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Against War and Structural Violence



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in Kyoto*

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4 Editorial Notes

4 Obituaries Gedong Oka & Ivan Illich

Country Reports

5 BURMA: Burmese villagers face Unocal in US court

*Kenny Bruno and
John Cheverie*

6 BURMA: TotalFinaElf in the line of fire

Vasana Chinvarakorn

10 BURMA: Tales from the border

Lodi Gyari

13 TIBET: Statement by special envoy

100 Nobel Laureates

14 INTERNATIONAL: The Dispossessed

FAIR

16 IRAQ: Iraq in the mainstream mass media

Phyllis Bennis

17 IRAQ: Terror war

INEB

22 Letter from INEB Secretariat Office

22 The case against McDonald's

24 Buddhism at a crossroads

26 Spirituality and homosexuality

27 Religion into politics

*Phra Paisal Visalo
Phra Chai Waradhammo
Wolfgang R. Schmidt*

SEM

30 It's not about fatalism

31 Association Francois-Xavier Bagnoud

32 North-South Prize 2002

33 THE PETITION for individual persons

Thanissaro Bhikkhu

Sulak Sivaraksa

35 Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects

Atsushi Tokinoya

36 Globalization and extreme modernism

42 Sulak Sivaraksa gives lecture on Buddhism and 9/11

Megan Mills

43 Free market will enslave us all

Chris Bunting

45 The standpoint of the Foreign Ministry

47 Don Swearer: A kalayanamitta

48 Michael Baumann

50 Breathing lessons

51 Peter Lawrence Pond

Letters

Book Reviews

Recommended Readings

* Postage stamp issued to commemorate Rama V's 150th natal anniversary.

PEACE

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The goals of INEB are to:

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

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Recorded speech by Aung San Suu Kyi for a conference held by Forum Asia Democracy at the European Parliament in Brussels, September 16-17, 2002.

It's an honor to welcome the participants of the conference on "Southeast Asia, Democracy and Civil Liberty Denied in Burma, Laos, and Vietnam."

It is deeply encouraging to know that there are people like you who care about our liberty and rights. We have struggled for democracy in Burma for more than a decade and during this time we have been strengthened by the support of friends and well-wishers from across the globe.

We know that our demands are not unreasonable, we are simply asking for the right of human beings to live lives coherent to the human dignity. Democracy and civil liberties are basic requirements for the survival of human dignity. I believe that this conference will contribute to a better understanding of the problems we have to face and the discussion of possible solutions will help the process of democratization to move forward.

We do not just need to change, we need to speedy change, that our people might be able to fulfill the potential and help make this world a happier place.

We have no time to lose, already too much have been lost. Therefore, I would like to urge you to increase your efforts to bring democracy and civil liberty to those countries where it is denied at present.

Thank you for your dedication to the cause of human dignity and human happiness.

I look forward to the time when we in Burma can also contribute towards the increase of human dignity and human happiness all over the world.

Thank you very much.

Editorial Notes

The threat of the US-led war against Iraq is far from over. UN arms inspectors are in Iraq, and any minor incident may perhaps serve as the pretext for an itching and trigger happy Washington to attack Iraq—again in the name of protecting the world from Evil. Why is the same role always assigned to the same side? Who cannot miss this constancy—this racial constancy—in humanitarian interventions as well as in the ongoing war against the “axis of evil”? Many articles in this issue of *Seed of Peace* deal with the situation in Iraq and the war against terrorism, as usual offering views that are off-center. Another main issue raised in this issue is the dismal situation in Burma, and evidence of corporate complicity in human rights abuses there. If Unocal and Total, among others, are found guilty for their involvement in human rights abuses in Burma, then both would be landmark decisions that will contribute to greater corporate accountability and surveillance: not only are states violent, global corporations are likewise.

In November 2002 our old friend, George Willoughby, a pioneer in nonviolent movement, received the Prestigious Jammal Bajai award from the Vice President of India in Mumbai. George is 90 years old now but is still vigorous in his commitment for global justice. His wife, Lillian, has non-violently opposed war against Iraq.

In Memory of Mrs. Gedong Bagoes Oka

She was a tiny but powerful person. Participants of the ‘Alternatives to Consumerism’ gathering in Bangkok, 1997, will remember Mrs. Oka from Bali, Indonesia. She founded and inspired Gandhi Ashram in Candi Dasa, a quiet resort on the east coast of Bali. ‘Ibu’ as she was called was a spiritual guide, mother and host for many rebellious souls, young and old.

Together with her husband she fiercely resisted the Dutch occupation of Indonesia. However her life was devoted to Non-Violence or as she insisted to have it called: ‘Ahimsa’. She demonstrated Gandhian lifestyle in her Ashram, situated at a sacred lagoon that releases its spring waters into the sea. Gandhi Ashram offers refuge for students and young people from the Eastern islands. She taught the community a holistic rhythm of Hindu ritual, chanting, interreligious communication, yoga, work and study and delicious vegetarian meals prepared from the organic gardens. Many guests have spent precious time in contemplation in one of the cottages with view of the sea.

One of Ibu’s strong statements was that consumerism was more damaging for Balinese culture than colonialism. The last meeting in the Gandhi Ashram being organized in cooperation with her friends from Thailand was dedicated to the preparation of the Banduang II conference in 2005. We hope the Ashram will continue to be a meeting-place of love and inspiration in honour of Ibu’s courageous worldview.

Hans van Willenswaard

Ivan Illich

died on December 11, 2002

Born in Vienna in 1926, Illich grew up in south-central Europe. He studied natural science, philosophy, theology, and history. During the 1950s he worked as a parish priest among Puerto Ricans in New York City, then served as vice-rector of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico. During the 1960s he founded centers for cross-cultural studies, first in Puerto Rico then in Cuernavaca, Mexico. During the 1970s his Centro Intercultural de Documentacion (CIDOC) became an internationally respected focus for intellectual discussion. Since the 1980s he has divided his time between Mexico, the United States, and Germany. He currently holds an appointment as Visiting Professor of Philosophy and of Science, Technology, and Society at Penn State. He also teaches at the University of Bremen.

Illich’s radical anarchist views first became widely known through a set of four books published during the early 1970s: *Deschooling Society* (1971), *Tools for Conviviality* (1973), *Energy and Equity* (1974), and *Medical Nemesis* (1976). *Tools* is the most general statement of Illich’s ideas. The other three volumes expand on examples sketched there in order to critique what he calls “radical monopolies” and “counter productivity” in the technologies of education, energy consumption, and medical treatment. This critique applies equally to both the so-called “developed” and the “developing” worlds, but in different ways to each.

BURMA

Burmese villagers face Unocal in US court

Human rights campaigners in the United States and Thailand are jubilant over a US court's decision on Sept 18, in a landmark human rights case.

The US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals in California, has set a remarkable precedent with its recent decision to give a go-ahead to the *Doe vs Unocal* case, in which the energy giant was alleged as being complicit in human rights abuses by the Rangoon regime.

The case, which revolves around events during the construction of the Yadana natural gas pipeline in southern Burma and the security arrangements for that pipeline, is remarkable for several reasons.

The defendant, Unocal, is based in the US, while the events in question took place in Burma. Because of US legal doctrine, it has been very difficult to bring cases from other countries to US courts, even when US defendants are central to the case. The *Doe vs Unocal* decision has overcome this obstacle.

The allegations include human rights abuses in violation of international law, including forced labour, rape and murder. Until recently, only nation-states were considered potential perpetrators of human rights crimes. An earlier decision in the case recognised that corporations are potentially responsible for grave human rights violations. The recent decision is critically important because it recognised that Unocal can be held liable for aiding and abetting abuses committed by the Burmese

military.

The recent decision has built on the earlier decision by further expanding the reach of the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) over corporate defendants.

The ATCA allows non-US residents to sue in US courts for violations of international law.

Eleven anonymous Burmese villagers, members of ethnic minorities such as the Karen, are the plaintiffs against a powerful US oil corporation, Unocal. These plaintiffs, for whom it is too dangerous to reveal their names, now live as anonymous refugees in Thailand. These victims are as distant from the trappings of power as any citizens on the planet, yet they will now get a chance to face wealthy oil executives in federal court alleging human rights abuses in violation of international law.

Until Sept 18, it looked like that would never happen. Two years ago, a Federal District Court judge dismissed the case, saying that while "Unocal knew or should have known" that the Burmese military "did commit, was committing and would continue to commit" gross human rights abuses, the company could not be held liable because it did not control or direct the Burmese military in committing those acts.

That decision left the official position of the US judiciary awkwardly out of alignment with traditional concepts of law and with common ethical sense. The lower court ruling held that even though Unocal knew of, and benefited from, the brutal

and illegal acts of its business partner, the Burmese army, Unocal could not be held liable under the ATCA for international law violations.

The Appeals Court decision of Sept 18 was the right one under legal and common sense ethical reasoning.

The facts presented in the pre-trial phases include overwhelming evidence that the Burmese military forced villagers to work during construction of the pipeline and for militarisation of the area.

The evidence shows that Unocal knew the reputation of the military, knew these abuses were likely to occur, and knowingly benefited from the actions of the military.

The decision of the Appeals Court comports with what most people believe: a company that knows of abhorrent and illegal practices and provides assistance to the perpetrators while reaping economic benefits, is culpable.

The Appeals Court made a logical decision in overturning the lower court's dismissal of *Doe vs Unocal*. The Sept 18 decision stands for the proposition that US companies operating abroad can be held accountable, under international law and in US courts, for aiding and abetting human rights crimes.

Although two years have been added to the victims' long wait for a trial in this case, there is a silver lining. After the dismissal of the case in Federal District Court two years ago, lawyers for the plaintiffs filed a parallel case in California state court, based on allegations that

Unocal violated California law (for the same actions of rape, murder and forced labour in the federal case.) That case is scheduled to go to trial in February 2003, giving the plaintiffs two potential venues to fight against an adversary whose power and wealth is almost overwhelming. The federal court's recent deci-

sion could help the plaintiffs in both cases, federal and state.

In a globalising world, where corporations have ever-increasing power, it is only fair that they have increased responsibility as well. For 11 Burmese villagers whose lives have been disfigured by the grotesque behaviour of the Burmese military

and Western multinational oil companies, the US courts now hold their best hope for a modicum of justice.

Kenny Bruno is Campaigners Coordinator and John Cheverie is Shapiro Public Service Fellow for Earth Rights International, which is co-counsel for the plaintiffs in Doe vs Unocal.

BURMA

TotalFinaElf in the line of fire

Translated by Kate Greene, EarthRights International, from "TotalFinaElf en ligne de mire," Jean-Pierre Borloo, Le Soir (Belgium) <http://www.earth-rights.org/news/TotalMay10.html>

Brussels, May 10, 2002

Despite recent restrictions in the Belgian justice system regarding universal jurisdiction over war crimes and crimes against humanity, a new suit has been filed in Brussels. The lawsuit implicates the Burmese junta and more directly TotalFinaElf. The attorneys representing the civil parties have already avoided the procedural stumbling blocks that have mired other international lawsuits, such as the suit filed against the Congolese Yerdia.

On April 25, Mr. Alexis Deswaef and Mr. Gregor Chapelle filed charges on behalf of the four victims of the Burmese regime. The victims have attained political asylum status in Belgium, Great Britain, Germany, and the United States. They claim to have suffered human rights abuses and torture at the hands of the Burmese regime (the

country has been renamed Myanmar by the junta). Opponents of the regime have denounced the crimes of forced labor, deportation, murder, extra-judicial killings and torture committed by the Burmese military since 1988

While the plaintiffs have not directly charged the Burmese perpetrators, they have on the other hand cited the oil company TotalFinaElf and two of its directors, Thierry Desmarest, chairman of the group, and Herve Madeo, director of Total Myanmar Exploration Production from 1992-1999, for complicity in the alleged crimes.

The plaintiffs believe that the group TotalFinaElf and the two directors share responsibility for the denounced actions. All the partners of the junta have knowledge of the crimes committed and also know the risks encountered in associating with those who commit such abuses. The victims denounced the "moral, financial, logistical, and military support" provided to the junta. They also cited many well-documented facts.

"No remuneration from Burmese army"

The TotalFinaElf group

extracts gas from the depths of the Yadana field and then transports it through 346 kilometers of underwater pipeline and 63 kilometers of ground pipeline.

The plaintiffs denounced the support given by the oil group to the military battalions assuring the security of the pipeline area; the local population renamed these troops "Total battalions". And it seems that these army personnel engaged in "systematic and generalized violations" of human rights.

The suit is backed by several reports by NGOs that describe the same forced labor practices imposed on the local populations: people forced to work as porters and made to build camps for the military. The plaintiffs claim to have proof that TotalFinaElf quietly chose to compensate 463 victims of forced labor in 1995-1996.

The Belgian subsidiary of the group declined to comment on the accusations. In Paris, TotalFinaElf has limited its response to a statement that the company was not officially informed of the suit, never used forced labor in Burma or anywhere else, and absolutely

never employed military personnel as a security force, as the personnel were paid by the junta itself to ensure the security of the pipeline on Burmese soil.

The lawsuit was given to Judge Damien Vandermeersch. He has recently taken the seat of the constitution of civil parties and has not expressed his opinion on the admissibility of the charge (which is not his responsibility), nor has he commented on the substance of the case.

In October 2001, another charge was filed in Brussels against TotalFinaElf, but that

time for complicity in the crimes committed in Congo-Brazzaville. These charges, targeting entities, cannot be dealt with by the International Criminal Court, which can only pursue individuals.

TotalFinaElf Inks Gas Deal, Faces Forced Labor Charges

The [Burmese] military regime announced that it will purchase gas from TotalFinaElf to salve the country's severe electricity shortages, signing a production-sharing contract with the French oil giant. Weeks

earlier, the company rejected claims that its Yadana pipeline project used forced labor. On behalf of two Burmese workers who had allegedly been exploited during the construction of the Yadana project in 1994, Paris lawyer William Bourdon filed a complaint with investigating magistrates on August 26. TotalFinaElf faces an array of other legal actions, including being accused in Belgium of actively supporting Burma's military regime.

Agence France-Presse, August 29, 2002; *AFX News Limited*, September 12, 2002

Civil action for complicity in crimes against humanity committed in Burma (Myanmar)

Lodged on Thursday, April 25, 2002, in the Brussels magistrates court against X, the company TOTAL-FINAELF S.A., Thierry Desmarest and Herve Madeo.

Summary:

The present action was lodged by four Burmese plaintiffs, each a former victim of human rights violation or torture (chest burnt with cigarettes, "the iron road" [a steel bar rolled up and down along the shin until the skin is torn off], blows on the head with sand-bags leading to permanent damage of the optic nerve, etc.) within the framework of a systematic, generalised and planned assault carried out by the Myanmar military junta through an arsenal of multiple means of repression which include massacre of opponents (1988), arbitrary arrests, torture, forced relocations and the massive use of forced labour.

This complaint, detailed over 78 pages, is the fruit of a long

research and inquiry. Thus the file submitted to the magistrate includes 80 documents and proofs. It is initiated on the basis of the so-called law of universal competence which gives competence to the Belgian courts to sue the authors (even citizens of foreign countries) of crimes against humanity even if these were committed abroad and even against non Belgian victims.¹

The choice made by the plaintiffs to bring a complaint against X—persons unknown—as the direct authors of crimes against humanity committed in Burma (Myanmar) results from a great difficulty of access to information in the field. Burma (Myanmar) is still today a tightly closed country where any witness of crimes committed by the military authorities takes huge risks for his own safety and that of his relatives if he testifies.

In many cases the military junta has taken severe reprisals against even distant relatives of human rights activists or democrats by very harsh means (arbitrary arrests, torture, disappearances). Thus the plaintiffs—who for this very reason have

been granted refugee status by four different countries—are taking very serious risks for themselves and their relatives, particularly those still resident in Burma (Myanmar).

Crimes against humanity

The complaint begins with an account of the human rights violations of which the plaintiffs have been victims. This account demonstrates the substantial damage the plaintiffs have suffered from the military authorities in Myanmar.

The plaintiffs proceed to show on the basis of several reports from the United Nations, the I.L.O. and Amnesty International (see pp. 16 - 26) how these human rights violations are an integral part of a systematic, generalised and well planned assault carried out by the military authorities in Myanmar through an arsenal of multiple means of repression including massacre of opponents (1988), arbitrary arrests, torture (to which the plaintiffs have been subjected and which Amnesty International describes as "institutionalised in Burma"), forced relocation of

population and massive use of forced labour.ⁱⁱ

The plaintiffs thus demonstrate not only the reality of these crimes against humanity committed by the Burmese military junta but also the previous knowledge by the junta's partners of the existence of such crimes and of the risk taken in being associated to these crimes.

The plaintiffs then target the legal entity of TOTALFINAELF as well as Messrs. Thierry DESMAREST and Herve MADEOⁱⁱⁱ, whom, as persons having suffered damage, they consider to have encouraged or participated in the criminal actions and thus to be equally responsible for the considerable damage that they have suffered.

The complicity in crimes against humanity of TOTALFINAELF, Thierry DESMAREST and Herve MADEO:

The plaintiffs demonstrate the *global moral and financial support* (see pp. 38 - 49) given to the military regime in Rangoon, in perfect knowledge of the consequences of this support with respect to the continuing massive human rights violations by this regime, by the company TOTAL (now TOTALFINAELF) and its management (Messrs. Thierry DESMAREST and Herve MADEO). The plaintiffs also show *how this support in full knowledge of the facts is considered by international standards and law as complicity in crimes against humanity.*

Precise facts:

The plaintiffs then demonstrate the *moral, financial* (see pp. 49 - 52) *as well as logistical and locally military*^{iv} (see pp. 52 - 55) support given also in full

knowledge of the facts by the company TOTAL and its management to many military battalions (nicknamed by the local population "TOTAL battalions") in charge of security for the Yadana pipeline in the Tenasserim region, *in full knowledge of the systematic and generalised human rights violations carried out by these battalions.*

The "perfect knowledge" by TOTAL and its management of crimes committed by their military partners is demonstrated (see pp. 55 - 62) by several reports from international organisations, by several testimonies from forced labour victims and deserters now in refugee camps at the Thai-Burmese border, *but also by some of the company TOTAL's internal mail and documents which show how the company was perfectly aware of the systematic and generalised use of forced labour by its partners in charge of security for the pipeline*^v *(use of forced portering for the army and of forced labour to build their barracks).* The plaintiffs also demonstrate that the company TOTAL and its management knew how systematic and generalised forced labour was by supplying proof that the company chose to discretely give a "compensation" to no less than 463 victims of forced labour for the period of December 1, 1995, to January 15, 1996.^{vi}

The examining magistrate will confirm or not this belief of the plaintiffs that the company TOTAL benefited—at least indirectly— from the systematic and generalised use of forced labour by its partners.

The plaintiffs however show—even in the absence of any advantage drawn by TOTAL (quod non)—*how the know-*

ledge and acceptance^{vii} by the company TOTAL and its management of the fact that their own acts^{viii} facilitated the crimes against humanity committed by many battalions in charge of security for the group's pipeline—and paid by TOTAL for this duty—constitutes complicity in the crimes against humanity committed in Tenasserim since the arrival of TOTAL in Burma.

Personal responsibility of Messrs. DESMAREST and MADEO

Mr Thierry DESMAREST, present chairman and managing director of TOTALFINAELF S.A. was the first person responsible for the Yadana project in his capacity as director of TOTAL EXPLORATION PRODUCTION from July 1989 until his nomination as the company's managing director in 1995. The plaintiffs supply the examining magistrate with statements by Serge Tchuruk (TOTAL's former managing director) naming Monsieur DESMAREST as responsible for the Burma project. They also supply two photographs of Monsieur DESMAREST personally signing contracts with the Burmese generals in Rangoon on September 10, 1994. *The plaintiffs sue Monsieur Thierry DESMAREST for complicity in crimes against humanity as responsible for the strategy of TOTAL's operations in Burma.*

In his response to questions on forced labour by three Belgian senators and members of parliament on May 31, 2000, during the shareholders general assembly in Paris, Monsieur Thierry DESMAREST confirmed that he wished TOTALFINAELF to remain in Burma. The plaintiffs demonstrate however his aware-

ness of the crimes against humanity committed by the TOTAL battalions in the pipeline region, and for this purpose they hand over to the examining magistrate 77 testimonies from Burmese refugees telling of massive forced labour (including children) used by the "TOTAL battalions" in charge of the pipeline security (paid, supplied with logistics and ammunitions by TOTAL) until after June 2001 (see pp. 73 and 74). This report was given to TOTALFINAELF and received no reaction from Monsieur Thierry DESMAREST.

Monsieur Herve MADEO, of French nationality, director of TOTAL MYANMAR EXPLORATION PRODUCTION from 1992 to 1999, is sued by the plaintiffs for complicity in crimes against humanity as responsible for TOTAL's operations in the field. The plaintiffs prove that he has been informed several times by UNOCAL's management of risks arising from the use of forced labour. They demonstrate also how he personally acknowledged the compensation given to forced labourers taken by the army (see pp. 60 - 62). He was in the field, organising the payment of the battalions, the loan of helicopters, the gift of cars, the works done by TOTAL for the army, the advice by "security consultants" employed by TOTAL.

Possible punishment:

In the only precedent with regards to crimes against humanity judged by the Belgian courts applying the Law of universal competence, the four Rwandan citizens from Butare found guilty of complicity in crimes against humanity were handed *punishments of 12 to 20*

years imprisonment by the assizes court.

The plaintiffs have no reason to believe that Monsieur Thierry DESMAREST and Herve MADEO might receive more lenient punishments when they are found guilty, according to the wish of the plaintiffs.

Proceedings:

The civil action was handed to the examining magistrate on Thursday, April 25, 2002. The decision rests with him with regards to the admissibility of the action. The only obstacle might be the presence or absence in Belgium of the accused. In doubt the examining magistrate will hand the file over to the director of public prosecution who will settle this question. If he states that the prosecution is admissible, the magistrate can adopt any useful measure such as formal indictment, summons, warrant for arrest, search warrant, etc.

-
- i None of the individuals subject to the present complaint has any immunity. At least one of the plaintiffs resides in Belgium. Several of the individuals subject to the complaint have been, are, or may be "found in Belgium."

