (p.16) To overcome addictive smoking, drunkenness, carousing and gambling, laziness, not falling in with people who lead us astray, requires self-discipline. Disciplined self-control is required to change the negative habits that prevent us from realizing our potential and becoming truly human. We must be firm in the belief that we can achieve this realization and act on that faith (Thai, *quam chu'a*).

Therefore, we should follow the advice of our ancestors who said, "A tilapia fish must be slit open and scaled before it can be dried. Keep at it. Keep at it." Becoming truly human can be just as difficult and requires effort. Do not give up or lose heart. Find a way to keep at it. If an elephant falls into a pond, it gets out with tremendous amount of self-effort. Similarly, extracting the mind from defilements (*kilesa*) is difficult and requires great effort if one is not to be defeated. We can, however, discipline the mind and tame ourselves.

Self-knowledge, self-confidence, and self-discipline lead to self-contentment (Thai, *phocai*).⁸ This is the fourth principle of living Dhammically. A contented state of being in the sense of a mind suffused with equanimity is the *sine qua non* of our birth as a human being, and separates us from that of a dog or cat or chicken. To realize our potential as a human being requires the wisdom of mindful understanding (*sati-paññā*).

Let us consider the nature of our sense of contentedness and what it is that makes this possible. Is it a result of self-love even though there may be nothing admirable about us and perhaps even loathsome? Contentment that comes from such self-love is a form of *kilesa*. True contentment and satisfaction results from self-discipline and self-purification.

(p.17) If we examine ourselves carefully and a sense of contentment arises from being without flaw or blemish that may lead to happiness; however, it is the happiness that results from sheer dint of effort that produces true contentment and satisfaction. Without a sense of contentment, happiness will be illusive. Even having millions of baht, will not make us happy. Lacking a sense of satisfaction and contentment we shall always want more and more. Whether, in regard to ourselves, our children, our husband, our wife, or our wealth—whatever it is—without a sense of satisfaction and contentment we will not be happy. To look for happiness elsewhere is a form of *kilesa* and will lead us to wrong action. It is crazy to think that drunkenness and gambling will make us happy. That is happiness with "k," not "kh;" that is mistaking being on fire with desire and passion as happiness. But it is the happiness that comes from contentment and equanimity is the happiness of being fully human. Happiness results automatically from such contentment. We do not need to debate or deliberate about whether or not we are happy. When we act out of contentedness and satisfaction, happiness arises automatically.

(p.18) In the case of money, if we are content with the amount

of money we have, then we may have a sense of happiness. But Dhamma is an entirely different matter. In Dhammic language, happiness means the satisfaction that comes from realizing our true humanity. This is true happiness—the happiness of the spirit (*viññāna*). Whatever we do—whether sweeping streets, rowing a boat, even cleaning dirty sewers—a sense of happiness in the here and now is possible when we act from a sense of contentment.⁹ It is this sense of contentment, of heartfelt satisfaction (*phocai*) that is the fundamental norm¹⁰ of what it means to be truly human. When we act according to this norm we are able to realize the highest potential of our humanity.

Everyone is defined by *kamma* in unique and particular ways. From the perspective of *kamma*, there are a variety of ways of being and acting in the world. One may be a farmer, gardener, merchant, banker, lawyer, and so on. Regardless of one's position in the world, however, Dhammically one acts justly and righteously with the good of all in mind. For example, a merchant or a banker should not seek an exorbitant profit but a fair profit to the benefit of all. (p.19) To act in this way is meritorious (*puññā*) because it promotes mutual wellbeing. To exploit others is demeritorious (*pāpa*). A lawyer who follows Dhammic norms of fairness and justice, and who does not exploit the less fortunate is acting meritoriously. A lawyer or a banker who exploits others is a hellish creature (Thai, *satnarok*), but those who help the world become more liveable and prosperous achieve great merit. In other words, those who are not greedy, and those who do not exploit others—whether

lawyer, banker, civil servant, or teacher—are acting Dhammically. They achieve merit and make the world a more just place, especially for those who are less privileged and disadvantaged. Those who are greedy, who deceive and exploit others end up in hell.

I understand that there are many students and teachers here today. Teaching is a vocation of great honor (*ariya-puggala*), worthy of respect (*ariya-puggala*) and meritorious value (*puññā*) because teachers “build” (Thai, *sang*) the world. The future of the world—whether the world becomes better or worse—depends on teachers who instruct children to be good [honest, just, righteous, not greedy] who, in turn, become good adults and make the world a better, happier place. The opposite is just as true.

To be true to oneself, whether a street sweeper or a king is to be content with oneself, and that is the essence of what it means to be truly human. To act according to this norm is meritorious and contributes to the wellbeing of the world. To be continuously dissatisfied, to always want more only leads to unhappiness, mental disease, serious physical illness, and even death.

(p.21) There is a fifth and final principle of living Dhammically. This is self-respect. Everyone sitting here, please, *wai* yourself in a gesture of respect.¹¹ Excuse me for asking, but do you have a high enough self-regard to *wai* yourself? If you doubt that you are good and suspect that you cannot *wai* yourself, you cannot flourish as a human being. But now pay closer attention; look more carefully and reconsider, and you will see—automatically without getting bogged down in

a lot of thought—that you really are worthy of a *wai* of self-respect. This gesture of self-respect signals the contentment (*phocai*) that leads to happiness and human flourishing (*pen manut*).

Let me review the five principles of what it means to be truly human so you will not forget them: (1) self-knowledge; (2) faith in oneself; (3) self-control; (4) self-contentment; (5) self-respect. These are five fundamental principles of the Buddha-Dhamma. They can be expressed in the Pāli language, but I have chosen not to do so because these principles would have been more confusing and difficult to remember; for example, the Pāli word, *paññā*, for knowledge instead of the Thai, *quamru*; or the Pāli word, *santosa*, for contentment instead of the Thai word, *phocai*. The words for “respect,” in Pāli, *gāravatā*, or in Thai, *khawrop*, *naph’u*, convey the same meaning, namely, that one respects the good and the beautiful in oneself.

(p.22) Above all, education should be about human flourishing.¹² I urge the many teachers and students in the audience not simply to view education as a matter of vocational training but of studying the Dhamma in order that all many flourish as human beings (Thai, *manut*; Pāli, *manussa*). You may have a lot of book knowledge, get a good job, and even become wealthy, but still fail to realize your deepest nature as a human being. You are then like a dog with its tail cut off. The more profound, Dhammic value of education instills the five principles I have discussed with you today: self-knowledge, self-confidence, self-control, self-contentment, and self-respect. Teachers who develop these values in their

students are truly meritorious (Thai, *dai pun*). They are like the Buddha. The Buddha taught the Dhamma in order that all might realize their full humanity. In helping their students to do so, teachers are repaying the Buddha.

The five principles are the means by which we embody the Dhamma. At the beginning of my talk I asked you, “What is the Dhamma?” Now we can answer that question. The Dhamma is following these five principles and in doing so we realize our true humanity; in doing so we become Buddha.

The Buddha said, “Whoever sees Dhamma sees me; whoever sees me sees the Dhamma; whoever sees the Dhamma sees the Tathāgata; whoever sees the Tathāgata sees the Dhamma.” Today we have the Dhamma and the Buddha. Regardless of whether or not we are someone of great importance, if we realize the Dhamma we are the Buddha; and to achieve our fullest potential as human beings is to become Buddha.

