

SEEDS OF PEACE

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*BUDDHISM AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS
IN THAILAND*

AFFIRMATION OF WHOLENESS OF LIFE

ISLAM AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

BUDDHIST CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE



Seeds of Peace

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Objectives of TICD

1. To coordinate work among individuals, groups of individuals and various agencies dealing with religions and development in course of working together.
2. To share experience in and knowledge of religions and development as well as exploring ways and means of working together.
3. To offer training and secure resources in terms of man-power and materials to support and enhance the agencies that need help.

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Editorial Note

Our first issue of **Seeds of Peace** was well received beyond our expectation. We were forgiven for our shortcomings, especially the very many printing errors, and we received many letters of encouragement from abroad. Some suggested that we should publish more often. A good number of individuals and institutions have already enrolled as subscribers. The publication was sold locally in many bookshops, and some of the articles were translated into Thai.

We were fortunate to receive quite a number of articles for publication. Unfortunately space limited us to printing only a few, and even then we had to abridge some of them. We decided to reprint important articles from other periodicals, and we try to stick to material concerning peace and the objectives of TICD.

Staff members at both TICD and ACFOD helped us tremendously. Many friends, both ecclesiastic and lay alike, were willing to give us any assistance we needed. It has created a really wonderful spirit, for which we are grateful.

We hope our endeavour in publishing **Seeds of Peace** would bear fruit positively and we look forward to our readers' comments and suggestions.

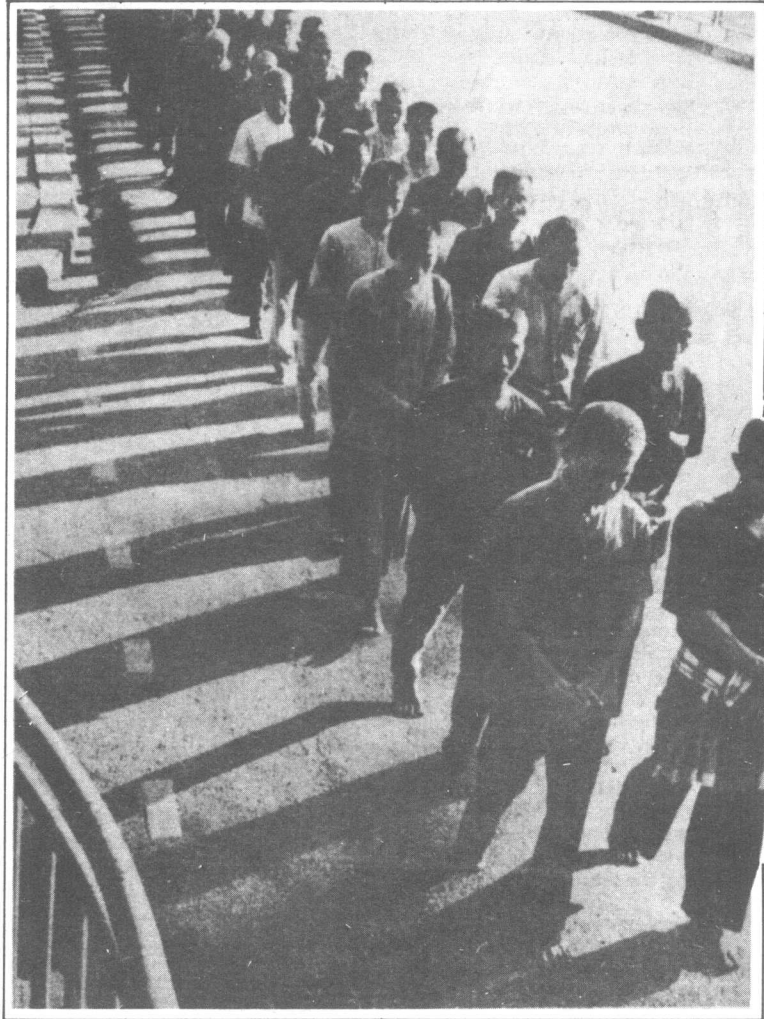
If you would like the next issue of **Seeds of Peace** to be published in January instead of April, please let us know.

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Thailand Peace '85 Campaign

GOTHOM ARYA



"Walk for Peace."

"People in the Third World share a belief that the nuclear threat is still a remote problem that is far less pressing than immediate problems such as poverty, social injustices and dictatorial curtailment of human freedom. But it is our contention that only by seeing the nuclear danger as the logical conclusion of a world nurtured by a belief in violence as the solution to world problems,

can the public be sufficiently informed and their desire for world peace be raised meaningfully". This quotation is from the letter sent to the Secretary General of the United Nations during his passage to Bangkok in January 1985, by the Thailand Peace '85 Program. The letter was meant to explain the rationale of the Program while requesting "support in any form". But, the world body responsible for the promotion of peace did not even care to send a reply. This lack of action seems to be quite symptomatic of the state of world disarmament affairs.

There were some considerations when the Peace '85 Program was being planned. While the target group should be the public at large, there was a special consideration on how to get young people, i.e. students and development NGO's workers, involved. This did not only stem from the fact that 1985 is the international youth year but also from the assumption that this target group has already a background of social consciousness. There was no difficulty for the organisers to agree that religion should be a central theme in advocating peace but when they came to discuss about the scope of the campaign there was a split. One group of organisers, mainly young people, would like to make the campaign more relevant by focusing on military expenditures and domination and Indochinese conflict, for instance. Another group preferred to emphasize the nuclear arms race with the thinking that the criticism of superpowers would rally larger support and invite less unfavourable reactions. The ideas of the latter group were to prevail with an unfortunate side-effect of less active participation of the formerly mentioned group.

The idea of Peace Campaign is certainly not new to Thailand. The elder statesman, Pridi Banomyong, produced a film called the *King of White Elephants* exposing his ideas of war and peace when he foresaw an increasing danger of Thailand being involved in World War II. In 1952, the International Peace Committee, Thailand has collected more than 150,000 signatures of those urging for world peace and an early end to Korean war. Unfortunately, the members of that

committee were arrested and later sentenced to long imprisonment on charge of inciting discord. Last year, the Sub-committee on Peace and Human Rights, Ministry of Education, organised a Peace Week on August 6-9, 1984 at Thammasat University designed "to create and expand the Thai's understanding of the nuclear problems which also relates to their consciousness concerning the significance of human lives in general".

The proposal to organise Thailand Peace '85 Program was drafted in the beginning of the year by the Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS) and later presented to an organising committee on the Valentine Day of February 14. The Program specified that "the senseless competition in the development of all types of nuclear weapons not only poses a direct threat to the existence of the whole human race, but consumes money that should be reallocated for human development, to raise the standard of living for millions and to feed millions of hungry people around the world."

The objectives of the Campaign were:

1. To commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
2. To call the attention of the Thai people to the problem of world peace which is being threatened by the nuclear arms race.
3. To contribute to the international campaign against nuclear arms race while promoting more human development and better livelihood for all.

The first committee meeting was attended by 70 persons from about 25 development NGO's and student organisations. This organising committee remains loosely structured. More time was spent on the activities than on the strengthening of the committee. About 15 development NGOs did participate actively by contributing money and/or manpower. Other committee members joined on their individual basis. The organising committee acted as a general assembly who set guidelines. There were 5 working committees in charge of the following activities: dissemination, film show, conference, concert, commemoration and coordination. But it has never been definitely

established that who was on which committee. In fact, 2-3 full time workers performed the essentials with the help of the CGRS workers and other friends.

The first two meetings of the organising committee spent a lot of time on the discussion about the scope of the campaign and on another issue, namely, what activity would be suitable to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Hiroshima - Nagasaki bombings. Some members proposed a walkathon or a peace parade, others preferred a concert or a conference. After lengthy discussions, a compromise, *a la Thai*, was reached. Nobody was really happy or unhappy. It was agreed that all the proposed activities could be organised in the same week of August 4-9, 1985. The conference proponents chose August 6, as this is the anniversary day. The concert proponents chose August 4 because it was Sunday. The proponents of a walk also chose Sunday but were rather hesitant as this would be a difficult activity to organise. The third committee meeting was delighted by a new proposal to organise a one day fast on Sunday August 4. A fast would be an impression of commitment as strong as a march and would be very peaceful and well in accordance to Buddhist tradition.

The dissemination work was considered essential to the Program. Five pamphlets were published and widely disseminated. Two sets of exhibitions were realised and shown to the public on 6-7 occasions. A book titled *The Arms Race* by John Turner was translated and published with the permission of the Cambridge University Press. Several posters were disseminated in the city. Few discussions and spots were broadcasted on radio. The access to TV broadcasting has proven to be more difficult. There were, however, few mentions and news coverage of the fast activity. The press gave a rather wide coverage of the peace concert and the fast day. Although there were some shortcomings, the dissemination was a success in bringing peace and nuclear arms race issues to the attention of the public.

In order to raise public awareness, several activities were organized that would lead to the peace week of August 4-9, 1985.



On May 22-25, two films, *The Muddy River* and *The Children of Nagasaki*, were shown at the auditorium of the Faculty of Engineering Chulalongkorn University along with many other Cultural activities. The film show had been planned to take place at the American University Alumni Association but its president, who is a general in the army, said that it would be inappropriate to do so. This ban gave the Peace'85 Program some unsolicited publicity.

On June 2, which was Visakha Puja day (the most sacred Buddhist holiday), music

poem reading and prayers were organized at Dhamma Sathan of Chulalongkorn University. Many speakers from different religious denominations appealed for peace on that day.

In July no activity had been planned but a student musical group, the Whiffenpoofs, from Yale University came to Bangkok on its regional tour. The Peace' 85 Program took the opportunity to join the committee which organized two Whiffenpoofs concerts, held on July 2 at Chulalongkorn University and at Montien Hotel. This has proven to be beneficial at least on two accounts. First it enhanced the public image of the Peace' 85 Program and it raised some fund.

The publicity of the peace concert was successful and the Thammasat auditorium was packed to an over-capacity of more than 3,000 persons on that day. The concert itself was well prepared and the audience was apparently satisfied. The publicity heavily stressed on the fact that this was the first time two popular musical groups: Caravan and Carabao, would perform on the same occasion. Surprisingly, it was a third group singing old popular songs which drew big applauses on that day. The stress on Caravan and Carabao performances made one bewildered, how many came to the concert with the peace issue in mind and how many with simply the intention to listen to good music. Caravan did help by singing few special songs: Hiroshima and "santi-pab" (peace in Thai) which ended the concert in a high spirit.

The peace week at Dhamma Sathan was also successful, thanks largely to the Santi Asoke Buddhist group. The program started at 6 o'clock on August 4. A group of about 300 persons mainly from Santi Asoke walked peacefully in rows of two from the Victory Monument and covered few kilometers before arriving at Dhamma Sathan. In the morning, there were Buddhist, Protestant, Catholic and Muslim ceremonies.

The solemn moment came at 1 P.M. when Professor Sem Pringpuangkeow, Chairman of Peace'85 Campaign, gave a speech in commemoration to those fallen in Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as in other

wars. All stood in silence and then laid flowers in front of the pictures showing the consequences of the atomic bombings. A model of a peace sculpture was later unveiled and 40 doves were set free.

In the afternoon, group discussions and speeches were organized as well as allowing time for individual meditation. About four hundred persons participated in the fast and about 100 persons who did not come to Dhamma Sathan pledged to do so.

During the week, there was an exhibition covering the issues of peace, religion, development and war. On the other days of the week, until August 9, panel discussions and cultural activities were organized. Another highlight was the conference with the presentation of 3 research papers on August 6. But the invitation was sent out late and the audience was smaller than expected.

The peace week was successful in receiving media coverage but its publicity was not very strong and attracted fewer attendance than expected. One disappointment, though, was to see only few students despite the fact that they were one of the main target groups.

The money raised mainly from concerts, will be donated to the Working group on Children Development (70%) and to Peace Program next year.

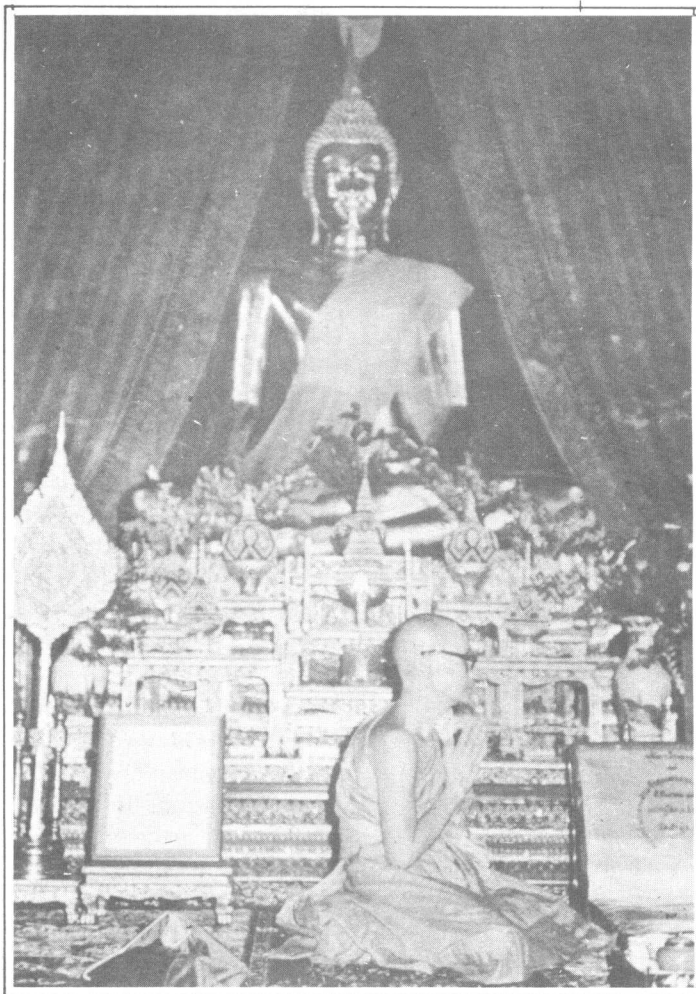
The Peace'85 Program advocated mainly two slogans namely: No More Hiroshima and Let's Declare a Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone. There is still a lot of work to be accomplished before these slogans be really heard and accounted for.