- ii See for example p. 20 of the case.
- iii Individuals about whom they were able to gather a series of written proofs.
- iv Beyond the monthly payments to the battalions in charge of pipeline security which made systematic use of forced labour, several testimonies include in their statement the transport of troops as well as delivery of grenades and ammunitions to military personnel on the company's helicopters. And finally a proof is given of the employment by TOTAL of mercenaries ("security consultants") to support the Burmese army in "securising the site."
- v Paid for this duty by the MOGE
- vi This compensation, of which the examining magistrate will demonstrate whether or not it recurred, demonstrates at the very least that TOTAL knew of the "massive" use of forced labour by the army in charge of security for the pipeline. Many testimonies which have reached TOTAL then (see below) demonstrate the massive use of forced labour at least until June 2001.
- vii Moral element (Mens Rea)
- viii Material element (Actus Reus) by way of moral, financial, logistical and military support.

Naropa University Course in Spring 2003

Vipassana Meditation weekend with Sulak Sivaraksa, March 7 -9, 2003; Naropa University School of Extended Studies. For more information or to register: visit www.naropa.edu/extend, or call 800-603-3117 (in the US).

Schumacher College

Will offer a course on "Simplicity" in November 2003. The instructors include Vicki Robin and Sulak Sivaraksa.

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BURMA

Tales from the border



Stranded with no future: The Shan exiles at Wiang Haeng district, Chiang Mai, live on a day-to-day basis.

Listening to Naang Yoong's story of how her husband was murdered a few weeks ago, one wonders at her cold, indifferent tone. Her voice is flat and dry; she narrates her personal tragedy matter-of-factly, almost like an unimpassioned reporter at the scene of a battle.

There are no tears as she recounts the vivid, graphic details. Her sagging cheeks appear, well, almost as dry as parched earth.

But it is her eyes, and her smile which is forced and sad, that tell the real story. As the dying light of the day falls on the creases of her face and the straggles of hair falling from her bun, Naang Yoong looks worn out, like someone who is in the last phase of life. Yet in answer to a query about her age, the Shan woman mumbles an unsettling "40."

In Naang Yoong's lap lies her four-month-old girl, Hom-noone. The name suggests fragrant flowers, but the infant's tiny face looks more like shrivelled petals. Her hands reach out for her mother's breasts. Naang Yoong has no milk to offer.

The ordeal this mother and daughter are undergoing is both horrendous and "normal." Naang Yoong is one of thousands of ethnic Shans who have had to flee a war zone in Burma.

"It happened on June 18," says Naang Yoong of the incident that cut short her husband's life. Her village in eastern Shan State, not far from Wiang Haeng district in Chiang Mai province, was attacked by a troop of Burmese soldiers.

"My husband, five children and I took shelter in a dugout to hide from the mortar shells. A soldier found us. He spoke in the Marn [Burmese] language and he had two stripes on his uniform.

First, he tried to extort money from us. He wanted about 200 baht. But we didn't have that kind of money.

"Then the soldier accused my husband of being part of the SSA [Shan State Army], pointing to his missing leg as evidence. My husband had been in the MTA (Muang Tai Army) years before, but quit after being crippled when he stepped on a landmine. My husband pleaded with the soldier, again and again. Then I heard two gunshots. My husband had been shot. The first bullet went into his left shoulder. The second went right through the middle of his forehead.

"All around us, bombs were going off all the time. My children were crying. I felt surges of intense heat, everything was in a blur.

"Before the soldier left, he told us to keep quiet. He said we must say that my husband died because of the shelling."

Naang Yoong fled to Thai-

land with her four youngest children, where they were given sanctuary at Wat Mak Kayon in Wiang Haeng.

At one time this was one of two shelters for Shan exiles in the district—the other was at nearby Wat Mak Kok Kam. Both have merged at the moment because the annual Buddhist Lent is underway and it is customary for villagers to spend days and nights praying and meditating at the temple. Wat Mak Kayon is not considered a “refugee camp” since in official Thai discourse Shans are “illegal migrants.”

Wat Mak Kayon is now playing host to 449 Shan exiles. That figure used to be higher by two. Tears flow down 57-year-old Naang Jing’s face as she begs visitors to help find out where one of the two—her husband—has gone.

On June 1, a group of “local” (Thai) officers came to the Wat Mak Kok Kam camp, she said. Naang Jing’s Burmese-Shan husband, Min Win, and a younger man named Sai Jo were taken away. They have not returned since.

The remaining residents were left speculating about what had happened. Were the two men spies? If so, for whom?

Naang Jing has her own explanation. “The officers may have thought my husband was a spy because he had made several long-distance phone calls. Perhaps they thought he was calling up someone from the Burmese authorities to report on the latest developments.

“But it was me who made the long-distance calls, and they were to our son in another part of Thailand. My husband was keeping me company at the grocery shop (which offers the phone service). At the time, we’d

been in Thailand for just four days. Between the two of us we only had around 200 baht. We were worried that we might be moved back over the border to Loilam [a Shan State Army stronghold, opposite Wiang Haeng district]. And we were worried that our son might have been caught [by Thai immigration officials] as well.”

So for two days, the couple commuted several times between the camp and the phone booth, unaware that Thai authorities may have regarded this as suspicious. At the end of the second day Naang Jing’s husband

and Sai Jo were escorted out of the camp.

A few days later, Naang Jing adds, a Thai officer returned to give about a thousand baht to Sai Jo’s wife. The money was said to have come from Sai Jo’s having sold his gold. Sai Jo’s mother-in-law, Naang U, said that her daughter, Sai Jo’s wife, has since gone to work in Chiang Mai, presumably illegally, in order to earn money to raise their four children.

Naang Jing says she can barely sleep these days. Her heart leaps every time she hears



mention on the radio of Shan villagers being detained or discovered.

Tears well up in her eyes as she undoes the belt that keeps up her sarong. Beneath the crease is where she stores her husband's identity card. The well-worn pink card, wrapped in plastic, is all she has left of him. It records her husband's name, date of birth, profession as well as his height-five feet, three inches. The photo of his kind-looking face shows he has a tiny mole on the lid of his left eye.

"We've been living together for 43 years," says the old lady, gulping back sobs. "We have never, ever, had a fight. He was so good—no drinking, no smoking."

"Now I keep praying to Buddha that he is still alive. I'm just dying to know his whereabouts. Even if I find out that he is behind bars somewhere, that's ok with me. At least I could go and visit him and give him food."

A stone's throw from where Naang Jing is sitting, young children are playing with miniature plastic pots and pans and dishes. They are engrossed in their own world—a place where hopefully they find fun and peace.

Sai Leng, 47, from another Shan village, knows how innocence can protect a child. On the dawn of May 20, the SSA mounted an attack against Burmese soldiers near his village. All around was pure chaos: bullets, mortar fire, friends and relatives scattering in all directions. Sai Leng's six-year-old son slept soundly through it all, not even waking as he was carried to a safe place.

"He'd never experienced fighting before," said the ex-MTA captain who says he turned his back on weapons in 1996, the

year Khun Sa surrendered to the Burmese junta. "At first I thought the battle would last only a short while. But after the shelling and explosions had gone on for four hours, I knew it wasn't going to stop any time soon."

Fortunately, Sai Leng's village is only five to 10 minutes' walk from the Thai border. Oddly, among those running for their lives on this occasion were three Burmese women. The trio—for reasons of safety their names have to be withheld—had been living and working in the area as school teachers and got caught up in the melee. All three have expressed their desire to return to their homeland. Sai Leng said he has been trying to contact the Burmese authorities to ask them to take their compatriots back, but to no avail.

"We have no problems living with the Shan people here," said one of the three young women. "The conflicts here apply only to those people who have guns, not us civilians. The only obstacle for us was the language difference." The Shans want to return home as well, of course, but Sai Leng sees that this is impossible for now.

Meanwhile, there's another story circulating among the Shans at Wiang Haeng. It concerns a 13-year-old boy named Sai Pho, whose desperate search for his mother ended in tragedy.

On July 3, the teenager arrived at the Thai border village of Laktaeng. He had been living with his father in Chiang Dao district and had heard that someone had seen his mother on the Shan State side of the frontier. He said he wanted to go over and meet her there. Everyone tried to dissuade him, but the advice fell on deaf ears.

Villagers saw the boy

crossing the border. Then they heard a gunshot, and that was the end of the story.

Nai U, 21, has heard about Sai Pho. He speaks good Thai because his old village was so near Thailand that he went to school here until Grade 8. Now he says he has a simple reason for not wanting to return there: "Klua Marn" [I fear the Burmese].

Nai U earns a meagre wage picking chillies in nearby farms. Life is difficult here, he says, but in Burma, there is basically no hope at all. His family of four picked up and ran to Thailand after fighting broke out between SSA and Burmese troops on June 20.

"Our village has in fact been a stronghold of the Burmese military for the last 20 years. There wasn't any fighting—you know, shooting and killing. Every now and again soldiers would come and take our property. We would just grit our teeth and bear it."

"A long time ago my father was a helper in the SURA [Shan United Revolutionary Army], doing things like making the tea. I myself have never wanted to join the SSA. I just want to work on the farm helping my parents." Now the sun has gone and Nai U's face is in complete shadow.

"If I go back now, I'm certain they will shoot us, or torture us. Who knows what's awaiting us? If a young boy [Sai Pho] gets shot to death, what would happen to grown-ups like us? To force us to go back would be the same as sending us to our death."

Vasana Chinvarakorn
Bangkok Post,
August 29, 2002

TIBET

Statement by special envoy Lodi Gyari,
head of the delegation which visited
China and Tibet

We returned to Dharamsala, India, on September 27, 2002, from our visit to Beijing, Chengdu, Shanghai as well as the Tibetan capital Lhasa, and areas in Nyingtri and Shigatse.

The task that my colleague Envoy Kelsang Gyaltsen and I had on this trip was two fold. First, to re-establish direct contact with the leadership in Beijing and to create a conducive atmosphere, enabling direct face-to-face meetings on a regular basis in the future. Secondly, to explain His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach towards resolving the issue of Tibet. Throughout the trip we were guided by this objective. Consequently, we focused our effort towards building confidence by dispelling distrust and misconception.

We have reported to His Holiness the Dalai Lama about our visit. Over the years, His Holiness has made consistent efforts to re-establish contact with the Chinese leadership. His Holiness welcomed the positive gesture of the leadership in Beijing in receiving our delegation and was very pleased that a renewed contact had been established. He instructed us to make full use of the opportunity created and continue our efforts to advance this process vigorously, which will lead to a mutually acceptable solution.

Envoy Kelsang Gyaltsen and I, accompanied by two assistants, began our visit on

September 9, 2002. During our visit we met officials in Beijing, Lhasa as well as in other areas. We learned from them about the progress made in the Tibetan areas as well as about the developmental projects undertaken. We have been impressed by the dedication and competency displayed by many of the Tibetan officials. While encouraging and admiring their efforts to develop Tibet economically, we drew their attention to the importance of paying equal attention to preserving Tibet's distinct cultural, religious and linguistic heritage. The officials also informed us about the importance they attached to protecting Tibet's delicate environment. We took the opportunity to share our thoughts on this issue.

Among the Tibetan officials we met were Mr. Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, Vice Chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC); Mr. Ragdi, the Chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region People's Congress and Deputy Party Secretary; Mr. Legchok, Chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region Government and Deputy Party Secretary; Mr. Samdup, Head of the Tibet Autonomous Region United Front Work Department; and Mr. Atrin, Vice Chair of the Sichuan Province Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

In addition to meeting officials we had the moving experience of being able to offer

our prayers in the Jokhang and the Potala. We were also able to visit Norbu Lingka, Gaden, Tashi Lhunpo, and Palkhor Choeten in Gyangtse. Our stay in Tibet had been short. Consequently, there was little opportunity to interact with ordinary Tibetans.

We had the opportunity to visit some areas of Chengdu, Shanghai and Beijing and were greatly impressed with the progress and development that have taken place. We also visited some of the sacred Buddhist sites in these areas.

In Beijing we met with Mr. Wang Zhaoguo, Vice Chair of the CPPCC and the Head of the Central United Front Work Department and Mr. Li De Zhu, Minister for Nationalities Affairs and Deputy Head of the United Front Work Department. We had frank exchanges of views with them in a cordial atmosphere. They reiterated the known position of the Chinese government on dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We took the opportunity to explain His Holiness the Dalai Lama's thoughts on resolving the issue of Tibet through negotiations in the spirit of reconciliation and dialogue. The Chinese leaders listened to our explanation with keen interest and engaged in free and spontaneous exchanges. We appreciated this greatly. Since I had the opportunity to meet Chinese leaders in Beijing in the early 1980s, what impressed us more this time was the much

greater flexibility displayed by the current leaders in their mental attitude.

Our host on this visit was the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Many other authorities, including the Tibet Autonomous Region Government, governments of Sichuan and Shanghai, have been involved in organising our visit. We wish to express

our sincere appreciation to all of them for their hospitality and assistance.

We have made every effort to create the basis for opening a new chapter in our relationship. We are fully aware that this task cannot be completed during a single visit. It will also need continued persistent effort and support from many sides. Mr. Kelsang Gyaltsen and I deeply

appreciate the firm support and full cooperation that we have been receiving from the Kalon Tripa, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, and the Kashag, whom we have thoroughly briefed about our trip.

*Special Envoy Lodi Gyari
Dharamsala,
September 28, 2002*

The Dispossessed by 100 Nobel Laureates

The following statement was released on December 7, 2001, by 100 Nobel Prize winners to coincide with the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the first Nobel prizes. Although the statement began circulating among the laureates last summer, most of them signed it after September 11.

The most profound danger to world Peace in the coming years will stem not from the irrational acts of states or individuals but from the legitimate demands of the world's dispossessed. Of these poor and disenfranchised, the majority live a marginal existence in equatorial climates. Global warming, not of their making but originating with the wealthy few, will affect their fragile ecologies most. Their situation will be desperate and manifestly unjust. It cannot be expected, therefore, that in all cases they will be content to await the beneficence of the rich. If then we permit the devastating power of modern weaponry to spread through this combustible human landscape, we invite a conflag-

ration that can engulf both rich and poor. The only hope for the future lies in cooperative international action, legitimized by democracy.

It is time to turn our backs on the unilateral search for security, in which we seek to shelter behind walls. Instead, we must persist in the quest for united action to counter both global warming and a weaponized world.

These twin goals will constitute vital components of stability as we move toward the wider degree of social justice that alone gives hope of Peace. Some of the needed legal instruments are already at hand, such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Convention on Climate Change, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. As concerned citizens, we urge all governments to commit to these goals that constitute steps on the way to replacement of war by law.

To survive in the world we have transformed, we must learn to think in a new way. As never

before, the future of each depends on the good of all.

THE SIGNATORIES

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Sidney Altman Chemistry, 1989
Philip W. Anderson Physics, 1977
Oscar Arias Sanchez Peace, 1987
J. Georg Bednorz Physics, 1987
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Baruj Benacerraf Physiology/Medicine, 1980
Hans A. Bethe Physics, 1967
James W. Black Physiology/Medicine, 1988
Guenter Blobel Physiology/Medicine, 1999
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 Paul Greengard Physiology/Medicine, 2000
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 Herbert A. Hauptman Chemistry, 1985
 Dudley R. Herschbach Chemistry, 1986
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 Daniel L. McFadden Economics, 2000
 C sar Milstein Physiology/Medicine, 1984
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 Joseph E. Murray Physiology/Medicine, 1990
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 Max F. Perutz Chemistry, 1962
 William D. Phillips Physics, 1997
 John C. Polanyi Chemistry, 1986
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 Burton Richter Physics, 1976
 Heinrich Rohrer Physics, 1987
 Joseph Rotblat Peace, 1995
 Carlo Rubbia Physics, 1984
 Bert Sakmann Physiology/Medicine, 1991
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 J. Robert Schrieffer Physics, 1972
 Melvin Schwartz Physics, 1988
 K. Barry Sharpless Chemistry, 2001
 Richard E. Smalley Chemistry, 1996
 Jack Steinberger Physics, 1988
 Joseph E. Stiglitz Economics, 2001
 Horst L. Stormer Physics, 1998
 Henry Taube Chemistry, 1983
 Joseph H. Taylor Jr. Physics, 1993
 Susumu Tonegawa Physiology/Medicine, 1997
 Charles H. Townes Physics, 1964
 Daniel T. Tsui Physics, 1998
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Engaged Buddhism

Thailand
Spring 2003

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Iraq

Iraq in the mainstream mass media

Mainstream Media sources have repeatedly asserted that UN Weapons inspectors were kicked out of Iraq. *EXTRA* the magazine published by FAIR every month has provided an excellent comparison of coverage by major news outlets in 1998 and recently, and exposed the lies and distortions currently being used to support a war against Iraq...

The U.N. orders its weapons inspectors to leave Iraq after the chief inspector reports Baghdad is not fully cooperating with them.

--Sheila MacVicar, *ABC World News This Morning*, 12/16/98

To bolster its claim, Iraq let reporters see one laboratory U.N. inspectors once visited before they were kicked out four years ago.

--John McWethy, *ABC World News Tonight*, 8/12/02

The Iraq story boiled over last night when the chief U.N. weapons inspector, Richard Butler, said that Iraq had not fully cooperated with inspectors and-as they had promised to do. As a result, the U.N. ordered its inspectors to leave Iraq this morning

--Katie Couric, *NBC's Today*, 12/16/98/

As Washington debates when and how to attack Iraq, a surprise offer from Baghdad. It is ready to talk about re-admitting U.N. weapons inspectors after kicking them out four years ago.

--Maurice DuBois, *NBC's Satur-*

day Today, 8/3/02

The chief U.N. weapons inspector ordered his monitors to leave Baghdad today after saying that Iraq had once again reneged on its promise to cooperate-a report that renewed the threat of U.S. and British airstrikes.

--AP, 12/16/98

Information on Iraq's programs has been spotty since Saddam expelled U.N. weapons inspectors in 1998.

--AP, 9/7/02

Immediately after submitting his report on Baghdad's noncompliance, Butler ordered his inspectors to leave Iraq.

--*Los Angeles Times*, 12/17/98

It is not known whether Iraq has rebuilt clandestine nuclear facilities since U.N. inspectors were forced out in 1998, but the report said the regime lacks nuclear material for a bomb and the capability to make weapons.

--*Los Angeles Times*, 9/10/02

The United Nations once again has ordered its weapons inspectors out of Iraq. Today's evacuation follows a new warning from chief weapons inspector Richard Butler accusing Iraq of once again failing to cooperate with the inspectors. The United States and Britain repeatedly have warned that Iraq's failure to cooperate with the inspectors could lead to air strikes.

--Bob Edwards, *NPR*, 12/16/98

If he has secret weapons, he's had four years since he kicked out

the inspectors to hide all of them.

--Daniel Schorr, *NPR*, 8/3/02

This is the second time in a month that UNSCOM has pulled out in the face of a possible U.S.-led attack. But this time there may be no turning back. Weapons inspectors packed up their personal belongings and loaded up equipment at U.N. headquarters after a predawn evacuation order. In a matter of hours, they were gone, more than 120 of them headed for a flight to Bahrain.

--Jane Arraf, *CNN*, 12/16/98

What Mr. Bush is being urged to do by many advisers is focus on the simple fact that Saddam Hussein signed a piece of paper at the end of the Persian Gulf War, promising that the United Nations could have unfettered weapons inspections in Iraq. It has now been several years since those inspectors were kicked out.

--John King, *CNN*, 8/18/02

Russian Ambassador Sergei Lavrov criticized Butler for evacuating inspectors from Iraq Wednesday morning without seeking permission from the Security Council.

--*USA Today*, 12/17/98

Saddam expelled U.N. weapons inspectors in 1998, accusing some of being U.S. spies.

--*USA Today*, 9/4/02

But the most recent irritant was Mr. Butler's quick withdrawal from Iraq on Wednesday of all his inspectors and those of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which monitors Iraqi

nuclear programs, without Security Council permission. Mr. Butler acted after a telephone call from Peter Burleigh, the American representative to the United Nations, and a discussion with Secretary General Kofi Annan, who had also spoken to Mr. Burleigh.

--*New York Times*, 12/18/98

America's goal should be to ensure that Iraq is disarmed of all unconventional weapons.... To thwart this goal, Baghdad expelled United Nations arms inspectors four years ago.

--*New York Times editorial*, 8/3/02

Butler ordered his inspectors to evacuate Baghdad, in anticipation of a military attack, on Tuesday night—at a time when most members of the Security Council had yet to receive his report.

--*Washington Post*, 12/18/98

Since 1998, when U.N. inspectors were expelled, Iraq has almost certainly been working to build more chemical and biological weapons.

--*Washington Post editorial*, 8/4/02

Butler abruptly pulled all of his inspectors out of Iraq shortly after handing Annan a report

yesterday afternoon on Baghdad's continued failure to cooperate with UNSCOM, the agency that searches for Iraq's prohibited weapons of mass destruction.

--*Newsday*, 12/17/98

The reason Hussein gave was that the U.N. inspectors' work was completed years ago, before he kicked them out in 1998, and they dismantled whatever weapons they found. That's disingenuous.

--*Newsday editorial*, 8/14/02

FAIR

From Znet: www.lbbs.org.

October 19, 2002

Iraq Terror war

Haven't we been here before? Washington bribing and threatening the United Nations, punishing countries which refuse to toe the U.S. line in the Security Council?

It's all just too familiar. In early 1998, at another moment when the U.S. was gearing up for war against Iraq, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan went to Baghdad, and negotiated a last-minute agreement with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. The agreement was designed to resolve problems with the arms inspections and to stave off the threat of a U.S. war.

When Annan came back to New York, the Security Council crafted a new resolution endorsing his agreement. U.S. Ambassador Bill Richardson demanded that the resolution call for "severest consequences" if Iraq should violate the agreement in the future; under pressure, the Council



agreed. The Clinton administration still wasn't happy. They were all geared up for war, and the resolution meant they would have to recall the bombers and fighter jets and troops.

But there was a serious disagreement over just what "severest consequences" meant. The Russian ambassador even coined a new word—"automaticity"—to describe what the phrase did not mean. "Severest consequences," virtually the entire Security Council had decided, did not give any state the automatic right to move on its own against Iraq.

Like earlier resolutions, this one ended with the statement that the Council "remained seized" of the issue. In UN diplomatic speak, that phrase always means the issue remains on the Council's agenda, and under Council authority.

So on 2 March 1998, after the resolution passed, the parade of Council ambassadors came out of the Council chamber, one by one, to warn explicitly that their resolution did not include "automaticity." It did not, they said, authorize any country—including the United States—to launch a unilateral military strike

against Iraq. Bill Richardson came last. When Richardson followed his fellow ambassadors out of the chamber to face the cameras, he blithely dismissed his predecessors' insistence that the resolution did not authorize a military strike. He simply shrugged and told the press, "we think it does." Months later, with no authorization by the UN, the unilateral four-day U.S.-UK mini-war of bombs and cruise missiles known as Desert Fox, devastated Iraq.