Footnote

- 1 In this lecture, Buddhadasa is challenging his audience of students and teachers to consider the fundamental norms of the Dhamma in a radically new way.
- 2 I interpret the meaning of Buddhadasa’s use of *prayot* (usefulness) not in a gross utilitarian sense, but in the more fulsome sense of wellbeing.
- 3 For Buddhadasa, being truly human includes the existential affirmation that all sentient beings share a universal human condition and the same spiritual or aspirations characterized in Buddhist terms as the four paths (stream-enterer, once-returner, never-returner, *arahant*), their fruits, and the sum-

- mum bonum of human aspiration, *nibbāna*.
- 4 Buddhadasa is an agent provocateur, par excellence. His skill in provoking his audiences to think more deeply about the spiritual truths he is trying to convey is seen in his use of irony, metaphor, and word play. In this case he is using a word in Thai that is pronounced the same but spelled differently and with very different meanings: refreshingly cool vs. firey hot, and equanimity vs. inflamed passion.
- 5 In Thai, the compound, *cit-cai*, conveys the intimate connection between mind and heart, thought, and sentiment. I have chosen to translate the term, mind and heart, rather than either the single terms mind or heart, or hyphenated heart-mind
- 6 I translate Buddhadasa's expression, *phop buddhasasana*, not in the literal sense of "discovering or entering Buddhism" but as "living in the Dhamma." Although Buddhadasa uses the term, *buddhasasana*, in several different senses, at the level of principle or norm I understand him to mean the Dhamma in the all-encompassing sense of the way things are in their true or natural state (*pakati=idapaccayatā*).
- 7 The Thai term, "sanuk," generally is translated as "fun," and as used here has a particular salience for the young people in Buddhadasa's audience.
- 8 *Pho* (sufficient) + *cai* (heart-mind) translated here as "contentment," resonates with the Pāli term, *upekkhā* (equanimity). It does not mean smug self-satisfaction or indifference, but rather, a calm, unruffled state of being.
- 9 This statement resonates with Thich Nhat Hanh's view of Zen Buddhism as being fully in the present.
- 10 Buddhadasa often uses the Thai term, *nathi*, in different senses depending on the context, which makes it difficult to translate. The customary translation of *nathi* is "duty," but a superficial understanding of duty or obligation fails to capture the depth of Buddhadasa's use of the term. Here I render *nathi* as "norm."
- 11 To *wai* is to place the palms of the hands together before one's face, often with a slight bow, as a greeting or gesture of respect.
- 12 In addition to the use of metaphor and analogy, Buddhadasa often employs colloquial expressions. In this sentence he refers to the kind of education that lacks the Dhammic value of become fully human as "a dog with the tail cut off," or "a chedi without a spire."

Nuked and X-rayed

With all the events of the few weeks following 3/11, I often had difficulty in focusing and thinking clearly. But while a bit confused, I was hoping that going through this would make me more courageous and creative. And now that I have come out of the tunnel, I feel much better and positive, and see things more clearly.

What Japan has experienced since 3/11 is like X rays; yes, all of us and our society were X-rayed and have now become transparent. What do I see? That what we need now is a bit of silence, time for mourning, prayer, and awe. We must contemplate on the dead and realize, as Thich Nhat Hanh said in his recent message to Japan, that part of ourselves, part of the earth, has died, and the dead is

and will be in us forever.

We are shocked to see in front of our own eyes our arrogance and the illusion that we can somehow control our Mother Earth. The Earth that created the great tsunami is the same Earth that has been giving everything to nurture us. We must re-instill the sense of awe that we might have been missing for a long time. We must meditate so that we can rediscover a way to reconnect ourselves to our Mother.

We see clearly that we have been a part of this civilization and its violent system built upon our own greed, hatred and ignorance, or what Buddhists call the three fundamental poisons. Instead of accusing TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) and the governments, we must realize that it is we who created this

monster called TEPCO that has become powerful enough to control governments, media and other big businesses. Yes, they had a kind of dictatorship, and we were willing to support and embrace it, increasing our consumption of electricity 5 times since the 70's. With their massively financed "All Denka (entirely electrified homes)" campaign, they have been successfully made us believe that more and more nuclear plants are necessary to live comfortably.

The fisherman-philosopher Masato Ogata once said "Chisso is me." He is a survivor and witness of the Minamata environmental crisis and was referring to the powerful Chisso Corporation that caused the mercury poisoning of the ocean killing innumerable lives including humans.

Yes, TEPCO is me.

One of the most important lessons we learn and relearn from the events of 3/11 and after is that our way of living was created and barely maintained only by causing irreparable damage to the Earth, thus curtailing the possibility of a good future. The mass media is now busy orchestrating a cheerful chorus of “recovery” and “reconstruction.” But the question is what we are going to reconstruct? The same kind of towns and villages that have been proven too many times in history to be so vulnerable? The centralized massive energy system that has made our democracy hollow and has made the rural communities and remote regions enslaved by the big cities, electric power companies and central government? Reconstruct the banks and walls to protect the 50 plus nuclear power reactors, and make the reactors themselves strong enough to beat the next challenges of earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, floods and landslides? Recover the once famous Japanese technology and the invincible “kamikaze spirit” that would make no more mistakes and neglects like the ones we witnessed this time? Reinvent the once miraculously growing economy that required us to endlessly consume, to build all those nuke and other power stations, to destroy much of our once healthy ecosystems, and to sacrifice our rural communities and their beautiful landscapes?

I can already hear politicians in future elections talk loudly of those “reconstructions.” But then we will have to remember that we can never reconstruct the world without the horrifying amount of toxic nuclear waste which will be with us for thou-

sands of years to come. Every step we made during the last several decades with more and more nuclear reactors was to make both the reconstruction of a healthy past and the construction of a healthy future harder and harder. Put another way; the reconstruction of a pre-3/11 world would mean extinguishing the remaining hope for a healthy, sustainable world. So let us say No to “reconstruction” of our previous Japan and choose from the remaining possibilities.

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

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

Of course, there are not too many reasons to be optimistic. Even if we turn around and shut down all the nuclear plants today, we have to spend decades to make sure that all the reactors continue to be cooled, and many generations after us have to in-

vent ways to deal with the enormous amount of toxic nuclear waste that is already here. So shall we continue our pursuit of wealth and luxury without turning around? Why not stopping later instead of now, if it’s too late anyway?

Again let us stop acting as if there is a choice. We must turn around not later but now. And that is if we are still interested in human survival. Let us become a “nuclear guardian” as Joanne Macy has urged us, accepting responsibility for the nuclear materials produced in our lifetimes. Macy is not optimistic, either, but her words are deeply consoling.

“Even if the Great Turning fails to carry this planetary experiment of ecological revolution onward through linear time, it still is worth it. It is a homecoming to our true nature.” (Joanna Macy “The Great Turning”)

Remember that the Chinese characters we use for the word “kiki (crisis)” can mean both danger and opportunity at once. This must be a great opportunity for us to grow spiritually, while stop growing materially, learning how to slow down, scale down and simplify. The real wisdom is to know how we can downshift joyfully and thankfully. This must be the moment of truth.

Keibo Oiwa

Keibo Oiwa is a Professor of Anthropology at Meiji Gakuin University, the founder of environmental nonprofit the Sloth Club, and a regular contributor to Be-Pal, a Japanese outdoor magazine.

Lawyer Thongbai Thongpao, 84, Inspired Generations

Well-known human-rights lawyer and Magsaysay award winner Thongbai Thongpao died yesterday morning aged 84, after suffering heart failure.

Thongbai inspired generations of human-rights activists and will probably continue to do so, although some have expressed disappointment at his silence over the years following the 2006 military coup.

Born to a poor farming family with five siblings in the northeastern province of Maha Sarakham, Thongbai was arguably the first modern lawyer to challenge the legitimacy of lese majeste laws, and gave legal help to social critic Sulak Sivaraksa in his fight against lese majeste charges in 1984.

Thongbai, who practised journalism on and off, was detained without charge as a political prisoner during the Cold War between 1958 and 1966 by then dictator Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, after he joined a group of journalists to visit Communist China.

“Thongbai was a man who fought for democracy all his life,” Sulak told *The Nation*, upon hearing the news. “After he came out of jail, he helped those in need and is widely admired in the Northeast.”

Known for his pro bono legal services for poor defendants, Thongbai refused to travel to accept the Magsaysay Award for Public Services from then President-cum-dictator Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines in 1984, citing Marcos’ human-rights record and the shooting to death of opposition leader Benigno



“Ninoy” Aquino a year earlier.

“He fought against dictators,” said Chulalongkorn University political science lecturer Naruemon Tabchumphon. “He was the first who [legally] fought against lese majeste laws and for labour cases. When defendants had no money to pay his fee he accepted rice or bananas.”

Naruemon said Thongbai inspired many others when, after one of the darkest chapters in modern Thai political history—the lynching of leftist students in front of Thammasat University, where he once studied law—he fought against the military and legally represented people charged accused of being communists.

Thongbai worked with many newspapers in the late 1950s and 1960s, including *Thai Mai*, *Pim Thai*, *Siam Nikorn*, *Supha Burut-Prachamit* and *Khao Phap*. He was president of the Thai Writers’ Association from 1984 to 1986.

In later years, besides becoming a senator, Thongbai wrote a column for the *Bangkok Post*.