Peace'86 Program is now on a drawing board; it will start with a better asset than this year's program. But whether or not it will make an impact on the public still depends on the commitment of the people who will be involved.

A modest step has been accomplished, but the risk of nuclear disarmament and better allocation of resources towards human development remains in its entirety. Peace certainly needs a life long process for its promotion. Let's continue and invite other people to join us in the urgent striving for peace.

BUDDHISM AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN THAILAND

Prawase Wasi



VEN. PHRA DHAMMACETIYA (MARAJINO)

Who cared so much to improve social condition of the monkhood.

In discussing development and Buddhism, Thailand makes a very unique case for study. Historywise, Buddhism has taken deep root in this country for almost 10 centuries. There are approximately 29,000 Buddhist temples, over 200,000 Buddhist monks, more than 100,000 novices and over 90% declared Buddhists among its citizens. By tradition and by law the King is a Buddhist and the Chief Patronage of Buddhism. With all these components, no one can deny that, in general sense, Thailand is a Buddhist country.

Yet this country is beset with increasing social problems, many of them very serious. Crimes are rampant. Thefts, rapes and violence including murders are problems of common concern. High walls, iron window bars and locked doors speak for themselves. Corruption and bribery are a way of life. There are more prostitutes than monks; commercial sex and international sex tours to this country have made Bangkok one of the most sinful cities in the world. The country is poverty stricken. Rural people storm into Bangkok to work as labourers, housemaids, prostitutes, etc. The rural folks like to be together, but they cannot. It is like a house divided. Approximately 900,000 children are abused in factories. There are more than 300 slums behind main streets in Bangkok. About 70-80% of pre-school rural children are malnourished and 50-60% of children in the slums in Bangkok are similarly but more severely afflicted. At least 55,000 pre-school children die annually from causes related to malnutrition. This is violence in disguise. Violence due to ideological conflict has been with this country for over 10 years and has taken a tragic toll.

Such is Thailand—an allegedly deep-rooted Buddhist country, yet afflicted with so many social problems. Why is this so? Has Buddhism nothing to do with social development? Or have Buddhist principles not been appropriately applied in social development?

Religions and Society

Though limited in knowledge, I believe

that all religions have occurred *because of* and *for* solving social problems. If and when men lived individually or in small groups they needed no religion or it would suffice for them to worship mountains, trees, ghosts or strange animals. By the time the great religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam emerged, men had already suffered complex social problems. These religions occurred *because of* and *for* solving those problems. Great problems breed great religions. Small problems breed small or no religious principles. Great religions did not occur and could not occur when people lived their lives as prehistoric hunters.

If the social problems of two thousand years ago, when the world was without capitalist/worker conflicts, guns, atomic weapons, and high monetary interest, are said to be complex, how can one describe the social problems of today? Can religions first created in peasant communities some two thousand years ago be applicable in today's technology-oriented and very complex societies? Though limited in knowledge, I see the religious prophets as superhuman beings who could see things that others could not. Although their teachings directly dealt with the problems of earlier days, their wisdom leads to general principles applicable even today, if correctly interpreted and applied.

Some Buddhist Principles

Lord Buddha's teachings may be divided into two main parts:

- I. Nature or Law of Nature—the natural truth.
- II. How men should behave according to the Law of Nature, so that the individuals and society will be at peace.

Nothing in the world or the universe is static, all being in a dynamic state. According to Lord Buddha's teaching on Anicca or impermanency, this is the ultimate Law of Nature from which stem other important principles.

How do things change? Things change according to causes. All phenomena are ac-

tually a continuous sequence of causes. Nothing exists by itself, unrelated to other things or causes. This is *Idapaccayata* or the law of conditionality.

Men do not live by themselves, but are part of Nature. It is a natural process that things, living and non-living, are adjusted along certain balanced points. As men are a part of the natural balance, they should be very considerate of Nature all around them, living or non-living. Without this consideration men will suffer. When insects, birds, trees, etc., are excessively destroyed, Nature is unbalanced and this leads to environmental problems and natural disasters. When nonrenewable materials such as minerals and petroleum are excessively consumed, men will suffer from various problems such as high prices and pollution. To live a moderate life, consuming as little worldly materials as possible, and to treat the environment with kind gentleness are important in Buddha's teachings because of the very Law of Nature just described.

Technology and the Changing World

Things change. Since the days of the prophets, societies have tremendously changed. Animals and human societies differ greatly in rates of change. While the behaviour of tigers and elephants is little different from what it was ages ago, human behaviour today is much more complex than when homo sapiens first branched off from apes. This is due to technology. Without technology available to them, animals do not manifest much change in behaviour and social living. Technology, endowed to man because of the level of brain function, determines the evolution (and sometimes revolution) of human society. Plantation technology transformed prehistoric hunter groupings into village settlements. Specialisation in different technologies have led to caste formation. Formerly each individual made a living by his own hunting ability. There was no need for trading. Specialisation necessitated commodity exchanges which have created transnational

business corporations. Industrial technology has led to town and metropolitan settlements, a transformation from exclusively rural communities to 95% urban communities in certain countries. Life and behaviour of men before and after the creation of monetary system are tremendously different, not to mention the changes resulting from the development of a banking system.

In the prehistoric hunting life, men could differ perhaps only in the number of daily catches. In the modern technology-oriented society, the social gaps are unlimitedly widened. In the old days man depended very much on what he himself thought and did. But in today's society, man is greatly affected by the system in which he lives.

The Old and the New: Social Disruption

In old agricultural Thailand the society was self-sufficient: "In the fields plenty of rice, in the water plenty of fish". The climate was warm and there was little need for clothing and planning ahead for food and fuel in the winter. There was no need for social organization and country management. The central government did not have much to do with the people. Communities were left to run things very much by themselves. Actually it was decentralized administration by nature. As a result of this "community democracy", people were undoubtedly happier in those days than in the present overcentralized system. Buddhist temples served communities well in those days. They were centres for education, medicine and cultural activities. Collective resources available at the temples helped run community affairs in a most economical way, both for the people and the state. This led to a rather harmonious way of life with Nature.

Expansion of Western imperialistic powers possessing warships and munitions suddenly imposed technologies to conquered and semi-conquered countries like Thailand. These countries were caught unprepared. Technology-oriented societies

need adequate social mechanisms to protect the people from the adverse effects of technologies. Even the West does not have adequate social mechanisms to protect its people from the disturbing effects of modernization. Countries suddenly imposed with technologies, not at all prepared for them, suffer more. Vastly, secularization has led to bureaucratic overcentralization. This bureaucratic overcentralization, in addition to causing great problems to the government in terms of budget and personnel management, has paralysed community ability throughout the country while leaving a loophole for the rich to jeopardize the poor. The budget-strained government are forced to indulge in unscrupulous business activities. Over-centralization breeds more corruption.

The temples have been almost cut off from useful social functions. Left with largely ceremonial roles, they have shifted more towards superstitious practices. The monks and the people are thus more stupefied both in religious principles and in social mechanisms. The majority of Buddhists, monks and lay people fail to understand the true Buddhist principles and the changing world, although *changes* are the ultimate truth according to Lord Buddha. The mere wishful thought that "if only the mind is good everything will be all right" is far from adequate for solving today's social problems.

The world is disrupted by social gaps, crimes, violence, hatred, wars, etc., largely because of the lack of adequate social and international mechanisms to vent off technology-associated vices. Lord Buddha said that *Avijja* or ignorance leads to suffering. The world thus suffers because it is lacking in knowledge.

Goals and Process of Development

It is not possible to set the clock back some 2000 years. This is against the law of changes. The attempt to do that would lead to anarchy. Technology will continue to be developed and used. The question is how to reap its benefits and fend off its toxicity in

order to relieve human suffering.

Lord Buddha said that every man must have the four basic requisites or *Paccaya*, i.e. food, clothing, housing and medicine. Without these, further development is not possible. The primary goal of development is to meet the four basic human needs for everyone in the society. People should be able to live in peace, with nature as well as with each other. This social development is not easy to accomplish. In addition to religious values it needs appropriate national management and social mechanisms. The most important strategy is to create a *critical mass* who truly understand both religion and the technology-oriented world. This critical mass must be willing to work with others of different religious or ideological principles who are aiming at more or less the same social development.

Top priority strategy for the mass movement is *not to impose strictly religious doctrines*. This has low feasibility in the confused society and will divide the people or even the movement members themselves. It should address itself, above all, to the eradication of poverty. Monks and lay Buddhists should take more active roles in the eradication of poverty all around them. If successful, people will be more appreciative of religious workers and religious principles. If not, they will find other social mechanisms. This does not mean that eradication of poverty alone is adequate for social development. Nonetheless, it is a must and foremost strategy to gain wide public acceptability.

I would like to cite the Yokkrabutr development as a case in point. This community in Ban Paeo district, Samutsakorn Province used to be poverty-stricken and rampant with crimes, gambings and other vices. There was no fresh water supply and crops were annually destroyed by flood. The new abbot of the community Buddhist temple, Prakrue Sakornsangvorakij, did not ask for donation from the people as monks usually do. He studied the many problems and decided that the land was suitable for a coconut plantation. He then studied coconut cultivation until he became an expert in it.

From the pulpit, besides preaching what was good and what was bad, he preached coconut plantation. The monks grew coconuts around the temple and the people made the community blossom with coconut trees. The abbot gave them good coconut breed which yields over two litres of sugar a night in contrast to the yield from the ordinary breed. Eventually everyone in the community earned 200 to 400 baht per day. The temple has also become wealthier and the monks have done further development for the community, including the construction of bridges, canals, roads, an earth dam to prevent flooding, improved water supply, etc. Crime and gambling are gone. There is still one addict in the community: monks have been around asking him to quit, but to no avail yet. However, the man does not cause problems to neighbours, because he, too, is earning 200-400 baht a day. This well illustrates that many social problems, such as crimes, prostitution, gambling, alcoholism and drug addiction cannot be solved by preaching alone or suppression, but by raising people's income. Young people in Yokkrabutr do not leave the community for Bangkok. They love their home. Looking at their faces you can detect a healthy state and happiness. I will say that their lives are better because of the abbot. They are ready to believe in what he says. He is smart enough to prevent capitalistic disruption of his self-sufficient community. He is now teaching meditation to the people. This is a small but most important example of development by religious workers. It is at the heart of country development and simultaneously solves both rural and urban problems. City problems cannot be solved without rural development.

Monks can and should be involved in solving other social problems. Bangkok people live in crowded concrete caves or in impossible slums without enough open space, trees and fresh air to breathe and relax. Children have no adequate space to play. Every available space has been used for commercial purposes; land prices are substantial. It is now impossible to build parks in Bangkok metropolis. Yet there are

over 300 temples in Bangkok. Each temple should clean up its ground and plant it with trees and flowers, suitable for people to rest their weary souls. Again Buddhists must be reminded that mere wishful thinking is not enough. To solve social problems there is a real need for action.

In 1976 Pra Dhammacetiya the Abbot of Thongnophakun temple ran a 3-week course in health care for rural monks with the support of the Komol Keemthong Foundation. It was so successful that monk training in health development now has greatly proliferated. One monk wrote, "Doctor, after my training with you I noticed that a lot of farmers were pale and weak. I gave them ferrous sulphate tablets and they became stronger. Now a lot of them come to me. Can you send me 20,000 more tablets?" Now regular courses for monk training in primary health care are being conducted at Samphraya temple.

If Buddhists remain passive toward social development, Buddhism in its institutionalized form will be an obstacle to the improvement of well-being of the people and humanity.

The described social activities in themselves are not adequate for social development. Men are very much affected by the system they live in. Thus social development must be associated with *system development*. Religious movements for social development must include mobilization for desirable results. This mobilisation will not be effective if carried out by religious people who use a language and scenario solely based 2000 years ago. There is a great need for workers who deeply understand and can articulate religious values in the present-day context of a changing world. According to the law of Aniccata or impermanency, nothing is static; development goals and processes must be dynamic.