We're seeing it again now. "Automaticity" has become an official part of the lexicon of UN jargon, and again Council ambassadors are asserting strongly that "there is no automaticity" in the new [probably two-part] resolution the council is likely to pass. But once again the diplomats of the Bush administration, like their Clinton-era predecessors, disagree with the rest of the Security Council, and it seems they still "think it does."

In the next several days it is likely that the U.S. will force a vote in the Security Council for a resolution that the Bush administration will later claim authorizes their war. Other Council members, perhaps most, will claim that the resolution authorizes no such thing. But they will likely do nothing to stop Washington's war.

What will the resolution look like? It will probably take the form preferred by the French—that is, a two-part resolution. But the substance will be all American. In fact, it is likely that the U.S. will claim that acceptance of the two-part arrangement is such a huge concession that there should be no further objections to anything the U.S. wants to include.

The first part will use strong

language outlining a new set of inspection requirements Iraq must meet. It will threaten unspecified "consequences" for any violation or any failure to comply with sufficient alacrity. It may even follow the language of the March 1998 resolution in threatening "severest consequences." Those consequences will not be explicitly spelled out, and the resolution might even include a reference to the Security Council meeting again if the slightest problem occurs regarding Iraqi compliance.

The U.S. will try to get all of its new conditions for the inspections into the first part of the bifurcated resolution. They will almost certainly succeed. What will be spelled out will be far beyond insuring that Iraq allow immediate access to the eight so-called "presidential sites," which under existing UN-Iraq agreements were indeed available for inspection but with certain special arrangements including the presence of international diplomats as well as advance notice. The new resolution will certainly impose punishing, humiliating conditions for inspections; it will likely include some that are designed specifically to increase the chances of Iraqi rejection even before inspectors arrive in Baghdad.

It is likely that the first part of a two-part resolution will include the conditions put forward in the earlier U.S.-UK draft resolution. One requirement will be Iraqi acquiescence to the inspectors taking any scientists—or anyone else—they wish to interview out of Iraq altogether, along with their families. The effect would be to have UN arms inspectors acting as asylum officers. Certainly many, perhaps

most scientists would jump at the opportunity right now to leave Iraq with their families and be granted asylum somewhere else. They are living, after all, in a country not only devastated by 12 years of crippling economic sanctions and the ravages of a repressive political regime, but also facing the likely possibility of imminent war.

There are certainly legitimate reasons why Iraqi scientists would want to live and work somewhere with greater safety and political freedom. There is also, however, the consequent and understandable likelihood of scientists exaggerating the level of Iraq's military or WMD programs as well as their own role in those programs, in the hope of persuading international immigration officials of their importance. And finally, another longer term result of such an effort, if carried out on a large scale, will be the stripping of a key component of Iraq's national intellectual and scientific base, with seriously deleterious effects on future efforts to rebuild a modern society.

The language proposed by the Bush administration would allow representatives of any of the five permanent members of the Security Council to participate in any inspections they choose. That would essentially vitiate the distinction between the current inspection team, UNMOVIC, deliberately made up of UN-employed technical specialists, and its predecessor (UNSCOM) whose inspectors were seconded from national (largely U.S. and British) militaries and intelligence agencies.

UNSCOM's credibility was completely undermined when it was discovered, in the summer of 1998 (and reported in the *New*

York Times and elsewhere in June 1999), that U.S. spy agencies had used the UN inspection team to obtain intelligence information having nothing to do with Iraq's weapons of mass destruction but everything to do with identifying and locating Iraqi targets for future U.S. attacks.

When UNMOVIC was created, it was specifically required to employ UN international civil servants as inspectors, largely to distinguish it from the discredited UNSCOM model of U.S.-British control. Hans Blix, the UNMOVIC director, staked out a clear position for his first two years defending the need for his inspectors to be accountable to the United Nations as a whole—not to the U.S. Air Force or the CIA or any other national agency. The new demand undermines that UN accountability, turning UNMOVIC into an unchanged incarnation of its spy-based predecessor.

If Washington gets its way in the Council, the resolution will also require Iraq to accept military escorts—UN Blue Helmets or from member states—for the inspectors, blanketing the country with unlimited numbers of UN or even U.S. troops. That means armed forces prepared to use their weapons against any Iraqi—official or otherwise—who so much as blinks. According to the language of the original U.S. draft resolution, the inspectors shall “be provided regional bases and operating bases throughout Iraq.” They “shall be accompanied at the bases by sufficient UN security forces; shall have the right to declare for the purposes of this resolution no-fly/no-drive zones, exclusion zones, and/or ground- and air-transit corridors, which shall be

enforced by UN security forces or by member-states; [and] shall have the free and unrestricted use and landing of fixed and rotary winged aircraft, including unmanned reconnaissance vehicles.”

That right to establish bases anywhere in Iraq the inspectors (or their military escorts) wish; their right to block Iraqis' access to whatever “exclusion zones” they wish; the right to establish no-drive, no-fly zones and create special UNMOVIC-only transit roads—all serve to collapse the distinction between inspection and invasion/occupation.

And we've been there before, too. Back in 1999, just before the U.S.-NATO bombing began during the Kosovo crisis, there was a “last-ditch” diplomatic effort at Rambouillet Palace in France. When it collapsed, we were told that the Serbs had rejected a perfectly reasonable international demand, and therefore made inevitable, even obligatory, the war that followed. What we were not told, what we only learned weeks later when the real story of the initially secret Appendix B broke in the German press, was that the Rambouillet accord, which was presented in take-it-or-leave-it terms to the Serb side, was designed to insure Serb rejection. Going way beyond the stated concern about Serb conduct in Kosovo, the accord would have required that “NATO personnel shall enjoy... free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the FRY [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] including associated airspace and territorial waters.”

Sound familiar? In both cases the official rationales for international intervention—Serb human rights violations in

Kosovo, Iraq's WMD programs—were, however legitimate in their own right, used as pretexts to impose an international military occupation. And that includes the attendant military control of the entire nation's ground, air and space in the name of human rights in Kosovo or disarmament in Iraq.

In Rambouillet the Clinton administration deliberately set the bar so high that the Serb side refused to sign. It appears the Bush administration is hoping the Iraqis will follow suit.

Once the new resolution is passed, one of two things will happen. It is certainly possible that the Iraqi government, despite reiterating their intention to allow “unfettered inspections,” will be so angered by the U.S. moving the goalposts of the arms inspection, that it will simply refuse to bring the inspectors back under the new terms, or will try to renegotiate the terms while allowing them in. The Council, at U.S. insistence, may well refuse to allow the inspectors to go to Iraq at all under the latter circumstances.

Or, Iraq will acquiesce to the new demands. Baghdad may decide to accept the condition regarding interviewing scientists “anywhere” UNMOVIC wishes, and is likely to accept the more intrusive arrangements regarding the presidential sites. If it does, inspections may get underway. But the chances of Iraq accepting a de facto military occupation in the guise of an inspection regime, and the chances of such “coercive inspections” functioning efficiently and professionally to carry out their disarmament tasks, seem slim.

Either way, it is clear that the Bush administration will make

its decision on whether to go to war in utter disregard of the first resolution's lack of actual authorization for war, and quite likely with little regard for any actual progress of inspections in Iraq. The resolution will undoubtedly end with the phrase "the Security Council remains seized of the issue," meaning it remains on the Council agenda.

It will also not grant any country, including the United States, the right to determine unilaterally when and if Iraq is in compliance with, or in material breach of, the resolution's terms. But U.S. officials have already indicated they intend to assert that the first resolution provides all the UN authorization they need—that is to say, none—to launch their war.

Tragically, it appears that all fourteen other Council members (or 13 if Tony Blair, against the massive opposition of the British people, allies the UK with his Bush buddies) are prepared to simply assert that they do not believe the resolution authorizes force, and then essentially "agree to disagree" with Washington. None, so far, unless France or Russia suddenly recovers their independence, are likely even to vote no, let alone mobilizing a serious international coalition to oppose Washington's war. China may abstain, as perhaps Syria might. But there is no indication of serious opposition; the Council is collapsing under U.S. pressure. It appears every country on the Council has made the same pragmatic determination that if the U.S. goes to war, we want to be part of it. The thinking seems to be that being excluded from an illegal preemptive war, what Congressman Jim McDermott called "a war for oil, power and

the blandishments of empire," is somehow worse than endorsing or participating in an illegal, preemptive war of oil, power and the blandishments of empire. We have been there before too. In 1990, in the run-up to Desert Storm, George Bush Senior bribed and threatened and punished virtually every country on the Security Council to force them to vote to authorize the U.S. war. The U.S. bribed poor countries with cheap Saudi oil.

Washington dangled new arms packages before governments such as Ethiopia and Colombia whose access to U.S. military support had been cut because of wars and human rights violations. U.S. diplomats went to China and said "name your price" to avert a veto—and fulfilled Beijing's wish list for post-Tiananmen Square diplomatic rehabilitation (with announcement of a White House visit by the Chinese foreign minister) and new development aid (in the form of a \$114 million World Bank assistance package).

And when the ambassador from Yemen, the only Arab country on the Council, voted against the U.S. war, there was a U.S. diplomat at his side in seconds, saying "that will be the most expensive 'no' vote you ever cast." And then Washington punished Yemen, poorest country in the Arab world, with a cut-off of the entire \$70 million U.S. aid package.

Many at the United Nations remember the "Yemen precedent" even today. It may be at the heart of international reluctance to challenge Bush's war. This is an era of a single super-power, more powerful in military, economic, political, technological, diplomatic, and cultural influence than any

empire throughout history. In this era, when the leader of that super-power has announced that any country not "with us" is to be considered "with the terrorists"—what country is prepared to risk standing defiant of U.S. demands?

Certainly many things have changed between 1991, 1998 and today. Perhaps the most significant changes have to do less to do with what the Bush administration is doing, than with how it justifies its actions. In 1991 Bush Senior never claimed the U.S. goal was "regime change" in Iraq; today the assassination or overthrow of the Iraqi leader is stated policy. Never before has the U.S. officially claimed the right to launch a preemptive strike; today, that "right" is at the center of a new doctrine, one which even Henry Kissinger acknowledged stands in violation of international law. (Of course Kissinger went on to claim that therefore what we need is not the repudiation of such illegal preemptive strikes but a full rewrite of international law, to create a new legality authorizing precisely such actions for the U.S. alone.)

And never before has the U.S. openly threatened to "go it alone," to invade another country in the name of enforcing UN resolutions even if the United Nations explicitly disavowed such a military attack. Today the UN stands in fear of losing "relevance" in Washington.

The option of a clear "no" position, rejecting the U.S. consensus, standing publicly against such a catastrophic war, and trying to prevent the war or at least distinguishing one's own country from such global folly,

does not yet appear on any Security Council member's agenda. And yet exactly that position is urgently required. Demonstrating how the U.S. is isolated from the rest of the world, publicly debunking the myth that Washington is leading an international coalition, would place any critical government on the side of the clear global majority position opposing this war.

At this moment the member states—especially those serving in the Security Council—are on the verge of losing their independence of action. Council members may not be able to prevent the U.S. from launching its war. But they can prevent the U.S. from claiming a multilateral UN credential when it does so. They can insure that the United Nations does not, by endorsing this war, violate its own Charter, which prohibits the use of force unless all possible non-military options have been exhausted. It is possible that France will maintain its independence and remain committed to opposing a preemptive U.S. war. Paris could refuse to accept the initial U.S.-UK resolution (even if it is based on the two-part structure France demanded), and may veto the inevitable second resolution explicitly authorizing war. But this scenario appears unlikely.

Rather, if the Security Council fails, this is a moment for other agencies of the United Nations to step forward. This is a time for the General Assembly, perhaps under the sponsorship of the Non-Aligned countries operating as the Group of 77, to take the lead. Relying on the "Uniting for Peace" precedent at the United Nations, the Assembly can seize the initiative as the most democratic organ of the

UN to assert its voice in the name of global humanity to challenge the legitimacy of Bush's war.

This is also a defining moment for the United Nations, in which the UN itself as an institution must choose how it defines its relevance on the world stage. Those of the UN system who seek "relevance" only in relation to Washington's narrowly-defined power will seek participation in, rather than challenging the legitimacy of, the U.S. war.

They believe that being sidelined by the U.S. represents the greatest threat to the United Nations. And indeed, their participation (however negligible) and their endorsement (however reluctant), will very likely guarantee that officially they are not marginalized, not excluded by Washington. However much they may quietly deplore the undermining of the United Nations, the violations of international law, the breaching of the UN Charter, all inherent in this unilateral U.S. war, they seem prepared to acquiesce to war, to guard against exclusion from Washington's war tent. The tactic may work; it may prevent the United Nations from being dismissed as "irrelevant" by Washington opinion-makers. But those UN officials take a different risk—that of losing their ability to speak on behalf of those disempowered voices that make up the 94% of the world's people who do not live in the United States. Those who serve at the center of the UN system have an obligation as international civil servants to implement the UN Charter—especially its fundamental mission of "saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war."

Their work is to protect the

peace, however difficult that task—through negotiations, fact-finding, inspecting, shaming, reporting—even if it means challenging the will of the most powerful UN member state. Regardless of concerns of "relevance," they must not become champions of war.

Others in the UN system, who define relevance in global terms not limited to the Washington beltway, will take a different decision. Those UN leaders will stand defiant of the U.S. They will speak out against the violations of international law, the undermining of the United Nations, the breaching of the UN Charter, that are all inherent in the launching of a preemptive war. They may not have the power to stop the war alone. But they will give voice to those around the world who have no other voice, whose governmental or civil society voices have been stifled by fear of U.S. power, retaliation, or the Yemen precedent, and who look to the United Nations as the voice of the global conscience.

They will speak out to defend the role of the United Nations as a check on all violations of international law, UN resolutions and the UN Charter—whether rooted in Iraq's unfulfilled disarmament obligations or in Washington's preemptive war—even if the global organization cannot be a contending power in its own right. Their voices will protect the real relevance of the global organization as it acts on behalf of "the peoples of the United Nations."

Phyllis Bennis

October 15, 2002

From Znet: www.lbbs.org.

Letter from INEB Secretariat Office

Dear INEB friends and readers,

Greetings! We all are approaching the new year. This is a good time for reflection, lessons that we may learn from the present year, what to do in the future.

Since the last issue of *Seeds of Peace*, I am in a stage of reflection and preparation for next year's program to support members of INEB. My aspiration is that the INEB Secretariat Office would facilitate programs for empowering each member's capacity to engage in social issues, and for strengthening our friendships in the network. Suggestions and comments are welcome to help me do a better

job for you. Also, if you could give me your evaluation or share your vision, that will be definitely great. I myself feel very grateful that many of the members including senior and executive ones are very supportive and keep sharing their visions with me.

I am now participating in a training called "Asia Super Training for Social Action Trainers" or "Asia Super-T." It is the first time that our friend George Lakey together with Ouyporn Khuankaew and Pracha Hutanuwat offered a training for trainers in the Asian context. This training will be offered again next year with the objective to help empower social activists

in INEB circle.

Other themes to be carried on next year include Bhikkhuni and woman, youth, peace and interfaith issues. The INEB Annual meeting will also continue. It is scheduled for July in Korea with the cooperation from INEB's Korean friend, the Venerable Pomnyun Sunim. I will keep you informed about all these.

Please feel free to contact the INEB Secretariat Office if you come up with any ideas for next year's activities. I hope the year 2003 will be an exciting and hopeful year for us all.

Yours in the Dhamma,
Lapapan Supamanta
Executive Secretary

The case against McDonald's

McDonald's spend over \$1.8 billion every year worldwide on advertising and promotions, trying to cultivate an image of being a 'caring' and 'green' company that is also a fun place to eat. Children are lured in (dragging their parents behind them) with the promise of toys and other gimmicks. But behind the smiling face of Ronald McDonald lies the reality - McDonald's only interest is money, making profits from whoever and whatever they can, just like all multinational companies. McDonald's Annual Reports talk of 'Global Domination' - they aim to open more and more stores across the globe - but their continual worldwide expansion means more uniformity, less choice and the undermining of local communities.

Promoting Unhealthy Food

McDonald's promote their food as 'nutritious', but the reality is that it is junk food - high in fat, sugar and salt, and low in fibre and vitamins. A diet of this type is linked with a greater risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other diseases. Their food also contains many chemical additives, some of which may cause ill-health, and hyperactivity in children. Don't forget too that meat is the cause of the majority of food poisoning incidents. In 1991 McDonald's were responsible for an outbreak of food poisoning in the UK, in which people suffered serious kidney failure. With modern intensive farming methods, other diseases - linked to chemical residues or unnatural practices - have be-

come a danger to people too (such as BSE).

Exploiting Workers

Workers in the fast food industry are paid low wages. McDonald's do not pay overtime rates even when employees work very long hours. Pressure to keep profits high and wage costs low results in understaffing, so staff have to work harder and faster. As a consequence, accidents (particularly burns) are common. The majority of employees are people who have few job options and so are forced to accept this exploitation, and they're compelled to 'smile' too! Not surprisingly staff turnover at McDonald's is high, making it virtually impossible to unionise and fight for a better deal, which suits.

McDonald's who have always been opposed to Unions.

Robbing the Poor

Vast areas of land in poor countries are used for cash crops or for cattle ranching, or to grow grain to feed animals to be eaten in the West. This is at the expense of local food needs. McDonald's continually promote meat products, encouraging people to eat meat more often, which wastes more and more food resources. 7 million tons of grain fed to livestock produces only 1 million tons of meat and by-products. On a plant-based diet and with land shared fairly, almost every region could be self-sufficient in food.

Damaging the Environment

Forests throughout the world - vital for all life - are being destroyed at an appalling rate by multinational companies. McDonald's have at last been forced to admit to using beef reared on ex-rainforest land, preventing its regeneration. Also, the use of farmland by multinationals and their suppliers forces local people to move on to other areas and cut down further trees.

McDonald's are the world's largest user of beef. Methane emitted by cattle reared for the beef industry is a major contributor to the 'global warming' crisis. Modern intensive agriculture is based on the heavy use of chemicals which are damaging to the environment.

Every year McDonald's use

thousands of tons of unnecessary packaging, most of which ends up littering our streets or polluting the land buried in landfill sites.

Murdering Animals

The menus of the burger chains are based on the torture and murder of millions of animals. Most are intensively farmed, with no access to fresh air and sunshine, and no freedom of movement. Their deaths are barbaric - 'humane slaughter' is a myth. We have the choice to eat meat or not, but the billions of animals massacred for food each year have no choice at all.

Censorship and McLibel

Criticism of McDonald's has come from a huge number of people and organisations over a wide range of issues. In the mid-1980's, London Greenpeace drew together many of those strands of criticism and called for an annual World Day of Action against McDonald's. This takes place every year on 16th October, with pickets and demonstrations all over the world. McDonald's, who spend a fortune every year on advertising, are trying to silence world-wide criticism by threatening legal action against those who speak out. Many have been forced to back down because they lacked the money to fight a case. But Helen Steel and Dave Morris, two supporters of London Greenpeace, defended themselves in a major UK High

Court libel trial. No legal aid is available so they represented themselves. McDonald's engaged in a huge cover up, refusing to disclose masses of relevant documents. Also, the defendants were denied their right to a jury. Despite all the cards being stacked against them, Helen and Dave turned the tables and exposed the truth by putting McDonald's business practices on trial. Protests against the \$30 billion a year fast-food giant continue to grow. It's vital to stand up to intimidation and to defend free speech.

What you can do

Together we can fight back against the institutions and the people in power who dominate our lives and our planet, and we can create a better society without exploitation. Workers can and do organise together to fight for their rights and dignity. People are increasingly aware of the need to think seriously about the food we and our children eat. People in poor countries are organising themselves to stand up to multinationals and banks which dominate the world's economy. Environmental and animal rights protests and campaigns are growing everywhere. Why not join in the struggle for a better world. Talk to friends and family, neighbours and workmates about these issues. Please copy and circulate this leaflet as widely as you can.

Please send me more information. I enclose _____ pounds donation to the campaign.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Greenpeace (London), 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, UK.

Tel 0171 837 7557 or 0171 713 1269.

Independent Internet info at <http://www.mcspotlight>

Buddhism at a crossroads

Once you have an official body taking care of the organisation of temples, lay people have no room to contribute. It's even possible that people would stop making merit or supporting their local wat, because they'd figure the government was doing it. The importance of Buddhism to Thai people cannot be overstated. That is one reason why hundreds of people, monks and nuns included, marched to Parliament House early last month to demand the setting up of a Ministry of Buddhism. Such a ministry would mean the state would provide a budget and personnel to address the problems threatening the country's main religion.

But should we put the future of Buddhism in the hands of the government?

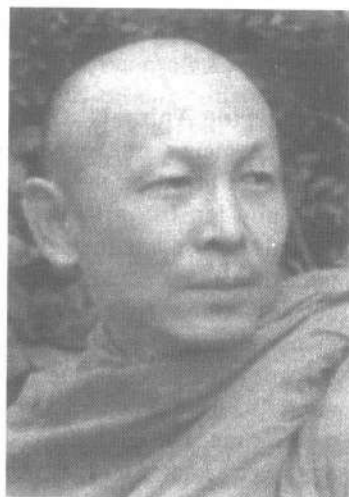
I would argue that if we truly wish to restore and support Buddhism, we have to find ways to involve lay people—communities—in the process.

History tells us something.

In the past, Theravada Buddhism thrived here amid a balanced relationship with the government, Sangha and lay communities. The Sangha guided people in the path of dhamma and the government and people were responsible for supplying monks with necessities and for monitoring their practices.

When the three elements worked well together, the religion flourished.

Another history lesson: Buddhism's disappearance from India did not have to do with the invasion of Muslim armies, as many believed. Hinduism came under attack as well, but clearly survived. The reason behind the decline of Buddhism in India was



excessive state patronage. This led monks to congregate at the then-prominent Buddhist university, Nalanda, and lost touch with lay communities. Over time, ordinary people came to believe that religious matters were the only concern of monks. When Nalanda was destroyed, Buddhism had no solid grounds left with which to continue.

In Thailand, over the centuries, it is true that the monarchy played an important part in upholding the religion. Royal support, however, was limited to important monasteries in the capital and big cities. The majority of wats and monks survived by public support.