Some younger-generation activists who grew up learning about Thongbai’s heroic deeds

were disappointed when he remained mute as the 2006 military coup took place, and last year when red-shirt protesters were jailed in the aftermath of political violence.

“It was rather unfortunate that towards the end of his life he didn’t speak up about political violence and political prisoners. We didn’t hear these things from him. After the [2006] coup we didn’t hear from Uncle Thongbai,” said the editor of leftist *Fah Diew Kan* magazine, Thanaphol Eiw-sakul.

Others like Naruemon are more forgiving. He said that perhaps Thongbai was suffering health problems and was already too old to expect more from him.

Sulak said the taint to Thongbai’s legacy would be his abandonment of his wife for a younger woman.

“Everyone has his or her shortcomings. He hurt his wife a lot, though,” said Sulak, who acknowledged that the younger generation of human-rights lawyers had been inspired by the path down which Thongbai acted as a trailblazer.

Aware of his legendary soft spot for young women, human-rights activist Sarawut Pratooraj nevertheless regarded Thongbai as a pioneering human-rights lawyer who devoted his life to the public good.

A cremation service for Thongbai will be held at the Srimahathat Temple in Bang Khen on Saturday.

Pravit Rojanaphruk
The Nation
January 25, 2011

Claude B. Levenson

“But where is Claude? Bring her to sit near me.” It was in January last year in Bodhghaya, India, one of the largest Buddhist sanctuaries in the world. Commanded by the Dalai Lama, the journalist Jean-Claude Buhner had to be a bit rough with his wife, Claude B. (for Buhner) Levenson, to get her to sit with him on the left hand side of the holy man. “Timid and detesting honours, Claude did not know what to do with herself. It should be said that there were more than 100,000 of the faithful there,” recounted, much moved, the man who shared the life of this extraordinary woman, who died on 13 December last in Lausanne, struck down by cancer.

The meeting in Bodhghaya was the last between the Dalai Lama and Claude B. Levenson.

The first meeting took place in 1981 in Paris. “We were three journalists at the Press Conference,” she liked to recount, “He did not interest anyone.” Is it because of Claude B. Levenson that the Tibetan cause later became known throughout the world and had stars like Richard Gere to defend it? Of course not, she would have replied, too modest to recognise that the fifteen books she wrote on the question and the numerous conferences she gave throughout the world are not foreign to the visibility of the cause.

Fascinating and Passionate

Chief Editor of *24 Heures*, Thierry Meyer remembers the extraordinary public attention during the debate that he led with Claude B. Levenson in



April 2008 at the Théâtre de Vidy, a few weeks before the opening of the Olympic Games in Beijing.

“She was fascinating and passionate, and replied tit for tat to sometimes unpleasant questions about the Tibetans and their attitude, judged retrograde by certain people.”

“I am a child of the war,’ she said about herself, born in Paris in 1938 with a Jewish father from Bessarabia and a mother who became a Communist resistant. Perhaps that is one way of explaining her unusual life, that led her in the 1950s to study Russian, Sanskrit and several Oriental languages such as Persian and Hindi at the Lomonossov University of Moscow.

The Absence of Her Father

But before undertaking her brilliant studies, the young Claude lived through a major trauma; when she was three and a half years old her father was arrested by the French police

before being deported to Auschwitz on the first train assigned to this purpose, from Drancy. One cannot emerge unscathed from this kind of drama. “And it was on her deathbed, a few days before she passed away, that she told me she had remembered the name of the village—Lucennay-les-Aix, in the Allier area, where she was hidden by Marie Labroux until the end of the war,” said her husband. As if the pain had obscured the memory.

A brilliant intellectual, journalist and traveller, Claude B. Levenson collaborated with numerous newspapers, including *Le Monde* and *24 Heures*, and made her name in the profession. But it was at the time of a new meeting with the Dalai Lama, in 1983, that she decided to go and see what was happening in Tibet. The spiritual head of Tibetans in exile, who recognized her and made her his translator, recommended her to go and see for herself what the actual situation was like.

“Our first journey finally took place in 1984,” testified Jean-Claude Buhner. “The last, semi-clandestine, took place in 2006.” Persona non grata in China for her links with the “separatists,” Claude B. Levenson and her husband travelled by way of Hong Kong, the former British colony that did not ask for an entry visa...

If Tibet was her cause, Claude B. Levenson also defended that of the Burmese Aung San Suu Kyi, whom she met on several occasions. As if apparently lost causes motivated her more than others. “She also

understood the Tibetan people very well. She was a very independent woman,” confided Rigdzin Namkha Gyatso Rinpotché, in exile in Lausanne since 2002.

When she was asked if she was Buddhist, Claude laughingly replied:

“I was perhaps in a former life, and perhaps will be in a future life.”

A definition which the Dalai Lama found “very good.”
Happy new life, Claude.

Jean-Claude Buhrer

In Memoriam Hoàng Ngọc Hiến



Hoàng Ngọc Hiến, Vietnamese philologist, essayist, and literary critic, was born on 21 July 1930 in Nam Định province in northern Vietnam. After 1945 he enrolled in a high school in Vinh, Nghệ An province. Subsequently, he received a scholarship and graduated with a doctorate in philology from Moscow University. His doctorate thesis was on the works of the Russian poet Mayakovsky. He was among the first batch of Vietnamese students to graduate from the Soviet Union.

Professor Hiến had taught at and served as director of the Nguyen Du School of Creative Writing at Hanoi’s College of Cultural Studies. The school was modeled after the Maxim Gorky School in Russia. Many leading Vietnamese authors graduated from this school, including Nguyễn Huy Thiệp and Bảo Ninh.

Professor Hiến’s signature essay was on the specific characteristics of Vietnam’s socialist literature. He coined the well-known notion of “chủ nghĩa hiện thực phải đạo”, which signifies a kind of realism that is politically correct, based on tradition, and averse to innovation. This has become a household term in the study of Vietnamese literature. This essay brought him many admirers as well as foes. The latter forced him into a kind of academic exile. It was during this period that he became seriously interested in Confucianism. He collaborated with the French scholar François Jullien in a research on the philosophy of Confucius.

Hoàng Ngọc Hiến was widely regarded by his students and colleagues as “the professor of professors.”

Professor Hiến died of cancer on 24 January 2011. He was 81 years old. He is survived by his wife, Tô Nga, and two daughters, Hoàng Tố Hoa and Hoàng Tố Mai

Montira Rato

11 March 2554

Dear Sulak Sivaraksa,

Congratulations on the Niwano Peace Prize! You really deserve it more than others. I am delighted that your lifelong commitment as a Buddhist to peace and justice is honoured in such a splendid way. You will certainly enjoy the great ceremony in Tokyo as I did.

I am, of course, also happy that you took the time to read my two volumes of memoirs, which shows your openness to other faiths.

Cordial good wishes,
Hans Kung

1 April 2011

The Union of Indonesian Buddhist Students (HIKMAHBUDHI) congratulates Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa for winning the 2011 Niwano Peace Prize. Ajahn Sulak's achievement and his unwavering endeavours to promote peace and dialogue through International Network of Engaged Buddhist (INEB) have been an inspiration for us for long. We are exultant and taking pride of him, our teacher and friend at the same time.

HIKMAHBUDHI
Appamadena Sampadetha,
Sukman
Chairperson

Dearest Ajhan Sulak,

Socially engaged Buddhists of Leh-Ladakh whole heartedly wishing :
HAPPY CONTINUATION DAY TO AJHAN SULAK.

Today we observed a small lighting of a butter lamp prayer for a happy, healthy and long life to you. Our life has become so meaningful due to your kind dhamma initiatives through INEB trainings and we pray to carry the noble mission in future for the happiness of all sentient beings.

With Metta
Socially Engaged Buddhists of Leh-Ladakh

Dear Ajarn Sulak,

The newly established Right Livelihood College (RLC) Campus at the Center for Development Research (ZEF, www.zef.de), University of Bonn, Germany, offers scholarships for PhD students to conduct applied empirical research in projects of the RLA laureates worldwide. The scholarships involve a 3-year Junior Researcher position at ZEF in Bonn and funding for up to 10 months of field research in a

RLA project. The PhD topics should thematically relate to questions of ‘pro-poor’ socio-economic development, environmental sustainability and social justice in so-called developing countries.

