

# SEEDS OF PEACE

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## WOMEN'S ISSUE

WOMEN IN THAILAND  
WOMEN UNDER BUDDHISM & CHRISTIANITY  
MOTHER DIVINE : THE LADY OF PEACE



# AN OBITUARY

## Eugene Denis S.J. : the man of no prejudice

The morning of the 11th of December 1986, a French Jesuit was still teaching at Chulalongkorn University. He smiled to everybody as usual. That same evening his students were crying beside his dead body. He died that afternoon at Xavier Hall. He had a heart attack.

Father Eugene Denis S.J. was much loved by all those who knew him. He was a man of no prejudice, no discrimination. Nobody has ever seen him angry. He smiled all the time. He was a scholar Buddhism and of Pali language who was much respected also by the Buddhists. The two researches on Buddhist original texts, namely on Phra Malai and Lokabanyat (the Buddhist Cosmology of the Early Period) gave him two doctorates with Summa cum Laude at the Sorbonne in 1963 and 1976. He was a member of the Research Institute of Oriental Studies in Paris, where he went back every year to present the outcome of his researchers, all of which concerned Buddhist original texts and literature. Fr. Denis was one of the most important scholars, who, through his researches and translations of Pali texts into French, has made it possible to students and scholars in the French speaking world to have access into Bud-

dhism.

It must be said that there has been no foreign missionary in the history of Siam who has so deep understanding of Buddhism as Fr. Eugene Denis. He succeeded to have such an understanding because of his open mind and open heart. He researched into Buddhism without any prejudice. He recognized the values of Buddhism without comparing it to Christianity or other religions.

Fr. Denis came to Thailand from China together with some of his colleagues in 1955. It was the "second mission" of the Jesuits after a breach of over 200 years. They were well known in the court of King the Burmese troops, the Jesuits also disappeared from the history of Siam. The world history sent them back again. Most of them, Fr. Denis as an example, are scholars of different disciplines. However, they are modest and keep on giving their significant contributions in various academic fields without that many people would not notice. It was the case of Fr. Eugene Denis, who passed away with his 65 years of age.

Seri Phongpit

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### Editorial Note

**Our Seeds of Peace have been devotedly serving** our readers for years. We are trying more and more to give all reliable and current informations concerning peace and love for our world fellows.

In order to encourage the world understanding, we manage to set a specific topic for each issue of our Newsletter so that our readers may have a chance to penetrate all fields of knowledge. Moreover, we attempt to eliminate and eradicate all religious intolerance and prejudice for the sake of peace and love. Our Newsletter has already dealt with topics of freedom, peace, and inter-religious understanding. We, however, speak less for women.

In this issue, we try to bring women's roles on stage. Some articles such as "Women Under Buddhism & Christianity," "Mother Divine : the lady of Peace" and "Women in Thailand" may illustrate how much women can do to carry the other half of the world. We expect to dedicate our next issue to women and their activities and hope that our materials will continue to please our readers.

To be sure, all the comments and suggestions are greatly welcome. And thanks to our staff members and friends, the present issue of the *Seeds of Peace* continues to be our pride and joy in your hands.

## Seeds of Peace

is published thrice annually in January, May and September, in order to promote the aim and objectives of the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD). For subscriptions and further information, please contact the Commission 4753/5 Soi Watthong Noppakun, Somdej Chaophya Road, Klongsan, Thonburi, Bangkok 10600, Thailand. Tel. 437-9445. Suggested minimum donation US\$ 10 per annum, postage included.

### Objectives of TICD

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

#### Guest Editor

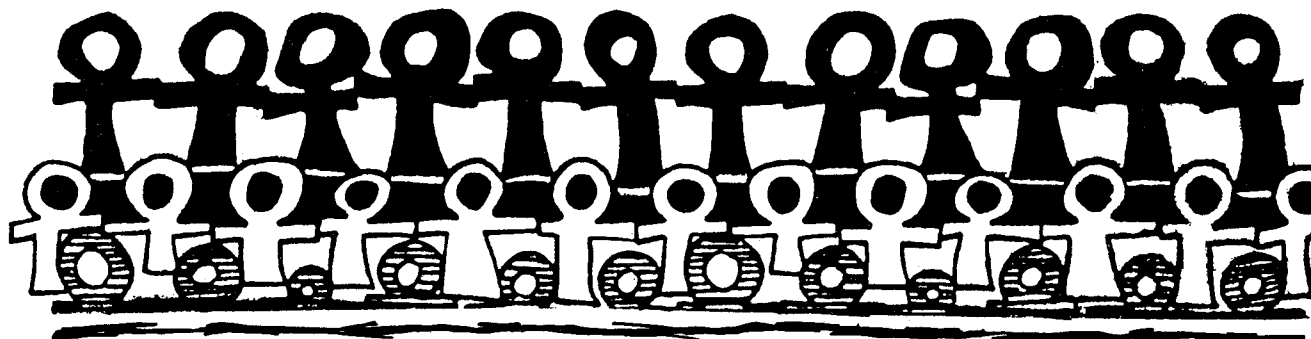
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# Women in Thailand