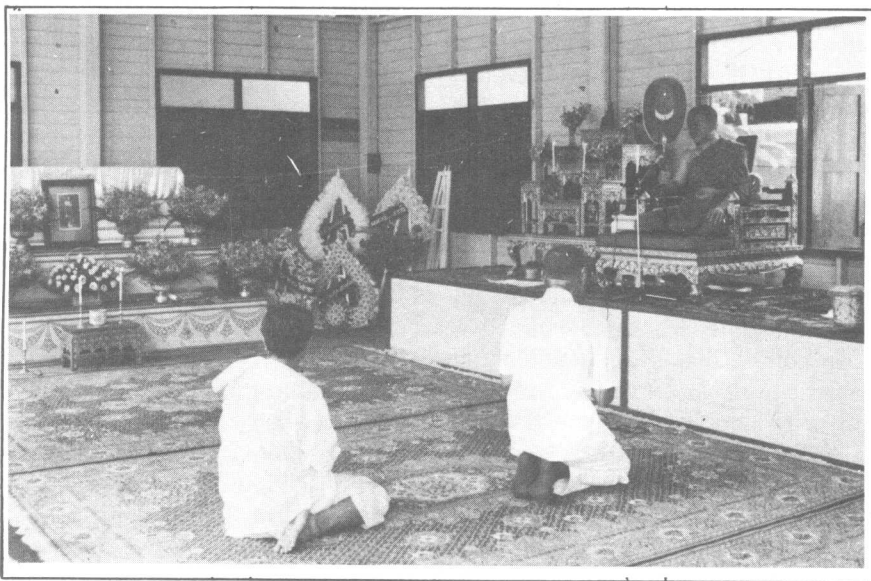
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Affirmation of Wholeness of Life: A Buddhist View on Life and Death

S. Sivaraksa



VEN. PRA RAJAVARAMUNI (PAYUTTO) Giving a sermon on life and death.

The Buddhist attitude towards life and death can be characterized by the Four Signs. i.e. an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a holy man (wandering monk). It is said that upon perceiving these signs, Prince Siddharta realized that the path towards overcoming suffering and death required a life of spiritual purity. Hence he left the luxurious life of the palace to seek salvation, and eventually found Enlightenment. Thus he became Buddha—the Awakened One.

For those of us who follow the Buddha's

teachings, we should aim to cultivate the right view towards life and death, even though we may not reach the state of deathlessness. Unless we have reached a certain level of understanding, we tend to resist becoming old, sick, or lifeless. We do not wish to be departed from those who are dear to us; nor to confront with those who we detest. Indeed, for many of us it is good to have pleasurable feelings and to resist all that is suffering or unsatisfactory. From the Buddhist standpoint, however, this is not natural. Ac-

cording to the Buddha, there are five facts which everyone of us should contemplate again and again:

- (1) I am subject to decay, and I cannot escape it.
- (2) I am subject to disease, and I cannot escape it.
- (3) I am subject to death, and I cannot escape it.
- (4) There will be separation from all that are dear and beloved to me.
- (5) I am the owner of my deeds. Whatever deed I do, whether good or bad, I shall become heir to it.

Death is the natural outcome of birth; and birth is also the consequence of death. This is the cycle of life from which only those who have reached the state of deathlessness or Enlightenment can escape. Those of us still drawn within this cycle should therefore train ourselves to realize that death is a certainty. It is only uncertain as to when we will die; and whether we will have a relatively short life or a relatively long life. Hence we should be mindful not to make waste of our life. Whatever is right and proper, we should perform while we can, so that our life is valuable and wholesome. To be beneficial to ourselves and others makes our life meaningful. At the same time, we should not be afraid of death; nor be saddened by the death of those dear to us. In fact, practising Buddhists should think of death as a good reminder of the value of leading a life which is useful to fellow human and other beings, as well as to the whole natural environment.

So, the more we understand about death, the more we understand our own life. When we think about it, we realize that our whole life-span is actually very short; comparable to the life-span of a thought which disappears as soon as another thought arises. This does not mean that we should not take life seriously. On the contrary, the Buddha reminds us to take death as a condition to help us conduct our lives diligently, mindfully, meaningfully and usefully; both for our own welfare and for the welfare of others. In actual fact, our daily lives are also conditioned by many other factors. If we are not mindful, our lives become conditioned by greed, lust,

fame, riches, power, hatred, fear, undecisiveness, and delusion. Sometimes we cause much harm to ourselves and to others by deeds supposedly carried out in the name of our honour, religion, or nation; or for the sake of our children.

Ordinary weaklings on the whole lead a life of laziness, or just 'enjoy' themselves as their sensual feelings would guide them. They avoid thoughts about death or undesirable outcomes. Conditioned by fear, by fame, or the like; they work so hard to achieve 'success' or to be 'secure'. In other words, they do not lead their lives mindfully.

For those of us who wish to lead meaningful lives, we should be conditioned by righteousness (Dharma). In dealing with life we must have confidence; and in dealing with others, compassion and wisdom. Thinking of death mindfully leads to confidence in life; and to the realization that while we live we must not be conditioned by hatred, greed, or delusion. In fact our every thought, word and deed should be designed to overcome these three root causes of suffering.

Once we train ourselves to have a natural attitude towards death, we also achieve an understanding of life and its consequences. We realize that there is nothing unusual in the fact that we shall depart from our beloved; that we shall have union with those whom we dislike; or that we shall not achieve many things that we would like to achieve. We also develop a realistic attitude towards the chaos and multitude of suffering in the world around us. But possessing this understanding is by no means sufficient. We must also know how to actively deal with our situation. We must take the right path to overcome suffering.

Many Buddhists feel that it is sufficient to adjust one's inner self to be calm and to be aware of the archaic conditions of the external world. Although one may be deprived of certain rights and physical comforts, yet one should remain calm and content. Death will obviously come and the world may even be destroyed by a nuclear holocaust, yet one should remain in a state of equanimity. This is in fact a wrong view. It is a path of pure heedlessness, rooted in ignorance and

delusion. To take the right path, we should certainly be calm; but we must also try to understand the cause of death and destruction, and how to overcome them meaningfully.

In Buddhism, the key word for the affirmation of wholeness of life is *"to walk on"*. When one is a weakling, one is afraid of death and suffering and cannot *"walk on"*. Once one understands the Dharma, then one can adjust one's inner condition to have a detached view of the world; having less greed, hatred and delusion. One is fairly content. Yet the external world remains unjust and dangerous. A small group of rich and powerful people still ruthlessly exploit the natural environment. The majority of people are deprived of basic human rights. Starvation, malnutrition, unemployment, prostitution, robbery and drug addiction are still prevalent. According to the Buddha, to ignore such a situation is to fall into a state of heedlessness; to be trapped by a false happiness. This is not considered as *"walking on"*.

In other words, we should adjust our inner condition, which should be calm and mindful, to be aware of the unjust external world. It is wrong to try to adjust the external world without training one's mind to be neutral and selfless. It is also wrong to be calm and detached without a proper concern to bring about better social conditions for all who share our planet earth as well as those who live in the same universe. In life it is our duty to restructure our consciousness to deal with the human society selflessly and harmoniously; with loving kindness, compassion, wisdom, and sympathetic joy. The Buddha encourages us to live mindfully all the time; to be free from hatred, greed and delusion as driving forces within ourselves; to be calm and critical, both of ourselves and our common situation; and to work with our brothers and sisters to bring about what is right and just to our world.

In Buddhism, individual perfection and social good are interdependent. A society that is comprised of people who can depend economically and intellectually on themselves can be a relatively peaceful, stable and secure society. Such a society is

ideally favourable to all efforts towards individual growth; physical, moral and spiritual. On the contrary, if a society is in turmoil, suffering from instability and insecurity, then it is difficult indeed to cultivate individual perfection. While there are some things in life which no one can do for others, and for which each individual is self-responsible; yet there are many things which everyone of us can do directly or indirectly for the benefit of others. Hence we should all take responsibility both for our own development and for the development of our common society; both of which are unseparably intertwined.

Traditional Buddhist Society was a society in which the population was highly self-reliant economically, culturally, ethically and intellectually. In the days of absolute monarchy, the rulers were expected to observe or possess sets of Buddhist virtues or qualities such as charity, high moral character, self-sacrifice, gentleness, non-indulgence, non-oppression, tolerance, and righteousness. Such rulers were expected to protect and care for all inhabitants of their kingdom, including beasts and birds. It was their duty to prevent and suppress unrighteous deeds, to see to the distribution of wealth among the poor, and to promote agriculture and other vocations. The strength of a monarch was considered to lie mainly in his wisdom in dealing with the affairs of his kingdom.

What is specially noteworthy about these virtues and royal duties was the emphasis on overcoming poverty. Poverty was regarded as the negation to the wholeness of life; and as the main source of crime and disorder. Economic self-sufficiency was considered a prerequisite for a happy, secure and stable society, favourable to the development of individual perfection; and it was required of the ruler to see that this desirable state of affairs prevailed in his kingdom.

Quite a number of people have the mis-conception that Buddhism regards poverty as a desirable quality. In this respect, poverty is confused with contentment, fewness of wishes, or non-indulgence; which are qualities much admired, as long as they

are accompanied by effort and diligence, not by passivity or idleness. Poverty as such is in no way praised or encouraged by the Buddha. On the contrary, possession of wealth by a king or an average householder can be praiseworthy; and even for a monk to receive frequent offerings (though monks are not expected to seek wealth) can be considered a virtue.

What is considered important in Buddhism is how wealth is gained and how it is made use of. It is considered evil to earn wealth in a dishonest or unlawful way. It is also completely wrong to become enslaved through clinging and attachment to wealth, thereby incurring suffering because of it. Equally blamable to the unlawful earning of wealth is to accumulate riches through stinginess; not spending such riches for the well-being of oneself, one's dependents, and other people. Again, it is also evil if one squanders wealth foolishly, indulgently, or uses it to cause suffering to others.

A good and praiseworthy Buddhist layman seeks wealth rightfully, and uses it for the good and happiness of himself and others. He devotes much or most of his wealth to support the Sangha (community of monks), and to alleviate the suffering and poverty of others. He also enjoys spiritual freedom—not being attached to, infatuated with, or enslaved by his wealth. This is where the mundane and the trans-mundane join together.

To be mundane, one seeks wealth lawfully and unarbitrarily, then makes oneself happy, does meritorious deeds, and shares one's wealth with others. Yet a Buddhist ought to 'walk on' beyond this stage, to be transmundane. This means he should use his wealth without greed, longing, and infatuation. He should be heedful of the dangers of possessing wealth, and have an insight which allows him spiritual freedom. Such a person is one who has made much progress towards individual perfection, thus affirming the wholeness of life through the unity of the mundane and the transmundane; just as birth and death complement one another to complete the integral cycle of life.

In an ideal Buddhist society, under

righteous and effective administration, there would be an absence of poverty. Everyone would enjoy economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency, except for the community of monks who would be purposely sustained by the surplus material supply of the lay society; in order that the lay people could be guided by the monks' life-style and spiritual progress over life and death. In the old days such an ideal Buddhist society might not have fully existed anywhere. Yet there were righteous rulers (Dhamma Raja) who tried to adhere to Buddhist virtues and qualities, though with shortcomings and imperfections; and their citizens did have a yardstick by which to measure their successes and failures.

Among the ordinary citizens there were also sets of virtues and guidelines to be observed. It was, for example, considered worthy to be wise, honest, moral, generous, tolerant, and confident. It was important to be energetic and industrious, skillful in management, to be watchful, to live in a good environment, to associate with good people, to have a balanced livelihood, and to aspire and direct oneself in the right way. On the social side, the individual was expected to maintain good relationships with other people and to make his contribution to the maintenance of a happy and favourable society by practising such virtues as giving and distributing, using kind and beneficial words, rendering useful services, and adhering to the principles of equality and impartiality.

Since the days of colonialism, Buddhist kingdoms have been replaced first by imperial rule, then by military dictatorship or a nominal form of western democracy. Most of the traditional Buddhist values and virtues have disappeared; replaced by western social norms and etiquettes, and ethical codes for the well-being of the Empire, the local elite, or the 'Company'. The local people do not really know how to make use of such western values for their personal well-being, or for the welfare of their own society, since they have been taught to look down upon their indigenous cultures, religions, and traditions.

Although Siam was never fully coloni

zed in a political sense, intellectually, she has never regained independence since imperialism made its mark. This is in fact the worst form of subjugation; to ape after western education, civilization and culture without a proper understanding of their implications. Blind admiration for western science and technology as if it were value-free is indeed the worst crime. Coupled with the loss of self respect and critical awareness of one's own spiritual and cultural heritage this leaves most Asian elite of the once-Buddhist lands in a spiritual crisis. On the one hand, they think they are Buddhists. Yet the Buddhism they adhere to is mostly just form and ritual (often outdated).

When the essence of Buddhist teaching is not properly understood, or purposely misinterpreted, a lot of harm can actually be carried out in its name. For instance, in Siam the usual cliché's about the Buddhist religion, the monarchy, and the Thai Nation are made use of to maintain the status quo; to help the rich get richer and the poor to remain poor, or even get poorer. Those who are suffering from poverty are told to be complacent about their situation, as this is the inevitable result of bad deeds performed in their previous lives. The Buddhist monkhood is even used to legitimize the military, who are the main forces of oppression, and who act as agents of the super powers and Transnational Corporations (TNC's) for exploitation of our natural resources.

So, our people have become victims of neo-colonialism and capitalism. Consumer culture and technology are being used, especially through the mass media, to create new values to replace Buddhist virtues. Greed and hatred are now encouraged. Even ill-gotten wealth and power are to be admired. Lust, indulgence, gambling and intoxicants seem to be the affirmation of life; which means that death must be avoided or postponed through plastic surgery and the like which, even if desirable are only available to the rich and powerful. For the multitudes, birth must be avoided. Hence family planning!

In order to overcome these false values created by materialism and so-called

economic development, we must go back to our spiritual roots and traditions. In the case of Buddhists, we must return to the essential teachings of the Buddha, which are universal and timeless, so that full human development once again becomes possible. Furthermore, we must also gain an in-depth understanding of the present realities of the world around us. It is not, however, right to hate our 'oppressors'—which are in fact unjust political and economic systems embodied by the super powers and TNC's. Hating them will make us hateful; and even if we could violently destroy them, we would be full of hatred ourselves.