With this e-mail we would like to inform you about these PhD scholarships and to find out about the demand of your organization or project for empirical research in this regard.

If you have a research question in mind that answering could create profound benefit to your organization or project and is related to the above mentioned topics then please answer the 4 questions listed below and send them back to:

Dr. Till Stellmacher, RLC Campus Bonn Coordinator: stellmacher@rlc-bonn.de

Dear Moo and Ajahn Sulak.

If you have any gaps to fill, in the next edition of *Seeds of Peace*, I offer this for your consideration. I actually wrote it after the devastating Tsunami on December 26th 2004. Sadly it continues to be relevant.

I have officially retired from coordinating the Foundation and joined the Special Advisors. Our emergency meeting on 25th of March was preceded by the earth tremor from Burma. I sincerely hope that none of our friends in the Shan States and beyond, suffered as a result. It seems it was not after all a bad omen for us.

Although I am long past my sell by date, it seems that all concerned consider the Dhamma Park Foundation and Gallery, and Khun Inson’s Heritage Gardens with which we are affiliated, to be a valuable cultural asset and legacy for the people of Lumphun and beyond. They want it to continue.

I left them in no possible doubt that after trying to find a replacement for five years, I could no longer physically continue to shoulder the burden of administration. The vehicle has run out of petrol, the driver has retired and all passengers have to get out and push to get it moving again!

My health seriously declined from September 2010. I went into hospital after our exhibition and the surgeons did a great job, removing a pocket in my oesophagus and unblocking my sinus. The problems which were all interconnected and made worse by my peculiar posture made life far more difficult for the doctors. At last I am able to swallow soft food almost normally again Zen style, which is a blessing, and I have to manage and control the breathing problems, the Asthma attacks, susceptibility to allergic Bronchitis and Sinusitis, due to sudden changes of temperature and toxins from the industrial complex beyond Lumphun City. Mindfulness of breathing aided by medication, meditation!

I have to practice Megga Mindfulness not to fall flat on my face and continue to live creatively. I still have my hands full during this transitional period but hope to have time when the vehicle starts moving again to consolidate my work, including my poetry and to do a lot more writing, and create some small satirical sculptures of the different kinds of Ego views, if I am granted the health and strength to continue my useful purposes on earth after my 79th Birthday in May!

The medical treatment and nursing I received at Samitivet Hospital was marvellous. I cannot praise them too highly. Everyone concerned and family and friends took such good care of me. I was truly blessed and so grateful also to my youngest son who paid the medical expenses, as I have never been able to afford an insurance policy!

We wish you strength and endurance and a Happier Thai New Year of the Rabbit. We hope we will not have to dig deep burrows to escape from nuclear outfall, in Thailand. Our hearts go out to our Japanese friends yet again.

With all good wishes
From Pa Maem.

5th January 2011

Most Respected Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa,

I seek your august presence for a four-day Global Buddhist Congregation to be held in New Delhi from November 27 to November 30, 2011. The Congregation has been planned to coincide with the 2600th year of Sambodhiprati, the Enlightenment of Buddha. This event will be followed by a journey by special train to Sarnath, Bodhgaya, Nalanda and Rajgir from Dec 1 to Dec 5.

A formal invitation will follow in due course.

This Congregation of 800 participants will deepen our understanding of Buddha's teaching, the glorious journey of Buddhism so far, and its relevance in our contemporary scenario.

In keeping with the significance of the occasion, we shall be requesting the President of India to inaugurate the Congregation on November 27 with the Prime Minister as the chief guest. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is proposed to be chief guest for the valedictory session on November 30.

Several Buddhist luminaries and scholars from various countries have agreed to serve as patrons of the Congregation. Those who have conveyed their acceptance so far are:

H.H. Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara Sangharaja, the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand,

HH Gaden Tripa Rizong Sras-Trul Thupsten Nyima Rinpoche, the Supreme head of Gelugpa Order,
India

Shri S.N. Goenka, Renowed Vipassana master, India

H.E. D.M. Jayaratne, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Sri Lanka,

H.E. Lyonchen Jigme Yoser Thinley, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bhutan,

H.E. Sukhbaatar Batbold, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Mongolia

Dr. Karan Singh, eminent scholar, diplomat, MP and Chairman ICCR, India.

Broadly, the Congregation will explore the role Buddhism can play to bring peace and harmony among religions and communities. We will also discuss how to establish closer relationships between various Buddhist traditions and communities for a united voice against violence, injustice and immorality. A forum of scholars and practitioners will interact to develop collective actions to promote peace, stability and prosperity in Asia and around the globe, and encourage dialogue between Buddhist contemplative traditions and modern sciences.

Your presence and participation will surely make an important and significant contribution to the success of this event.

It would be our honour to look after your travel expenses and hospitality.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

With warm regards,

Yours faithfully,

Ven. Lama Lobzang
Secretary General

Thailand and World War II

By Direk Jayanama

Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 2008

Xxiv, 566 pp. \$33.17 (cloth)

The memoirs of Direk Jayanama, the former Thai foreign minister and wartime ambassador to Japan, have been essential reading for students of Thailand's role in World War II for more than forty years. Publishers recently released a revised English edition to mark the one-hundredth anniversary of Direk's birth. The most obvious alteration involves the editor's decision to change the book's title, inserting "Thailand" in favor of the original "Siam." This is somewhat ironic, given Direk's preference for the more traditional "Siam," but reflects the editor's desire to conform to modern standards. Also new is a tribute penned by writer and activist Sulak Sivaraksa, who laments that current Thai leaders lack Direk's "moral courage and gentleness in refusing to serve dictatorial regimes" (p. ix)

Since its original publication, *Thailand and World War II* has been a critical source for shaping how historians have understood Thailand's role in the conflict. Direk intended his memoirs to serve as a record for future generations, so that they "could learn how Thailand was brought into the war, the part it played in this world conflict, and how we managed to avoid being thrown in turmoil and disaster following the defeat of Japan" (p. 133). The book is divided into three sections. Part I describes conditions in prewar Thailand, focusing on its foreign relations with France, Britain, and Japan. Part II dis-



cusses Thailand's situation during the war, including its alliance with Japan and the Free Thai movement. The final section examines Direk's role in Thailand's attempt to reestablish its international credibility following Japan's defeat and the return of the Allies to Southeast Asia.

Although he carefully avoids passing judgment on people or events, Direk structures his memoirs in order to establish a clear narrative on the war. Thailand appears as a small, neutral country forced to choose sides in a battle of global superpowers and, in the end, escapes serious harm because of the skillful diplomacy of its leaders. Direk explains how his country became the target of "economic warfare" long before the outbreak of hostilities in Southeast Asia, and he implies that Thailand was dragged into the war with no agenda other than the preservation of its independence. Most of the prewar section supports this conclusion, but the detailed account of the events of the 1940

Mekong border conflict raises critical questions. Direk describes the diplomatic process by which Phibun Songkhram attempted to strong-arm French Indochina into acknowledging Bangkok's claim over the "lost-territories," but he fails to acknowledge that Thailand's expansionist efforts actually compromised national sovereignty by making it dependent on Japanese intervention.

In his middle section on the wartime era, Direk's memoirs offer an important perspective on the confused status of uncolonized Thailand within the Co-Prosperity Sphere. On the one hand, the country remained independent and an equal partner in the effort to drive Western imperialism from Asia and establish the Co-Prosperity Sphere. Japanese forces in Thailand constituted a "guest army" rather than an occupying force. On the other hand, Direk distances himself from Phibun's embrace of Japan and includes only a paragraph on Thailand's declaration of war against the Allies. He also describes Bangkok's annoyance at being relegated to the purview of the Greater East Asian Ministry, a move that effectively placed Thailand on par with Indochina or the Philippines in Japan's estimation. Two essays by former Seri Thai members also provide background on domestic opposition to Phibun, including Pridi's clandestine cooperation with the United States and Great Britain.

In the final section on the

war's aftermath, Direk assumes that Thailand has successfully retained its independence and avoided the fate of a defeated power. He points out that Thais harbor no resentment over the war, remembering how its citizens showed kindness to Japanese prisoners after the war, just as they had done earlier with Allied prisoners. He does not, however, directly address the question of whether postwar Thailand fits the category of a "defeated" or "occupied" nation, stating only that the thousands of British troops stationed in Thailand "were not invited" (p. 258), as opposed to the Japanese "guest army" that resided in the

country from 1942 to 1945.