## 1. Introduction:

Being born Thais we were taught to be proud of our independent country and even so being Thai women, we are proud to learn of our better position than that of our foreign sisters. This is because we had neither foot-binding which occurred in China nor sati or widow-burning which happened in India. Thai women have played important roles both within and outside the household, especially rural women. They have worked side by side together with men in the fields, managed marketing systems and have contributed to decision-making within the family. Thai women are respected as mothers and wives fulfilling their roles and duties in childrearing and taking responsibilities of the well-being of the family.

Do all these notions reflect Thai women being discriminated against or do they manifest that women and men are treated equal in society? In fact, the common understanding about the position of Thai women tell us only their illusory images. Looking beyond or into the history or even the present day, evidence show some contradiction. Despite the fact that Thai women have a remarkably high rate of participation in the labour force, as in the past, they have gained little access to education, property, legitimate power, and have lived with a double standard of sexual morality.

This paper will discuss the position and problems of Thai women, including the criticisms on women's development policies and activities organized by both governmental organizations

and non-governmental organizations.

## 2. The situation of Thai women

According to the Women's Development Plan (1982-86), the female population of the country is 49.6 percent of the total. From trends observed from 1970-80, it can be assumed that women represent 50 percent of the work force. Thai women have had a remarkably high rate of participation in the labour force in the past, and, as Khin Thitsa points out, in 1968 Gunnar Myrdal declared that Thailand had the highest rate of female participation in the labour force in the world. Whereas in the United States, 24 percent of women over the age of 15 are economically active. In Thailand, the figure is as high as 81.4 percent, reaching 87.4 percent among those women aged 40-49 (compared with only 29.9 percent in neighbouring Malaysia).<sup>1</sup>

As in the 1970 census and the 1978 labour force survey, the number of women employed was about 70 percent of the men, or about two thirds of all adult women. Both surveys, however, were conducted during the agricultural off-season, thereby excluding casual or under-employed workers from the category of those employed. If we add the enormous number described as "waiting for the agricultural season" to the employed category, the ratio of women to men in employment would be between 83 and 87 percent.<sup>2</sup> Despite the high participation of Thai women in agricultural production and other employment sectors, they



earn inadequate incomes and are less educated. The consequences of the National Economic Development Plan since 1961 emphasizing upon economic growth rather than the equality in income distribution, have thus, made rural women face more serious problems and have become migrants. Since most of them are unskilled labour with little educational background, they have become cheap labour in different types of industries, or workers at the construction sites or servants.

The problem of low wages for women have forced them into different types of establishments offering sexual services, working as prostitutes or masseuses or even become victims of trafficking abroad<sup>3</sup>. This is a form of income for their families in the rural areas. Besides the double workload of Thai women and the serious economic problems, they have had to face, they have also become victims of sexual violence, i.e. rape, wife-battering and forced prostitutes.

Furthermore, the position of Thai women in the law, many studies pointed out that in the past, laws have denied female autonomy, allowing a husband to sell his wife at any time, to pawn her or give her away, to administer bodily punishment on her or inflicting death to an adulterous wife<sup>4</sup>. Although Thai laws have changed with time, Thai women are still discriminated in some laws as stated by Malee Plukspongsawalee — under the Constitutional Monarchy, Thai women are not discriminated under national, provincial or municipal politics, but there remain laws and regulations which prevent women from participating fully in local politics and administration<sup>5</sup>.

As seen, Thai women have a remarkably high rate of participation in the labour force, but have gained little access to legitimate power, property, and education. Thai women, especially in the rural areas, are often economically responsible for their families, while a strong internalization of a 'proper female role' has been long emphasized through Buddhism. Yet, the contradiction is explicit between the demand for her responsibility to the family besides other strictures imposed on her, including the double standard vis-a-vis sexual morality. For example, according to Pasuk Phongpaichit's study of masseuses, most girls sent about one third to

half of their earnings to their families. The most remarkable thing about her sample was their outlook of themselves as family breadwinners<sup>6</sup>.

### **3. Women's development activities in Thailand**

These activities in Thailand have been organized both at governmental and the non-governmental levels. The former reflects mainly in the National Economic and Social Development Plan including activities by some Departments' concern. However, the most important sector of women's development in the country is the non-governmental organization or women's organization as will be discussed.