The monarchy's ability to ensure that monks stayed within the bounds of the vinaya (correct discipline; Buddhist canon) was also limited, even when the monarchy had absolute power. During the reign of King Rama I, 128 monks were disrobed. That number increased to 500 in the reign of King Rama III. Even so, attempts to clean up the Sangha were limited to temples in the capital.

The practice and discipline

of monks who lived far from Bangkok was controlled by their local communities. It is undeniable that this sort of local social control is what helped Buddhism to survive until today.

Buddhism began to decline when the three-pronged relationship lost balance. The downturn began about 100 years ago, when the Sangha was pulled towards the state and away from the community by the Sangha Act, (more widely known as the *Ror Sor* 121 bill). It was first implemented in 1903 and unified Buddhist administration under the Sangha Supreme Council.

As religious affairs came under government control, communities had less say. The wat, which traditionally belonged to the community, was classified by law as an "asset of the religion" and came under state control.

The villagers' voice was no longer a factor when it came to many issues, including questions about whether certain wats should be built or maintained. These issues were now up to the state.

The state took control of promotions within the monk hierarchy. Although part of that power was later returned to the Sangha Supreme Council, the effect remained the same—lay people were kept at a distance from monastic matters. Eventually, people paid less attention.

The problem is that religious affairs have not been a priority for the state. That is one reason why we have seen so many serious problems with monks and monasteries and why there has been a call for the establishment of a Ministry of Buddhism.

It is not fair, of course, to

place all the blame on the state. We cannot dismiss the fact that lay people have turned their backs on the religion as well.

Take the alarming deterioration in the quality of education for monks. Are ordinary Buddhists aware of this? Have they shown any interest in tackling the problem?

While a massive percentage of donations go to construct ubosot, vihara or other temple buildings around the country, only a tiny amount is allocated to schools for monks and novices.

The setting up of a new ministry might mean a bigger budget for the well-being of monks and the religion but it would definitely weaken the three-pronged relationship even further.

If such a ministry were set up, lay people would become even more complacent about religious matters. The existing Department of Religious Affairs is not very large, but people still expect it to resolve every scandal involving monks. Lay people no longer think that it is their job to shore up the religion.

This tendency would become more pronounced if the department was upgraded to a full-fledged ministry. The ministry would take over even more of the functions that used to be the responsibility of lay communities. These functions would in turn serve as more justification for expanding the ministry's budget and powers.

Once you have an official body taking care of the organization of temples, lay people have no room to contribute. It's even possible that people would stop making merit or supporting their local wat, because they'd figure the government was doing it.

One can look at any rural

society for evidence of the adverse impact of government intervention. Whenever state mechanisms and financing arrive, villagers quickly depend on them to solve all problems. They stop helping themselves and one another.

Is there now any village where people are willing to use their own initiative to build a new road or repair a bridge? Most villages will only do so when they get money from the state or the *Or Bor Tor* (Tambon Administrative Organisation). Without financing, villagers won't work together on such issues, even if it's for the common good.

There is no question that the idea for a Ministry of Buddhism was put forward in good faith. But we can't ignore the negative effects it would have on the duties of individual Buddhists.

The central question is: what is causing the decline of Buddhism? Is it a lack of money? Patronage? Power? Or a lack of awareness among Buddhists?

If money and power are the answer to problems, why do we still have a plethora of social ills? The Interior Ministry is equipped with wide powers and an enormous budget—but it can't seem to cope with problems like drugs, crime and gambling.

The key to solving problems in Buddhism is the active participation of civil society. Instead of raising a leviathan ministry, the government would do well to mobilise the public to take an active part in matters concerning the religion.

One solution it should consider is the setting up of a decentralised system of committees for the administration of religious affairs at all levels, from the national down to tambons.

These committees, which

would have to be recognised by law, would be tasked with administering and supporting matters concerning the religion, including expanding spiritual knowledge, promoting Buddhist ethics and promoting education for monks.

The committees would be sponsored by the government and paid for with local taxes. Members should be elected in the same manner as members were elected to the National Constitution Drafting Assembly.

An assembly of Buddhists should also be established to monitor the work, policies and budgets of these administrative committees.

Both organisations should contain monk and nun representatives. Both would provide forums for religious and lay people to exchange views about the religious situation both nationally and in their localities. Such forums could consider issues such as making sure that monks maintain discipline, deciding how to deal with those who stray off the rightful path, and screening men before they enter the monkhood.

Reviving the role of lay people would help restore balance in the governing of the religion. It would be a longer process, but we really have no choice.

State control might bring quicker results but in the long run would just exacerbate the problem.

The proposal to establish both local administration committees and the assembly of concerned Buddhists does not dismiss the role of the state. Government must continue to play an active role in maintaining the well-being of Buddhism and monks, partly through the soon-to-be-established National Bud-

dhism Bureau.

That office would maintain a close working relationship at all levels with the local committees for the administration of religious affairs. It would serve as the government's agent in allocating

budgets for the committees and assembly.

To maintain the health of the religion, the government should be promoting the active participation of the public, not taking over the public's job. That's why

we shouldn't look to the proposed ministry as the answer to the restoration of Buddhism in national life.

Phra Paisal Visalo
Bangkok Post,
October 2, 2002

Spirituality and homosexuality: A training to light up gays' lives

Oppression of the homosexual is frequently evident in Thailand. In the year 1997 Rajabhat Institute (a university) announced that the sexually deviated would not be accepted in the Education Faculty. Two years later, the Public Relations Department demanded that all the six TV channels refrain from broadcasting images of sexually deviated persons, particularly gays. But both stipulations were revoked because they were publicly opposed by Anjaree Group (a lesbian group) and some human rights organizations. They rightly claimed that such stipulations violated democracy and expressed discrimination. However, discrimination still persists. Some life insurance companies refuse to provide health insurance to gays, regarding them as risky to HIV exposure. But these companies did not explicitly cite this reason otherwise they might be accused of discrimination.

In the meantime, homosexual people, either gays or lesbians, are not aware of their own rights leading to perpetual discrimination in the guise of social policies. However, for them to stand up to fend for their rights is actually a complicated and difficult social process. To do so requires them to undergo a

self-confronting process. Most homosexual people, gays and lesbians have not experienced such process. As a result, the issue of the rights of homosexual people has not gone very far. Not only that, at the social policy level, there is no law or regulation that officially recognizes their lifestyle. They have to go on "living in the closet."

In response to such problem, Pailin Chotisakulrat and I have come up with a program called "Training on Spirituality for the Homosexual." We see that "religion" is another social institution that oppresses this group of people. Religious teachings have strong impacts on the ways of thinking and living of the homosexual. Thus it is important to question teachings that imply sexuality prejudices. The important point is that religious teachings might be one of the major factors that hamper their power to call for justice and equal rights.

This year we have organized 4 training workshops. The first one is for "Anjaree Group" (a lesbian group) with 11 participants. The second is for "Rainbow Sky" (*fa si rung*) (a gay group) with 9 participants. The third is for 15 participants from Fire Group (a lesbian group in Chiangmai province) and the

fourth is for 15 members of "Friends-Love-Friends" (a group of gays at Lumpini Park).

From these four training workshops we found that both the homosexual (gays and lesbians) and the bisexual experience oppression and verbal assaults from society, wherever they live or hide, whatever religion they practice. They are stigmatized and condemned particularly by religious institutions. And, religious teachings seem to be the strongest force that hurts them most. On the contrary, the heterosexual does not have to suffer from the same fate.

Buddhist teachings claim that homosexuality results from bad karma. People of this kind are prohibited from ordination. Similarly, Christian and Muslim teachings say that they are sinful. They must correct their sexual orientation to conform to that of the majority in order to redeem from sin. But to reorient sexuality is not easy because it is an issue of preference. And heterosexuality may also be socially constructed as it is socially policed. Going against one's preference and social norms is a difficult task.

Stigmas embedded in religious teachings push the homosexual toward a loss of self-

confidence especially in leading life as a homosexual. They feel guilty that they are sinful. They are afraid of isolation. All these lead to an inability for self-acceptance and consequently to self-hatred. They have no self-respect. They are unable to reveal themselves to those near and dear to them. The most dangerous thing is that they might punish themselves because of being different, even committing suicide.

The training process made use of the "talking in a circle" technique. It is to show that in the teaching of many religious persons, there could be a "technical failure," thereby prejudicing against the homosexual. We asked the participants to transfer a piece of information from one person to another. Although a modestly sized piece, the person who is the last in the circle received a distorted information. Information was carried through the sender's understanding and interpreted by the recipient—through the language of the sender and way of thinking of the recipient. In any religion, this failure is possible.

The other important point is that since the heterosexual documented the teachings, the

teachings then are full of prejudices against the homosexual. And, also against women. We noted that it is men who recorded the teachings. That's why there is tendency in religious texts to provide more space for men.

However, nowhere in the teachings of the Buddha did the Buddha explicitly mention that homosexuality is a sin. Neither did Jesus Christ. Messages against the homosexual happened long afterward in the process of reinterpreting or explaining the holy text.

We also introduced the *Kalamasutta* as an analytical tool. It is a 10-point checklist for the criteria of belief. This method made sure that our learning through the analysis of Buddhist teachings is solidly grounded.

In the 3rd training in Chiangmai our friend, Julia Cassaniti, who also joined the Ariyavinaya Meeting in February 2002, was kind enough to travel up country and inform us about the gay and lesbian situation in the United States. She provided us with a brief history of the struggle for equal rights by gays and lesbians since 1950.

In all 50 participants attended the four training workshops. We hope that we have

helped them to rediscover or reclaim their value and to light up their wisdom. We hope that we have helped improved their attitudes toward themselves and religions. For the first time, the secret is revealed that religions do not speak ill of the homosexual. For many participants, it is as if they were born anew. Their positive impressions are reflected at the end of training: for example, "I am pleased to have this chance," "I have better understanding about religion," "I know myself better," and "I am no longer a rubbish."

N.B. We got no financial support in organizing the training. We paid out of our own pockets for train tickets when traveling to Chiangmai. It was a relief that we were able to use the offices of a local NGO and the Red Cross without having to pay for rent. The small number of participants attending each training suggests that the homosexual community in Thailand is still afraid of revealing themselves.

Phra Chai Waradhammo, coordinator of Gay and Lesbian Issue (GLI)
(Translated by Lapapan Supamanta)

Religion into politics

During the time of liberation from western colonialism, nation-building and modernisation, the debate about the underlying political concepts almost excluded religious dimensions from the political discourse. This was one dimension of modern thinking. The ban on religion was mainly because most of the new nations were trying to implement a socialist version, varying from

very soft market socialism to hard core communism.

Now there is a return of the politics of religion as an embodiment of human ideals, which the secular state has apparently betrayed or is unable to address effectively.

Former Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid expressed this observation very clearly in his opening address at the Mil-

lennium Interfaith Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue, held in Jakarta at the end of July.

According to Mr Wahid, the rise of religious and cultural conflicts has led to the politisation of religion in the wake of the failure of secular states to address ethical concerns and deliver social and economic justice.

Of course, one has to recognise that religion served as a



conduit of abuse and manipulation of the truth many times in the past. However, Malaysian scientist and political leader Chandra Muzaffar, speaking at the same meeting in Jakarta, argued eloquently that resources and insights of religion could be placed at the service of the greater common good. He repeatedly referred to the core values, the essence of cultural and religious traditions like justice, love, compassion, hospitality, dignity, unity in a common humanity, recognition of the interconnectedness of all living realities and an intuitive grasp of the sacred.

HISTORICAL RELATIONS

Muslims and Buddhists constitute the two biggest religious communities in Asia. It is beyond any imagination to think how much can be achieved if these two religious communities work together on the basis of their shared values and try to transform Asia.

Looking into history, it appears that Muslims and Buddhists have had fairly good relations. Some of the great Muslim scholars have paid a rich tribute to Buddhism in their writings.

For instance in Malaysia, in the 10th century a Muslim scholar by the name Ibin Anadib wrote about the virtues of Buddhists who had been in contact with him. In the 11th century, Al Birudi wrote about Buddhism and tried to understand the spirituality of Buddhism. Perhaps, he was the first scholar in history to study different religions scientifically.

In the 12th century Al Sharistani wrote *Nations and Beliefs* in which he describes the Mahayana Buddhism in very great and accurate detail.

The initiator of the Jakarta dialogue is Taiwanese Buddhist Dharma master Hsin-Tao. He advocates concrete pragmatic and dialogical projects of cooperation. After a 10-year search for the truth while living in self-

isolation at a cemetery, followed by two years fasting, Hsin-Tao is now engaged in the realm of inter-religious communication and inter-faith education for peace.

Up to now, his greatest achievement is the construction of the world's first modern Museum of Religions in Taiwan. His even bigger project is to protect or to rebuild sacred sites. He has started to collect funds for the construction of Buddha statues in Afghanistan, which have been destroyed by the Taliban.

The encounter with Hsin-Tao gave a glance on what may happen if a dynamic inter-religious concept of dialogical activities is widened into the field of politics. His way of projection confirms that religions in Asia have gained self-confidence and that they are recognising their spiritual potentials. There was a move in Jakarta towards a position that time has

come, in which to be tolerant is not enough. And it is also enough talking about the fundamental differences in dogmatic interpreting of concepts of life and death, good and bad and so forth.

'THE LADY IS TIRED'

In Indonesia, the presence of poverty and corruption is evident. Only 41 percent of the existing workforce is employed. Asked to comment on the government's role on the matter, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, chairman of the central board of Muhammadiyah in Indonesia, said with a smile: "The Lady is tired!"

One of the many surprises at the Jakarta meeting was the high level of Participation of youth. One day was reserved for an exchange of ideas between the new and old generations. The meeting was organised around future trend, with peace as the linking theme between past and future.

To facilitate the giving and receiving of hospitality, upon which the dynamic of the meeting was based, the organisers chose the headquarters of the Islamic Millennium, which is led by Habib Chirzin, as the venue for the youth dialogue. Buddhist and Muslim youths made a strong plea for interfaith education. They are searching for ethical and cultural ideals. And they are ready to assume political leadership to build a just and peaceful society based on religious and spiritual values.

Many questions were raised, however. What are the religious component of common grounds across religious boundaries for a new era of global peace? Is the concept of a just war antagonistic to the sanctity of life? If so, how should religions act responsibly?

What are necessary and convincing motivational changes in religious ethics in order to improve the individual socioeconomic engagement, and so to eliminate one major reason for inter-religious and interracial conflicts?

One of the most debated issues was the future of cooperation among Buddhists and Muslims based on their spiritual traditions in the globalised world. It was clear that on the micro level of people, many things are traditionally done in a cooperative spirit. But not too many examples were available from medium and macro structural levels and the sectors of society.

So a number of the religious and non-religious issues which may hinder inter-religious cooperation were identified and discussed. Other questions were not even raised. For example, what are religious elements of a spiritually moral power complementary to the legal power in a situation in which the modern secular states' inability to accommodate ethical values is becoming increasingly obvious?

What are the religious experience which can contribute substantially to a modification of the practice of democracy as a way of living in sustainable communities and diverse societies? What are the religious assumptions for overcoming the contradiction or the antagonism between the exclusiveness of a particular religion and the universality of the task ahead?

NATURAL SPIRITUALITY

If religions want to be helpful in creating new human politics of global peace, human security and renewed democracy, then they must search for

a natural spirituality, which envisions the shared ground of all religions and human traditions. This path goes beyond the simple dualities of good and evil, of faithful and heathen.

Our world faces a critical process of the formation of a global hegemony based on violence and injustice. In the mid last century, the endangered newly liberated nations, together with those still under the colonial yoke in Asia and Africa, managed to escape from being sandwiched between the powers of a divided dualistic world.

When the leaders of that time came together in Bandung in 1955 they came from Muslim, Hindu, Taoist, Socialist and other backgrounds. They did not insist on their own particular spirituality, but they invented a new and universal quality of a practice-oriented natural spirituality.

This decisive dialogue for the practice of seeking a way for political survival became the pretext for uniting and resistance in a spirituality which said "No" to a new dependence and domination of the powerful. What is expected from religions today is that they may agree upon and contribute to a spiritual pretext which can give an authentic space for all those who search for a non-violent coalition for peace vis-à-vis any axis for war.

Besides encouraging encounters and creating new friendships, the Jakarta Dialogue between Asian religions was a structural and methodological milestone on the long march to global peace with justice.

Wolfgang R. Schmidt is former Executive Director of the World Council of Churches and Asia Director for Bread for the World.

It's not about fatalism

Karma is one of those words we don't translate. Its basic meaning is simple enough—action. But because of the weight the Buddha's teachings give to the role of action, the Sanskrit word “karma” is packed with many meanings and the English word “action” can't carry all its luggage.

This is why we've simply airlifted the original word into our vocabulary.

But when we try unpacking the connotations the word carries, now that it has arrived into everyday usage, we find that most of its luggage has gotten mixed up in transit.

In the eyes of most Westerners, for example, karma functions like fate—bad fate, at that: an inexplicable, unchangeable force coming out of our past, for which we are somehow vaguely responsible and which we are powerless to fight.

“I guess it's just my karma,” I've heard people sigh when bad fortune strikes with such force that they see no alternative to resigned acceptance.

The fatalism implicit in this statement is one reason why so many people are repelled by the concept of karma, for it sounds like the kind of callous myth-making that can justify almost any kind of suffering or injustice in the status quo: “If he's poor, it's because of his karma.” “If she's been raped, it's because of her karma.”

From this, it seems a short step to saying that he or she deserves to suffer, and so doesn't deserve our help.

This misperception comes from the fact that the Buddhist concept of karma came to the

West at the same time as non-Buddhist concepts, and so ended up with some of their luggage.

Although many Asian concepts of karma are fatalistic, the early Buddhist concept was not fatalistic at all. In fact, if we look closely at early Buddhist ideas of karma, we'll find that they give even less importance to myths about the past than most modern Americans do.

For the early Buddhists, karma was non-linear. Other Indian schools believed that karma operated in a straight line, with actions from the past influencing the present, and present actions influencing the future. As a result, they saw little room for free will.

Buddhists, however, saw that karma acts in feedback loops, with the present moment being shaped both by past and by present actions; present actions shape not only the future but also the present.

This constant opening for present input into the causal process makes free will possible.

This freedom is symbolised in the imagery the Buddhists used to explain the process: flowing water. Sometimes the flow from the past is so strong that little can be done except to stand fast, but there are also times when the flow is gentle enough to be diverted in almost any direction.

So, instead of promoting resigned powerlessness, the early Buddhist notion of karma focused on the liberating potential of what the mind is doing with every moment.

Who you are—what you come from—is not anywhere near as important as the mind's

motives for what it is doing right now. Even though the past may account for many of the inequalities we see in life, our measure as human beings is not the hand we've been dealt, for that hand can change at any moment.

We take our own measure by how well we play the hand we've got. If you're suffering, you try not to continue the unskillful mental habits that would keep that particular karmic feedback going.

If you see that other people are suffering, and you're in a position to help, you focus not on their karmic past but your karmic opportunity in the present: Some day you may find yourself in the same predicament that they're in now, so here's your opportunity to act in the way you'd like them to act toward you when that day comes.

This belief that one's dignity is measured, not by one's past but by one's present actions, flew right in the face of the Indian traditions of caste-based hierarchies, and explains why early Buddhists had such a field day poking fun at the pretensions and mythology of the Brahmins.

As the Buddha pointed out, a Brahmin could be a superior person not because he came out of a Brahmin womb, but only if he acted with truly skilful intentions.

We read the early Buddhist attacks on the caste system and, aside from their anti-racist implications, they often strike us as quaint.

What we fail to realise is that they strike right at the heart of our myths about our own past: our obsession with defining who

we are in terms of where we come from—our race, ethnic heritage, gender, socio-economic background, sexual preference—our modern tribes. We put inordinate amounts of energy into creating and maintaining the mythology of our tribe so that we can take vicarious pride in our tribe's good name. Even when we become Buddhists, the tribe comes first. We demand a Buddhism that honours our myths.

From the standpoint of karma, though, where we come from is old karma, over which we have no control. What we "are" is a nebulous concept at best—and pernicious at worst, when we use it to find excuses for acting on unskillful motives.

The worth of a tribe lies only in the skilful actions of its individual members. Even when

those good people belong to our tribe, their good karma is theirs, not ours. And, of course, every tribe has its bad members, which means that the mythology of the tribe is a fragile thing. To hang onto anything fragile requires a large investment of passion, aversion, and delusion, leading inevitably on to more unskillful actions in the future.

So the Buddhist teachings on karma, far from being a quaint relic from the past, are a direct challenge to a basic thrust—and basic flaw—in our culture. Only when we abandon our obsession with finding vicarious pride in our tribal past, and can take actual pride in the motives that underlie our present actions, can we say that the word karma, in its Buddhist sense, has recovered its luggage.

And when we open the luggage, we'll find that it's brought us a gift: the gift we give ourselves and one another when we drop our myths about who we are, and can instead be honest about what we're doing with each moment—at the same time making the effort to do it right.

Thanissaro Bhikkhu

(Geoffrey DeGraff or Acharn Geoff), is an American-born Theravada Buddhist monk. He was ordained in Thailand in the forest tradition in 1974. He is now abbot of Metta Forest Monastery near San Diego, California. He is author of *The Mind Like Fire Unbound*, *The Buddhist Monastic Code*, and *The Wings to Awakening*. For more information about his work, visit www.accessinsight.org.

Association Francois-Xavier Bagnoud

North-South Prize 2002 won by Albina du Boisrouvray and Xanana Gusmao (24.07.2002)

Lisbon, 24.07.2002: The 2002 North-South prize has been awarded to Xanana Gusmao, President of East Timor and Albina du Boisrouvray, founder of the Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Association.

Xanana Gusmao, the first President of East Timor, was born in Manatuto, East Timor on 20 June 1946. A symbol of resistance and the fight for the right to self-determination of the people of East Timor, he is also in the forefront of the reconciliation process. He was one of the main figures behind the referendum vote of 20 May 2002 which led to independence.

Albina du Boisrouvray, a French-Swiss national, is the founder of the Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Association, which campaigns for the welfare of orphaned children suffering from AIDS. She aims to make leaders aware of the fact that by the year 2010 there will be 100 million such children.

The two winners will receive their prize at an official ceremony to be held in Lisbon at the end of November 2002 in the presence of high representatives of the Portuguese authorities, the Council of Europe, and leading figures from North and south.

The North-South prize is awarded each year to two personalities, one from the North, one from the South, who have

actively contributed to the development and defence of the rights of the individual, pluralist democracy, and the partnership between North and South.

Previous winners have included Mario Soares, the former President of Portugal, Graca Machel, the President of the National Organisation of Mozambique Children, Mary Robinson, Patricio Aylwin, the former President of Chile, and Peter Gabriel.