The book contains rich material on Thailand's postwar negotiations with the Allies (not including the Soviet Union), particularly the successful effort to avoid Britain's attempt to impose harsh reparations. Likewise, Franco-Thai diplomacy is presented as a triumph because it removes the final obstacle blocking Thailand's admission to the United Nations. There is no discussion of the nation's collective senses of humiliation and outrage when the four provinces (including the Preah Vihear temple, the focus of recent Thai-Cambodian tensions) must be returned to French Indochina.

During the past thirty years, scholars of Thailand have moved away from the perpetual independence narrative toward a discussion of the war within the context of Thai expansionism. Despite this shift, Thailand and World War II remains a critical milestone in Thai historiography, and it should be a starting point for any student interested in Thai foreign policy. Its continued publication will undoubtedly be welcomed by all scholars.

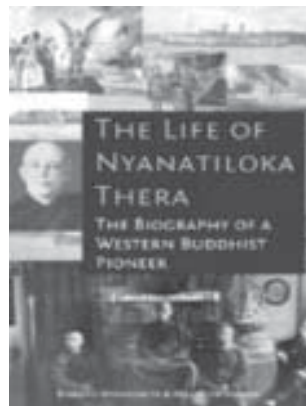
Shane Strate
Wayne State College
Published in
Journal of Asian Studies,
Vol. 69 issue 04, 2010



The Life of Nyanatiloka Thera — The Biography of a Western Buddhist Pioneer by Hellmuth Hecker and Bhikkhu Nyanatusita

This book was published by the Buddhist Publication Society (BPS) in Kandy, Sri Lanka in 2008. Mr. Hellmuth Hecker is a well known German writer who has written many books about Buddhism and religious studies.

The biggest part of the book consists of an autobiography by Nyanatiloka which he wrote during his monastic stay in 'Polgasduva', which is also referred to as the 'Island Hermitage' in southern Sri Lanka that he himself had founded in 1911. His autobiography had been published by Mr. Hecker in German language in 1995. The new BPS edition adds a new foreword by Stephen Batchelor, an introduction by Bhikkhu Nyanatusita and introductory chapter about Buddhism in Germany by Walther Persian, writ-



ten in 1931. Throughout the book the reader can find various photographs, as well as plenty of notes with information about other important Buddhists of the time, and background information. A postscript contains additional information, a list of Nyanatiloka's literary work and biographies of some of Nyana-

tiloka's disciples like Venerable Nyanaponika.

As mentioned in the title the book is about a western Buddhist pioneer who became a monk in an Asian country. The man who would be known as 'Nyanatiloka Thera' many years later, was born as a German national on the 19th of February 1878 in Wiesbaden, Germany, by the name of "Anton Walther Florus Gueth". Throughout his youth he showed a keen interest in music, playing both the piano and the violin, and got in contact with many young and talented musicians.

Still at a young age he listened to a lecture on Buddhism and developed the dream of travelling to India in order to become a monk. Having made up his mind, his journey lead him

through various European and Northern African countries before he arrived in Burma where he was finally ordained as a novice monk in September 1903 at the age of 25 years.

The main place of Nyantiloka's Buddhist practice turned out to be the above mentioned 'Island Hermitage', also known as "Polgasduva" in Southern Sri Lanka which was still named 'Ceylon' until 1972. Having established a monastery on an island off the coast of Galle, a 'Sangha' gathered around their spiritual teacher Nyantiloka that consisted of both German, Sinhalese and other foreign monks. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 ended the monks' peaceful stay in Sri Lanka. Mainly the German nationals including Nyantiloka and his disciples were arrested and transferred to an internment camp. Due to their German nationality they became de facto prisoners of war and were shipped to Australia in 1915 where they had to endure a lot of hardship while having to stay in a concentration camp.

After being allowed to leave Australia, Nyantiloka was separated from his disciples and travelled on to China under great difficulty. From Shanghai he

started on a journey by ship that turned out to become an odyssey through the vast country. After the WWI cease-fire of 1918 Nyantiloka was expelled from China and deported to Germany where he experienced the post-war atmosphere following the Peace Treaty of Versailles. Although he was back in his home country after years of staying abroad Nyantiloka soon felt the urge to return to his spiritual home in Sri Lanka. But all his efforts of returning to Sri Lanka failed when he was denied to enter the county at the border. Being forced to travel on, his journey led Nyantiloka to Japan in 1920 where he was offered work as an university lecturer. He stayed in the country until 1926.

By that time he was finally able to return home to the 'Island Hermitage' in Sri Lanka, the war had prohibited him from returning for twelve years. During the following years more German Buddhists arrived and were ordained at the 'Island Hermitage'. When the Second World War broke out the German monks were temporarily arrested again but they were able to stay in Sri Lanka. In 1951 Nyantiloka left the 'Island Hermitage' due to health problems and moved to

the cooler 'Forest Hermitage' in Kandy where he spent the last years of his life. 'Nyantiloka Thera' died on the 28th of May 1957 in Colombo at the age of 79 years. He was honoured with a State funeral which was attended by vast crowds.

Reading this autobiography gives the reader a detailed description of the difficulty and hardship the first western Buddhist monk had to endure in the first half of the twentieth century, which was marked by the horrors of the First World War. It is the story of a man's determination and strength of will that impresses the reader before the background of internment, disease and malnutrition which was the fate of thousands of people during the war.

Throughout his imprisonment Nyantiloka continued his Buddhist studies and translations of the Pali Canon. Considering the circumstances his achievement must be regarded as highly remarkable and the work of a man whose life was led by ideals that enabled him to surpass the various suffering he had to encounter during his lifetime.

Jan Matthias Trapp

The committee 'Buddhism and Society' of the European Buddhist Union (www.e-b-u.org) will be organizing an international networking weekend in The Netherlands on **18 and 19 June 2011**. The theme of this meeting is '*A Buddhist commitment for a better world*': how can Buddhism contribute to make this world a better place and help preserve our planet from impending destruction? Renowned guest speakers and authors, such as Professor Laszlo Zsolnai (director of the Business Ethics Center at the Corvinus University in Budapest) and Professor David Loy (former Besl Family Chair of Ethics/Religion & Society at the Xavier University in Ohio) will be sharing their experience and expertise with other participants, active in the field of engaged Buddhism. The venue of the meeting is the Naropa Institute in Cadzand, The Netherlands.

More details about the goals of this networking weekend and the actual participants can be found hereafter. For more information: frans.goetghebeur@skynet.be.

Press Release

February 28, 2011

Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, INEB to receive Niwano Peace Prize

The Niwano Peace Foundation will award the twenty-eighth Niwano Peace Prize to Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand.

The presentation ceremony will take place in Tokyo, Japan, on Thursday, May 19th, at 10:30* a.m. In addition to an award certificate, Mr. Sivaraksa will receive a medal and twenty million yen.

Sulak Sivaraksa was born in 1933 in Thailand, to a family of Chinese ancestry. Educated in Thailand, England, and Wales in law and other disciplines, he returned to Bangkok in 1961. Sulak's long career has seen him using his intellectual gifts to propel the concept and movement of Engaged Buddhism. Sulak has worked as a teacher, scholar, publisher, activist, and founder of many organizations. He has authored more than a hundred books and monographs in Thai and English.

To avoid undue emphasis on any particular religion or region, every year the Peace Foundation solicits nominations from people of recognized intellectual and religious stature around the world. In the nomination process, some 700 people and organizations, representing 125 countries and many religions, are asked to propose candidates. Nominations are rigorously screened by the Niwano Peace Prize Committee, set up in May of 2003 on the occasion of the

20th Anniversary of the Niwano Peace Prize. The Committee presently consists of twelve religious leaders from various areas of the world, all of whom are involved in movements for peace and inter-religious cooperation.