#### **3.1 Some critical views on governmental organizational activities**

The concept of women's development by the government is reflected in the National Economic and Social Development Plans which are the general guidelines for all activities in relation to women. The First and Second Plans (1961-66, 1967-71) did not mention specifically women's development in spite that the majority of women faced more serious problems in many aspects. These included problems in inadequate incomes, lesser education, problems of health and the double workload<sup>7</sup>.

But once the National Plan started relating to women, it showed a sign of confusion among planners and the government. Evidence from the Third and Fourth Plans (1971-76, 1977-81) indicated that planners should have acquired more knowledge to be able to understand the situation of women. According to the Third Plan<sup>8</sup> women only became a target group of the population policy rather than being considered as a subject of the policy, i.e. population policies should help promote women status. In the Fourth Plan<sup>9</sup>, the training programs designed for rural women in community development areas of 70 province could not meet to help solve the problems of low incomes, low education or help promote participation of rural women in community development activities because it was oriented towards nutrition, family planning including domestic science and female teenagers were trained to be proper ladies.

However, the concept of women's development has been formed into a better under-

standing of women issues in the Fifth National Development Plan as compared to previous ones. It is the first time that a National Economic and Social Development Plan has included a specific Women's Development Plan. In each sectorial plan, a mention has been made of various problems facing women, e.g. in education, health, politics and social aspects. The plan covers policies and strategies for dealing with these problems and emphasises the 12-44 age groups as being important target groups. It also emphasises on the increasing incomes to at least 5,000 baht (\$ 217) per head per year<sup>10</sup>, particularly in 37 provinces following the Plan for the Rural Poor<sup>11</sup>.

It should be noted that the Employment and Income Raising Plan which is one of the Principle Plans for the Development of Women's Roles and Activities would put more burden on rural women. The statement here is that more work does not mean more income, as should be. Thus, the strategy should be on how the plan could alleviate the workload of rural women, besides providing them adequate incomes<sup>12</sup>. It should include also how the plan would tackle problems of sexism in employment and the problem of low price of agricultural products.

With regards to the implementation level, there is still some limitation in terms of the function of the National body dealing with the Plan. As Srisawang Phuavongphatya points out that the women's development activities of the whole nation will be interrupted because the appointed committee of the National Commission on Women's Affairs will terminate its office following that of the present cabinet<sup>13</sup>. This indicated that the government is still unsure and inactive as they should. Furthermore, considering the draft of the next coming Sixth Plan<sup>14</sup> (1987-1991), there is no sign of women's development activities mentioned in it.

Although the National level has not yet had a permanent body to deal with women's development issues, there have been some governmental agencies working in the area of women. These agencies are dispersed in various departments, like the Dept. of Labour, Dept. of Agricultural Promotion, Dept. of Public Welfare and the Dept. of Community Develop-

ment. Again, these departments emphasize on nutrition, family planning and other occupations. These organisations so far, have faced problems of co-ordination, co-operation, work replication, budgetting for instance.



### 3.2 Some criticisms on non-governmental organisations' activities

There are about 400 non-ogvernmental organisations (NGOs) at present, concerning women throughout the country which are organised by women only<sup>15</sup>. Among these, the first women's organisation called "Women's Association of Siam" was registered on 23rd December, 1932, the year a political change from absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy took place. The objectives of this association were to provide room for women of different occupations to meet, discuss and exchange their views. The priority then focussed on child-bearing and rearing, domestic science including job opportunities for its members<sup>16</sup>.

The first women organisation started with some difficulties, i.e. they gained little popularity besides having to seek permission from their husbands before getting involved in the organisation. Evan so, there was a tendency for more organisations to emerge. For example

in 1943, the Women's Cultural Association founded, focussed its activities mainly on social welfare, women affairs and cultural activities. In 1948, the formation of the Women's Graduate Association was followed by the Women's Lawyers Association in 1950. Then in 1956, the National Council of Women of Thailand established, acquired till its present day, has 107 member organisations throughout the country<sup>17</sup>.

The objectives of most women organisations mainly concentrate on social welfare activities which include different target groups, i.e. children, women, etc. Some organisations focus on activities in their professional fields but others focus on consciousness development of women. Women organisations may be categorized according to their objectives as follows:-

1. Professional fields — Women's Secretarial Association, Women Doctors' Association.

2. Culture, morality and religion — Women's Cultural Association.

3. Social relations — Women's Alumni Association.

4. Social welfare activities — National Council of Women of Thailand, Women Lawyers' Association.

5. National security — Housewife for national security

6. Assistance for women's immediate problems — Women's Shelter, Rape Prevention Centre.

7. Women's development which focusses on consciousness development — Friends of Women's Groups, Women's Information Centre.