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Albina presents UN Secretary General Kofi Annan with 2 million signatures collected through our safety Net



UNITED NATIONS - May 8, 2002 Albina du Boisrouvray, president of the Association Francois-Xavier Bagnoud (AFXB), presented UN Secretary General Kofi Annan today with a ribbon symbolizing more than 2 million people from all over the world who signed the AFXB safety net demanding that the UN, governments, NGOs and others give top priority to the expected 100 million AIDS orphans by the end of this decade if no immediate action is taken.

The Secretary General then signed the ribbon described by Albina as a safety net intended to reel these most unfortunate children back into a society that will care for them. People from 175 countries signed the safety net including Nobel Laureates, prisoners on death row in Illinois, Sting, the Mayor of Paris, James

Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, school children, royalty from various countries, activists and hundreds of thousands of people in India where the AIDS pandemic looms ominously.

The previous day in an extraordinary action, the Speaker of the New York City Council, a body co-equal with the Mayor of the City, declared May 7, 2002, AIDS Orphans Day in the city and presented du Boisrouvray with a Declaration praising her and AFXB for their outstanding work for AIDS orphans and the most disadvantaged children around the world.

Working energetically to raise the issue before the start of the UN Special Session on Children which began on May 8, 2002, du Boisrouvray and 40 high school children took their

campaign to the Wall Street early Monday morning where they lobbied investors to care about these orphans holding up signs that said: "What is the value of an orphan on the NY Stock Exchange?" They engaged young investors explaining the impact of poverty worldwide on their investment.

Campaigning continued in Washington Park adjacent to New York University where crowds came and heard the plea and signed. Later, near a major commercial center dominated by MACY's Department Store, scores of shoppers, urged by enthusiastic students, came to add their names to the safety net before presenting it to the UN Secretary General.

Albina and her staff will continue lobbying at the UN Special Session for the rest of

the week for a campaign that began in September 1999, to raise the issue of AIDS orphans before those who can take action to help these help these helpless

children before they are exposed to sexual abuse, recruited into child armies or terrorist's cabals, or left on the back streets of chaotic sprawling cities to fend

for themselves.

A warm thank you to the AFXB staff worldwide for their contribution to the Safety Net!

THE PETITION for individual persons:

The Honorable
Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra
Prime Minister of Thailand
Government House
Bangkok, Thailand
Fax: (66-2) 629-9211

Dear Prime Minister Thaksin,

With the completion of two major research efforts—one carried out under government mandate and the other by villagers themselves—there remains no doubt that the Pak Mun dam has been a tragic mistake that has gravely affected the lives of more than 6,000 families near the dam and countless others whose livelihoods and way of life depend on the Mun River.

As a concerned global citizen, we respectfully call on you to act on the mandate that brought your administration into office by decisively ending this horrible chapter in the history of Thailand. We most urgently call on your government to follow the recommendations of the research and open the gates for a number of years or simply decommission the dam entirely and then work to rehabilitate the ecology and communities along the river.

Last year, in response to local villagers' demands, the Thai government agreed to

consider the findings of three separate studies concerning the economic, social, and environmental impact of the dam on the Mun river and surrounding communities: the research of Ubon Ratchathani University (directly funded by the government), the villager-led Thai Baan research conducted with the help of the Southeast Asian Rivers Network (SEARIN), and the study conducted by the Institute of Scientific and Technological Research of Thailand. These three bodies of research were to be presented by October of this year to a government review panel headed by senior Ministry of Science official Suphavit Piamphongsant. This panel was to review all past research on the Pak Mun dam, analyze the methods and findings of this present set of research, and provide a guide for resolving any contradictory evidence. Then, by 30 November, the review panel was to provide recommendations to the government so that an informed and just final decision could be made about the ultimate fate of the dam.

Given that the findings of the Ubon and Thai Baan research come to the same conclusion, the review panel can come to but one recommendation—to open the gates for a number of years or to decommission the dam entirely.

In stark contrast to both the research findings and the procedure established by the government itself, on 23 September, a government committee headed by former Deputy Prime Minister Pongpol Adireksarn, after a most cursory consideration of the Ubon University's research findings, came to a decision to close the dam gates for 8 months of the year. Rather than rectify this hasty and ill-considered decision, a cabinet resolution instead confirmed it by ordering the dam's gates to close on November 1.

There are several serious problems with this preliminary decision. First, it is unclear why any decision was made by Mr. Pongpol's committee or by the cabinet given that the review panel is scheduled to send its recommendations to the government by the end of November. We concur with Mr. Suphavit, chair of the review panel, who has stated that Mr. Pongpol's decision was premature.

Second, the decision was made without consulting villagers who, according to both Ubon and Thai Baan Research results, stand to lose their livelihoods if the dam gates are closed. Mr. Pongpol refused to speak with the villager representatives from the Assembly of the Poor. Villagers were also

barred from the committee meeting at which the decision was made. In contrast, the main beneficiary of this decision, the Energy Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), was invited and present. This imbalance suggests a worrisome lack of transparency and lack of provision for full participation by all stakeholders.

Third, it is disturbing to note that the decision to close the gates 8 months each year does not follow any of the four alternatives recommended by the Ubon research team. Why was Ubon University asked to carry out this research if its results were to be so lightly considered? This is particularly distressing given that the data and analysis strongly indicate that the fourth alternative—opening the gates for five years and then reconsidering the energy needs of the country as a whole—is the only viable choice given the serious and unsolvable social and ecological effects created by the dam.

It would also be in the government's interest to consider the findings of the villagers themselves whose research clearly indicates that the river's

annual lifecycle—and the fish and communities that depend on it—is seriously affected by closing the gates at any time of the year. Mr. Pongpol's committee calls its decision to close the gates a "compromise" between EGAT and local fishermen. But what kind of compromise ignores all options recommended by professional research and excludes the voices of affected villagers from the decision-making process? Furthermore, why has the government made a decision before the review panel, established to consider results from all the research and funded by the government itself, has had a chance to make its recommendations?

Prime Minister Thaksin, last year you ordered the Pak Mun dam gates to be opened for research. We now appeal to your reason and your commitment to serving the Thai people. Choosing to close the gates now carelessly sacrifices the livelihoods of the more than 6,000 Thai families living near the dam and countless others living along the Mun River.

If the gates are closed on 1 November without the govern-

ment taking into account any of the research, the international community will have serious concerns about the Thai government's sincerity in addressing problems of the poor, its interest in preserving the environment, and its commitment to conducting affairs in a transparent way that is open to public scrutiny.

We call on the Thai government to uphold due process for full-citizen participation in resolving this 13-year controversy. There is every indication from the research that the only reasonable solution is to open the gates for a period of years or simply to decommission the dam entirely.

Your government has introduced many progressive measures. It has established a sound framework and set of procedures for understanding the effects of the Pak Mun dam. Make your government the one that has the courage to finally put an end to this tragic mistake.

Thank you for your careful consideration, tactful governance, and constant attention to the voice of the people.

Respectfully yours,

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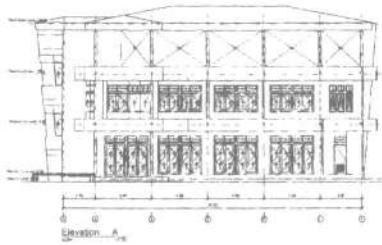
Bangkok, 9-11 November 2003

Contact: Hans and Wallapa
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Garden of Fruition
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Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects

Speech by H.E. Mr. Atsushi Tokinoya, Ambassador of Japan to Thailand on the occasion of the contract signing ceremony for five projects under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects scheme, August 27, 2002, at 11:00, Embassy of Japan.



Mr. Kittichote Hoiyeephoo
Dr. Amporn Wathanavongs
Mr. Preeda Gunama
Mr. Montri Sintawichai
Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. A warm welcome to you all to the Embassy of Japan. It is both a pleasure and an honor for me to be here for today's contract signing ceremony. Japan's program of Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects, or GGP, was set up in 1989. Since then—through a variety of projects—it has successfully contributed to a better understanding and relationship between the peoples and countries of Thailand and Japan. The scheme's mission is to provide support to projects proposed by non-governmental organizations and local government authorities, targeting the most needy people in the country. As tangible results are witnessed by those at grassroots level, so are we receiving more and more requests for GGP grants every year. Five contracts have been signed today, and I would like to comment briefly on each of them.

Today's first contract is a project for Promotion of Securing Citizenship for Hilltribe People, conducted by the Highland People Education and

Development Foundation. Lack of citizenship causes great difficulties in the life of hilltribe people. Therefore, this project aims at helping activities to improve human rights protection and social welfare for hilltribe people in northern Thailand, by promoting the securing of citizenship. The Japanese Government will fund the purchase of three vehicles for this activity to coordinate between hilltribe people and local administrative offices.

The second contract is a project for Construction of Day-care Centers in Rural Areas, conducted by the Foundation for Rehabilitation & Development of Children and Family. This project aims at improving the educational environment for the growing number of needy children from 3-6 years old in rural areas. The Japanese Government will fund the construction of three day-care centers in Karasin province, and Maha Sarakam province.

The third contract is a project for Construction of Maehongson Education Center for Hilltribe people, conducted by the Maehongson Hilltribe Welfare and Development Center. This project aims at developing vocational abilities and providing correct knowledge about HIV/AIDS to hilltribe people, by constructing an education center

in Maehongson province. The Japanese Government will fund the construction of a one-story education center building, which will provide a large training room, with a maximum capacity of 80 persons. We will also fund the construction of a canteen and two dormitories.

The fourth contract is a project for Construction of a Shelter for Abused Children, conducted by the Child Protection Foundation. This project aims at improving living standards of abused children in shelters, by constructing a new multipurpose building in Bangkok. Children rescued from sexual abuse, violence, forced prostitution, and forced labor have serious traumas. They need a shelter and rehabilitation. The Japanese Government will fund the construction of a two-story multipurpose building, which will provide a dormitory and a dining room on the first floor, and an indoor sports hall and two small meeting rooms on the second floor.

The final contract is a project for Construction of Suan Building for the Socio-Economic Development Center, conducted by the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation. This project aims at improving the income generating ability of poor villagers in northeast Thailand, by constructing an education center in Bangkok. This center will provide seminars to teach design of handcraft products, and marketing, to villagers. The Japanese Government will fund the construction of a two-story education center building, which will provide a large and a small training room on the first floor,

and a library and accommodation for trainees on the second floor.

The GGP scheme represents the Japanese people's sincere wishes to be of help to those people in real need, through directly assisting organizations like yours which are making tremendous efforts at the grass-

roots level in order to improve the lives of those needy people. It is my sincere wish that the GGP scheme will continue to fulfill our sincere wish, and in turn enhance the existing strong relationship and friendship between our two countries. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the leaders

and staff of today's projects for their continuing efforts to help the neediest people in Thailand.

Thank you.

H.E. Atsushi Tokinoya,
Ambassador of Japan to Thailand

Globalization and extreme modernism

Sometimes I feel that globalization is not really an accurate descriptor of the age we are said to be living in. The word 'globalization' is at best too socially neutral, at worse highly misleading and deceptive. Sometimes I prefer catchwords such as "free market fundamentalism" and "extreme modernism" to "globalization."

"Free market fundamentalism" is a more accurate descriptor because globalization, which preaches the interdependence of nations, the mutuality of their interests, and the shared benefits of their interactions, has triggered the very opposite consequences; e.g., increasing dependence of 'developing' states on 'developed' states, increasing inequalities between the North and the South, investors and workers, agro-businesses and peasants, widening income inequalities within and between states, etc. As a result of the free market system, the natural environment in large pockets of the world is also in ruins beyond repair, threatening ecological equilibrium and human survival in general. And despite these obvious consequences, we are told that the free market system is

still not free enough; there are still barriers to trade; economies have to be further deregulated or restructured at almost all costs; and so on. All these must be done in the name of progress, prosperity, development. If this faith in the emancipatory power of the free market system is not akin to fundamentalism, then what is?

"Extreme modernism" is also a more accurate descriptor because we are living in a world characterized by the intensification, radicalization, and universal spread of 'modernity.' One Thai scholar has called this "the age of extreme modernism," whereby "modernity now relies simply on its own justification and devours all other forms of actualization of human beings." Other forms of human aspirations are degraded as inferior—the products of weak and abnormal minds. The implication is clear: there is only one way to be sane and normal. This is understandable, as the development concept of modernization is racially coded. Its intellectual precursor is none other than "Europeanization." The renowned syndicate columnist Thomas Friedman has even labeled

critics of globalization "advocates of a flat earth." According to Friedman, these critics are locked in the abnormal past, refusing to accept the unilinearity of time.

If my criticism of globalization makes me a flat-earther, so be it. For all of us who are interested in freedom, justice, non-violence, democracy, and environmental sustainability we should intensify our activism, criticisms, and analyses—not seal our lips, refuse to think and disengage ourselves from the sufferings in the world. Luckily, and here I may be overly optimistic, the term 'globalization' may be an overstatement, inviting resignation or fatalism. We are in a globalizing world as opposed to a globalized one. As such, we all still have a chance to define its contours and contents before the 'center' is occupied without our participation. It is indeed empowering to feel that we all can still make a difference.

As a Buddhist I turn to the teachings of the Buddha in order to responsibly engage with the sufferings in the world. Throughout the decades of my activism, I am sustained and rejuvenated by a very simple magic the

Buddha had to offer. And I shall share it with you all in this speech, and hope that embracing it you will be nurtured and awakened.

Let me begin with the story of a monk who went to see the Buddha and who told the Awakened One that he had been meditating for many years before he could obtain a magical power to walk on water across the river. The Buddha commented on how silly that monk was to waste so much time to achieve something that is not at all useful. If the monk wished to cross the river, the best way to do was to get a boatman and pay him two *annas*.

In Buddhism, magic is not to walk on water or to fly in the air. It is indeed miraculous to walk on earth mindfully and to attribute what mother earth contributes to the welfare of all.

I am reminded of another Buddhist story. One day a leader of a religious sect came to visit the Buddha and asked Him "If I follow your Way, what will I do day by day?" The Buddha replied, "Walk, stand, lie down, sit eat, drink..." The religious leader then inquired "...what is so special about your Way?" And the Buddha answered, "It is indeed special. The ordinary man, though he walks, stands, lies down, sits, eats, and drinks, does not know he is walking, standing, lying down, sitting, eating and drinking. But when we walk, we know that we are walking. When we stand, we know that we are standing..." Well the whole point of the story is to show the virtue of mindfulness. Once the human consciousness is restructured, the world is perceived non-judgmentally; that is, beautifully without division and conflict.

If we do not exploit the earth or any aspects of nature, nature will grow holistically, heal itself and help us human beings to grow physically, mentally and spiritually.

When we look at a flower mindfully, we will realize that it is indeed a very simple magic: the flower also has non-flower elements. Right now it is fresh and beautiful, but soon it will decay and die. Yet it will become compost and will be reborn as a plant, which will again produce flowers for all those who appreciate beauty and goodness.

Likewise, each of us too will one day die, and our dead bodies will unite with the earth, and rebirth will take place miraculously or magically for those who wish to understand the interconnectedness of all things or the inter-being of all.

Without you, it could not be me. You and I inter-are, as Thich Nhat Hanh put it. In each of us, there are also non-human elements. We are the sun, the moon, the earth, the river, the ocean, the trees, etc. Without trees, we human beings cannot survive.

Scientific knowledge conditions humans to be like machines, and we perceive the world and the universe as merely composed of matters. Matters are merely things. Things have no life or feeling. Hence we destroy Mother Earth and cut down trees merely for financial gain or in the name of economic development.

It all started with the Age of Enlightenment, which argues that 'I think therefore I am'. Any being which cannot think is regarded as inferior and can therefore be exploited by those who can think. Even among thinking beings, the clever ones

who can think better are in a position to exploit the weaker ones in accordance with the Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest.

Besides, the more we concentrate on thinking, the more our thought becomes compartmentalized. The deeper we think, the more we bury our thoughts and ourselves. We cannot see the wood for the trees. We are unable to perceive the world holistically. Hence the products of this thinking and our experiments with matter, scientism and technology, are unable to be questioned.

An even greater problem is that when we reach the age of economism and consumerism which goes by the name of globalization, we change the phrase 'I think therefore I am' into 'I buy therefore I am.'

Hence human beings on the whole have only two aspects in life, i.e., to earn money in order to consume whatever advertisers brainwash us to purchase. Advertisers are on the whole controlled by transnational corporations, which have become more influential than any nation state, and their main objective is to exploit natural resources and human beings in the relentless pursuit of economic gain.

If I were to go to the Buddha to ask for a very simple magic from him to rid us of our modern predicaments, he would most likely suggest the following phrase: 'I breathe therefore I am'.

Breathing is the most important element in our lives—indeed in any living being, for without breathing we will die. And breathing goes on day and night, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It never stops. Yet most of us do not take

good care of our breathing. If we did, that would indeed be a simple magic.

Breathing in, I calm my body.

Breathing out I smile.

Dwelling in the present moment,

I know this is a wonderful moment!

Breathing in, I know that I am breathing in.

Breathing out, I know that as the in-breath grows deep, the out-breath grows slow.

Breathing in makes me calm.

Breathing out makes me feel at ease.

With the in-breath, I smile.

With the out-breath, I release.

Breathing in, there is only the present moment.

Breathing out, it is a wonderful moment.

The above technique is called *samatha bhavana*, which helps one to be calm or to set seeds of peace within. Then one would develop insight meditation or *vipassana bhavana* in order to develop critical awareness of the self, not to take the so-called self seriously. Thus one becomes less and less selfish in order to look for peace and justice in the world—with real understanding of oneself and of the world. Hence one is no longer controlled by biased views of love, hatred, fear or delusion. Our magical formula could be like this:

Let us pray for world peace, social justice, and environmental balance, which begin with our own breathing.

I breathe in calmly and breathe out mindfully.

Once I have seeds of peace and happiness within me, I try to reduce my selfish desire and reconstitute my

consciousness.

With less attachment to myself, I try to understand the structural violence in the world.

Linking my heart with my head, I perceive the world holistically, a sphere full of living beings who are all related to me.

I try to expand my understanding with love to help build a more nonviolent world.

I vow to live simply and offer myself to the oppressed.

By the grace of the Compassionate Ones and with the help of good friends, may I be a partner in lessening the suffering of the world so that it may be a proper habitat for all sentient beings to live in harmony during this millennium.

Indeed the heart of Buddhist teaching has much to do with social ills. The crux of the Buddha's teachings transcends the notion of individual salvation and is concerned with the whole realm of sentient beings or the whole consciousness. Here the inescapable conclusion is that Buddhism requires an engagement in social, economic, and political affairs. One cannot overcome the limits of the individual self in a selfish and hermetically sealed manner.

The Four Noble Truths, namely, the suffering, the causes of suffering, and the cessation of suffering and the path to that cessation, can be skillfully applied to social activism. This is indeed a very simple magic. Moreover, through deep breathing one can see the roots of social suffering on a basis of Buddhism's Three Main Root Causes of Evil, namely *lobha*

(Greed), *dosa* (Hatred), and *moha* (Ignorance).

In narrow terms of interpretation, understanding the three root causes can help us to get rid of pains and disturbance in our personal lives. But in broader terms, or in the social context, they can really help us to envisage the causes and give us hints about the ways the causes can be ceased.

In my view, consumerism and capitalism can be explained as the most important modern form of greed. With them, our values are geared towards satisfying the gaps in our life by ever-increasing consumption and accumulation. By failing to understand the magic of advertising we are at its mercy. This inevitably leads to conflicts of interests, and more importantly exploitations are justified by the concept of the "invisible hand." Militarism embodies hatred as its core basis. The lust for power, which leads to widespread human rights abuses, is a prime example of how hatred can manipulate individual minds and lure them to install unjust social structures in order to uphold their power.

The last main root cause is ignorance caused mainly by centralized education. Students are taught not to think holistically, but to compartmentalize their thinking, to memorize and to abide by the existing norms. This can help explain much of the weakening in the mobilization of student movements as well as other social movements. Often times, students are trained and equipped just with skills to become employees for multinational companies, to exploit their own fellow nationals and nature. Children also get exposed to detrimental values through tele-

vision, computer games, etc., which have been replacing more and more the traditional roles played by many snobbish teachers.

All these sufferings can be, in my Buddhist tradition, reduced or totally extinguished by the right understanding of the nature of things. Buddhism is unique for its approach is not reinforced by faith, but rather by practice. Thus, to attain understanding, one has to really experiment with the truths themselves. Aloofness is never a value praised by us. Buddhism also gives me a sense of inter-belonging. With this view, I feel the inter-relatedness of all beings. It helps to internally affirm a common phrase among Buddhists that we all are "friends in common suffering".

Thus, my Buddhist model of development must begin with everyone truly practicing to understand himself or herself. In the Buddhist tradition, we call it *citta sikkha* or the contemplation on mind. Meditation is important for us to attain the insight, the qualities of which include alertness and criticality. Critical self-awareness is thus important for

us, and this will help the practitioners to feel more empowered to criticize themselves. From the critical understanding of one's self, we can begin to try to critically understand our community, society, nation and eventually our world. From criticizing ourselves, we hold the critical awareness towards society and the government, and all the establishments in order to understand how these mechanisms of greed, hatred and ignorance operate and manipulate at the structural levels. Bearing in mind the solutions, we also feel hopeful to articulately use all non-violent means to achieve a peaceful end.

Buddhist tenets also help me feel closer to and eventually to be one with the majority. In our tradition, it is believed that every being embodies a Buddha nature, or the potential to attain the highest understanding. Thinking this way, I feel the equality among all of us regardless of rank and status. And I feel that the poor are entitled to the same dignity as us to struggle for what they should be given.

Buddhist teaching is the core that permeates all my

activities. It is indeed a very simple magic starting with proper breathing. Incorporated in that is the voice and wisdom of the people at the lowest level, and of course monks in this country come mostly from the lowest background. I also feel that beauty has to go hand in hand with all activism. I have made all my efforts to preserve ancient artifacts and mural paintings, and I have also used culture and the arts as a tool to achieve social and political goals. And culture in my view is not bounded by national borders; it should reach out to our neighbors, or even farther than that. In this respect, we should have respect for other cultures, traditions, as well as religions precisely because with this tolerance society at large can survive with peace. Diversity and living culture must be at the heart of the struggle against the monoculture of the McWorld syndrome, which is controlled by transnational corporations. For me, my work grows out of a very simple magic offered by the Buddha.