Here are some comments by members of the Peace Prize Committee on the selection of Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa:

- Sulak's is a voice of reason and ethics, speaking truth to power and highlighting tangible issues that touch on human dignity. His voice carries far and has influenced thinking at many levels. (Ms. Katherine Marshall)

- He sees Buddhism as a questioning process. A Buddhist should question everything including oneself, look deeply, and then act from that insight. He is among a handful of leaders worldwide working to revive the socially engaged aspects of spirituality. (Rev. Phramaha Boonchay Doojai)

- He is a courageous Buddhist activist, also he is intellectual enough to persuade people to promote the importance of social awareness among Buddhists all over the world. He is the founder of many organizations, including the Asian Cultural Forum on Development and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. His work and achievements certainly qualify him for the prize. (Rev. Nichiko Niwano)

The Niwano Peace Prize

The Niwano Peace Foundation established the Niwano Peace Prize to honor and encourage individuals and organizations that have contributed significantly to inter-religious cooperation, thereby furthering the cause of world peace, and to make their achievements known as widely as possible. The Foundation hopes in this way both to enhance inter-religious understanding and cooperation and to encourage the emergence of still more people devoted to working for world peace.

The Prize is named in honor of the founder and first president of the lay Buddhist organization Risho Kosei-kai, Nikkyo Niwano. For Niwano, peace was not merely an absence of conflict among nations, but a dynamic harmony in the inner lives of people as well as in our communities, nations and the world. Seeing peace as the goal of Buddhism, Niwano devoted much of the last half of his life to promoting world peace, especially through inter-religious discussion and cooperation.

Past Niwano Peace Prize recipients are:

1. Archbishop Helder P. Camara (1983)
2. Dr. Homer A. Jack (1984)
3. Mr. Zhao Puchu (1985)
4. Dr. Philip A. Potter (1986)
5. The World Muslim Congress (1987)

* due to the major earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan, the presentation ceremony is postponed to 23rd July

- 6. Rev. Etai Yamada (1989)
- 7. Mr. Norman Cousins (1990)
- 8. Dr. Hildegard Goss-Mayr (1991)
- 9. Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne (1992)
- 10. Neve Shalom/ Wahat al-Salam (1993)
- 11. Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns (1994)
- 12. Dr. M. Aram (1995)
- 13. Ms. Marii K. Hasegawa (1996)
- 14. The Corrymeela Community (1997)
- 15. Ven. Maha Ghosananda (1998)
- 16. The Community of Sant' Egidio (1999)
- 17. Dr. Kang Won Yong (2000)
- 18. Rev. Abuna Elias Chacour (2001)
- 19. Rev. Samuel Ruiz Garcia

- (2002)
- 20. Dr. Priscilla Elworthy (2003)
- 21. The Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (2004)
- 22. Dr. Hans Küng (2005)
- 23. Rabbis for Human Rights (2006)
- 24. Dharma Master Cheng Yen (2007)
- 25. His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal (2008)
- 26. Rev. Canon Gideon Baguma Byamugisha (2009)
- 27. Ms. Ela Ramesh Bhatt (2010)

The Niwano Peace Foundation
 The Niwano Peace Foundation was chartered in 1978 to contribute to the realization of world peace and the enhancement of a culture of peace. The Foundation promotes research

and other activities based on a religious spirit and serves the cause of peace in such fields as education, science, religion and philosophy. The Foundation's endowment of about 3.8 billion yen makes possible the Niwano Peace Prize and other activities such as grants, research projects, lectures, symposia, and international exchanges. The Niwano Peace Foundation is a government-recognized charitable organization. Contributions are tax-deductible.

For further information please contact Mr. Tadashi Takatani of the Niwano Peace Foundation.

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

The Niwano Peace Prize International Selection Committee decided to award the 28th Niwano Peace Prize to Sulak Sivaraksa, a remarkable and multi-faceted Buddhist leader whose work for peace is exemplified by courage, determination, imagination, and the constant inspiration of the core principles of his Buddhist faith. Sulak has helped to change the views of political leaders, scholars, and young people, in Thailand, Asia, and the world, encouraging a new understanding of peace, democracy, and development. He challenges accepted approaches that fail to give priority to poor citizens, men and women alike. He has, over a lifetime of dedicated service and



unflagging commitment, given new life to ancient Buddhist teachings about nonviolence and about peace and justice.

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

Sulak has worked as a teacher, scholar, publisher, activist, and founder of many organizations. He has authored more than a hundred books and monographs, in Thai and English. A teacher throughout his adult life, he promotes a spiritual education movement grounded in traditional culture and values. It is a

mark of Sulak's approach that he has nurtured and supported younger leaders over the years. Many today are leaders of a wide range of organizations.

Sulak has always been an activist and never hesitates to speak truth to those in power. To serve society truly, Sulak contends, one must stay in touch with poor people and the grass roots. Working to bring about change has embroiled him in many controversial issues. He approaches advocacy with a combination of knowledge, courage, and absolute commitment to nonviolence. He is widely credited with having mobilized Thai civil society, creating many social welfare and development organizations. All embody two central themes of his work: rejection of consumerist development, and pursuit of development rooted in indigenous culture and socially-engaged religious traditions and beliefs. His organizations reflect an indigenous, sustainable, and spiritual model for change. Today, these organizations are active far beyond Thailand.

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

Sulak's intelligent advocacy for the environment is another important reason to honor Sulak. He speaks forcefully against environmental destruction, promoting environmental preservation and environmental justice. Sekhiyadhamma (Stu-

dents of the Dhamma), a network of Buddhist monks, work in their communities to preserve local environments, principally forests that are so essential to village economies. Characteristic of Sulak's approach, the work combines education, teaching villagers better ways to conserve natural resources, and political action to protect local social, cultural, and natural environments from the encroachment of commercial, industrial, and urban development. Sulak's environmental ethic is grounded in a holistic understanding of the Buddhist principle of interdependence and a deep respect for nature. Knowledge of inter-becoming (a term he borrows from Thich Nhat Hanh), is achieved by developing mindful awareness. In contrast to more reflective and contemplative styles, he aggressively fights in the trenches for the cause of human and environmental justice.

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

Sulak extends the Buddhist Five Precepts into ethical guidelines that can forge a more sustainable, compassionate, and just global society. To refrain from killing today means an end to all modern forms of violence. To refrain from stealing is a call for global economic justice. Not engaging in sexual misconduct

calls us to examine all systems of male dominance which exploit women. Prohibiting false speech is a call for honesty at the international level. Avoiding intoxication is a call for global responsibility for drug and alcohol use and an examination of its causes. In Sulak's Buddhist vision of society, the individual is understood as a starting point for change: through individual spiritual growth, social justice is eventually achieved.

Sulak is a leading voice in global inter-religious dialogue and engagement, an acknowledged global leader for peace. Sulak always argues that interdependence is an essential, living concept. His is a voice of reason and ethics, speaking truth to power and highlighting tangible issues that touch on human dignity. He was one of the early leaders who brought the ethical challenges of caring for the environment into global discourse. His voice carries far and has influenced thinking at many levels. This is reflected in admiration and recognition of his work, including the 1995 award of the Right Livelihood Award, also known as the alternative Nobel Prize.

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



Acceptance Message

I accept the Niwano Peace Prize for 2011 with gratitude and humility. I was privileged to know Mr. Nikkyo Niwano and admired him so much for his dedication to Buddhism—to bring the message of the Buddha into the modern world and make it relevant—not only in Japan or for humankind but for all sentient beings. Under his leadership the *Risho Kosei-kai* has become a Buddhist movement in spiritual uplift and moral courage for all its members who have contributed so much to the social welfares of others.

His influence and contribution in establishing and promoting the World Conference on Religions for Peace and the Asian Conference of Religions for Peace are very significant—ecumenically. These efforts have allowed religious leaders at almost every level in Asia and around the world to collaborate in promoting peace with skilful means.

I myself participated in the ACRP and WCRP many times at many places—not only at great assemblies, but also in small workshops designed to make contemplative education and spirituality available to mainstream educators.

It is indeed most appropriate that the Niwano Peace Prize is named after a great man although the man himself was so humble and for all practical purposes selfless. To keep the prize alive in his name is not in any way a kind of hero worship, but as a way to use the prize to encourage individuals and organizations to promote peace in the world. The prize is known as the

Asian Nobel Peace Prize, just as the Right Livelihood Award is also known as the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize.

The Right Livelihood Award began in 1980—three years before the Niwano Peace Prize. I received the RLA in 1995 and now I am privileged to receive the Niwano Peace Prize in 2011.

I happen to know and admire most of the previous recipients of the Niwano Peace Prize, especially Archbishop Helder P. Camara of Brazil. I worked very closely with Somdej Preah Maha Ghosananda of Cambodia, especially in the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, of which he was the patron, together with the late Bhikkhu Buddhadasa and the present Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh.