The evaluation on women's organisations by some studies showed interesting results. As Sukanya Hantrakul pointed out, since most of the women's projects concentrate on social welfare and focussed not only women targets, there are also other groups. This led to the problem of the poor distribution of limited resources for women target groups for example. According to the evaluation project of the National Council of Women of Thailand (1977-79), it was found that the projects on Women and Child Promotion including the study on Thai women were the last to be funded. As the figures showed, these two projects received only

2.8 and 1.8% financial support respectively. Meanwhile, children's projects supported, received 18.3%. Among the total target groups, women constituted to only one-fourth of the total<sup>18</sup>.

The preliminary study by the sub-committee on Promotion of Women Roles and Activities of the Thailand National Commission on Women's Affairs, evaluated 108 women organisations in various aspects. These included the structure of the organisations, administration, policies, activities, financial problems, recognition by the public and the government and the coordination matter. The study pointed out that these women's organisations still face certain difficulties which are lacking full-time staffs, the need to have self-evaluation to review its objectives and activities. Curiously, most organisations pointed out that they gained more recognition by the public and the press than by the government (46.21%, 31.06% and 22.73% respectively). There is still a need to develop cooperation and coordination among organisations in the area of planning projects<sup>19</sup>.

The NGOs on women's development have affected the change in women's position, especially organisations with objectives and activities focussed on women's needs and problems. On one hand, they have helped to solve and meet immediate needs, but on the other, they have sensitized the government to take up more women issues seriously. Nevertheless, most women organisations still need to develop in certain areas for example, the problem of staffing, financing, recognition by the government, distribution of resources for women's target groups and coordination among organisations, etc.

#### 4. Conclusion

Although the position of Thai women when compared to those in other countries have better position, the situation of the Thai women as pointed out in many studies in history till the present day, reflect that they have not been treated equally to men. The majority of them are still faced with problems in many aspects, e.g. those concerning inadequate incomes despite of hard work, poor health and malnutrition, lowly educated, discriminated



by the laws, customs and regulations.

The consequences of the National Economic Development Plan since 1961 emphasized on economic growth rather than the equality in income distribution, brought about many problems to rural women. Many of them became migrants and worked as unskilled labour as factory hands, servants, masseuses, forced prostitutes or even became victims of trafficking aboard.

As far as the women's development activities in Thailand are concerned, those organized by both governmental and non-governmental. Among those organizations NGOs have played significant roles because of their long establishment. In regards to the governmental activities, the concept on women's development began in the Third, the Fourth and the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plans (1971-76, 1977-81 and 1982-86 respectively). It indicated that Planners should have acquired more knowledge to be able to understand the situation of women. Evidence showed that women only became target groups of the population policy rather than being promoted as a subject of the policy according to the Third Plan. But in the Fourth Plan, women were trained only to be proper housewives. In the Fifth Plan though, it included a specific Women's Development

Plan, but some principle Plans for the Development of Women's Roles and Activities are still to be improved. It should be noted that more work does not mean more income, according to the Employment and Income Raising Plan. The Plan should have alleviated the workload of rural women, besides providing them adequate income. There should be a provision of a strategy to tackle problems of sexism in employment and the problem of low prices of agricultural products. Furthermore, there is a problem at the implementation level in terms of a national permanent body dealing with women's development activities of the country.

When considering the NGOs which play the most important role in women's development activities of the country, they brought about some changes in women's position because of their objectives, policies, and the long-term activities. On one hand, the organisations helped to solve women's immediate problems and needs, but on the other, it sensitized the government to take up women's issues more seriously. Although there are quite a number of women's organisations in the country, i.e. about 400 organisations, there is still a need to develop certain areas. This includes problems of staffing, financial support, the distribution of resources for women's target groups, the recognition by the government and the problem of coordination among organisations.

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*This kingdom was known as Siam until 1939, when its name was changed to Thailand. Then it reverted to the original name again in 1946. Two years after the coup d'état of 1947 it was decreed that the country would be called Thailand, and it remains so officially. Ironically the kingdom has since been ruled by one dictator after another—with very brief liberal democratic intervals. The name, Thailand, signifies the crisis of traditional Siamese Buddhist values. By removing from the nation the name it has carried all its history is in fact the first step in the psychic dehumanization of its citizens, especially when its original name was replaced by a hybrid, Anglicized word. This new name also implies chauvinism and irredentism.*

*The Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Buddhist Era seems to be one year later than that of Burma, Srilanka and India. In fact this is not so. The difference is that while the latter regards the year of the Maha Parinibbana as B.E.1, the former takes it to be the first anniversary after the Master's Passing Away. For example this year is B.E. 2529 according to the Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Calendar, but it is B.E. 2530 according to the Burmese, Ceylonese and Indian Calendar.*

## WOMEN UNDER BUDDHISM & CHRISTIANITY



*Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh (centre), Ms. Sumalee Viravaidhya Wich and Prof. Wolfgang Schäfer during The seminar*

Under the umbrella of Thai-German Dialogue, there are various projects, one of them is "Buddhist-Christian Dialogue". Within this project, a seminar on "Women in Religion and Society in Thailand and Germany" was held at Evangelische Akademie at Bad Boll, W.Germany during April 3-5, 1987.