To properly overcome such unjust and harmful systems, our internal condition must be calm and mindful. We should cultivate loving kindness and compassion to others—our 'enemies' as much as their victims. If possible we should help to enlighten those working in governments, bureaucracies, international banking, TNC's etc., to see that unjust economic systems and blind use of high technologies are as harmful to themselves as to others. Poisonous foods, dangerous medicines and arms races may give them much unethical wealth; but eventually they also will be the losers. Indeed, the wealthy and powerful people of the world are not at all happy. They are very insecure and afraid of death. Yet they cause so much death and suffering. Poverty and wretchedness increase everywhere, and eventually all life on our planet may be destroyed.

While trying to educate the rich and powerful, we must always communicate with the poor and oppressed. Indeed, if we must choose sides, we should be with the poor, at least in our culture and life-style. The more our livelihood is simple, the less natural resources will be exploited. The less we imitate the rich, the more will we be free from the harmful effects of consumer culture and high technology. If, together with the poor, we could become conscientised not to join the richman's club or any system of oppression, then that would be the first step away from 'economic development' and towards full human development, which is the real affirmation of wholeness of life.

in order to bring about a growing force of awareness throughout the world, it is important that we gain a good understanding of complex systems such as the TNC's, which have greed, hatred and delusion as their main driving forces. Hence we understand how human destruction at Bhopal became possible. But that event, and other great tragedies such as those at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, must not make us feel revengeful or helpless. We have to be mindful at all times. Wisdom and compassion must be our main driving forces. If the top people and their middle echelons will not learn any lessons from their destruction, then we will build up awareness with as many people as possible so that economic, political, cultural and technological oppression of every form is widely understood and opposed.

Such mass destruction as occurred at Bhopal due to the aggressiveness of modern technology and the uncontrollable power of the TNC's should help to make more and more of us aware of our lofty heritage prior to the colonial period and the Industrial Revolution. Despite our ancestors' shortcomings and savagery, they never had such destruction and disregard for life on so large a scale. On the contrary, their stress on self-

reliance, social harmony rather than competition, and their discouragement of greed, hatred and delusion should serve as an example to us for meaningful reapplication in the present day context. Then, for Buddhists at least, we should go back to the teachings of the Buddha on life and death; so as to strive for a peaceful and just society where individual moral and spiritual growth is nourished, and where the wholeness of life is truly affirmed.

When Prince Siddharta saw an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a wandering monk, he was moved to seek salvation and eventually became the Buddha, the Awakened One. Similarly, such suffering as that brought about at Bhopal should move many of us to think together and act together to overcome such death and destruction, so as to bring about the awakening of mankind as a truly free being, living in harmony with the universe.

A paper prepared for a Consultation in the Economic Justice Program of Christian Conference of Asia/Urban Rural Mission, 10-17 September 1985, New Delhi. (The author wishes to thank Ven. Phra Rajavaramuni and Mr. Jon Ungphakorn for helping him in writing this paper).

NEWS

Thai Peace Day Remembers

FORTY years after the end of World War II, surviving members of the Seri Thai (Free Thai) Movement remain a group of forgotten people.

There was no official ceremony to acknowledge the important role they played during the crucial period that helped Thailand avoid becoming a part of the Axis. There was no mention of them in the official media.

And it was with this grievance in their minds that about 60 members of the Seri Thai Movement got together for a quiet and solemn meeting at Wat Mahathat (Ta Phra Chan) last Friday. Their purpose was to remember the members of the movement that have passed away.

Thanpuying Poonsuk Banomyong, wife of the late Dr. Pridi Banomyong, who was the leader of the movement, presided over the ceremony.

She did not try to conceal her bitterness on how the occasion was completely ignored by the government.

She said in most other countries, it was the governments which sponsored the ceremonies to commemorate such occasions.

"After 40 years, people here may have forgotten all about it. Nobody seems to be interested," she said.

Other members of the movement also voiced similar complaints. "The government simply ignores the occasion," one of them said.

Most of the members of the movement are in their 70's and 80's.

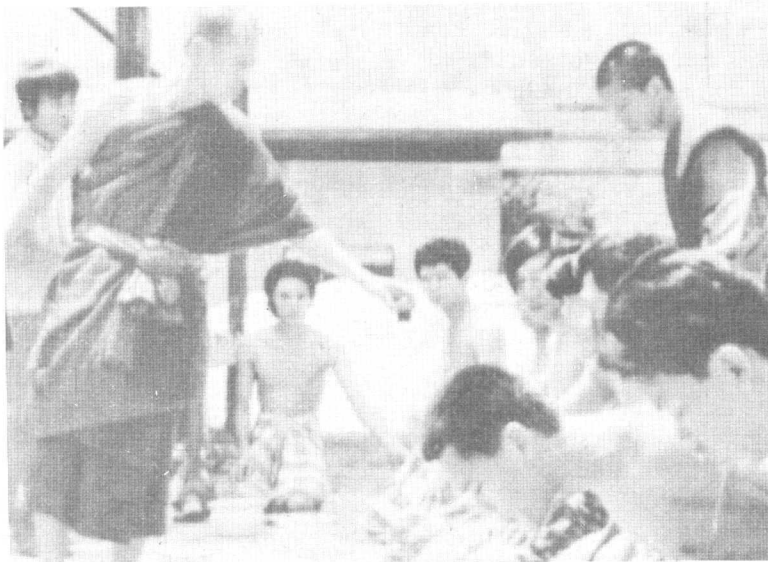
Among those who joined the ceremony at Wat Mahathat was former prime minister Rear Adm. Thawal Thamrongnavasavat, who is now 84.

THE NATION, Monday, August 19, 1985

A CASE STUDY IN SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Buddhism & Ethnic Minorities : Wat Tam Krabok

N. Tapp



It is unfortunate that primarily as cultivators of the opium poppy the Hmong are known to the Thai public. The kind of political disaffection which spread among Hmong communities during the 1960's and early 1970's had its roots in the uncertain and difficult conditions associated with the local production of opium after it was officially banned in Thailand in 1959. The Hmong became the target of many Government programmes, such as the *tham-mācarik*, out of all proportion to their actual numbers, largely owing to the popular image of them as insurgents and opium producers. Rates of addiction to opium remain high in many Hmong villages (nine out of twenty-five household heads in the total village of my own study, for example), and Hmong and

other upland opium addicts have frequent recourse to Thai hospitals seeking treatment for a variety of complaints.

The exact position of religion in society, and particularly in social development, is a problematic issue which has recently been widely discussed among Thai Buddhist intellectuals. Some would argue that traditionally, unlike his Christian counterpart, the Thai monk has always been closely involved in community life—acting as village teacher and doctor besides advising on a wide range of technical and emotional problems—and that he has largely lost this role owing to the rise of modern systems of medicine and education. The need to incorporate into modern development those spiritual values which are often provided by traditional

systems of belief has been argued powerfully, particularly with regard to dams. In Thailand there is a long tradition of autonomy at the level of the local temple which repeated attempts to centralise and hierarchalise the Sangha during the present century have failed to destroy completely. The Buddhist monkhood remains an important channel of social mobility, and in many cases local saints are popularly acclaimed before receiving legitimating through joining the Sangha. A good many temples (estimated at 3,000) remain outside the official ecclesiastical system. Known as *suan* or *samnak*, these are not registered by the Department of Religious Affairs, and may lack consecrated grounds on which to perform full ordination rites for monks (although often the monks within such centres have been fully ordained elsewhere).

Wat Tam Krabok, as it is popularly known, is a monastic centre located near a famous Buddha's Footprint shrine in the province of Saraburi, north of Bangkok on the edge of the Northeastern plain. It was founded in 1959, reportedly by nine *dhutanga* or ascetic monks who came to retreat in a nearby cave, although already by 1960 it contained as many as sixty monks. It is unique among Thai monastic communities in a number of different ways. Over the years it has become one of the most important and influential centres in Thailand for the treatment of opiate addiction. Moreover, its patients have included many Hmong and members of other upland minority groups.

Although its Abbot's activities have earned him the disapproval of those sectors of the Thai Sangha who feel that a monk's business should be confined to preaching, gradually he has received more and more public acclaim for his work with opiate addicts, and at weekends the centre is now visited by some tourists, benefactors from Bangkok, coteries of police and army cadets. Ācān Chamruun Parnchan, the father and pioneer of the centre, had worked with opium addicts before his ordination as a monk in the early 1950's, but the first addicts are said to have received treatment at the centre only after the opium ban of 1959.

Despite considerable opposition to the work of the monks, a Government grant of some land and funds totalling 400,000 baht was made in 1963. By 1983 it was claimed that over 48,000 patients had sought treatment there. In September 1984 the monastery housed 120 monks, although many of these were at a new site established just outside Lopburi, besides 160 addicts and nearly 100 other patients. New patients were being admitted at a rate of 20-30 a day.

Born in 1924 in neighbouring Lopburi, Ācān Chamruun is a charismatic leader who inspires loyalty and devotion among his followers. Before ordaining as a monk he had been a police officer, and one of the primary figures influential in establishing a national intelligence service in Thailand. Much of his wisdom is said to have been received by him from his aunt, a spiritually gifted woman of the kind who occasionally attain prominence in Buddhist communities. A photograph of *luang phō yai* (or 'great reverend father'), as she is known, is honoured in a small cave adjacent to the main buildings of the temple. Among the patients it is said that her spirit still inhabits another, more inaccessible cave. The photograph shows *luang phō yai* wearing a monk's robes, and when I asked about the oddity of this, I was told that she was something more than a woman; *tua pūying*, *cai pūchai*—the heart of a man in the body of a woman.

The centre is in fact administered by two *luang phō* (reverend fathers), rather than one, as is usually the case. These two are brothers, and while Ācān Chamruun acts as the spiritual mentor and administrator as well as spokesman to the outside world, his brother superintends the agricultural work at the centre; for, unlike most Thai monasteries, the monks at Tam Krabok cultivate maize and banana plantations on a large scale. The latter also supervises a large *sālā* or pavilion, which is entirely devoted to the reproduction of a special kind of music (again unusual in monastic communities). This music is derived from rubbings taken of natural objects such as trees or paths from all parts of Thailand. It is then transcribed, ac-

cording to a complicated system, into musical notation with the help, among others, of music students from Thammasat University, and recorded at three speeds on an electric organ.

In conversation Ācān Chamruun is keen to emphasise that the medical treatment offered by the monastery was the result of no deliberate decision on his part. Addicts came, and were treated; he, as a monk, felt that he could not refuse them treatment, and so the programme grew. Dr. Westermeyer (1982) has described how, as the result of the philanthropy of a Thai-Lao woman Sunthone Dhillavanh, resident in Vientiane, addicts began to be sent for treatment at Wat Tam Krabok from Laos after 1970. Between then and 1975 some 3,000 addicts, mostly from the refugee relocation zones of Laos, had received treatment at Tam Krabok with assistance from USAID, the Asia Foundation, the Lao Ministry of Social Welfare, and other groups. In 1975 Ācān Chamruun received the Magsaysay human rights award (with funds of 10,000 dollars) from the Philippines for his endeavours in the field of social action. Owing to the strict rules enjoined on the monks at the centre against the uses of modern technology and particularly mechanised transport, however, he was unable to fly to the Philippines to receive the award personally. I saw an example of this rule at the monastery when a group of monks caught in a downpour refused to accept a lift in a pick-up truck. Ācān Chamruun also emphasises that he treats every kind of addiction. The techniques employed at Wat Tam Krabok have been effective in curing addiction to pep-pills, valium, nicotine and alcohol, methadone (which he claims has earned him high-ranking enemies among supporters of multinational pharmaceutical companies), paint-thinner (Thailand's most recent scourge) and even 'Casanova-ism', as he puts it, besides other mental and physical disturbances. But it is as a treatment centre for opiate addiction that his centre is most widely known, and most important.

The treatment itself is unique, since it is based on herbal medicines and herbal

massage steam-baths (traditional remedies for addiction), together with a type of meditation based on the internal repetition of *mantras*. For three to five days new patients must ingest the herbal medicine, administered by the monks themselves at nine o'clock in the mornings, which induces vomiting and is said to purify the body of the poisons it has accumulated. Great secrecy surrounds the preparation of this medicine, which is described as composed of over a hundred types of herb, gathered from different parts of Thailand. Major ingredients include morning glory, citronella, cogon grass (*yā khā hōm*), ritnus and castor bean extract (*la hung*). The hot steam baths, which are taken by all patients in the mid afternoon in alternation with cold showers, relieve the abdominal cramps and aching symptoms associated with withdrawal. The day is also punctuated by the morning and evening chanting of the monks, and the three meals a day served to the patients, who wear a uniform of red shorts and a white shirt which distinguishes them from the brown robes of *thudong* ascetics worn by the monks.

What is regarded as the most important part of the cure, however, is the sincere desire on the part of the patient to rid himself of the cause of his craving, and to entrust himself to the Buddha's and the Abbot's care and protection. This is affirmed in a ritual vow (*satca*), taken with the Abbot by patients immediately after they have arrived. According to Ācān Chamruun, the treatment depends on the importance of being able to 'find a fact in one's life', and he himself sees the cure as '80% psychological'. A full course lasts only ten days, but patients are normally expected to remain on in the monastery for a period of rehabilitation or vocational training which may last several months.