Professor Hans Kung has always been very kind to me. He asked me to give a small Buddhist contribution to his Global Ethnic Project. He feels that he and I have a common platform in struggling for freedom. He said “spiritual dictatorship must be resisted...church totalitarianism in particular must be opposed with the freedom of conscience, the freedom of a Christian”.

I struggle for political and cultural freedom in my country, which I never call Thailand because we have so many non ethnic Thai living there, who should have human rights and dignity no less than the majority. Siam is supposed to be a Buddhist kingdom yet it has followed the Chinese government blindly by not allowing the Dalai Lama to enter the country. It declares

itself to be a constitutional monarchy. Yet it has less majestic laws that makes the King sacred beyond any kind of criticism, with a maximum punishment of 15 years imprisonment for each case. The total of new cases in the year 2009 was 164, an astounding number equaling half the total number of cases from 1949 to 2005. The issue has become so convoluted that people accessing others of lese majeste, or even those who have just tried explaining the law, find themselves charged under the same law.

I myself have been charged under this law on several occasions. When I was acquitted from this charge in 1995 I was awarded the so called Alternative Nobel Prize in Sweden.

The three most recent charges against me over the last four years were dropped towards the end of 2010, when I heard the most welcome news that I was selected as a recipient of the 28th Niwano Peace Prize. This will encourage me to struggle more meaningfully and nonviolently for freedom, for social justice and for truth—all of which are the essence of peace.

The prize in financial terms will be very helpful indeed for my various activities within Siam and in the region.

We started the International Network of Engaged Buddhists over two decades ago.

Today, it has become a flourishing grassroots Buddhist network across Asia, and also into the West, where we are bridging across multi-denominational Buddhist communities, in order to bring the Buddha’s teachings

into practice—not only privately but publicly—to make a more just and peaceful world. We challenge social structures which are unjust and violent, and we try to offer alternative models of development in the globalizing world which is dominated by neo imperialism and transnational corporations.

Major steps have been taken towards developing plans for an international conference on Buddhism and climate change in 2012 and developing a more comprehensive 3-year INEB environmental program. This program will build up to the 2012 conference and go beyond it in sharing resources and know-how for conducting grassroots Buddhist-based environmental activities. The project will also help locate and develop Buddhists coming to participate in these major global environmental conferences to articulate a Buddhist perspective on the issues.

INEB works closely with the so called untouchables—the lowest caste—in India and approaches them as friends and equals. We empower ourselves nonviolently for social change. INEB also continues support of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's position on Tibet of positive engagement with the Chinese government. Although INEB will continue to speak out against human rights abuses in Tibet, it will seek to engage positively on various levels with Buddhists and non-Buddhists within mainland China. INEB hopes to form a bridge for increased dialogue between the Chinese and the Tibetans and with Chinese Buddhists inside China in general.

The INEB Conference, held very two years on a rotating country basis, is the main plat-

form for the network's development and intercultural exchange on INEB's vision, aims, objectives, and actions. For the coming year the INEB conference is to be held in Bodhgaya, India, from the 26th to 29th of October 2011.

INEB Young Bodhisattva Program is a program to be set up to support the training of socially engaged Buddhist youth at the grassroots level. There is an annual international group training for members drawn from all participant organizations, with specialized courses and a separate exchange program of interns among participant organizations. This new three-year comprehensive program will be launched in the coming year. At this time, there are roughly 8-10 participant organizations from India, Sri Lanka, Burma, Laos, Siam, Cambodia, and Indonesia with hopes to expand to Nepal, Malaysia, Japan and the West.

We are also working through the Spirit in Education Movement to challenge mainstream educational practices, and to bring learning back to the people, empowering them to be able to face the ever increasing challenges of this modern world. This work started in Siam, where the return of learning to local grassroots communities has built an expanding movement of people who are able to challenge the injustices facing their lives with wisdom, clarity, and compassion. They are able to recognize that their traditional culture is not inferior to any culture in the world, and that by retrieving and revitalizing the essence of their cultural and spiritual values they can provide authentic well-being for their communities.

SEM is also working to rebuild humanist relationships

among people throughout the Southeast Asian region to overcome nationalistic boundaries and build a sense of unity and respect. We work closely with our brothers and sisters in Burma, to challenge the injustices of their lives, and to engage meaningfully in defining and building their own vision of a just and peaceful society. We are also bridging the long-held divisions between Siam and Burma, working with migrant workers whose lives in Siam are challenged by exploitation and negative historical perceptions, not only from the general public, but from our political institutions as well. We are bringing together multi-ethnic youth, working with local communities, with the police and judiciary, to create better understanding and rebuild the relationships among us, to ensure that we can live together peacefully and happily, and support each other whenever we are in need.

Our work in Laos for the last 15 years is very much appreciated by the Sangha authority in that socialist republic. Even in Siam itself, quite a number of mainstream educational institutes collaborate with us in contemplative education; professors and students learn to be mindful through meditation practice, to cultivate seeds of peace individually, and through inner peace to transform society meaningfully and skillfully.

The Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation was founded by me over four decades ago. It is an umbrella organization for INEB and SEM plus a few other movements, like Ashram Wongsanit, a model for an alternative lifestyle at the grassroots level, which has linked global eco-villages internationally. Recently

our Foundation has been collaborating with Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok and the Bhutan Studies Center in Thimphu in establishing a School for Well-being. This will help in fostering the concept of Gross National Happiness instead of Gross National Product.

The Niwano Peace Prize will no doubt play a significant role in strengthening all of the activities I have listed under the umbrella of our Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, which also has published its English periodical *Seeds of Peace* for the last 27 years. Our various activities in challenging the status quo are usually reported in it—not to

mention my own books, the latest title of which is *The Wisdom of Sustainability: Buddhist Economics for the 21st Century*, which continues E.F. Schumacher’s ground breaking work on Buddhist economics, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* which emphasizes small scale, indigenous sustainable alternatives to globalization. It offers hope and alternatives for restructuring our economies based on Buddhist principles and personal development.

I am happy to say that the Japanese edition of this book may appear in May 2011.

It is our collective challenge to find ways to work together

meaningfully and mindfully, with respect for human dignity, in our common endeavor as people of all faiths, to live selflessly, with compassion, and hope for a better world. Receiving the Niwano Peace Prize is a great honor and blessing for me personally, but let me accept as a wager made in the name of hope for all sentient beings.

Lastly I would like to thank Mr. Kinjiro Niwano and the Board of Directors of the Niwano Peace Foundation and its jury who decided to honour me with the prestigious prize.

Sulak Sivaraksa
10 December 2010



INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CAMPAIGN FOR TSUNAMI RELIEF



Our country-based INEB network in Japan, the Japan Network of Engaged Buddhists (JNEB), is starting to put together various information on Japanese Buddhists activities regarding all the aid and support that is needed immediately in northern Japan. This information can be found on new English homepage at: <http://jneb.jp/english/>

For further inquiries, you can contact at: jnebre relief@gmail.com

Please join us for the
People’s Dhammayietra for Friendship and Harmony between Cambodia and Thailand
15-17 May 2011
At Aranya Pradet, Sakaew Province, Thailand



To promote peace within and among the political leaders and relevant citizens groups who are encouraging the war between Cambodia and Thailand through their extreme nationalist attitudes.

For further information, you can contact at
secretariat@inebnetwork.org or visit
www.inebnetwork.org and <http://ktpr.wordpress.com>

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PLATFORM
RE-THINKING PROPERTY: Pathway to a Well-Being Society scenario
25-27 August 2011, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok

Format

Creative communication in an atmosphere of multi-stakeholder community building, leading to some clear plans for the future.

Perspective

- Birth of the ‘alternative development’—movement in the 1970’s as an early warning, and a window of opportunity towards change and innovation.
- UNCED in Rio de Janeiro 1982, preceded by the Our Common Future report.
- (Financial) crisis of 2008 and confirmation of climate change, resulting in the global economic and governance system in total ‘repair’: the need for a breakthrough of alternative approaches.

Vision

Organic Agriculture (agro-ecology) is the heart of global transformation.

Strategy

Promotion of a consensus-building process—with the protection of the environment and Human Security as common ground—between the three basic stakeholders as equal partners:

1. governments, inter-governmental bodies; **2. the business sector**; **3. civil society**: NGO’s, peoples’ organizations, independent thinkers, educators and activists, religious organizations and ethics-based movements, (extended) families, communities etc.