The organizers were Prof. Wolfgang Schäfer of the Akademie, Ms. Lusanne Lipka who works on women's issue from Frankfurt, Ms. Suteera Nittayananta, Ph.D. student from Berlin, and Elizabeth Schweizer, Theologian from the Akademie.

I was invited as a speaker and resource person along with Sabine Lehmann from Bonn.

Those who attended the seminar were both Thais and Germans, with Germans as majority. The participants came from various towns and cities in Germany i.e. Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Mitzinger, Tübingen, Frankfurt, Weihenzell, Wiesbaden, Offdingen, Heidelberg and Berlin.

They were interested in Thailand, problems of Thai women in various aspects, Theologians interested in comparative studies on women in religion, Sociologists who work for Thai women in Germany, German teacher who wanted to know more about the background of Thai students, Buddhist German

wanted to be in touch with other Buddhists, Journalist wanted to know more about Thailand, some have been to Thailand and wanted to keep in touch with Thai people, etc.

The seminar began on the evening of April 3, 1987 right after dinner. As the purpose of the seminar is to offer an opportunity for a dialogue, the arrangement for the seating was in a circle. The acoustic was ver good, though the room was large thee was no need for microphone.

Wolfgang Schäfer was the moderator in this session and asked each participant to introduce him or herself. I was the only one without any knowledge in German language, thus needed a translator. The introducing was well done, each one besides introducing his or her name also gave educational and professional backgrounds and stated his or her purpose of attending the seminar. Such information were important for the organizers and resource persons as it enable them to address the issues more directly to the interest of the audience in the following sessions.

To attend the seminar, each participant paid DM 100 (approx. 1,400 Bahts) which included 6 meals and a good accommodation. Those who could not afford this registration fee, the Akademie would take only the minimum

expense that a person would spend on the week end. When the participants were responsible for such expense and most of them have to travel from various towns and cities, they were, therefore, a group of really interested people, with the aim to benefit from and contribute something to the seminar.

On the second day of the seminar, in the morning session we had presentations by Sabine Lehmann and myself. We started with Sabine, thinking that it would be better to begin from Christian context to fit the majority of the participants.

Sabine spoke about suppression of women within the church. Equality is often heard but only verbally and did not correspond to reality. Roman Catholic Church does not allow ordination for women. In protestant Church, women can become ministers but those in the high position with power of decision making is very few and limited. Sabine pointed out that Jesus himself grew up in a Jewish context which looked down upon women. In Jewish prayer, they say thanks for not being heathens, for not being stupid and for not being women! But at the same time one is reminded that the disciples who followed Jesus through thick and thin were women. Women held congregation in the house, women offered Jesus her home as a church. But in second generation equality among men and women degenerated. Men began to order how women should dress in congregation, and that women should not speak in congregation, men were only head of congregation, etc.

Story of the Fall of man was explained as women's responsibility. In the 2nd century, it is found that there are certain messages of women suppression inserted in the Letter of Paul. Therefore, Sabine insisted that women have to brace themselves and study Theology. She also pointed out another incident with the mentioning of Junia, a female apostle which was later changed to Junias - a male apostle. The more the Bible is being studied, the more they have discovered tendencies against women. And Sabine thinks that women do not have reason to be quiet.

St. Augustine equates sexuality to sin and allows sexuality only for procreation.

Thomas Aquinas understands women as defective and they are not full beings. Women came through humid south wind, having more water, therefore, they are less intelligent.

Both Augustine and Thomas Aquinas were highly estimated by the Church, whatever they say carried high authority. Therefore women can move out of hell only if she leads a life like Maria, the Virgin. Women had to turn to cloister lives. Their lives had been pure sacrifices. Some of them who stood out to speak were persecuted as witches. History of the Church during this period is a dark age. In 1436 the number of women, old women, healers, critical women, etc. who were persecuted and burned to death estimated between 100,000 to 9 millions!

In Protestant Church women started to study Theology in 1908, in 1917 there was the first female Theologian, in 1925 there were 100 female Theologians. In 1921 female Theologians formed an organization for the right of female assistants and ministers. Only in 1952 women were allowed ordination but they must remain unmarried.

In 1899 A German King founded an organization for women utilising women's service to help social problems. According to the words of Jesus "What you have done to the poor you have done to me". The role of women in the church tended to limit only services to the poor and the needy.

H. Zumach urged that women must discover themselves, and they need liberation within women organization. Women organization in the Church should extend to the outside world. When women started to react, the Church was nervous about it.