Addiction is a serious illness, and withdrawal a highly dangerous process; *dukkha* in the full sense of the word. Even the memory of withdrawal is hard to escape. Several cured patients could not bear the sight or smell of the herbal medicine they had once had to take; a German monk told me his scalp literally crept to think of it.

Because many patients are of the *nakleng* or 'tough' type, the centre has to be run on strictly authoritarian lines. The Abbot's compound is strongly guarded for security against possible attack, and a stern, melancholy atmosphere pervades the grounds of the temple and the inhospitable landscape which surrounds it. Although an ex-patient sometimes performs dramatic enactments of heroin addiction, and a rock band has been formed by some of the convalescents which plays for the patients at weekends, the hard physical labour imposed on monks and convalescents alike allows little time for pleasure or idleness. Insanity seems to be a more frequent outcome of withdrawal than actual mortality. Particularly troublesome patients are placed in solitary confinement behind bars, as much for their own safety as for the safety for others. I visited one of these, who begged for tobacco. Sometimes the screams of newly admitted patients are clearly audible. One patient ran amok while I was at the centre, and fled away wrapped only in a blanket. He had no idea where he was running to, and was soon pacified and brought back.

It is difficult to evaluate the success of this treatment, since the names and addresses of former patients are, quite properly, not released. In general, addicts do not seem to come for treatment at Wat Tam Krabok of their own free will. They tend to be sent by their relatives, or from other medical centres, while for many years the Central Security Division of the police has sent addicts to Tam Krabok from the slum areas of Bangkok. According to another famous Magsaysay Award winner who works in those areas, patients returning from treatment usually relapse very swiftly. The centre itself, however, claims a 70% success rate, which is extremely high by international standards. Westermeyer's (1982) study of opiate addiction has made it very clear how problematic it is to measure success rates for curing addiction without extensive follow-up evaluation and outcome studies which should last a number of years. Westermeyer's data based on a study of patients from Laos who attended the monastery in 1974

and 1975, suggests a relatively high mortality rate among addicts undergoing treatment at Wat Tam Krabok. While nobody could doubt the sincerity of Ācān Chamruun after speaking with him or with those of his patients who have chosen to stay on in the centre as monks, it may be that the complete absence of the use of any opium substitute such as methadone can prove dangerous.

There were eight Hmong families in residence at the monastery at the time of my visit, numbering thirty-eight people in all, all with members who had undergone or were undergoing treatment for opium addiction. There was one Akha patient. Two of the Hmong had become monks, while the Hmong women and children seemed to do most of the cooking and preparation of food for the monastery. There was very little communication between the Hmong families and other inmates, from whom they were isolated in a *kutistule* bungalow. Most of the Hmong could speak no Thai, and communicated with the others through one or two spokesmen. Nobody else at the centre spoke any Hmong (or Akha), except for one Sino-Thai patient whom the Abbot had instructed to learn Hmong. One recent Hmong arrival, who suffered from a distended stomach as well as the opium addiction which had previously eased the pain of his stomach, begged me for money to escape, though he was not sure where he would go to.

Westermeyer's extensive study of Laotian, Hmong, Mien, Khmu', Caucasian and expatriate Asian addicts treated both in Laos and at Wat Tam Krabok concluded that 'The most negative patient evaluations came from virtually all tribal addicts going to Wat Tam Kha Bok' (*sic*). He talks of the 'strong negative emotion (ranging from disgust to outright anger)' which minority people expressed towards Wat Tam Krabok: 'Many said they felt tricked by the Ministry of Social Welfare into going for treatment, and several volunteered that they would die before ever going there again' Westermeyer attributes these reactions largely to differences of language (since the tribal people could not understand what was being said to them) and

of religion, since many of the rituals performed at Wat Tam Krabok would have no meaning for non-Buddhist patients, and compares these reactions with the generally favourable reactions of ethnic Lao patients.

Certainly the Hmong at this centre appeared far more withdrawn and depressed than any I have met in refugee camps or impoverished situations overseas. However, I am not qualified, nor do I have the data, to evaluate the treatment offered at Wat Tam Krabok. Ācān Chamruun has a great sympathy with and concern for the ethnic minorities, especially the Hmong. He supports the ideal of an autonomous state for the Hmong people, and claims to have a medicine effective against the chemical attacks said to have taken place against the Hmong in Laos. Although much of his information on the Hmong did tend to be inaccurate (he maintained for example that the Hmong numbered fifty million people and killed, deformed or maimed children), he showed a genuine curiosity to learn more about their social system, and a concern for their problems which he felt, as a Buddhist teacher, he could help resolve.

At Wat Tam Krabok, considerable importance is attached to birth-dates, prophecies and the interpretation of dreams. Both the Abbot and one of his patients said they had foreseen my coming to the temple, and when I was eventually pressed to say what kind of dreams I have had about the place, I recounted the following nightmare:-

I had seen a white-coated doctor enter a small room, and glance round to make sure

he was alone. On a table in the centre of the room, sat a tiny man, about four inches high, in a solution in a jar. He had no clothes on and sat on a small chair in the jar with his back to me. The doctor removed the lid from the top of the jar, and turned a dial which controlled the solution fully around. To my horror, all the blood ebbed out of the hominid's body, from his head to his toes, leaving him still sitting motionless upon the chair, although there was now no blood left in his body.

After I had told the Abbot of this dream, which I had been convinced related to him in some way, he paused only a second before giving me his interpretation. 'Yes' he said, 'that dream was about this place, and I am the doctor you saw in your dream. The little man represents the hillpeople, because they are smaller than we are. And the blood signifies their whole way of thinking, which must be radically changed if the opium problem is to be solved. For the hillpeople are the key to the opium problem'

I feel that through his interpretation, the Abbot expressed more about the relationship between Buddhism and ethnic minorities than a single paper could ever do. For, if not an indication of what a *Buddhist* attitude towards ethnic minorities might be, his interpretation certainly represented those *cultural* attitudes in which religion is so often embedded, and can perhaps never wholly escape.

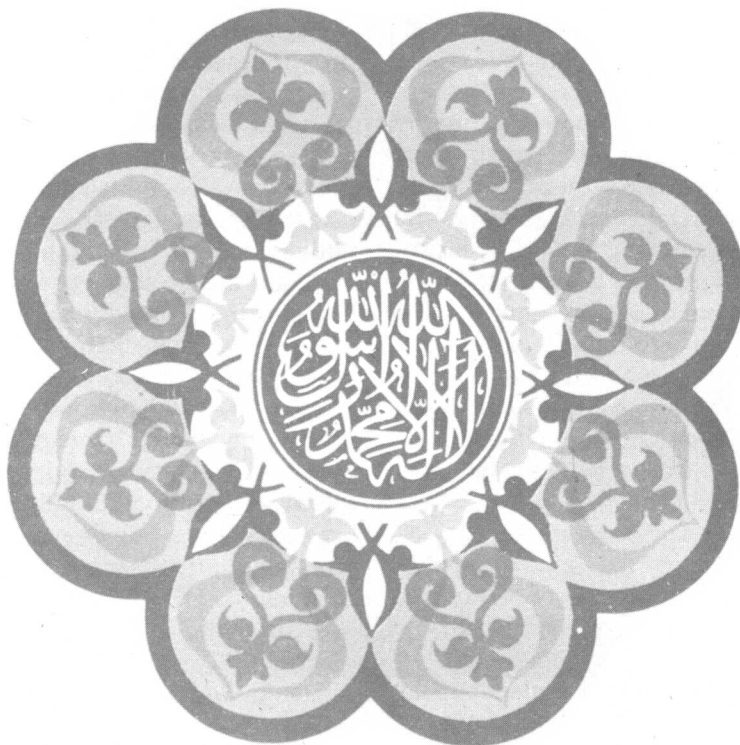
Late News

Moscow (Reuter)—Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev announced a five-month ban on nuclear weapons tests beginning on August 6 to mark the 40th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. The move came just after an announcement President Reagan had invited Soviet observers to witness an American underground nuclear test as a unilateral gesture to inspire an increase in trust between the superpowers.

Bangkok Post, 30 July 1985

ISLAM AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Cesar Adib Majul



Development as characterized in this paper has two aspects: the internal and the external. The first deals with both a humanistic and social dimension in that it deals with solutions to eliminate poverty, reduce unemployment, raise the standard of living and bring about all that this connotes, and to provide for a happier and healthier if not longer life. The second or external one has to do with the strengthening of a given society so as to preserve its national sovereignty or independence from other alien forces. In Islam, this generally means the preservation of the Muslim *umma* from external violence or falling under the power of non-Muslim powers. But since at present

the Muslim world is divided into different national entities, it means the strengthening of a particular Muslim country against any other country trying to dominate it or take away its Islamic identity.

Development if it is to be directed properly involves certain attitudes. The first fundamental attitude to be taken by a Muslim towards it is that it must be viewed within the Divine Plan. Needless to say, any secular idea towards development must be banished from the mind. Islam looks at all life, nature, and their process and transformations as an interrelated unity integrated by a Divine Plan. The life of man and his use of natural resources ought to be one of service

to Allah. Service here is not confined to rituals but involves a prescribed and ordered relationship between an individual and himself, an individual and other individuals, and an individual and his total environment, and, above all, between him and Allah.

Unfortunately, in the past, Muslims had not often distinguished the fundamentals of Islam from historical institutional accretions which were adopted in response to environmental changes as well as foreign intrusions. While it is more than desirable for Muslims to fully adhere to the fundamentals of Islam, it is imperative as well not to look at Islam as a closed and rigid system but as something continually renewing itself to meet the emerging changes, complexities and challenges of the modern world. Actually, innovations in science, education, technology, political administrative procedures, and social experiments will not imply a change in the basic Islamic values if they are done within the framework of man's service to Allah as traced out in the Qur'ān. All these require an enlightened '*ulamā*' who, while serving as guardians of the fundamental Islamic values, are also creative thinkers who refuse to adhere to blind tradition. It must be an '*ulamā*' that will also be identical to an intellectual group that is well versed or at least cognizant of modern science, whether physical or biological or social, which enables its members to understand and be more responsive to the conditions of a changing world. In addition, what is required in a Muslim society is for those others who do not intend to be specialists in religious studies to be more educated in such studies in spite of their different professions or specializations. While the curricula of the traditional *madrassa* must be enriched by an increase of science (both natural and social) subjects in the schools of higher learning in the professions should likewise be enriched by courses in Islam.

The students of the above institutions of learning will not fall into the trap of secularism which clouds so much of Westernization. On the contrary, they will see the work of Allah in so much of science and technology provided they are directed to the social good

as a commandment of Allah. It must be hammered on students that the search for more knowledge is a commandment from Allah Himself when He asks us to pray to Him as follows: "My Lord! Increase me in knowledge."

Not only are the development of the mind and the search for more knowledge ordained religious duties, but also the preparation for a trade or profession in order that the material cares of man may not be neglected. Allah had given men the inner forces as well as outside resources as favors not only as tests but also as ingredients to lead righteous lives which by themselves are forms of worship and service to Allah. Unfortunately, it is the forgetting of such favors like giving the resources of earth to man as a trust that is leading to so much pollution, waste, and extinction of some species of flora and fauna. Already mankind is suffering from the effects of unbridled development.

Development if it is to be contributive to the social good and harmony so as to bring about greater cohesion to a country must never be used solely for the interest of a few individuals and families or a special group. What is vital to a well-ordered *umma* is for the individual to emancipate himself from individual and family interests or other narrow interests in order to conceive of a larger good — that of the *umma*. Islam is against the monopoly of wealth and therefore against the use of the earth's resources in favor of some as against others. It is against any form of human exploitation since this degrades the Allah-given inherent worth and dignity of the individual soul. Moreover, each person must normally have his adequate share of earth's resources if he is to make operative those very qualities which Allah gives him in order that Allah be better served.

The Qur'an requires that society should have an authority that is meant to bring about justice or the judgment of people along equitable principles. This refers to government. No development in society will succeed unless the government is serious about it. An aspect of development is an intimate involvement of the government in the

economic life of society. It is ultimately government that will protect both the political and economic rights of individuals and see to it that justice prevails. The best form of government is one that has the consent of the governed and this consent easily comes from consultation of the governed. Indeed, the people should be consulted on those matters which intimately affect them. This does not neglect the principle that those charged with governmental authority must have certain qualifications over and above those of the ordinary citizen.

Two Qur'ānic principles should guide government in its actions regarding development. The first is that all political power ultimately belongs to and comes from Allah. He is the owner of all sovereignty but allows mankind to exercise some sovereignty as a trust. Political power among men is only a loan to be used in accordance with Allah's decrees. Strictly speaking, in Islam the people are not at all sovereign. Only Allah is Sovereign although the people may exercise sovereignty as a loan for which they are ultimately accountable. Thus is the exercise of political power a test to government authorities. The second principle is that all wealth belongs to Allah who bestows it upon man. This means that all property, whether private or public or state property, are to be held in trust and man is accountable finally to Allah on their use. The same principle applies to the usufruct of nature.

Adherence to the above two principles will avoid government arbitrariness, disregard of human rights, exploitation, and other negative elements. They will further direct development for the good not only of the individual but for society at large. No special classes or groups will be favored in society against those of the general public. Education and other social services or benefits will be universalized. In effect, a healthy and harmonious society will be the order of the day.