Sulak Sivaraksa's article "Globalization and extreme modernism" was published in the *Bangkok Post* on 12 May 2002. A week later Ken Hodge wrote a scathing comment on Sulak's viewpoint, which was published in the Postbag section of the *Bangkok Post*, prompting the latter to respond in kind. Nippon Namnuen, one of Sulak's colleagues, also responded to Hodge's criticism. Sulak's and Nippon's comments were published on May

26, 2002. Their exchanges are reproduced below.

Ken Hodge's Response

Sulak in danger of being flattened

This letter is in response to Sulak Sivaraksa's May 12, 2002 comment in Perspective.

However one wishes to define globalisation, it's difficult to deny that folks want mobile phones, fancy cars, and big

houses.

Nowhere in the world is this more obvious than in Thailand, where the religion of the land has a strong anti-materialistic tone, yet where people will devote a monstrous percentage of their monthly income to the purchase of a BMW.

It's also difficult to deny that a free market and a minimum of trade barriers has a way of raising the standard of living.

This is Economics 101, and unless Khun Sulak has a whole

new set of equations to propose for the scholars of this field, he'd best accept it. Of course, there are myriad variables that confound true "free trade"-corruption, internal politics, the difficulty of sacrificing one's own job in acceptance of the probability that a certain percentage of people "out there" will get new jobs, etc.-but "globalisation" can hardly be blamed for these.

In its most optimistic definition, globalisation might mean a dissolving of state borders..., an end to racism, unobstructed communication between cultures...and on and on.

Rather than positing a utopia where flowers get reborn again as flowers (why not cockroaches?) and "nature will grow holistically" (talk about fundamentalist drive!), Khun Sulak would do better to act to direct globalisation towards its most beneficial ends.

Rather than defining Buddhism as being "counter-modern", which isn't a hell of a lot of different than "counter-relevant" (as a sad percentage of Bangkokians already believe), he could be informing young Thais of the vitality of Dharma in embracing and guiding modernity. Instead, he stands in the path of a locomotive.

SULAK'S REPLY

The letter in Postbag May 19, 2002, titled "Sulak in danger of being flattened", by Ken Hodge, is a silly interpretation of my comment in Bangkok Post, May 12, Perspective. My first impulse was to ignore it. However, Buddhism teaches that the source of human suffering lies in ignorance. As a Buddhist I must exercise patience in the face of ignorance

and try to help my critic to overcome his ignorance.

My critic opens his argument with the sentence, "However, one wishes to define globalisation it is difficult to deny that folks want mobile phones, fancy cars and big houses." This is a misleading statement. My critic appears to think that the meaning of "globalisation" is obvious like "table" or "mobile phone." This is a one dimensional understanding of a very controversial concept. The problem is precisely how one proceeds to define globalisation.

At one level "globalisation" means the removal of technical obstacles to the bridging of distance and time. In this sense one could not speak of the world as a single unit before Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus circumnavigated the globe in the fifteenth century. To continue in the same vein, the world today is more globalised than the world in 1400. And the world in 2100 would be even more globalised than the world today. If this is the locomotive of "globalisation", Buddhism is not standing in the way.

However, my critic has confused the above meaning of "globalisation" with a more ideological definition of globalisation. He has lumped the meaning of "globalisation" with wanting "mobile phones, fancy cars and big houses," the "dissolving of state borders" and presumably corporations ruling the world.

Is the statement "(all) folks want mobile phones, fancy cars and big houses", factually correct? Can my critic prove this? With due respect to economics 101, I don't think that any respectable economics

professor would care to elevate that statement to the status of an economic law.

Did my critic offer any reasoned argument to support his blanket assertion that "(all) folks want mobile phones, fancy cars and big houses"? No. He simply confuses his celebration of consumerism with an observation of the inevitability of globalisation. Since globalisation is inevitable in one sense then it must also be inevitable that "mobile phones, fancy cars and big houses" would inherit the world, nation states would disappear and corporations would rule the world. This is a fallacious argument.

I don't think that states are about to disappear or that Microsoft, Tesco, Total, CNN and a bunch of corporations would be ruling the world even in an "optimistic" future.

However, even if for the sake of argument we concede that "(all) folks want mobile phones, fancy cars and big houses," would such a desire be realizable? The population of the world today has reached 6 billion! By 2050 demographers predict that the world population would be 10 billion. Is it possible to give everyone mobile phones, fancy cars and big houses? If not it is both cruel and morally reprehensible to promote consumerist values and desires which most human beings inhabiting the earth will never be able to satisfy.

My critic's claims should also be addressed at another level. Since he has not bothered to provide any facts to support his assertions he may be implying that they are not necessary. He may expect the reader to accept that his reasoning is self-evident.

His letter asserts that the unstoppable "locomotive" of globalisation would sweep away all obstacles including Buddhism and its critics because everybody wants globalisation. There appears to be a hidden premise involved that is not acknowledged. That is that globalisation makes everybody desire the products of globalisation including mobile phones, fancy cars and big houses.

The conclusion "(all) folks want mobile phones, fancy cars and big houses" is then set up as a new premise. A new conclusion is drawn that because "(all) folks want mobile phones, fancy cars and big houses," therefore everybody wants globalisation. This reasoning is fallacious. The fact that folks want mobile phones, fancy cars and big houses does not necessarily mean that people want globalisation. It may simply mean globalisation makes people want these things. Economics 101 does not have all the answers. Sometimes, Philosophy 101 can also help confused minds.

Nippon Namnuen's Reply

Ken Hodge (Postbag commentary, 19/05/02) has a first rate, second rate understanding of both modernity in the form of globalization and Sulak. Hodge unpacks his argument by beginning with a banal restatement of the utilitarian view of human nature: humans are by nature greedy so "folks want mobile phones, fancy cars, and big houses." This is neither true nor false, but if taken as the essence of human nature it will legitimize the most monstrous socioeconomic organization. And human happiness is not simply an accumulation of

personal pleasures.

Hodge then goes on to assert, "a minimum of trade barriers has a way of raising the standard of living," calling this observation "Economics 101." This subjective position masquerading as commonsense or knowledge of course serves the rich and the powerful, especially the transnational capitalist class, more than the downtrodden. Perhaps, Hodge has not taken any course beyond Economics 101. But whose living standard is served? Is it surprising that income disparities between and within nations have been widening since the neoliberal experiments of the 1980s? That 20 percent of the world's population earn approximately 85 percent of the world's total annual income? And so on. Leading economists like Joseph Stiglitz well realize the threat of an unrestrained market system.

Hodge then regurgitates another mainstream neoliberal conviction: the problem is not with unrestrained free trade but limited access to it. And the "myriad variables that confound true 'free trade'" largely derived from the innate flaws of (Oriental) societies: corruption, internal politics, etc. So transnational corporations must be given more rights at the expense of human beings—profits over people? And neo-authoritarian institutions like the IMF and World Bank should have greater power at the expense of democracy and self-determination? Hodge must be reminded that we have yet to live in a post-imperial age.

Hodge goes on to insist, "the most optimistic definition" of globalization "might mean... an end of racism, unobstructed communication between cul-

tures," etc. But modernity (a regional term peculiar to the West) in the form of globalization is a racially coded concept. There is no equal appreciation of other cultures because the failure to unequivocally accept modernity (globalization) is akin to standing in "the path of a locomotive." Time travels in a unilinear path. Well Sulak has tried to engage in an intercultural dialogue, giving a Buddhist analysis of globalization, which Hodge, despite his insistence on the "unobstructed communications between cultures," could not stomach. To Hodge, the "most beneficial ends" of globalization is modernity. Other aspirations are unthinkable—simply not possible, a reflection of primitive minds and cultures.

Thus it is possible that Hodge's intercultural exchanges simply entail the borrowing of bits of other cultures to improve the mechanics of Western (modern) civilization. Here one senses Hodge's bedrock certainty that 'progress' and 'Western values' should be paramount in the world.

What Sulak has done is "rescuing the premodern from its assigned space as history, from its designation as [imperialism's] self-confirming other, and...inserting it in the same time as the modern." Reinterpreting imperial categories such as the premodern/modern and developed/underdeveloped, Sulak is able to launch a nonviolent critique of globalization. He points to an alternative future, a possible future—and not *the future* as Hodge has done. So globalization as it stands should not be seen as *the future*. That there are many possible futures is not a problem, but the best solution.

Sulak Sivaraksa gives lecture on Buddhism and 9/11

In front of a Kirby Lecture Hall filled to bursting, the Lang Distinguished Visiting Professor of Social Change, Sulak Sivaraksa, contemporary of the Dalai Lama and co-founder of the International Order of Engaged Buddhists, presented a thought-provoking argument on the importance of non-violence in world affairs.

Sivaraksa, or Ajan Sulak as he is called by his students and colleagues, dressed humbly in muted colors and Birkenstocks. Almost seeming to fade into the background, he nonetheless exuded an air of confidence and wisdom that immediately settled the energetic audience.

After being introduced by Religion Professor Donald Swearer, who listed Sivaraksa's many organizations, books, and awards, Ajan Sulak began his speech with an excerpt from a letter the Dalai Lama sent to President Bush a day after September 11, 2001, in which the Tibetan spiritual leader counseled non-violence. Following this, he read a poem by Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh relating the pain incurred by violent acts. Sivaraksa went on to caution against "cultural ideas of exclusivity," saying that it breeds violence.

One of the main points Ajan Sulak emphasized was that non-violence does not mean "doing nothing" but is actually a "powerful force." As an example, he mentioned the Chinese occupation of Tibet and the peaceful means that the Dalai Lama and others have used to effect change.

Ajan Sulak also compared the means to inner peace to the means for enacting global peace. Meditation is important to free our minds from greed, hatred and ignorance and lead them to generosity, compassion, and wisdom. We must then, however, use these attributes to help the world by eliminating structural violence.

According to Sivaraksa, when Bush named the terrorists "evil" and certain countries an "axis of evil," he fell prey to dualistic thinking, a dangerous philosophy similar to that of Hitler and Stalin. Instead, Sivaraksa urged people to look at conflict from all sides, and thus help create peace. He contrasted peacekeeping, which is akin to firefighting; peacemaking, which is "forging agreements;" and peacebuilding, which is creating "a culture of peace." Ajan Sulak argued that the last is the best option, but is also "an endless task."

Ajan Sulak also stressed the value of "transnational grassroots movements," reconciliation, and "re-examination of our concept of justice."

Non-violence "takes great courage," he said, and "does not mean opting out or doing nothing." He ended his speech by urging the audience to "find the imagination and courage to take the initiative" to lead America to "promote peace and justice, democratic political institutions, [and] fairer and more egalitarian economic systems the world over."

Afterwards, Kenneth Kraft, professor of Buddhism at Le-

high University, compared Ajan Sulak to a gentle bulldozer, highlighted the "seeds of peace" aspect of his speech, and once again urged us to use our imagination. He also offered a conundrum: "How do we know when we have done all that can be done?" Kraft believes that political understanding is required in engaged Buddhism.

Professor Swearer opened up the floor for a few questions at the end. When asked what young people can do to help effect non-violence in the current post-9/11 situation, Sivaraksa suggested that students like those at Swarthmore should use "compassion" when writing congressional letters and speaking to politicians. Additionally, he clarified his belief that there is no such thing as a "just war."

In the words of Kenneth Kraft: "[Sulak] says 'I don't have all the answers,' but I think he does."

Megan Mills
The Daily Gazette
Swarthmore College
October 25, 2002



Free market will enslave us all

Humans do not develop by buying mobile phones and BMWs, argues Thai environmentalist Sulak Sivaraksa, who believes a sustainable future requires a little bit of spiritual enlightenment. Chris Bunting reports Sulak Sivaraksa's expression is the most active thing in the restaurant. What does he think of George W. Bush, for instance? His face seems to fold in on itself as the cheeks expand outwards, the mouth puckers and the eyebrows crash down like a portcullis. Sivaraksa starts gestulating vigorously.

He looks like a man who has just taken a taste of a very, very bitter lemon.

"I'm sure he is a very nice man but I...." The sentence is left hanging, presumably because it is perfectly visually expressed on his face. Tony Blair? The expression is suddenly calm and a short pause as a precise formulation is decided: "Tony Blair is a very nice man in my opinion, but I do not think he lives in the real world. He wants to make the UK powerful. He wants to sit with the US." The mouth puckers briefly.

Mention World Bank president James Wolfensohn and you get a wide-eyed look of utter bewilderment, as if Sivaraksa had seen with his own eyes a fantastical beast with the head of a crocodile and the hind of a hippopotamus. "James Wolfensohn is an arrogant man, a very arrogant man, but he is a deeply spiritual person in the Jewish tradition."

It is the closest Sivaraksa, who has met with Wolfensohn to discuss ethical issues surrounding economic develop-

ment, gets to a favourable assessment of someone in what he calls the "mainstream." "The mainstream will not listen to us. They cannot stand me," he says with a grin so broad that it forces his eyes to close. Sivaraksa—a small, stockily built man who claims to be 69 but appears younger—has been tormenting the mainstream in his native Thailand since the early 1960s, earning for himself recognition as the country's leading intellectual and social activist. Educated in Britain at St David's College, Lampeter, and London's Middle Temple, Sivaraksa began a remarkably eclectic intellectual career in 1961 when he returned to his home country to set up an intellectual journal, the *Social Science Review*. It was a huge success, quickly establishing itself as the country's most prominent intellectual publication. Working under a military dictatorship but with powerful sponsors in the Thai royal family, Sivaraksa developed a highly independent and critical editorial line in the journal while also organising discussion groups to foster free thought among readers and contributors. Many of the leaders of the student uprising that overthrew the military regime in 1973 had been active members of Sivaraksa's groups.

Fortunately for him, he was out of the country during the murderous return to dictatorship in 1976. That close shave and Thailand's subsequent vacillations between Democracy and dictatorship have done nothing to lessen Sivaraksa's unflinching demand for good government in his country. In 1991, shortly

after Thailand had plunged into another period of military rule, he delivered a coruscating speech at Thammasat University, publicly accusing the two most powerful military leaders of corruption, destroying democracy, harming the monarchy and being irreligious. He again escaped into exile.

A staunch monarchist, he has twice been arrested for defaming the king. He is credited with helping to create much of Thai civil society, helping to set up dozens of non-governmental organisations dealing with everything from social welfare issues to spiritual education and then a series of umbrella organisations to integrate their work.

He is currently on bail for helping to organise protests obstructing the building of a gas pipeline between Burma and Thailand that he considers environmentally destructive and supportive of a murderous Burmese regime. His activism has earned Sivaraksa deep enmity from much of the Thai ruling elite and acclaim throughout the international rights community. But it is not his status as a big fish in the Thai pond that has attracted the interest of international figures such as Wolfensohn.

As world leaders slowly turn towards seriously addressing issues of sustainable development on the eve of the Johannesburg summit, some have found in Sivaraksa a profound critic of old assumptions. "The mainstream leaders talk about economic growth to help the poor," says Sivaraksa, sucking on a lemon. "But I have never seen them talking to the poor. I live

with the poor. There are villages in Thailand that were once surrounded by forest. The people were living off the environment self-sufficiently, and according to the figures they were very poor because they were going to the market. Now there is no forest and there are new buildings everywhere and everybody is very much richer according to the figures—except it doesn't look like that when you meet the people who are starving, who have to spend a day's earnings to buy a can of fizzy drink."

The son of a family of Sino-Thai businessmen, whom he describes as part of the "oppressing" class, Sivaraksa is a complex thinker, at once culturally conservative—insisting on the need for Thais to return to their Buddhist and monarchist roots—and socially progressive—loudly committed, for instance, to women's rights and welfare issues. He is as critical of traditional socialist models of economic improvement, which sacrificed human goals to impersonal production targets, as he is of capitalist models, which he says do much the same in their drive for increased gross domestic product and market value.

The basic message of his brand of "engaged Buddhism", however, is simple: humans do not develop by buying mobile phones and BMWs. In his own country, he sees the process of "westernisation" since the coerced opening of the country to foreign trade by the British in the 1850s as a steady destruction of its culture and independence. Poor people have become poorer. Daughters of farmers who have lost their land have been sold into prostitution, and the supposed beneficiaries of a fundamentally

violent social structure, Sivaraksa says, have themselves become slaves to the capitalist system's relentless need for them to consume. "It is a kind of religion, a kind of sacrament. Department stores have become the temples for people. Buddhism is no more than a ritual for them," he says.

"The Buddhist argument is that this assumption of endless material development is an illusion. Obviously, if every Chinese person has a car, then the world won't be able to cope. But also we have to ask what we mean by development. In the Buddhist concept, development means development of the human being. That doesn't just mean material development. In fact, that can get in the way. We need to have a balance between spiritual, social and environmental development."

Sivaraksa's most recent projects have focused on building alternatives to the consumerist model. A grassroots leadership programme has been teaching a "critical understanding of the present socioeconomic structures" and alternative development strategies such as micro-credit unions and resource-sharing schemes to leaders of marginalised traditional communities in Thailand since 1996. Plans are also afoot for a South-east Asia Learning Centre for Sustainable Communities running courses of up to two years. Participants would spend half their time in the classroom learning about sustainable development and half their time setting up projects in their own communities.

But for Sivaraksa, any genuinely sustainable development of society will require a rediscovery of spiritual values. In Thailand, that means a return

to Buddhist roots, but in other countries, he says, other traditions will need to be revisited: "There is tremendous richness in Christianity that your countries must rediscover. The Muslim religion is the same. We need to come together, atheists and agnostics as well, and we need to look beyond the materialistic. "The corporations that run the world now have the latest technology—they employ the best brains. But they lack ethical strength, and that is what defeats all human organisations in the end. Without an ethical basis, nothing will last. I remember very well how George Orwell said 50 years ago that the Soviet Union would not last. Nobody believed him. At that time, the British left looked at the Soviet Union as the answer, just as people (now) seem to think the only way forward is this market fundamentalism. They even ignored Stalin's atrocities at that time, just as they are ignoring what companies are doing now. "But Orwell was right in predicting the end of that regime because they had no moral legitimacy and these corporations cannot last because they have none either." For once, Sivaraksa's face is expressionless.

Chris Bunting
The Times Higher
Education Supplement,
published on 23 August 2002



The standpoint of the Foreign Ministry

When Mr. Siddhi Savetasila for the first time became Foreign Minister, he appointed M.R. Kasemsamoson Kasemsri as Permanent Secretary, and it was an open secret that the Permanent Secretary had a low opinion of the Foreign Minister as someone who had no idea of international relations. Beyond the direct internal conflicts the Permanent Secretary also constantly verbally abused head of the ministry. However, Siddhi Savetasila, who was endowed with the virtue of forgiveness and of leniency, remained patient not interfering with the affairs concerning ministerial officials subordinate to the Permanent Secretary. After not too long a period Mr. Siddhi acquired an extensive knowledge of foreign affairs. Despite being a former officer of the Air Force and coming from the National Security Council, he had prudently and extensively adopted a peaceful course of foreign policy. Despite the fact that he was close to China, he was prepared to welcome the Dalai Lama from Tibet to Siam.

I once asked M.R. Kasemsamoson after his retirement and he told me: "The officials of the Foreign Ministry usually uphold the standpoint of ethics and human rights, through which they have the courage to show politicians their well substantiated opinions. Even if they (the politicians) agreed to the recommendations of our opposing political decision, it was also their very right, because in democracy it is not necessary that politicians have to listen to the advice of ministerial officials, and certainly they do not interfere with the

transfer of ministerial officials, which is incumbent upon the responsibility of the Permanent Secretary."

M.R. Kasemsamoson also said: "Previously the officials of this Ministry had firm backbones and hence were not afraid of politicians, with the exception of a few sycophants... from the past down to the present and the future...politicians only perceive short-term benefits. Ministerial officials [hence] must appeal for the consciousness of politicians with well reasoned arguments and information. If these [people] do not listen to [us] and act contrary to our proposals, this is their very right." "But later", thus added [M.R. Kasemsamoson], "the majority of ministerial officials no longer have backbones and they [become] almost exclusively [the mouthpiece of] politicians and agree with what they say. This was the crucial moment of downfall."

When Mr. Voraput Jayanama passed away prematurely, Mr. Anand Panyarachun said that Voraput was a man with firm backbones. This means he represented moral positions with [his] courage and endurance; moreover he had a good command of the extensive expertise in foreign politics. He possessed the valour to voice his opinions in a direct way, so much so that even the senior officials were not satisfied with them.

Mr. Surapong Jayanama is a cousin of Mr. Voraput and he attempts to follow the tracks of the elder, even though he was not as cautious and subtle as the former was. Either as Director-General of the Department of Information or as the Director-

General of the Department of East Asian Affairs, Mr. Surapong Jayanama always had a clear standpoint and the courage to present his viewpoints on numerous matters to politicians. Even [at times when] he contradicted the basic principles of the government, the government was still satisfied, such as on the issue whether or not to grant the Dalai Lama the permission to enter to Thailand, which [according to Mr. Surapong's opinion] is a matter of dignity for Siam, a land that is really not under the protection of China. All the European countries and America, notwithstanding their good relations [with China], have acted similarly.

As to the visit of the Dalai Lama during the term of Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetasila the approval was granted in mutual agreement, although there were dissents. With respect to the situation in Burma, Mr. Surapong's opinion was that Siam upholds the position of a defender of human rights and should not yield to the military dictatorship of that country, whereby [we] ought not to think on short-term economic advantages. This [principle] applies to the rest of dictatorially ruled ASEAN countries. Siam should adhere firmly to the principle of democracy; yet it can be befriended by dictatorship without having to support a dictatorial regime which restricts the freedom rights of its citizens.

It is extremely lamentable that the present Foreign Minister does not exhibit any moral principles and is blind to the values of human rights and the conditions in our neighbouring lands.

Moreover, the Foreign Minister is indifferent to Aung San Suu Kyi or to the Dalai Lama and his role in promoting Buddhism... here is a vital issue for a country ruled by a democratic government. If Siam shows an unequivocal standpoint on such issue, we can play an important role here, at least like what Malaysia has demonstrated....

The first demonstration of power by Mr. Surakiat Sathirathai was the dismissal of Mr. Surapong Jayanama from the office as the Director-General of the Department of East Asian Affairs and his demotion to Ambassador directly under the Ministry. However, a compromise was ultimately reached, whereby [Mr. Surapong] was to be sent as Ambassador to Berlin. This was considered a clever solution, for the Thai Ambassador to Germany must be a person who has gained internationally recognised experiences in diplomacy. It was the case for Mr. Direk Jayanama and Mr. Anand Panyarachun, who occupied the post [as Ambassador] of this country after having already held many important posts. Even if Mr. Surapong Jayanama does not possess the calibre of both these personalities, yet he has been Ambassador to Vietnam, Portugal and Greece.