Women began to get more involved. Protestant women started boycotting fruits from S. Africa. They are more in touch directly with their sisters in S. Africa. Women all over the world felt the suppression and the need of solidarity. As the saying goes - suppression of women is destruction of the earth.

The presentation by Sabine was well received. Though it was in German through the efficient translation by Wolfgang I could follow the trend of the thoughts and arguments without difficulty.



The following session was my presentation which I have to admit had some difficulties. The background knowledge of the participants differed widely, some never had any knowledge on Buddhism yet among them were Buddhist scholars and Buddhists by faith. I had to divide the talk into 2 separate parts. First part dealing with structure and the essence of the teaching of Buddhism. I explained the Four Noble truths with emphasis on points of misunderstanding prevalent among Buddhists and otherwise. This method proved to be successful as the Buddhists found some interesting points of discussion and the newcomers found Buddhism practical and relevant to the present day society. Any other concept can always be linked to the main structure of the Four Noble Truths.

In the second part I explained about the role and religious status of women from the Buddha's time up to present day society in Thailand. I presented the social and religious status of Mae Ji and narrated the attempt made by women from various part of the world to form an organization for Buddhist women. This attempt resulted in a conference on Buddhist Nuns held in Bodh Gaya, India in February 1987. (more detail in a separate article)

On the second and third days of the conference discussions were devoted to problems shared by women of both countries.

Elizabeth Schweizer, one of the organizing members gave a reflection on her life. She grew up from a religious Protestant background and noticed a great difference in the roles men and women played in Church. The men would lead the congregation, make decision, attend meetings, while women would serve coffee and cookies, attend to kitchen duties, etc. Elizabeth thought the Church is insincere and ready to pass out order what women should and should not do. She questioned the teaching by the ministers and doubted if it was the word of Jesus. She turned to the study of Theology in search for the true teaching of Jesus. She found that the teachers were men, with men's ideas and men's critiques. Theology as a whole was, therefore men's theology, social structure was basically men's structure authorised legally and religiously.

This leads to the necessity of having feminist Theology which is theology for salvation and because it is Theology for salvation it is the real Theology. In the concluding part Elizabeth pointed out this kind of social structure dominated by men is poisonous not only to women but to the whole society.

The next day, which was the last day of the seminar, Elizabeth and Helga, a second year student in Theology explained the Feminist methodology of interpreting Theology. They quoted Matthew 15:21 which is the story of a Gentile woman asking Jesus to treat her sick daughter. Jesus refused in the beginning, for he was to help primarily the Jews. But through argument the Gentile women won Jesus over with her faith and Jesus finally cured her daughter.

Elizabeth pointed out the persistence of the woman, her strength of faith and the courage she had to remind Jesus of his true

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From May 23 to 28, 1987, the University of Hawaii Institute of Peace and the Dae Won Sa Buddhist Temple of Hawaii organized an international seminar on a very important topic namely "Peacemaking in Buddhist Contexts". The convenor of this seminar is Prof. Glenn D. Paige of the Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii whose reputation as a "nonviolent political scientist" is widely known. This seminar is not the first of its kind. As a matter of fact, it is the third international seminar on the theme of "Buddhism and Leadership for Peace." The first one was organized in Honolulu in 1983 with the theme to explore theoretical dimensions of Buddhism, Leadership and Peace.<sup>1</sup> The second was organized by SOKA University in Tokyo in 1984 where case studies of leadership and peace in relation to Buddhism were examined and discussed.<sup>2</sup> This third conference, in a sense, is a departure from the theme of leadership and probe deeper into the action-oriented perspective of peace in the so-called "Buddhist societies"

"Peacemaking in Buddhist Contexts" was designed to probe into the question why is it that peacemaking efforts in societies where

mission which did not limit only to the Jews. Even Jesus had to be reminded by a Gentile woman and he listened to her. Women, therefore, must be brave to express their critical ideas and do not simply accept things handed down through tradition which primarily belong to men's structure. Women must be able to maintain sincerity and strength of faith.

The feminist interpretation is applicable in Both Christian Theology and Buddhist Tripitaka. It would indeed be interesting to see the Buddhist feminist interpretation which will help better understanding of Buddhist context.

In conclusion, in this seminar, the difference which stood out between Thai and German women, Buddhist women and Christian women was the methodology in their struggles to gain freedom. The Buddhists proposed a subtle and compromise way. The effort to remain being feminine and yet capable of achieving their goal. While the Christian Ger-

mans would seems to prefer confrontation. They see the subtle and compromise method as unsuccessful in their social context. Women from both countries learned from each other the different methods, when and how to utilise the technique to fit best in various circumstances. The main concern is righteousness, responsibility and to consider the best for all. Everyone went away with the feeling of fortified strength and conviction that women's power can no more be underestimated.