It is obvious that a healthy and harmonious Muslim country without fear of internal disorder or disruption will be in a better and stronger position to maintain its national integrity and sovereignty in the present world

of international rivalries and power struggles. The chronic resistance of smaller and weaker countries *vis à vis* bigger and stronger ones is still largely the contemporary situation. Not all forms of aggression consist of military violence. There are such things as cultural imperialism and ideological subversion as well as other forms of subtle infiltration to steal away the soul of a nation from its cultural heritage. Needless to repeat, development is one of the tools that best guarantees national and cultural integrity.

In concluding this paper, let it be stated that in the final analysis the quality of development in a Muslim society will depend largely on the individual Muslim's attitude towards it. Intellectuals, religious leaders, government leaders as well as policies or programs can only go so far.

There is an aspect in the worship of or service to Allah that has not been emphasized by Muslim jurists possibly on account of its too philosophical or theological basis. This has to do with the idea of man's soul partaking of the Divine Breath. If Allah's breathing into Adam of mankind for that matter means that all forms of life or energy, whether physical, biological, psychological and intellectual, come from Allah Himself, then it becomes a duty for man to develop all of these along the Divine prescriptions and injunctions. At bottom, the Divine breath in man represents, those capacities meant to exemplify in individual, family and social life, such qualities that are Divine-like. These qualities in social operation are the Islamic virtues. In Allah they are found in an infinite and absolute sense. For instance, Allah is the Knower and the source of all knowledge; but He gives knowledge to and allows man to have it while commanding him to increase it. Allah is the Compassionate and the Merciful; but He prescribes that persons be compassionate and forgiving of each other. Allah is the Truth and He commands that mankind be truthful in its words, oaths, and promises. Further examples will be too numerous to state. But what is suggested in them is that worship or service (*ibādāt*) must not be conceived in a narrow and restricted sense but in a more intended comprehensive manner.



Muslims must view the natural sciences (both physical and biological) as attempts to understand more the signs of Allah in nature and in themselves. These are the signs for men of understanding to make them to know more of Allah while serving to remind them that Allah is the Creator and Lord of all things. Muslim students must view the social sciences not as mere descriptions of society and its manifestations but as data for study on how Islamic values can be progressively applied to society in order to improve the quality of individual, family and social life. In the humanities, too, the Muslim scholar and student ought to exert efforts to maximize his creativity by drawing inspiration from the Divine quality of *Al Musawwir* or Fashioner. Thus can life be made more beautiful or at least tolerable. It must be recalled again that Allah had breathed into man's soul the capacity to create and fashion beautiful things as evidenced in Islamic art, architecture, and calligraphy. *ibādat* will connote, among other things, like performing the pillars of Islam, the duty of man to develop his soul's faculties along intellectual premises as service to Allah. Consequently,

secularism and crass materialism will be banished from the mind of the Muslim thinker, scholar and student. They will not fear the data of and emerging discoveries in all scientific fields of study as long as these are related to and fall under the Divine umbrage — for only Allah is to be feared. On the contrary, science in its manifold aspects, modernization or development, and other results of man's creative efforts can all be harnessed as instruments and allies to further glorify Allah and attest to His Glory.

Needless to say, it is the Islamic duty of Muslim countries with more favored resources and with a higher rate of development than other Muslim countries to help the latter. Regardless of ethno-linguistic and geographical differences, all Muslims belong to one and only one *umma*. Moreover, when Muslim countries have become strong through mutual help, they have a duty to mankind as a whole. Different communities and countries can and must learn from each other. In the long run, the vast store of scientific and technological knowledge belongs to all men as a common heritage. It is not enough for Muslims to draw from this common fund—they are obliged to contribute to it as they had done in the past. Muslims should work for the welfare of all mankind without, however, losing their religious identity. Actually such work ought to be done as an Islamic duty and therefore Muslims will serve as witnesses of how their community or *umma* can be a model to other countries. With the fulfillment of its duties, Allah promises Muslims the following : "You are the best community (*umma*)—that has been raised for mankind. You enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and you believe in Allah."

Extracts from "Solidarity" (Current affairs, ideas and the arts) Vol. 4, 1983 Manila, Philippines.

Buddhist Christian Dialogue



H.H. Pope John Paul II had an audience with H.H. The Siamese Supreme Patriarch of the Buddhist monkhood.

Rt. Rev. Thienchai Samanchit

Catholic Bishop of Chandaburi

Today, I am very happy to meet with you. Would you please tell us about Buddhism so that the Christians will have the chance to study and learn Buddhism and come to know more about Buddhists. Especially the Christians in the Philippines are very interested because, over there, there is a School for the Great Religions of Asia. Would you please tell us what Buddhism is meant for you in your life?

Ven. Bhikkhu Khamkien Suvanno

Abbot of Wat Pa Sugato, Bhukhong, Chaiyapoom

Before, I was only a Buddhist in name. I did not really study well to the real core of the *-Dhamma* teaching. But it was only when I came to learn by living in a *Practising* way of meditation they are doing them

right now (behind the video scene), that had impressed profoundly deep in my heart.

There was such a happening, a love for mankind. Before, we loved only our relatives. Since I came to know this life of real Buddhism, it made me able to love others. Love others' lives and love their whole beings, in what they are and what they have. Because of this, I decided to commit my life as a monk, not only for the Buddhist but for every human being who also yearns for *sukha* (happiness), dislike *dukkha* (sorrow, suffering), everyone alike. In a case such as this that I've found myself liberated from the life of selfishness, taking advantage of others. Now, as I've already been liberated from these, or in another word Dhamma has started to let me see life, seeing outward, far outward. This means to see other people's life and my life. For this, that I offer my life for mankind, to teach them to know about the elimination of *dukkha* where there would be no more sorrow.

Bishop Thienchai

We would like to hear further from you on how you live life according to the teaching of Buddhism, as a monk for the past 20 years.

Bhikkhu Khamkien

I live my life to serve other people. Live for other people, even when I am thinking, my thought would be for others, things that would be very useful for them, for mankind. I do not think much of sorrow, hardships, or even small things for my personal self, are not in my thought. My life, every day, every time, every minute is lived for others. Give my life for others. The expenses on living and eating and so forth are not for myself, but for others for the past 20 years. Before, my life was for myself, for my brothers and sisters and for relatives and my friends. Now, I live my life for others, anyone, brothers and sisters alike, everybody in the world alike. In short, I live my life for others.

In my way of thinking, it is to make use of your *Pañña* (wisdom or supreme intelligence), to see the world farther, outward. For example, when we were in the temple, we not only saw the people in the temple, but looked out to the parishioners, to the people. Do they have any problems? Supposing they are poor, are they really poor? Why are they poor? How are we going to help them? We must try to see right through their problems. We'll not only see people in the temple. In brief, I spend my life for others.

—We would like to know further how the Buddhist layman live according to the way of Buddha's teaching. We would like to know deeper.

—In fact, layman is only a name that is given and so is the name for the monk is a classification. The real truth according to the Dhamma is that we are all the same. We classify them as layman, as monk etc. These are how things are being classified: The fact is that the teaching of the Buddha enables us to teach all men to become monks, everyone to become monk (phra) which means excellence. To gain happiness, everyone alike.

To discard sorrow, everyone alike

The teaching of the Buddha (Dhamma) or any kind of religious teaching is good. This is the universal pillar suitable for men, women, young and old to lead their lives happily. If we really grasp deeply the teaching of the Buddha, we can apply it either in our everyday living, in our jobs, living together, solving problems together and helping one another.

As for myself as a monk, I like to say that my life is for others. I do not think of dividing people into different groupings, such as Christians, Muslims. I do not think as such. We are together, common humanity. We shall share what we have and practice charity amongst us. In fact, if we have touched the essence of the teaching, this is where much happiness is found. I do not think of this group, that group, that people, those people, do not think as such. I live my life for others. This is truly a universal teaching.

This teaching is suitable for everyone, every age. If everyone, in every nation of this world, who is a fellow human being could understand this essential teaching thoroughly, everyone will become brothers and sisters. I guarantee you this, for me, I will not be of harm to anyone, and I also think that others will not be harmful to me either. Even though they will scold or curse at me or try to kill me, I will still think that it is not him but something that lies behind.

According to this teaching, *Kilesa* (defilement) is the cause of evil and because of a better understanding of this "vice" that I am not in anger, jealousy, vengeance, no ... So I go on with this teaching.

According to the Dhamma, this "vice" is an emotional stage (not under control). Once we realize that we are not enemies to one another, we'll become very much calm, tranquil, and smooth. If everybody could understand this, any country, any language, men or women, in any foreign land, we shall be one. We shall become brothers and sisters who all want happiness, and dislike sorrow. There couldn't possibly be any persecution; there will be charity, if everybody comes to know this. Not only the monk, but

everyone who has spirit and body alike.

Dhamma is suitable for every language, everybody; there is no exception. We must understand this. I used to tell people like this.

In the village where I live, there are more than 200 families. We do not belong to one family, but we are one. We are not each to his own family, but one family. Let us look deeper into this. We are one family, one family even though we are from different places, and from different lands. We are all alike. We love happiness, we dislike sorrow, because of this we do not persecute each other. We shall be a help to each other. We are brothers and sisters. This is what I am trying to make people understand.

—What do you get from Buddhism? We are impressed in your talk, and would like to hear from you so that it would be fruitful for us.

In this conversation, Bhikkhu Khamkien is conveying to us the fruits of his inner experiences (life of meditation).

—Before, it seemed to me that I was put in a cage or prison, being placed in one particular spot. It seemed as if I did not know much. I did not see, I did not understand about my own thought. When there was anger, I thought it was really me. In fact, it was not. When we come to really study it, especially the *satipatthana* (the ground of awareness, but whatever you may call it, the point is to be aware of yourself) if you are aware of yourself, then anger will disappear. You should develop awareness of yourself by being aware of all your bodily movements such as turning your hands, raising and lowering your forearms, walking forward and back, turning and nodding your head, blinking your eyes, opening your mouth, inhaling, exhaling, swallowing saliva, etc. You must be aware of all these movements, and this awareness is called *sati* (mindfulness). When you have awareness of yourself, the unawareness, which is called *moha* or delusion will disappear. When we are fully aware of ourselves, there arises a certain kind of *paññā* (wisdom) in the mind, that knows reality as it is (as seen in the video, they are doing it right now, walking and sitting.) Let's study into this.

If everybody sees his own life, speaking of this unhappiness, (sorrow) doing "*satipatthana*", it seemed as if there are no more work, no more burden to do, no worry, nor anguish, ...none (burden lightened), no duty anymore, no more other things. Before, there was anxiety, this and that, anguished, thinking of this and that, happiness, sorrow, sometimes sad, sometimes happy, but, now no more. It is constantly calm, constant calmness, as if I have no more burden to carry. I've found already that my whole life will be spent for others and not for myself. If everybody comes to understand this, that we are one in one land, one in brotherhood and sisterhood and then love ...is born. Charity, compassion,is born, and also helping each other, these become a reality and not only that, there is still more. We shall not help only relatives, but we help everyone, every nation, every language, with no exception. Nothing for our own benefit. There will be no more sorrow, no more problems, either in body or in spirit ... no more. Wherever I'll be, there will be calmness. Whether I live in the forest, or in the village, or in the temple, I find calmness, ...calmness. It is as if it is oneness. There will be no difference whether I'll be in the house, in the temple, or wherever it is, there will be no problem, no anxiety. In the spiritual sense how are we going to do to help other people to reach this stage? We must help one another. There must be cooperation among us. We must help each other in our Buddhist way. Also the Christians, the Muslims whatever their cultural or religious affiliations, they could help each other in their own ways. The teaching of each religion is very useful, helping each other for the good of common humanity.

I am interested in Christianity. There were some whom I had met. Sometimes we learn from them. Next week, I'm going to Chiengrai. I am going to meet one person, a Christian. I learned from him also, especially as regards the rural development. I do not have experience of some work that are academic but I have experience of inner aspect, that is *liberation*, but in terms of rural development, I have yet more to learn.

In the inner spiritual sense I think we are adequate.

—We would like to ask you how do you work out your spiritual aspect concerning prayer and helping the villagers?

—In my village, I used to teach them spiritually beforehand, so that when they are ready to do whatever they want to do, we teach them to earn their living. They learned the basic steps first. I taught them the walking meditation, to begin with. Then we shall bring mindfulness into their work, whether they are farmers, traders, policemen, soldiers, teachers or the general public, they have used this method of meditation "*satipatthana*". To have awareness, constant consciousness, (if you practice this meditation continuously like a chain that is to develop *sati*-awareness or consciousness, then in at most 3 years sorrow will be diminished by 60% and in some cases completely eliminated. Some may achieve this in as little as one year or even 90 days) so that anytime that this emotion (an uncontrolled vice or negative motion) comes up, they would be aware of it. Then they shall learn the stages of this emotion or the mood of the mind. The villagers then would have the actual experiences and they will bring this into their own daily life such as, how to live together in group.

Before, they did not know the stages of their own stability of mind. So, we brought this method to them "*the way*" and how to live together. When they know each other, they could become brothers and sisters, forgive one another, and work together; then fruits are born consequently. They have cooperatives, rice bank, other agricultural ventures together, because of working closely together, compassion is born amongst them and the more they feel to become brothers and sisters, help each other in rural development and public utilities. Anything that will be useful they will start to put into practice from their own life experiences and bring "*the way*" into their other works. Those who come here are teachers, farmers, soldiers, policemen, fathers, mothers, etc. They all adopt this method of meditation. It is suitable to every career, for all ages, male or female alike. I've already mentioned in the

beginning that the Dhamma teaching is very suitable for every one. Sometimes, when we see the problem, we help to solve the problem.