Mr. Surapong does not agree with the politics of the head of the Ministry and voices his opinions outspokenly, even though he does it in a more restrained manner than Mr. M.R. Kasemsamson [once] did towards Mr. Siddhi Savetasila. However, Mr. Surakiat could not bear it. Mr. Surakiat does not think that ministerial officials who are Thai naturally have the right to criticise the government if they disagree with the instruction of their superiors.

Moreover, the situation is made worse through the additional [reason] that Mr. Asda Jayanama, the elder brother of Mr. Surapong Jayanama, who was once the Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations in New York, was brought into conflict with Mr. Surakiat, [and that was] with regard to his politics as well as his administration. Mr. Asda Jayanama was of the opinion that Mr. Surakiat systematically promotes only sycophants, whereas in most of the cases the qualifications and the honesty of the officials were not at all taken into consideration. Mr. Surakiat was unable to harm Mr. Asda. After Mr. Asda retired, he continues to attack Mr. Surakiat's politics in [his] critical articles. Mr. Surakiat certainly cannot understand that Mr. Asda and Mr. Surapong, notwithstanding their relations as brothers, do not work hand in hand. Both of them know how to separate private matters from official affairs.

Mr. Surakiat demonstrates that he considers the Foreign Ministry as his very own fiefdom. He needs only followers or people flattering him. He does not listen to even the Permanent Secretary. He fetches the former and already retired Permanent Secretary back as advisor. This [action] is tantamount to the complete control of the State Secretariat. What makes the situation even worse is the following: When the Deputy Permanent Secretary proposes anything with which the Permanent Secretary disagrees, the Minister orientates himself to the opinion of the deputy. What dignity does the Permanent Secretary have left? How could this man still be the pillar of ministerial officials?

The transfer of Mr. Surapong from Germany to South Africa would have appeared reasonable had the government decided to pursue a politics of helping the Third World, or would have been a rational argument if the Ambassador were to participate in the important United Nations Conference held in September [in Johannesburg]. However, the conference would have been ended before his transfer. Moreover, the [post of the Thai] Ambassador to South Africa is normally reserved for someone who for the first time is appointed to the post of Ambassador. This post in comparison to many other posts is lower in rank. This is an obvious degradation and punishment. If Mr. Surapong were to quit the diplomatic service, Mr. Surakiat would emerge victorious for then he would have the Foreign Ministry all for himself.

Moreover, the woman whom Mr. Surakiat requested to be Thai Ambassador to Berlin, has never been Ambassador before, whereas the present Thai Ambassador to Germany is a person with considerable standing. What will the German government think? Do they (Thais) still have consideration for us (Germans)? Or are they more concerned about China and Burma than Germany?

I used to say that Mr. Chuan Leekpai was a Prime Minister who allowed individual ministries to work in their own directions, like an orchestra without a director. Coincidentally the Foreign Ministry under the Chuan government pursued very shrewd politics, which was a glorious page for that government. However, later the government of Thaksin Shinawatra permitted the Foreign Ministry

to be a playground of Mr. Surakiat

Nobody should think that... we would not get any problem from a government that is recalcitrant and that isolates itself from all criticisms by ruling arbitrarily without honour and moral principles.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that our politics towards Burma obviously follows that of the Malaysia's, whose Prime Minister travelled

to Burma to obtain advantages for his old company. (It is this company that the [Thai oil company] P.T.T. works with in the construction of a pipeline through the district of Chana in the province of Songkhla, which is harmful to all of us.) We only think about economic interests, going as far as bowing to the will of Burma by transferring the army commander. We are spell-bound by the Burmese military dictators and dare not meet Aung

San Suu Kyi. Consequently, Burma can trample on the dignity of Siam in all aspects. Is there anyone in the Thai government who is ashamed of this? Or is it just as easy to intimidate ministerial officials as it seems easy to kowtow to foreign dictators?

Originally published in *Khao Sot* newspaper, August 24, 2002

Unofficial translation:
Volker Grabowsky

Don Swearer: A kalayanamitta

"Visions of the Moral Life" was the title of the retirement celebration held in honor of Professor Donald K. Swearer on November 8&9 at Swarthmore College. Sulak Sivaraksa wrote a tribute.

As a practicing Buddhist, one is encouraged to walk on the Noble Eightfold Path, beginning with Right View or Right Understanding, which depends on external factors as well as internal factors. An important external factor is to have good friends who really tell us what we do not wish to hear. An important internal factor is to develop critical self-awareness and self-criticism in order not to take oneself too seriously, not to be trapped in egoism, but to be more selfless and altruistic.

Ultimately a good friend, *kalayanamitta* in Pali, is the voice of our conscience. In the mundane world a good friend (1) protects his friend when he is off guard; (2) protects his friend's property when he is off guard; (3) is refuge in times of danger; (4) does not desert his friend in times of hardship; and (5)



respects his friend's family and relatives.

I am really privileged to have Don Swearer as my *kalayanamitta*. Pragmatically he often helped me when I was off guard. Although he did not have a chance to protect my property, he was really concerned when thousands of my books were burnt by order of the Thai dictators in 1976 and my bookshop was told to move away from the premises that it had occupied for over two decades. Don understood the bookshop was also an

intellectual center which helped youngsters to understand and fight for democracy nonviolently.

In the times of my exile both in 1977 and 1992, Don helped to secure me a place at Swarthmore College to teach temporarily. He contacted other mutual friends to have me teach elsewhere too. During my senior citizenship, Don managed to have me invited as a distinguished visiting professor at the college for one whole semester. This experience has been a treat intellectually as well as spiritually. When many of my relatives insisted on visiting me at Swarthmore, Don honored and took care of them with hospitality and a real understanding of Asian culture.

Don and I have been friends for 35 years. For friendship to last that long is remarkable. A close English Buddhist friend deserted me when he felt that I had become too politically active and too unconventional. Many of my Thai friends felt that I betrayed my class; they could not understand why I opted to be with the poor. Yet Don respects

my way of doing things unconventionally. Although he is always polite, Don can tell me subtly something which normally I would not want to hear. He chooses his words skillfully. I really appreciate it. His words are often the voice of conscience; they help me to develop critical self-awareness in order to have Right View. Don has helped me understand the best of American culture, too. Having been educated in Britain, I shared the English prejudice that Americans are boastful, bad-mannered, and worshippers of money. Don's lifestyle is entirely contrary to this image and he introduced me to a number of friends who are also humble and unworldly.

Indeed, one could develop Right View from a good friend, whether he is a Buddhist or a Christian. I feel that Don is both Buddhist and Christian in the best meaning of the words. He is a spiritual person who really cares to serve others—friends or foes—with compassion and understanding.

Don has also helped me with my work in Siamese Buddhism. Through his efforts the most valuable Thai monks, Bhikkhu

Buddhadasa and Bhikkhu Payutto, became known abroad. Not only did Don write about them appreciatively and translated their work, he also became their good friend. In the case of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, Don suggested to him, humbly and skillfully, that he give a series of lectures on certain themes. The Venerable Buddhadasa liked the idea. The outcome was a series of serious books on subtle topics of Buddhadhamma, such as the law of dependent origination. As for Venerable Payutto, Don was instrumental in having him spend one semester at Swarthmore College and one semester at Harvard University.

These are only two examples of how Don helped contemporary Thai Buddhist scholar-monks to become known in the west. I myself am known in the U.S. largely through his articles on my socially engaged Buddhism. If western scholars know anything of Theravada Buddhism, their knowledge is usually limited to Sri Lanka and Burma. Don does not only know central Siam, but also northern Siam which is much more subtle than its southern counterpart.

Don is very fortunate in having Nancy as his special *kalayanamitta*. She not only helps him in the family, and in his work, but she sometimes tells him what he may not want to hear. Maybe that is how he developed the critical self-awareness at the core of his Right Understanding.

I have met a number of Don's former students, from Oberlin and Swarthmore. Some have become forest monks with deep meditation practice; others have become leading scholars of Buddhism and other religions. Some even became my co-workers in our International Network of Engaged Buddhists. It is a joy to be with these young friends, who make you feel that there is hope for the world in spite of its present predicament. Don shares my belief that the present century can be an age of spirituality, in which greed, hatred, and delusion are transformed into generosity, compassion, and wisdom.

Kalayanahi mittehi samanagato

*Blessed with good friends,
relying on noble friends,
even a fool can become wise*

Michael Baumann

The Following eulogy was written for the cremation ceremony of the late Dr. Baumann on 6 November 2002 at Wat Thong Nopakun.

Michael Baumann is the best German friend that I had—the one that was closest to me. He passed away on 31 October 2002 in Bangkok. As I am now teaching in the United States I regret not being able to help out in his

funeral rites. I feel that the least I can do is to write a eulogy on him.

Michael was stationed in Siam (Thailand) some three decades ago working for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, for the German social democrats. Germany (back then West Germany) has numerous foundations that are affiliated with political parties. For instance, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation

represents the Christian Democrats (conservatives); the Friedrich Naumann Foundation represents the liberals; and the Heinrich Boll Foundation is for the Greens. After the Second World War, western Germany was occupied by the United States. The US government felt that western Germany had to be more thoroughly democratized. German political parties were

instructed to allocate part of their budgets for political education of the people along their respective political lines through their foundations. This also had to be done democratically. When West Germany's economy picked up, funds for political foundations also increased, and they were able to expand their educational programs abroad.

Michael Baumann came to Siam in order to educate Thais on the importance of unionization in the tradition of social democracy. Back then, Siam was under the Thanom-Prapas dictatorship. Not surprisingly, Baumann had a brief stint in the country. Appeasing the Thai right-wing military dictatorship, Baumann's superiors back home recalled him from his post. Clearly dissatisfied, Baumann resigned, and subsequently became an advisor to a political party. He eventually became deputy minister of Schwerin, his birthplace.

Michael and I became close in 1984, the year I faced charges of lese majeste for the first time. Concerned about my personal safety, Michael took me to meet many influential figures in West Germany such as Willy Brandt and Kahn Dukheim.

Michael was interested in religion no less than in politics. He practiced *bhavana* meditation every morning before going to work. He was open-minded, generous, and compassionate. He was also fond of artistic beauty—music, paintings, and sculptures.

When I faced charges of lese majeste again in 1991, I spent my exile in Germany with Michael Baumann. Not only did I stay over at his place, Michael also arranged lecture tours at several universities for me. And Michael accompanied me to Bangkok to



fight the charges of lese majeste in court. He was worried that I might be physically attacked or threatened. Before my exile to Germany in 1991, I took refuge in the German embassy in Bangkok. Michael contacted leading newspapers in Germany to interview the German foreign minister about my situation. The German foreign minister replied that it was an honor that I decided to seek refuge in the German embassy: the German government did not recognize the military junta that illegally came to power in Siam.

At the time when Siam was under the dictatorship of Suchinda Kraprayoon, Michael was working for the German parliament. He allowed progressive Thai students in Germany to call home in order to learn more about their country's situation from the parliament free of charge. He also took me along with a number of Thai students to meet many German representatives, who eventually struggled for the restoration of democracy in Siam via nonviolent means.

Subsequently, Michael worked for the cause of democracy in Burma, and linked his

work with mine. He supported the democratic movements in Burma, including Burmese students who were—and still are—struggling for democracy. Working with Michael, I got a chance to know many ethnic leaders in Burma, and was even invited to witness the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Aung San Suu Kyi in 1991.

I once took Michael to meet a German friend of mine who was then director of the department of political affairs in the German foreign ministry. Michael wanted the director to help out with the situation in Burma, which required deft political maneuverings. My friend—the director—stated that although many of Michael's proposals were too impractical and idealistic, he nevertheless deserved to be supported. In times like these, we need more people like Michael Baumann. Most of our politicians and bureaucrats lack idealism or are only interested in reaping short-term benefits.

Michael was the first foreigner to travel in Burma as far as Myitkyina, which borders China. Michael opposed the military dictatorship in Burma. But, upon invitation, he worked

with the Kachin people in Burma, and supported them in whatever ways he could.

Michael passed away in Bangkok since he came from Burma. It is unfortunate that he would not be able to see the fruits of his labor in Burma: laying the foundation for grassroots and participatory democracy in that country, and creating a vibrant

civil society that is aware of the threat posed by capitalism and consumerism.

May you rest in peace. You had done numerous merits when you were alive. Your death may be untimely, but you went peacefully and with dignity. Those you left behind are naturally grieved by your death. But death is inevitable, and it can

often come as a surprise. You led a good life, leaving behind many goods for us to witness today—although you hardly took any credits for these goods.

I was highly fortunate to have a good person like you as my friend, and I will gladly join you—perhaps not very long from now.

Breathing lessons: A Buddhist engaged in social justice alights in Swarthmore

He's arguably one of the best known men in Thailand today. For criticizing the monarchy and the military in past years, he has been imprisoned in his country three times and been exiled twice. "They called me a radical," he says smiling mildly. "Now the Army has asked me how to do conflict resolution."

Sulak Sivaraksa is a noted lay Buddhist activist and social critic, founder of more than 30 organizations and NGO's (non-governmental organizations), a teacher, intellectual, publisher, author and environmentalist. He has been in Swarthmore since early fall as the Lang Professor of Social Change at Swarthmore College, where he has been teaching a course called "Engaged Buddhism in Asia and the West."

Ask Americans the first thing that comes to mind when Buddhism is mentioned and more than likely they'll say meditation. For Sivaraksa, however, meditation or self-awareness, is just one component of the religion. The other, which flows from a neutral self-awareness, is social justice

through nonviolence. The commitment to social justice from Buddhist principles is what is known as "engaged" Buddhism. "Buddhism has a lot in common with liberation theology [a Christian movement, mostly based in Central and South America, that emphasizes social justice]" says Sivaraksa, "but liberation theology is not very clear on nonviolence."

Two of engaged Buddhism's best known practitioners are the Dalai Lama of Tibet and Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar (Burma), both Nobel Prize winners. They are also among Sivaraksa's mentors and, in the case of the Dalai Lama, a very good friend. For Sivaraksa, it is important to "cultivate good friends" because they "can become your voice of conscience and tell you what you may not want to hear." An ecumenicist, he counts as his friends Quakers, other Christians and Muslims, as well as Buddhists.

Referring to Suu Kyi, to whom he speaks by phone, Sivaraksa says, "The Burmese junta is the most powerful military organization and it's afraid of one

woman."

As a cultural critic, Sivaraksa says, "Society is too violent and too materialistic. People are shaped by mass media, mostly TV, to consume. The more you understand Buddhism, the more you learn that riches and power are an illusion."

As for an impending war with Iraq, Sivaraksa has been critical of the Bush administration because of paradoxes in its ideology: Hussein was once our friend, "now he is Hitler"; and "the USA sells more arms than any other country, yet it wants to curb arms in Iraq."

His answer to terrorism: Learn how to breathe to cultivate peace from within and rid yourself of preconceptions about the world. "Even nonbelievers can do that," he says. Examine yourself first for there is hatred, greed and illusion in all of us. Fighting terrorism with military retaliation, however, will merely compound violence, he says.

Sivaraksa, who is 70, and his wife have enjoyed Swarthmore village life and its friendly merchants. "The town for me is ideal," he says. "I believe small is

beautiful." He says he has been "very impressed with the students" whom he has found "very well read" and serious. Although he finds the arboretum

campus "beautiful," he has brought his class to meditate in Chester in order to "open their eyes to less privileged" lives nearby and to a less aesthetic

environment. In January, Sivaraksa will leave Swarthmore College for Harvard University.

The Swarthmorean
November 29, 2002

Peter Lawrence Pond

Peter Lawrence Pond died in Providence, Rhode Island on June 20, 2000, at the age of sixty-seven. He was educated in Connecticut at the Foote School, Yale University, and Yale Divinity School. Peter's mother, Josephine Stanton, lived in Thailand for many years until her death in an automobile accident more than twenty years ago. She was widow of the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, Edwin Stanton, and she dearly loved Thailand and the Thai people. She considered Thailand her

home.

After her death, Peter went to Bangkok in 1978 and worked on several projects in Bangkok. He developed good friendships and a love of Thailand, its culture, food and especially its people. He learned to speak Thai. Peter was in Thailand when the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia and refugees fled into Thailand. This was the beginning of an amazingly courageous and compassionate involvement with Cambodia. He worked inside Cambodia bringing people to

safety in Thailand and trying to improve conditions inside work camps near the border until he was shot and nearly killed by Khmer Rouge soldiers. He continued his work with refugees in Thailand until the situation stabilized. Even back in Providence, he continued his good works, involving himself with projects to help troubled youth. Perhaps his most enduring legacy will be the 15 adopted children from SE Asia that he and Mrs. Ponds raised.

Dear *Seeds of Peace* Readers,

Happy New Year. We hope you enjoy the first *Seeds of Peace* of this year.

Please make sure that you continue membership for the year 2003. We are sorry that we have to stop the free mailing because we cannot bear the costs. It is hard for us to survive without your support.

Subscription and renewal fee for the year 2003 is

- ☐ one-year membership USD50
- ☐ life membership USD500
- ☐ three-year membership USD100
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The payment can be made by cheque:

In USD and Pounds sterling payable to "Sulak Sivaraksa"
In Australian Dollars payable to Jill and Graeme Jameson
and mail to their address at
50 Daveys Lane, Hoddles Creek, VIC. 3139 Australia

Please send your cheque, name and contact address to:

Seeds of Peace
666 Charoen Nakorn Road, Klong San,
Bangkok 10600 Siam (Thailand)
e-mail : ineboffice@yahoo.com

Whenever you are in Bangkok don't forget to visit SUKSIT SIAM Shop at 113-115 Fuang Nakorn Road, opposite Wat Rajabopit in old Bangkok. The shop was founded 35 years ago by Sulak Sivaraksa and his wife and is gradually regaining its avant-garde reputation. It is a lively meeting point for activists, artists, craftspeople, students and 'enlightened' entrepreneurs. A cup of real coffee is served. Explore the selection of alternative books in Thai and English; and handwoven and naturally dyed cotton products made by rural communities from various parts of Thailand. Including hand-spun products of the legendary Pak Moon protesters. Phone 02-222 5698 to inquire about the monthly organized shop talks.

October 6, 2002

Dear Sulak Sivaraksa,

We are writing on behalf of the Buddhist Studies Workshop at Princeton University to invite you to present a public lecture sometime during the Fall semester (September 2002-January 2003). The theme for this year in our Workshop is the study of Buddhism in America, and we feel that students and faculty here at Princeton would really benefit from hearing you speak. Virtually any topic would be fine; among the recent speeches reproduced on your website, the one entitled "What do I as an Eastern Buddhist Expect Westerners to Discover in the Buddha?" would be ideal for our group.

The Buddhist Studies Workshop is a relatively small group of faculty, undergraduates and graduate students drawn from different departments who are interested in pursuing interdisciplinary and cross-cultural conversation about topics in Buddhist studies. We would be able to provide for your transportation to and from Princeton, a stay overnight at a local hotel, reimbursement for your meals and other travel expenses, and a small honorarium of \$500. Our sponsors at the university include the Center for the Study of Religion, the Department of Religion, and the Bobst Center for Peace and Justice.

Don Swearer suggested we contact you directly; we hope you don't mind a simple e-mail message (we're also sending a hardcopy of this invitation by U.S. mail). Wendy is a former student of Don's at Swarthmore College. She recently finished her Ph.D. in Sociology at Princeton with a dissertation on the shape of Theravada Buddhism in the U.S. This year she is Acting Associate Director of the Center for the Study of Religion. Stephen (Buzzy) is D.T. Suzuki Professor of Buddhist Studies in the Department of Religion; he attended a conference sponsored by the Chung Hwa Institute for Buddhist Studies with you several years ago in Taiwan.

We hope your time at Swarthmore is passing well, and we look forward to hearing from you. The best way to reach us is to send e-mail to Buzzy at sfteiser@princeton.edu, call him at (609) 258-4490, or send mail to him: Professor Stephen F. Teiser, Department of Religion, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08544-1006.

With best wishes

Stephen F. Teiser
D.T. Suzuki Professor in Buddhist Studies
Director, Buddhist Studies Workshop

Wendy Cadge
Acting Associate Director,
Center for the Study of Religion

The Archbishop of Canterbury

10 October 2002

Dear Sulak

May I express my warm thanks to you for your presence and your participation in the World Leaders' Meeting in Canterbury this week. I was delighted with the progress we made in the dialogue, and I was grateful for the particular contribution that you were able to make. The honesty and openness that was shown testify both to the urgency of the task and the depth of the commitment of all around the table. I hope very much that you will continue to walk with us in this vital and exciting enterprise.

Yours
George

Social Policy

October 27, 2002

Dear Sulak Sivaraksa:

It is a pleasure and honor to be able to send you the enclosed copies of *Social Policy* with articles on Engaged Buddhism. And we deeply appreciate your willingness to have us summarize and present your thinking. We also appreciate your associate, Tilo, who was so generous with his time in reviewing our

edition.

Just a word as to how this special feature on Engaged Buddhism came to be in our journal. A few months ago, quite by accident, I saw and purchased your book, *Loyalty Demands Dissent: Autobiography of an Engaged Buddhist*. I enjoyed, learned and was moved by your story. It led to this feature.

You will also find a couple of other copies of *Social Policy* which will give you an idea of the range of our interests. Should you have other ideas for articles, we would certainly appreciate hearing them. And we would like to be kept abreast of developments with the Assembly of the Poor.

Apart from the magazine, editorship of which I assumed just a year-and-a-half ago, for the past 40 years I have worked as a community organizer. My earliest experience was with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the peak of the U.S. civil rights movement. Subsequently, I worked for the "dean" of American community organizing, Saul Alinsky. After directing his organization's work in Kansas City, Missouri, I returned to my home in the Bay Area and started ORGANIZE! Training Center. Since 1972, it has been my base of operation.

I would be very interested in sharing organizing experiences with you, and hope that we might get together the next time you are in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Sincerely,
Mike Miller
Editor

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Swarthmore College

October 28, 2002

Dear Professor Sivaraksa,

Thanks for the truly beautiful inspiration to place peace building at the core of our personal and societal commitments. Your talk was a historically important event for the College. We are so appreciative of your being here this year.

I'm very sorry I needed to leave before the questions but felt, in the effort to reinforce Swarthmore's role in education for peace building, I needed to lend support to the student peace rally.