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**Note:** After having finished this report, I realised the presentation focused more on Christianity. This is done intentionally as there are other papers focusing on Buddhism.

## A Report on an International Seminar on Peacemaking in Buddhist Contexts: Lessons in Political Enlightenment

strong Buddhist influences are perceivably present end up facing various obstacles? Widely regarded as a religion of peace and nonviolence, activists in the field of peace frequently fell frustrated by the Buddhists who seem to be rather unenthusiastic about peace if not outright hostile to the idea. This seminar, then, chose to examine the causes of this seemingly illogical relationship by studying concrete cases of peacemaking in societies where Buddhism is supposed to serve as contexts.

This article is a reflective report of that

seminar. Cases of peacemaking in Buddhist contexts will first be reported with emphases on three aspects in each cases, namely circumstances surrounding it, specific problems facing it and suggestions provided by each paper writer. Then an explanation of the tension between Buddhists and peacemaking efforts will be offered. In addition, abstract as well as concrete solutions to enhance the possibilities and scope of peacemaking in these societies will be discussed. A brief note on political enlightenment will then serve as a conclusion of this report.

### Cases of Peacemaking in Buddhist Contexts

Cases of peacemakings in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, South Korea and Thailand were discussed in this international seminar. Three papers dealing with these cases but for Korea were presented, however. Each of these three papers was primarily written by participants in peacemaking efforts in his own country. From each case, problems and relationships between peacemaking efforts and Buddhism has become better elucidated.

**Vietnam** The paper for the Vietnamese case is "Love in Action : the non violent struggle for peace in Vietnam" by the famous Nhat Hanh. This was an old paper written in the late sixties and Nhat Hanh could not come to this seminar. Dr. Truong Buu Lam, a Vietnamese professor of History at the University of Hawaii was kind enough to serve as the paper presenter. Drawing on his solid knowledge of Vietnamese history, Prof. Lam helped shed a meaningful light on Nhat Hanh's paper significantly. Drawing upon the doctrine of the Middle Path, Nhat Hanh suggested in his paper that the Buddhists formed themselves into the Third Force and tried to put an end to violence that spelled destruction to Vietnamese society.

It is important to note that the time when the paper was written was the time of war. The kind of violence facing Vietnam then can be termed "direct violence".<sup>3</sup> As a result, the approach needed to cope with such a situation of war had to be a direct one. However, two basic problems seem to prevail in Vietnam. First, Vietnam is a society plagued with a long history of war. The power of history lies, not so much in the academic record, but in the subjective meaning the people give towards their own collective life in the past. In this sense, the power of Buddhism has to be considered in relation to such power of history in shaping the destiny of peacemaking in Vietnam. Second, the war in Vietnam portrayed an incident where the role of Super-powers had to be taken into serious consideration. In the claws of 'realpolitik' at the international level, domestic Buddhist context can be perceived as losing its potential influences on peacemaking.

**Sri Lanka** Mr. A.T. Ariyaratne, the President of the Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya, wrote a paper titled: "Peace Making in Sri Lanka in the Buddhist Context"<sup>4</sup>. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend this seminar so his paper was presented by Dr. Wimal Dissanayake, a Sri Lankan social scientist who is presently an associate director of the Institute of Culture and Communication, East-West Center. In the paper, Ariyaratne proposed the "Third alternative" to be initiated by a non-communal, nonviolent people's force as a starting point. This "third alternative" then will try to alleviate the suffering and prevent further escalation of violence that would lead to increased suffering among more and more people. The approach used by this group also included a direct intervention to stop direct violence.

The situation in Sri Lanka is different from that in Vietnam during the war days. Ethnic violence between the Sinhalese and the Tamils has been so devastating recently. One participant in the conference voiced concern for the life of Mr. Ariyaratne pointing out that he is now walking a tight rope over the pit of ethnic hatred where Mahatma Gandhi once walked and was not able to complete his mission because he was assassinated by a Hindu assassin. There are also few problems in the Sri Lankan case. First, one can certainly raise the question of who constitute the partners in this conflict. Some may say that the conflict is not between two ethnic groups. Rather, it is between the Sri Lankan government and an extremist portion of one ethnic group in that country.<sup>5</sup> Second, in a situation where ethnic components serve as explosive factors, "the" Buddhist way of solving such conflict may better be de-emphasized. Otherwise, other groups may perceive such a solution as closer to the Sinhalese side due to the fact that they are primarily Buddhist. As a result, potentials for the success in solving this conflict peacefully may have been sadly curtailed. Third, the proximity between Sri Lanka and India and the latter's foreign policy regarding this issue has to be taken into consideration. At its closest point, the two countries are only 22 miles apart. More importantly, perhaps, is the cultural proximity