—We are very impressed with your talk. Before ending this talk, we would like Than Archarn (teacher) to give us some thoughts or something special for us as a Christian.

—I have said many times in the subject of teaching of any religion. I really had this feeling, not because I am talking in front of you or not talking to all of you, it's this. This thought always had been with me, when I eventually came to understand the real Dhamma. Oh, everyone is alike. One who loves happiness, dislikes *dukkha* (sorrow). One does not want to persecute others. Whatever religion, it teaches people to do good, to avoid evil, making merits. I have both taught spiritual growth and material development to the rural villages. There were times, that I have met Christians and Muslims. From my heart, I do not mind whether they were Buddhists, Christians or Muslims. I wish we have a mutual cooperation. Let us help mankind away from *dukkha* (sorrow). We should not persecute each other, there should be no jealousy amongst us. I teach them all about this whether they are Christians, Muslims or Buddhists, that we are all human beings.

So, let us spend our life together, not only in this country. To love oneself, to love one's family, to love men and women of the world, ... the whole world, taking responsibility of the world.

To spread this teaching, to help your fellowmen, it is our direct responsibility. It is not a question of asking or begging... The real teaching of religion is in the present moment. If any problem arises, we help to solve, and find the solution. Help each other solve the problem. If they do not yet see the problem and if we have seen the problem before them, we should gently point out, and give advice to enable them to realize what the problem is. Sometimes, people are so immersed in their own mistakes, that they do not see they are at fault. We should help them to realize, telling them, whether it was right to behave like that.

Sometimes disputes arise among the people. I listen and understand their problem whether it is a family quarrel or social conflicts. I have come to know and listen to their problems. Sometimes I could help them to find also in earning their living. If only we could understand how to live together really as fellowmen!

Not so long ago, I heard an unpleasant news between Christians and Buddhists. I do not see, why we took some supposed words... so seriously and create hatred. If only everyone understands reality words created to classify people cannot rule over us. Some people are thinking that the Christians are getting more people to join their creed. Actually, it is good, if anyone can teach or is able to teach anyone how to liberate from sorrow, how to live in unity like brothers and sisters, then why was it not good? It is good as well. It is not a question of religion in being a Christian or a Buddhist, never, never. Now, I'd see that everything is improving.

For some people like you ...(pointed to the Bishop and people around him) could be like Bodhisatvas that is if you sacrifice your lives for the benefit of others. Not so long ago, there were young people, young boys and girls who came to help the villagers in many things, who have been granted some funds from abroad, ... to give a hand, help.... They really sacrificed themselves for the people. We are monks, we cannot just sit and sleep. We have privileges. They gave us free rice. They gave us free food. The house is free. The medicine is also free. Someone is behind these scenes to make life convenient for us. We just cannot bear doing nothing, we have to help mankind. As I told you, I offer my life for others, not acquiring my own personal benefits. Some people see the monk, even some Buddhists do not understand these questions. There are many more... many more. They become monks just to do some ritual ceremonies only and to obtain fortune and respect, praise and flattery from others. But a few of them, about 5%, would go and cooperate with the people and suffer with them.

I have some friends, they misunderstood me of having no position. I

am not a religious superior over the district or the commune. I am none of these. Since the day I was ordained...spiritual inner things are the only things I was searching for. The rest are not important. Few people would come to realize enough that one's life must have meaning, useful, valuable, and that there is only these things ... to help each other, and to give charity.

Supposing we are able to teach one friend to become educated, it is like making merit. It is like gaining great merit to be able to teach an uneducated person to become a little bit educated. To be able to convert a criminal to be a good person, to be able to stop people that are going to kill each other to lay down their weapons. This is making merit, the highest merit. Not only by words. To teach one who does not know what is right and what is wrong and to teach them what is sin and what is merit. To teach them living in the right path. This is what I, myself, would like to do. There are many other activities that are already performed by other monks in different ways. But, this is my path. I would liberate them from sorrow so that they would become wiser. To become more like brothers and sisters.

This is what I have in mind. I would like to spend the rest of my life to work at this task until my life ends.

We, in Thailand, entrust to you, missionary, who came to Thailand, (pointed to Norma) to help people to understand one another. Each one giving a helping hand to all. It does not matter if you are a Christian or Muslim, we must help one another ...This is what is in my thought.

—After listening to your answers, we feel that Christianity or Buddhism, every religion alike, teaches us to be brothers and sisters, to avoid bad, by doing good. To live together in peace.

On this occasion, we wish to thank you very much, for your sharing and spiritual food for thought for us Christians, especially Christians in the Philippines who want to know more about Buddhism. For sure, that we have gained much from your talk, although we are having different religions, we should be in good rapport with one

another, as you have said. We shall keep on and go ahead with this relationship. As you have mentioned, let us help each other in this way, so that our country will be in progress. The world will have no war, if there is no racial discrimination, no division amongst the west and the east, the north and the south which exist now at present, then we could live in real peace.

We wish you all the best of strength for your health and mind and rich in wisdom, so that you will be beneficial to the country, Thailand, so that everything will be according to your teaching. Thank you very much.

—I am also very happy to come to meet with Christians and elders of the Christian community. I have never hoped that I would have the chance to come and meet with you. It is my good fortune. Those things which I have said, perhaps, there might be some things which are not suitable. We ask for your forgiveness at this moment. And if

anything is beneficial, then, let this blessing come to you, to everyone of you, in the west, in the east.

Let us be brothers and sisters until the end of our lives. We must not come into dispute. If we really work hard in our teachings, our home would not be in need of keys, no need to close doors, no thieves. I dare say to you, if one knows the way to liberation, there is no need of prison, no policeman, no soldier ... no need. There will be only brothers and sisters.

To be able to succeed in this, how are we going to do?

We entrust this to the leaders of each religion to sacrifice their lives to spread the teachings of their masters. Give a hand, with our patience, our perseverance, it will probably succeed one of these days.

May you be happy and sawasdee to all of us.

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WALES AND THE WORLD

Fond memories

One of Lampeter's most distinguished former students, Thai scholar Sulak Sivaraksa went back to college to say thank you to the friends who rallied round him when he stood trial last year.

Sulak, a lawyer and social reform campaigner in Thailand, faced a maximum gaol sentence of 30 years on a charge of high treason following the publication of his book *Unmasking Thai Society*.

But following an energetic campaign backed by Amnesty International, and led by St. David's University College's principal, Professor Brian Morris, and a fellow former Lampeter student, Bob McCloy, who is now director of education and recreation at Kingston upon Thames, Sulak was freed and the case against him dropped.

"No official reasons for the decision have ever been given, but I believe it was because of International pressure," Sulak told me.

"It was wonderful to have the support of so many people, and coming back to

Lampeter is just like coming home. To me, the place means friendship."

Sulak has fond memories of his days in Lampeter in the Fifties and was the college's first Asian student. He took his studies seriously, but joined Bob McCloy, the then president of the students' union, in organising the famous Cheese Pie rebellion which saw the once staple dish on the college's menu banished for ever.

After lunch with Professor Morris, Sulak revealed, he attributed his popularity during his student days to the fact that he had a ground floor room on the college's campus.

"In those days we had a strict evening curfew, and I was always being woken up by students knocking on the window so they could crawl in through my room," he explained.

Today's students enjoy a far freer life at the university, and yesterday Sulak told them about life and the social conflict of his home country.

From Lampeter, Sulak will travel to London and then on to Europe where he will give several lectures for Amnesty International.

Westgate

Visit in Tübingen

Sulak Sivaraksa

Buddha as an Example

In our country when we think of a Buddhist, we tend to think of a monk in saffron robe retired into himself rather than a social reformer. Sulak Sivaraksa is a convinced Buddhist and a committed democrat. The 52-year-old guest comes from Thailand, prefers, however, to call it Siam according to the old custom. In his opinion, the name "Thailand" is "undemocratic". It was not until 1939 when a fascist military dictator of the Pan Thai Movement converted this country in Southeast Asia to a new name with which the territorial claim for almost the whole Southeast Asia is linked.

Sivaraksa is one of the most prominent representatives of the Buddhist laymen and coordinator of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, an organization active in 17 Asian countries. Among other things ACFOD trains community workers for rural population in the region. At present he takes part in a Buddhist-Christian Dialogue in Bad Boll. Monday evening, on invitation of the Institute for Ecumenical Research, he gave a speech in lecture room 22, Kupfer Building.

In his fight for social justice and democracy in a country ruled by military regime, Sivaraksa looks up to "Buddha as an example". One must try, "to be calm, not to hurt the enemy", and always "keep the attitude of active compassion", especially

towards the poor. In Siam there are enough poor people. "We have twice as many prostitutes as monks. There is plenty to eat. Rice is exported; yet sixty percents of the population are malnourished". The government works for its own pocket and not for the people's well-being. Ordinary people could develop a self-consciousness against that only when they "rouse what is really Siamese" against the overflow of western culture. That is where the Buddhist spirituality plays a role.

The community workers trained by Sivaraksa's organization are practical examples of this program. These young people go to live with the farmers for one or two years, learn from them and at the same time teach them. They should help the farmers, for example, with book-keeping or with contract deals, and should see to it that the goods or medicine they get distributed free of charge really go to those in need and do not disappear into the pockets of corrupted civil servants.

This way of confronting capitalization of the country holds Sivaraksa far more proper than the way the young Siamese used to do in the seventies, "They went to the jungle thinking that Marxism was the answer". Nothing against the analytical method of Marxism, "it is very helpful," but the practical model of class-struggle only leads to situations, "in which the oppressed become the oppressors. Just have a look at Vietnam, for example"

He has sympathy for Christian theologians who fight for liberation in the Philippines. The fact that one sides with the op-

pressed means for him the beginning of a dialogue between different religions. He can understand why the Christians in the Philippines take up arms to fight the dictator there. Sivaraksa, however, chooses another way.

Despite his advocacy for non-violence, he had to flee abroad for 2 years for the first time after the military coup d'état in 1976. One of his books, in which the king, among others, is criticized, was confiscated last year; he himself was arrested. He thanks friends abroad whose intervention had, last but not least, helped his case so that he was set free again.

A success that Sivaraksa can already cite with certainty is the following: The medical methods of the Buddhist monks which once were forbidden by the Ministry of Public Health in favor of westernization, and which were replaced by imported medicine too expensive for most people, are now being accepted again. Even medical students are sent to learn from the monks. "So just as there are barefoot doctors in China, we will have bareheaded doctors in Siam"

*From: Tübingen/Lokale Kultur
Saturday, May 4, 1985*



Sulak speaks

At a recent meeting in London, co-sponsored by the Thai Development Information Service and *Inside Asia*, Sulak Sivaraksa, director of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, outlined his views on recent events in Thai political society. Sulak himself was arrested last year, and held for several weeks before his case was finally dropped (see *Inside Asia*, No. 1, Nov./Dec. 1984). A shortened version of his talk is given below.

THE FORTUNATE or unfortunate thing about my case is that I was well known. But what about those who are not known? They are being repressed much more ruthlessly. And they are not mentioned—not even by the local press. Local reporters, if they report these things, are even shot dead; this is not mentioned in the national press either. For this reason we need friends abroad, who know us and relate to us, and can apply some pressure.

The main obstacle in development or humanitarian work in Asia is, without fail, the powers-that-be. They think that when you work with grassroots people—the farmers and fishermen—you will teach them to rebel against the government. For instance my organization, ACFOD, the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, brings small people together from across Asia. (The rich people in any case get together by themselves). Recently we had an international meeting of small fishermen, in Rayong in eastern Siam. It was attended by a man from Songkhla. As soon as

he returned, the police questioned him: 'You are just a fisherman; why did you go to a meeting? Why do you meet people from other countries? To rebel?' This is not an isolated instance, it's usual.

Army factions

As I predicted last May, things began to get rough. Prem retired from the army, so he had no real power base—he must be supported by somebody in the army. The army has been running Siam uninterrupted since 1947. Of course, we have had 'democratic' window-dressing—a cabinet and civilian ministers—but they don't mean a great deal. Since the military is the real power, the trouble starts when it is not united: then it is not clear who succeeds whom.

Prem is a very clever politician and has links with enough power in the army to support him. But now General Arthit is impatient to succeed Prem. Arthit tried to have the constitution amended because at present it doesn't allow a serving military officer or civil servant to hold a political post, but he failed. So, for Arthit to topple Prem, a coup is necessary.

In July, 22 suspected communists in Bangkok were arrested. There was disagreement within the army about this. Prem had offered an amnesty to the communists, saying in effect 'Although you have communist sympathies, if you come back to our fold you will be forgiven. And for those who have not yet decided, we will give you time to think about it, then you can come back.' In late June or early July there were supposedly a number of top communist ac-

tivists in town; and part of the army (particularly Arthit's faction) said 'We must arrest those people', while another group, associated with Prem, said 'No, let them be—they may decide to join us.' While the argument was going on, those who were supposed to be the big shots in the CPT (Communist Party of Thailand) escaped, so they felt they had to arrest the others, 22 in all.

Arthit's group felt that Prem's faction had made a big mistake in letting the big shots escape, and Prem's assistant, Chaowalit, was even accused of being a communist sympathizer himself.