Sincerely,
Al Bloom
President

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29 October 2002

I consider myself privileged to have enjoyed your company during the meeting of the World Faith Development Dialogue. Your contribution during the meeting was both insightful and enlightening; I have learned so much. I am also delighted that I had such exceptionally distinguished company few steps from one of the most remarkable houses of God, namely the Cathedral of Canterbury.

I would like to express my profound appreciation for all the participants in general and for your good self in particular. I am also attaching a copy of a recent paper on Islamic finance. As an economist, I honestly believe that this financial innovation that revives old and cherished teachings of Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam would enable the financial system, which is usually known for its calculative utilitarianism, to better serve the poor.

I am counting on your support to make this idea known to all interested and concerned people, hoping that it would contribute to a more efficient, equitable and just world economy.

Let us also pray that the WFDD would succeed into its noble mission of improving the lot of the poor and consequently the whole humanity.

With God's blessings, guidance and protection, and my best regards.

Dr. Mabid Ali Al-Jarhi
Director, Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI)
The Islamic Development Bank

After the Terror

Ted Honderich
(Edinburgh University Press,
2002)

Addressing mainly Western readers, in particular Anglo-Americans, moral philosopher Ted Honderich writes, "We were required by September 11, in my view, to see ourselves and reform ourselves." Honderich's brilliant *After the Terror* attempts to do just that—to provide the conceptual and moral tools for self-perception and resolution to change, to make moral contemplation a matter of the living present and the future. His provocative conclusions are likely to raise much more than a few eyebrows, especially in Western societies, which he describes bluntly as "ignorant, stupid, selfish, managed and deceived for gain, self-deceived, and deadly."

Honderich devotes the first half of the book to laying the conceptual and moral framework for understanding the September 11 tragedy and the subsequent American counter-attack against Afghanistan. Honderich begins with his concepts of good and bad lives. He defines a good life as one that "goes on long enough," which in large part means sufficiently having "great goods" such as material means for a good quality of life, freedom and power, respect and self-respect, private and public relations with others, and the satisfactions of culture, including religion, knowledge, and diversion. Bad lives are therefore the opposite: ones that are short, ones that suffer from deprivation, or both.

Within this framework, Honderich argues that, based on the average lifetimes in years, a

good life will go on long enough for some 77 years (e.g., in the US and Western Europe). However, many people, most noticeably in Africa, are merely leading "half-lives"—and not happy and healthy half-lives, but ones ridden with emptiness, illness, and suffering. Comparing the best-off tenth in the good life category with the worst-off tenth in Africa, the ones most responsible for pulling down the average lifetimes in years, the finding is even more disheartening. Those in the worst-off tenth in Africa merely have "quarter-lives" (e.g., an average life expectancy of 30 years). "It is not living that goes on at the bottom in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia or Sierra Leone, only something less." And, "it is useful to keep in mind now, about those four million whose lives averaged thirty years, and those among them with quarter-lives at best, that each of them had a name, and hopes."

Honderich then asks, "If we had really worked at it, would the worst-off tenth have gained fifty years of life on average?" Honderich insists that Western societies, especially their leaders and business elites, are responsible for these bad lives through both omission and commission/positive actions. "You're left with the plain fact that we could have done otherwise and we didn't, and that this had awful effects."

Next, Honderich unpacks his philosophy of morality, coming up with basic principles "about what to do, not about what sort of character to be credit or blame." He begins by examining three sets of philosophical currents that define and shape the natural fact and practice of morality. If society is organized around libertarianism à la Robert Nozick,

Honderich sees it as "vicious" because in such society "one does no wrong at all in letting others die of starvation right there when this could easily have been prevented." He argues that liberalism à la John Rawls is based on false assumptions "about the extent of equality in a society and the private property rights." In particular Honderich questions Rawls's vague third principle: that there are only to be any inequalities that make the worst-off class better-off than they would be without those inequalities. "As much inequality as benefits a worst-off class. Until we are told more, that could be no inequality at all, or as much as anybody can think of. It could be the top tenth of population having 30.5 per cent and the bottom tenth 1.8 per cent [as in the US], or just about any other shares you can think of."

Honderich's preferred social morality is what he calls "the principle of humanity," a set of policies intended to reduce the number of bad lives involving both the badly off and the better off. Broadly speaking, the first policy of the principle of humanity "is to rescue the badly-off by means that do not significantly affect the well-being of the better-off." The second calls for real distribution: "transferring means from the better-off that do significantly affect their well-being—without making them badly-off." The third and related to the second has to do with the assumption that taking from the better off will reduce their incentives to contribute to the social whole. Honderich thus proposes "to reduce incentive-inequalities to the really necessary ones." And the last principle "is a prohibition on wounding, attack, killing, torture, sexual attack and

violation, intimidation, and other violence and near violence." "The first three had to do with increasing and transferring ordinary means to well-being, the fourth with non-violence."

Now if morality is about what to do Honderich further asks, "Did we wrong them? Do we wrong them?" Them, of course, being those who are leading or who had lived bad lives. To answer these two questions, Honderich distinguishes between "moralities of special obligation" (e.g., Kant's "pure good will," absolute character, and highmindness especially towards those we identify with) and "consequentialist moralities" (that we are responsible for the consequences of our actions, especially the predictable ones). He sees the former as making morality "less safe" and not significantly different from "the...amorality of political realism"—i.e., doing for us, our nation, etc. He sees the latter as more compatible with the principle of humanity.

Good intentions do not necessarily make an action right. Of course intentions in the case of killings are monstrous. But killings may result from commission as well as omission. "What is non-violent can be more destructive than violence." Think of structural violence, for instance. Omitters, on the other hand, are often not thought of badly. Honderich thus urges us to separate the question of actions being right and wrong from the question of intention or moral standing. "There can be no doubt that this understanding makes the rightness or wrongness of an action independent of the actual intentions in it." Trying to come up with big differences between acts and

good intentions, on one hand, and omissions on the other hand, is simply engaging in some sort of apologia.

Honderich agrees that "our positive actions and policies of an economic kind have an overwhelming and grim case against us." But his focus is on omissions, which "are a simpler case, less disputable, enough by themselves." In this view, Honderich writes, "What this comes to is a proposition to the effect that there is among us a *responsibility* for the bad lives. It is not just that our actions are wrong, but that there is a responsibility on our part for them."

Thus to Honderich the question Why Americans are hated? is "pretty ignorant and dimwitted." "Americans and we who are with them," Honderich argues, "...are hated by the people for the reason that what we are doing, what it comes to, is destroying them and their lives." This is the correct answer Honderich believes Americans and those who stand with them should come up with in order to avoid storing up additional failure. Americans ought to reflect on their political and economic systems.

The acts of September 11 were not wrong because they constituted violence, as opposed to Popperian rationality and negotiation. The half-lives and quarter-lives "are, to a considerable extent, the fruit of international negotiation." And concentrating on the violence of others also facilely overlooks "our own violence. It forgets about the past in that respect." September 11 was not wrong simply because there were killings, especially of innocent civilians. "The ground of our feelings cannot be just that

the fact of killing, since there are killings we tolerate and do not condemn. There have been wars that were right." And above all, "Innocents have been killed by us in Afghanistan." September 11 was not wrong because it was an attack on a democracy. Honderich characterizes the form of government and the kind of society in the West as "hierarchic democracy" that tolerates gross inequalities and gives inordinate influence to special interests (e.g., corporations). "Our democracies," Honderich contends, "are now the principal arrangers of bad lives, the world as it is.... Our democracies are deadly states."

"For me, and perhaps you, the killers of September 11 are condemned more clearly and explicitly by one thing worked out from the natural practice, which is to say the morality of humanity." But this morality of humanity is also inextricable from the issue of responsibility and of what to do next.

"The second wrong...that of the killers at the Twin Towers, was in some way owed to the first, our omissions with the bad lives. Their wrong was in a way owed to ours. Certainly that does not absolve them. It is indeed a certainty that two wrongs do not make right." Or even more forcefully, Honderich writes, "We are rightly to be held responsible along with the killers. We share in the guilt....Did we bring the killing at the Twin Towers on ourselves? Did we have it coming? Did we ask for it? Those offensive questions, and their offensive answers yes, do contain a truth. We did play a part, our politicians at our head." Thus, "We were there with those who aided the killers and with Osama bin Laden."

As for the American counter-attack against Afghanistan, it cannot be justified as a measure of retribution and revenge. "You cannot tear people apart or burn or choke them to death for reasons of just *feelings*, reasons of national satisfaction. That is not civilization but barbarism." As mentioned earlier, many of the reasons cited to condemn the September 11 terrorism do not hold. Interestingly Honderich adds, "We did not have clean hands when we sent our own killers, but that in itself does not condemn us. If the only defensible actions were by the people with hands, there would be rather fewer of them."

To Honderich the American

counter-attack might be defensible if it "would make more September 11s less likely, and not lead to other disaster. It would not lead to more war, more state terrorism, and more of the other terrorism." In this light, the American counter-attack "could not conceivably be our only right response to September 11." Put differently, "if [the counter-attack] was conjoined with self-perception and resolution to change, it was defensible." However, "the counter-attack by itself, unaccompanied by self-perception...would strengthen that side [of our societies], including almost all those on top in our societies, whose desire or inclination it is to have things go

on as before. Unreflectively to engage and win battle is almost certainly to fall into a conviction of rectitude....Victory alone in Afghanistan could lead to more war by us. It could lead to a wrongful war on Iraq. It would certainly have the effect of reinforcing our political and economic systems."

Perhaps it may be too soon to judge the legitimacy of the American war against Afghanistan as Honderich implies. Perhaps as Bush *et al* are beating the tom toms of war against Iraq, Honderich's "bad feeling" about the American counter-attack is proven correct. After the terror, there will be more terror.

S.J.

Lord of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image

Maurizio Peleggi

(Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002)

Around 1860, the king and courtiers wore a silk *phanung* with either a shawl or a jacket of Persian or Chinese style. Early photos of King Chulalongkorn as a youth show him with a topknot, *phanung*, silk sash, heavy ankle bracelets, in a setting of oriental pottery and shrubs. Thirty years later, king and courtiers wore European-style military uniforms for formal occasions, and Edwardian jackets, ties, and hats for more casual affairs. The background of their portraiture was littered with Grecian urns, Roman columns, and classical European statuary.

In 1860, for most of the people, what the King wore was a mystery. The royal body was still largely hidden. It appeared

only on rare ceremonial occasions, obscured behind Indian-style ritual paraphernalia. The king's image never appeared on a picture, coin, or whatever. Even when receiving foreign embassies, the king was obscured by drapes or darkness.

But King Chulalongkorn went to Europe in 1897 to be seen. By this time his image appeared on medals, coins, stamps, and picture postcards. He loved being photographed. From 1899 he mingled with the people at the annual Wat Benchajair. And in 1908 he revealed to his subjects the massive sculpture of himself on a horse.

Maurizio Peleggi's fascinating and entertaining book is about the transformation of the monarchy in the Fifth Reign. That's not a new subject. But Peleggi is not interested in the usual stuff about administrative reform, modern education and foreign diplomacy. He tells us what the king bought, wore, built, and displayed. And why.

In the past, Siamese kings looked to India and China as the source of civilisation and royal authority. Royal rituals originated from India. Tribute missions were still sent to China to get formal recognition of a new monarch. But by the 1850s, India was under colonial rule, and China was crumbling under colonial pressure. The new centre of world civilisation was Europe. What made Europe so dominant was its new industrial capacity to make things.

The Siamese court did not send tribute to Europe, but rather sent royal sons there to be educated in new skills and manners. It imported not just European ritual, but European things. On his Western tours, Chulalongkorn bought paintings and sculptures from Florence, porcelain from Sèvres, Tiffany vases from London, Fabergé objects from St Petersburg, jewelry from Berlin. Kings had to have the best. And the best in the high colonial era meant the

European. The nobility followed suit. The palaces and mansions of Bangkok filled up with European kitsch.

The King presented himself to the world, dressed this way and surrounded by these possessions, as proof that he and Siam were *sivilai*, part of the civilised world, and that he was part of the elite club of world monarchy. When *Tailor and Cutter* magazine of London ruled that he "looks like a typical English gentleman," that was a triumph. When an American called Siam "probably the most despotic country in the civilised world," it was the last four words that mattered. The king presented himself this way to his subjects to show his association with the new fount of world power, and to dramatise the difference between absolute monarch and ordinary subjects.

The most dramatic part of this transformation was the redesign of Bangkok as a theatrical backdrop for a new era of royal display. The Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall was constructed by a team of Italian architects as a truly Roman setting for royal appearances.

Dusit Park was designed as an elite rusticated suburb, focused on the Vimanmek palace, and dotted with 19 mansions, some with ballrooms and private zoos. The Ratchadamnoen avenues were cut through the city to make a setting for parades. And the equestrian statue was installed at the public centre of this project to ensure the reign would be remembered—and remembered specially for its modernity.

This project climaxed with three magnificent occasions. In November 1907, the king returned from his second tour of Europe and entered the city in a

magnificent procession. He passed through nine ceremonial arches built by ministries vying for prominence. From the photos Peleggi includes, it is clear that recent decoration of Ratchadamnoen has been similar in style but a little less grand. At each arch, officials and subjects recited speeches on their contribution to the "progress," which was the hallmark of the reign and the high colonial era.

Less than a month later, the celebration of the longest reign in Siamese history was held in the old capital of Ayutthaya. The site of the ruined old palace had been recently cleared, and a temporary palace erected, possibly modeled on the descriptions left by 17th-century Western travellers. In this setting, the king called on intellectuals to compile a history of Siam that went back as far as those of the *sivilai* countries of Europe he had just returned from.

A year later in 1908, the royal jubilee was celebrated, with the unveiling of the equestrian statue, a parade of 112 cars, mostly from the royal garage, and then a float procession. The Health Department's float included a cardboard hospital, and giant replicas of medicine bottles, surgical implements and medical herbs. The Irrigation Department had a hundred people walking in close formation holding up paddy stalks to simulate a field. King and government brought progress to the people.

Anyone living in Bangkok for the past 20 years since the Bangkok bicentennial has come to expect such celebrations as regular events. But in 1907-8, this was a new and public theatre of royal ceremonial. And it was different. Previously, the king

appeared in *kathin* processions, seated in a traditional gilded barge. Now he was driven in a European motorcar.

Peleggi's point is that all this buying, dressing, displaying, building and parading was not just a result of the monarchy's growing power and wealth, but rather part of its creation. These new patterns of consumption and display started from the 1870s, when the young Chulalongkorn was still stifled by old courtiers, although it undoubtedly climaxed in the last 15 years of the reign. Peleggi argues, "the royal elite fashioned a new sense of themselves, both as individuals and as a social group. By contemplating themselves in their new clothes, new domestic settings, and new urban spaces, the Siamese court ended up convincing themselves, above all, of being modern."

Peleggi is saying that the Siamese monarchy survived this earlier era of globalisation (known then as colonialism) by becoming global themselves. By presenting themselves as spearheads of the global enthusiasm for "progress," and "as members of the fraternal order of world royalty," the Siamese court may have made it more difficult for the colonialists to treat them as mere "native rulers." Moreover, by creating such a powerful new idea of monarchy as the centrepiece of the new nation-state, they ensured that nationalism was more about kings than people.

But Peleggi suggests that the transformation of the monarchy may have gone slightly too far. Its image became a little too modern, too European, too open, too rational, and too powerful. It spent too much on building palaces, and not enough

on building temples. It failed to notice and negotiate with new social forces which had a rather different idea of what a nation should be. Hence King Chulalongkorn's two successors had a much more difficult time. And over 1932-46, the monarchy was eclipsed.

Peleggi ends by reflecting on the current reign in the light of his analysis of the Fifth. King Bhumiphol began by being very modern in the 1960s, with world tours and his affection for jazz, sailing and photography. And the popularisation of Fifth Reign memorabilia constantly recalls

this earlier age of modernisation. But since the 1960s, he has rebalanced the mixture between modern and traditional. Peleggi argues that "King Bhumiphol restored to the sovereign's figure some of the supernatural aura that Chulalongkorn had curtailed in his push for a modern image." He pursues "progress" just as much as Chulalongkorn, but has reinterpreted it as rural uplift rather than grand emulations of Europe. And he has fashioned an "austere" and "Olympian," image which contrasts with the "bourgeoisified, affable image" of Chulalongkorn.

Peleggi's implicit argument is that by becoming modern, by making the transition from "Lords of Life" to "Lords of Things," the Siamese monarchy traversed the high colonial era much better than most of its peers. Moreover, by rebalancing modernity with reinvented tradition, the current reign has seen the monarchy transformed yet again for a new era of globalisation.

Chris Baker
Bangkok Post,
19 October 2002

Recommended Reading

A Peace of Pie: Burma's Humanitarian Aid Debate

Alternative ASEAN Network
on Burma (ALTSEAN)
Special Report October 2002
Bangkok, 2002

The special report contains various articles on peace-building, reconciliation, the democracy movement, human rights and humanitarian problems in Burma. The main focus lies on the debate to create conditions to make aid effective and sustainable in terms of reconciliation.

New Page, Old Story: Report Card Burma

1 April - 30 June 2002
Alternative ASEAN Network
on Burma (ALTSEAN)
Bangkok, 2002

Does one expect improvements in democracy and reconciliation in Burma after the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from 19 months of house arrest in May 2002? This issue of Report Card Burma takes a critical look at the situation in Burma.

Faith in Development: Partnership between the World Bank and the Churches of Africa

Edited by Deryke Belshaw, Robert Calderisi and Chris Sugden
Regnum Books International, Oxford, 2001

The World Bank and the faith communities

have a major role to play in attacking the root causes of African poverty within and outside the continent. This book discusses the principles and practicalities of a partnership, covering a broad range of development topics. It draws on an extraordinary conference, organized jointly by the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa and the World Bank in Nairobi in March 2000, to explore closer collaboration, especially at the grassroots level.

Providing a fascinating glimpse of the spiritual dimensions of poverty, this book will be of interest to everyone concerned about the plight of Africans today, as well as to specialists already working to address these issues.

On Equilibrium

John Ralston Saul
Penguin Canada: Toronto, 2001

"*On Equilibrium* is an intelligent, persuasive and controversial exploration of the essential qualities of humanity and how they can be used to achieve equilibrium for the self and to foster an ethical society. It is at once an attack on our weakness for ideologies and a manual for human action. It is the logical, compelling and human successor to John Ralston Saul's best selling trilogy."

A Buddhist Bible, Essential Readings from East and West

Donald Lopez, Beacon Press: Boston, 2002

The Buddha, A Short Biography

John S. Strong
Oxford, 2002

Tracing the Way, Spiritual Dimensions of the World's Religions

Hans Kung
Continuum: New York, 2002

Visions of Compassion: Western Scientists and Tibetan Buddhists Examine Human Nature

R.J. Davidson & Anne Harrington, eds
Oxford University Press: New York 2002.

Development and Culture: A Development in Practice Reader

Edited by Deborah Eade
Introduced by Thierry Verhelst with Wendy Tyndale
Oxfam GB, Oxford, 2002

Development in Practice Reader draws on the contents of the acclaimed international journal *Development in Practice*. It offers thematic collections of papers by practitioners, policy makers, scholars, and activists. Each book includes an original introductory essay and an annotated resource list of recent publications, as well as relevant journals, organisations, and websites, constituting an essential guide to cuttingedge thinking and action on the chosen topic.

Voices of the Poor series

consist of three books that bring together the experiences of over 60,000 poor women and men.

The first book, *Can Anyone Hear Us?*, gathers the voices of over 40,000 poor women and men in 50 countries from the World Bank's participatory poverty assessments.

The second book, *Crying Out for Change*, draws material from a new 23-country comparative study.

The third book, *From Many Lands*, offers regional patterns and country case studies.

World Bank and Oxford University Press,
New York

Leo Tolstoi: The Wisdom of Humankind

Translated, Considered and Introduced by Guy de Mallac
CoNexus Press, 1999

This new edition in English, while based on the authoritative Russian scholarly edition of 1956 is a compilation of Tolstoy's outstanding work which contains the essential wisdom of various cultures and ages. It is the expression of his insights and the summation of a lifetime of thought and reflection, which addresses a number of today's key issues.

Menike

By Nancy Grace
Creative Holdings, Philadelphia 2001 (US\$ 18)

All about elephant tradition and behavior, telling us that nowadays baby elephants in Sri Lanka are given to falling into hold. This is similar to the situation in Siam. You may order a copy from Suksit Siam, Bangkok email. suksit@loxinfo.co.th

Dialogue of Civilizations

Edited by Majid Tehranian and David Chappell
I.B. Tauris, 2002

National Identity and Its Defenders: Thailand Today

Edited by Craig Reynolds
Silkworm Books, 2002

Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research and Theological Perspectives

Edited by Everett L. Worthington, Jr.
Templeton Foundation Press, 1998

Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation

Edited by Raymond Helmick, S.J., and Rodney Petersen
Templeton Foundation Press, 2002

Wisdom from World Religions: Pathway toward Heaven on Earth

Edited by Sir John Templeton
Templeton Foundation Press, 2002

The Hand of God: Thoughts and Images Reflecting the Spirit of the Universe

Edited by Michael Reagan
Templeton Foundation Press, 1999

Inside the Mind of God: Images and Words of Inner Space

Edited by Michael Reagan
Templeton Foundation Press, 2002

Padmanpani Lectures: A Selection

Tibet House, 2002

Letters Against The War

Edited by Tiziano Terzani (India Research Press)
New Delhi 2002

Environment Words : A Dictionary in Plain English

Editor : Glenda Kupczyk-Romanczuk
Published by Images Asia

Friends on the Path : Living Spiritual Communities

by Thich Nhat Hanh, compiled by Jack Lawfor
Parallax Press, 2002

Debating Green : Proceeding from a Series of Workshops for the Inauguration of the Heinrich Böll Foundation Thailand and South East Asia Regional Office, Chiang Mai, 28-29 February 2000

Edited by Dr. Ronald D. Renard, Mattana Gosoomp
Published by the Heinrich Böll Foundation-
Thailand and South East Asia Regional Office
Chiang Mai

Debating Limits to Sustainable Development? : A Case Study of Thailand from a Cultural Perspective on Sustainable Development in South-east Asia

by Karl H. Segsneider
Published by the Heinrich Böll Foundation
Thailand and South East Asia Regional Office
Chiang Mai

Knee Deep in Grace

The Extraordinary Life and Teaching of Dipa Ma
by Amy Schmidt
Present Perfect Books, 2003
Canada



Don Swearer, Lodi Gyari, Sulak Sivaraksa at Swarthmore College November 27.