Aim

To transform public policies geared by un-specified economic growth, towards wellbeing-driven, sustainable, just and participatory development. With focus on food security (and *food quality*) for all—as the basic determinant of quality of life and social security in all its dimensions.

Objectives

- To take stock of alternative development movements in Thailand, the Mekong region, SE Asia, Asia, Asia-Europe and the world, from the perspective of the participants.
- Cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary exchanges and analysis on ‘Re-thinking Property’ and foresight in particular regarding the vision ‘Organic Agriculture is the heart of global transformation’.
- Draft the outlines of a strategic scenario towards a breakthrough of wellbeing-driven, sustainable and just participatory public policy development; guided by multi-stakeholder consensus building.
- To formulate an Action Plan within the competence of actors who are present, and partners to be identified.

Target groups

- Policy makers and advisors of governments and political parties; inter-governmental bodies.
- Responsible business leaders, labour representatives, social investors, social entrepreneurs, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) innovators.
- Civil society opinion leaders, environmental activists, independent religious leaders, community leaders, farmers’ representatives, consumers associations, volunteers, independent thinkers, Youth leaders, artists.
- Researchers, academic teachers, business trainers, experts and educators, students, policy makers in research and development; media representatives, creative planners and activists.

Information and registration: www.schoolforwellbeing.org



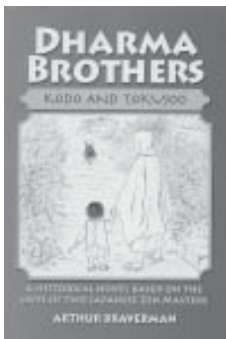
A History of Thailand through Chinese Eyes
The autobiography of Chinese immigrant and journalist U Ji Yeah has been translated into Thai by his daughter

***Alternatives to Global Capitalism:
Drawn From Biblical History,
Designed for Political Action***
By Ulrich Duchrow
Printed by International Book in 1998



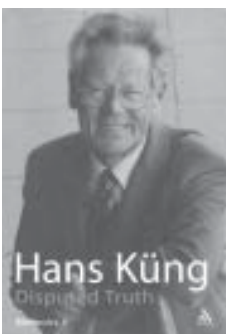
***Bencharong & Chinaware in the Court of Siam:
The Surat Osathanugrah Collection***
By Jeffery Sng and Pimpraphai Bisalputra
Published by Chawpipope Osathanugrah
Printed by Amarin Printing and Publishing Plc, 2011

***Changing Course Reclaiming Our Future:
Report of the 30th Anniversary Conference
of the Right Livelihood Award***
Edited by Sharan Srinivas
Published by Neo Sentuhan Sdn Bhd, 2010



***Dharma Brothers, Kodo and Tokujoo:
A Historical Novel Based on the Lives
of Two Japanese Zen Masters***
By Arthur Braverman
Published by Taormina Books, 2011

Dhammic Socialism (Burmese version)
By Bhikkhu Buddhadasa

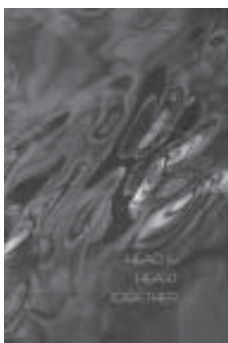


Disputed Truth: Memoirs II
By Hans Küng
Translated by John Bowden
Published by Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008

***Free Thai:
The New History of The Seri Thai Movement***
By Sorasak Ngamcachonkulkid
Published by Institute of Asian Studies,
Chulalongkorn University, 2010



Recommended Readings



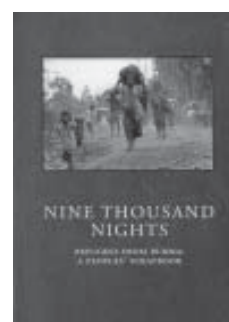
Head & Heart Together
By Thānissaro Bhikkhu
2010

Introduction to 38 Blessings of Mangalā
Written by Lay-Ein Su Ashin Vicittasāra
Translated by U Han Htay
Printed by Daw Ni Ni Khine



KulturAustausch
Ausgabe 1/2011

Nine Thousand Nights
Refugees from Burma: A Peoples' Scrapbook
Published by Thailand Burma Border Consortium,
2010



Der Alternative Nobelpreis
By Geseko von Lüpke, Peter Erlenwein
Published by Oekom, München, 2010

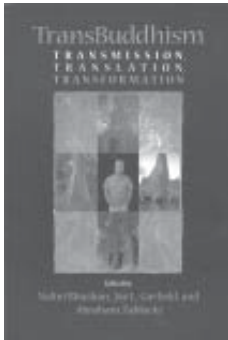
Sacred Mountains of Northern Thailand and their Legends
By Donald K. Swearer, Sommai Premchit
and Phaithoon Dokbuakaew
Published by Silkworm Books, 2004



Soil not Oil: Environmental Justice in a Time of Climate Crisis
By Vandana Shiva
Published by South End Press, 2008

Tracks and Traces: Thailand and the Work of Andrew Turton
Edited by Philip Hirsch and Nicholas Tapp, 2011





***TransBuddhism: Transmission,
Translation, Transformation***

Edited by Nalini Bhushan,
Jay L. Garfield, and Abraham Zablocki
Published by University of Massachusetts Press,
2009



***Water Wars: Privatization,
Pollution, and Profit***

By Vandana Shiva
Published by South End Press, 2002



***With Robe and Bowl, On the Cotswold Way:
My first English Tudong***

By Venerable Manapo Bhikkhu

A Note in Honour of Service

When I went to take treatment from a local Auyurvedic centre I got acquainted with Mr.Sulak Sivaraksa there he gave me two books written by him on the change of culture. ***Religion and development*** and to preserve the declining moral values in this world. Also he has opposed the capitalists to safeguard the down trodden masses even at the risk of his own life supporting the down trodden masses against capitalism.

This book gives a valuable message to the world since it brings out the facts to the rich and power hungry people in today's society who are putting their utmost effort to acquire material happiness and are tempted by them to a great extent. In acquiring and possessing material benefits and luxuries and that is akin to having a sip of salt water when we are thirsty, to quench our thirst. If the resources of this world are equally distributed among all people, and if people acquire a good spiritual knowledge and are spiritually developed, then there would be a lasting happiness. Not realizing these fundamental truths, people continue to wage wars, Kill people and create disharmony in this world. This book also gives a very valuable message to this category of this people, since it shows how people should live according to the Noble Eightfold Path as preached by Lord Buddha, and the way people can attain Nirvana by adhering to the Eightfold Path. According to the one of the sayings of the Buddha 'caratha carican bhikkhave'. A true Buddhist should not go after multitudinous material items and luxuries. This book has made even the noble sangha aware of some of the Dhamma principles which are being neglected today.

In future for the sake of the innocent people I wish long life health and happiness !

I am Ven. Kotte Dhammatilaka Thero

Translated by Ven Pelene Dhammakusala
Many Blessings



The 2011 Bi-Annual Conference of the
International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)

The Future of Buddhism

From Personal Awakening
to Global Transformation

Wat Pa-Buddhagaya
Bodhgaya, India
October 26-29, 2011

Many are confronting our rapidly globalizing and interconnecting world by retreating back into parochial nationalisms, ideologies of ethnic superiority, and religious fundamentalism. Many Buddhists have been part of such political campaigns that have killed thousands and forced millions into domestic and international exile. Yet, at the same time, an unprecedented number of people in the world are crossing national, ethnic, and religious barriers through internet and other technologies to interact, learn, and rejoice in our diversity.

What is Buddhism's role in this movement?

What is the future of Buddhism, or rather, is there a future for Buddhism?

Come join us at the bi-annual conference of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) at the place of the Buddha's enlightenment to re-awaken and re-vitalize our Buddhist commitment to work for the welfare of all sentient beings!

The conference will include a variety of events:

spiritual : morning programs of meditation, chanting, and Dharma talks

intellectual : roundtable talks on pressing social issues

relational : generational sharing among socially engaged religious leaders

practical : workshops on social action skills

informational : an open fair of Buddhist activist groups and their activities

celebrational : film, art, and cultural performances.

There are also a variety of specialized pre and post-conference programs for youth, artists, mediators, and pilgrims.



Organizer : INEB, Deer Park Institute, YBS India and Jambudvipa Trust

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