Excuse for a coup

As the arrests did not produce any dramatic events more ensued. That was when I entered the arena. At first they were going to charge me with being a communist; but when they consulted the Special Branch police, the CID and the Public Prosecutor's Department, they were told: 'You can't accuse Sulak of being a communist, people will just laugh!' That's why the *lèse majesté* charge was trumped up. Even so, all these three departments (and Prem) felt that I should not be arrested, but the other side argued 'You people are too legalistic, too cautious: last time, those leaders escaped, so now we should go ahead.' And I was arrested. I felt they were trying to stir up an excuse for a coup; but it didn't work.

They were thinking of further arrests. Kraisak Churnhavan was threatened...and the directors of the Social Science Research Institutes at Thammasat and Chulalongkorn Universities, and even the Rector of Thammasat

was threatened with arrest. Why? The army people are no fools—they wanted to stir up popular demonstrations and disorder.

Prem was now politically and physically very weak, but the Americans came to his aid. He went to the USA for an operation—I think on political grounds as well as medical grounds. Before his departure, Prem gave strict instructions to Arthit not to interfere with the government—and insisted that the case against me should be dropped. At least, so I was told. But Arthit is supreme commander, army commander-in-chief and also the *puraksa phranakorn* (commander-in-charge of security in the capital) and so has a lot of authority, especially since Bangkok is under a declared 'state of emergency'. He simply ignored Prem's instructions and so the case went on.

To be blunt, I think Prem wasn't quite sure where the Palace stood. Arthit is supposed to be very close to the Palace, and Prem may have thought that the Palace was backing Arthit. And Arthit played that game very cleverly.

Royal rebuttal

On the day Prem returned from America, I appeared in court. We shared the headlines. I heard afterwards that Arthit and Prem had a heated argument for over two hours about poor Sulak—not that either of them like me! I think that it was at this point that international pressure was influential. The King let it be known that he was not backing Arthit in my particular case. He felt embarrassed that his name had been used for political

easons. Prem derived support from this, and in any event was getting stronger, and the case against me was dropped.

Then Arthit blundered by criticizing the devaluation of the baht, and many people thought that he was finished, that he might not even have his term as supreme commander extended. But those who thought that don't understand Thai subtlety. Of course, Arthit's remark was a bit extreme. But he still had his factional support and perhaps even Prem needs Arthit's faction to balance some of the people around him. And people high above Prem may need other factions around as a counter-balance too. So Arthit has now reemerged and has had his term extended.

When you look at politics at the top, they are just trying to balance power—and meanwhile the people suffer more and more. Economically things are much worse; politically things are no better; and if you try to do something yourselves, they watch you.

Which way for us?

But for those of us who feel that the only alternative future for the country is with the people, at the grassroots, it is essential to build up the base. The top people—look up at them, try to understand them, keep them (in Buddhist terms) in 'sympathetic joy'—that is, hope they won't kill each other too much! Meanwhile we try to protect ourselves from being killed, and do something so that our people can live meaningfully, with dignity.'

At one time, we thought Western capitalism would be an

answer. When John Bowring came and forced King Mongkut to open the country, we were proud that we retained our independence unlike all our neighbours—but I think it was a false independence. This is in fact what I went to gaol for: I said I thought the princes and kings later on admired the West too much, and thought that Western technology would help us. It didn't. Now the poor and the middle class imitate the rich—and the rich imitate the West. The result, I think, is a muddle.

Many of us feel communism is not an answer either, though marxist analysis may be useful. In the 1970s our youngsters thought that communism would be the answer. Many went into the jungle... though perhaps too they didn't have a choice. Now many of them are disillusioned. We will have to go along the capitalist road for many years to come. We must not just abandon one road for the other, like Deng Xiaoping abandoning Marxism in favour of capitalism, or vice-versa.

For many of us, particularly Thai Buddhists, we feel that we must go back to our own cultural roots, to translate and transform them to the modern period. Buddhism is important for us, but we must not be pure, absolutist Buddhists. We must work with Christian and Muslim friends, and put our hearts and minds together to solve our problems indigenously, and yet learn from beyond our national, and beyond our cultural and religious traditions.

Sulak Sivaraksa is co-ordinator of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, based

in Bangkok. He is a prolific writer on social and philosophical subjects and has played a prominent role in building links between voluntary organizations in

Thailand and Europe.

Reprinted from *Inside Asia*, London June - August 1985, nos. 3-4, £ 1.50 per copy

BOOK REVIEWS

Siamese Resurgence :
by S. Sivaraksa, ACFOD
1985 (463 pp) Distributed
by Suksit Siam, Bangkok

The sub-title: "A Thai Buddhist Voice on Asia and a World of Change" indicates the direction of the contents of the book. It actually is a collection of papers, addresses and notes of interviews Mr. Sivaraksa had given between November 1980 and December 1984, relevantly grouped into five sections viz: (i) Buddhism and Society; (ii) Buddhist Perspectives and Development; (iii) Culture and Asia; (iv) Some Leading Siamese Personalities, and (v) Miscellaneous..

Archarn Sulak is a man of strong convictions and he brings his scholarship to bear on the courageous arguments he gives drawing on history, religion and current affairs of his beloved nation. He would not allow himself to be swayed by majority opinion or even usage when he insists on referring to his country as *Siam* and not as "Thailand" which he disapproves at the outset as being a hybrid, anglicised word. Accordingly the title of the publication is based on the historical name: *Siam* rather than the imposed innovation after the 1947 *coup d'etat*.

The hard-hitting dissents Archarn Sulak expressed either in interpreting national history or in expounding religious concepts are significant indications of the role he plays in society often at great personal and material costs. In many ways he makes his mark as an orthodox traditionalist and his explanations about Buddhism are straight communication of the canons even in terms of the vocabulary and imagery. This makes it all the more interesting for the reader as one invariably hears the orthodox interpreter of the age old religion on the one hand and the refreshing thinker who takes seriously the application of the faith to contemporary social and human challenges on the other.

In the opening section on Buddhism and society, the very first chapter went straight to the core of Buddhist teachings viz. the four noble truths, the three signs of being, the chain of causation, the eightfold path and the four states of sublime conditions.

Having established the fundamental doctrines, the stimulating arrangement of the contents brings the reader face to face with the hard knocks Archarn Sulak administered against the malpractices in Buddhism. The usual impressions of many

about Buddhism as an other-worldly religion seeking personal escape from involvement in society was disproved by his concrete case-stories of social service rendered by the monks including an old monk in his neighbourhood, who looks after the poor of his native region and those who are in serious struggles of life after migrating to the metropolis. Such concern for society instead of turning one's back on it and the concern for politics or economics were explained as *being based on Buddhist religion*.

His discerning comments and study are not only for his own religion but also for Christianity as he addresses western audiences. For someone outside another faith (in this case the Christian faith) to courageously declare that western civilization is eroding Christianity (as he did in his chapter on "Quality of Life") manifests the keenness of his observations and the degree of his discerning mind.

The sections on "Culture and Asia" and "Leading Siamese Personalities" contain important scholarly corrections to readings in Siamese history and these will help later Thai generations to assess persons and events in their history with alertness. The closing section though made up of miscellaneous topics still contribute to the theme of the publication.

The reader after going through the last pages of the collection may still entertain the question why the term "resurgence" appears in the title of the book. One may argue that the religious and social critic's pen might have pointed out more of 'degeneration' than of 'resur-

gence' among his people as he scans national history and the horizon. But there is no doubt that the author is seeking to highlight the philosophical, cultural and historical distinctions of the Thai heritage. In so doing he is also challenging his own people and at the same time his fellow Asians, to manifest and bring about the "resurgence" that is indicated both as a heritage and an investment. The accounts narrated and the thoughts shared are surely worthy of deep reflection and consideration for serious application.

Kyaw Than
Mahidol University
Bangkok

Puey Ungphakorn, A Siamese for All Seasons

(Komol Keemthong Foundation, Bangkok, 6 October 1981), pp. 351

Puey Ungphakorn, A Siamese for All Seasons is a collection of articles by and about Dr. Puey Ungphakorn, one of the outstanding leaders of present-day Thailand. The book takes the reader on an exciting journey through recent Thai history, starting with Dr. Puey's experiences in the Free Thai Movement during World War II, his struggles to help build a truly democratic Thailand with a strong and just economy, and his deeply personal views of the events that led up to and through the events of October 1976.

For serious students of Thailand who wish to better

understand recent Thai history, and who would like to better know one of the figures who played such an important part in that history, this book is a must.

Dr. Puey is an economist, and served as Governor of the Bank of Thailand from 1959 to 1971 and later as economic adviser to the government of Mr. Sanya Dharmasakti. He was later to also serve as the Rector of Thammasat University, a post which he was holding when the university was put to siege by rightist elements and many students killed, hanged and burned. Dr. Puey left the country at that time and went to England where he now lives. Included in this book is an article written by a Thai journalist who recently visited Dr. Puey in England, and through that article one can see the fierce love and loyalty which Dr. Puey still holds for his beloved Thailand.

Dr. Puey's clear and strong analysis of the Thai situation, and his welcome sense of humor make this book easy reading, yet powerful and thought-provoking.

Max Ediger

Church of Christ in Thailand
From *Journal of the Siam Society*
1982

ภาพพุทธประวัติ วัดทองนพคุณ

*Painted Sculpture on the
Life of the Buddha-folk Art
at Wat Thongnopakun*
(Matichon Publishing
House, Bangkok, 1983)

This is a beautiful book of

folk art created in 1915 by a group of independent craftsmen at Ban Chang Lor in Thonburi, which was and still is a community specialized in producing Buddhist sculpture. It was the Honorable Mrs. Lom Hemajayati, benefactress of Wat Thongnopakun who paid for the series of 90 painted sculpture, decorating the Preaching Hall of the Wat, which she helped in its reconstruction. Mrs. Lom was a millionairess and a close friend of King Chulalongkorn.

Last year, the old Preaching Hall was in a declining state beyond repair, so the Abbot had it removed and rebuilt on a new site. The painted sculpture was well preserved and photographs were taken of them by members of the Thai Inter Religious Commission for Development, before they were redecorated at the new Preaching Hall.

Last year being the Bangkok Bicentennial Anniversary, the Association of Siamese Architects decided to ask its Honorary Member, H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, to present awards to those who preserved their buildings properly, especially the buildings with artistic and historical values. Wat Thongnopakun was the only temple which received the award for looking after the consecrated Assembly Hall as it deserved.

As a consequence, the Association of Siamese Architects in collaboration with the Siam Society asked H.R.H., who is also Vice Patron of the Society, to present the *Kathina* Robes to the temple, which the Princess did on 5th November 1983.

On this occasion, she also

presented the *Pha Pa* (Forest Robes) to the Abbot and raised the *Chow Fa* (Sky Tassel) of the new Preaching Hall. This book was published on that special occasion, with some financial assistance from the descendant of the Hon. Mrs. Lom Hemajayati and from the Jim Thompson Foundation.

The book, however, does not mention who the editor was but it is not difficult to guess about this anonymous editor. As the book was produced in a hurry in order to present it in time to Her Royal Highness, it is not without major printing errors. Let us hope that the Publishing House will take its time to present a new edition to the public with no printing errors at all.

Mr. Pong Sengking of Silpakorn University was responsible for the Thai text, which he did very well. He traced the uniqueness of this type of folk art from this Wat to another at Samudrasongkram province to find out that it was the same benefactress, through a monk at Wat Thongnopakun, that a series of 84 pictures were executed three years later at the temple of that monk's birthplace.

The English text is much shorter and was the responsibility of a few Thai scholars who tried their best to present the Thai narration on the life of the Buddha written in the archaic style of the early Bangkok period to the English reading public. The photographers and designers of the book should indeed be commended in producing a beautiful book for us.

Had all these people taken their time in producing the book, we would really have a wonder-

ful gift similar to the gift of Dhamma as expressed through the allegorical life of the Buddha decorating the Preaching Hall of Wat Thongnopakun. As it is, it shows human imperfection,

which can be improved.

Phra Pracha Pasannadhammo

Suan Mokh Kao,

Pumriang, Jaiya

From Journal of the Siam Society
1983

Please call me by my true names

Do not say that I'll depart tomorrow
because even today I still arrive.

Look deeply: I arrive in every second
to be a bud on a spring branch,
to be a tiny bird, with wings still fragile,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,
in order to fear and to hope,
the rhythm of my heart is the birth and death
of all that are alive.

I am the mayfly metamorphosing on the
surface of the river,
and I am the bird which, when spring comes,
arrives in time to eat the mayfly.

I am a frog swimming happily in the clear water
of a pond,
and I am the grass-snake who, approaching
in silence, feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks,
and I am the arms merchant, selling deadly
weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve year-old girl, refugee on a
small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean after being
raped by a sea pirate,
and I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable
of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo, with plenty
of power in my hands,
and I am the man who has to pay his "debt
of blood" to my people,
dying slowly in a forced labor camp.

My joy is like spring, so warm it makes
flowers bloom in all walks of life.
My pain is like a river of tears, so full it fills
all four oceans.

Please call me by my true names, so I can hear
all my cries and laughs at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names, so I can wake
up and so the door of my heart can be left
open, the door of compassion.

Thich Nhat Hanh

The Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Buddhist Era seems to be one year later than that of Burma, Srilanka and India. In fact this is not so. The difference is that while the latter regards the year of the Maha Parinibbana as B.E.I, the former takes it to be the first anniversary after the Master's Passing Away. For example this year is B.E. 2528 according to the Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Calendar, but it is B.E. 2529 according to the Burmese, Ceylonese and Indian Calendar.



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