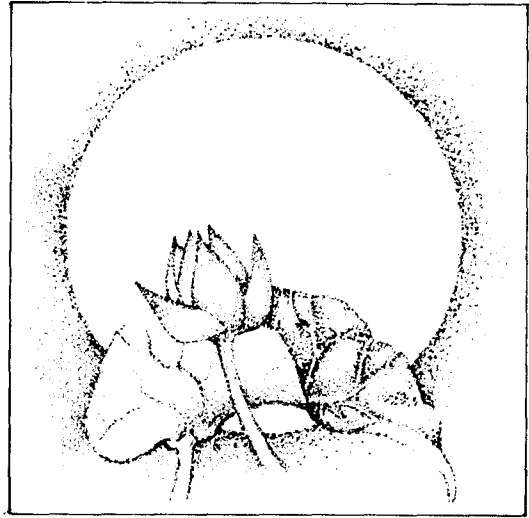
between the Tamils in Southern India and their brethren in Sri Lanka.

One more important fact emerges from the discussion in this Sri Lankan case. Ariyaratne suggested that the People's Peace Offensive has to be carried out. Sarvodaya's reputation in the field of development works is already widely known. It can be argued that they have embarked on the attempts to put an end to existing social injustice or Galtung's "structural violence"<sup>6</sup>. In this sense, their previous efforts can be correspondingly termed "structural peacemaking" while this new effort to put an end to the existing direct ethnic violence can be classified as "direct peacemaking." Perhaps, these two dimensions of peacemaking will help elucidate peacemaking efforts and constitute a more thorough understanding of peacemaking.<sup>7</sup>

**Korea** The Korean case is in many ways most important for the convenor and some people in the organizing group of this seminar. For Glenn Paige, the convenor and author of the famous *Korean Decision*, the fact that Korea is divided into two hostile communities nurtured by the fire of hatred fanned by ideological differences. In addition, the Korean society is under the military rule. Student protests, sometimes violent, had been taking places all over the country against the dictatorial regime.<sup>8</sup>

From the discussion, most Korean participants seemed to feel that Buddhism is not functioning in their society. Some complained bitterly that the Korean youths do not share Buddhist values. A Korean monk, however, pointed out that these values are coming back but peace protagonists in Korea do need better methodologies in disseminating the ideas of peace. In a militaristic society where the national threat from across the Northern border is continuously emphasized by the state, it is not always easy to convince the public of the relevance of peace and peacemaking.

Peacemaking in Korea also suffers from two basic problems. First, there seems to be no methodology for peacemaking from a Buddhist point of view. Second, like in most other cases, national conflict is heavily effected by global conflict. Some participants voiced their desperate cry concerning the impossibility of freeing Korea from the web of super-powers



and their conflicts.

**Thailand** The Thai paper titled: "Struggling Dove and Plastic Lotus: Peacemaking in Thai Society" is co-authored by Drs. Chaiwat and Suwanna Satha-Anand. Chaiwat wrote the first part of the paper from the point of view of an academic who has a keen interest in peace-related activities. Then Suwanna criticized Chaiwat's thesis from the point of view of a student of philosophy and Buddhism.

Chaiwat's thesis is that peacemaking in Thailand has not been going on as it should have been in a society that prides itself as a Buddhist society because Thai society is not a Buddhist society. If the doctrines of Buddhism are used as a set of standard, then Thai society cannot be called a Buddhist one. Suwanna's basic criticism is that it is unfair to judge this society on the doctrinal basis of Buddhism. The Thai people, perhaps, have developed their own brand of Buddhism which may not take doctrinal Buddhism as seriously as Chaiwat would have wanted.

Peacemaking in Thai society assumes a different form than in other cases presented in this seminar. Due to the absence of immediate threat of direct violence in the form of foreign invasion or clear-cut military dictatorship, peacemaking efforts in this society primarily aim at eradicating structural violence. Consequently, efforts in Thailand can be called "structural peacemaking". There are some problems facing these efforts, however.

In the paper, a combination of factors

which constitute a system of constraints hindering peacemaking efforts in Thai society have been outlined. They are: the history of peacemaking in Thailand notably the incident known as "peace rebellion of 1952"<sup>9</sup>; the bureaucratic suspicion about anything done or initiated outside the realm of bureaucracy; and that the doctrines of Buddhism is not taken seriously. In addition, the linkage between Thailand and a Super-power is also conducive to the emergence of such cooperation as the "war reserve arsenal." This cooperation is possible because Thailand is regarded as a frontline state and that the imminent border threat is always underscored, among other things.

After the discussions of these cases, Dr. Robert Bobilin, a professor of Religion at the University of Hawaii and a Director of the University Institute of Peace, was asked to undertake the task of comparing peacemaking efforts in these cases. Instead of comparing them, he offered a significant theoretical explanation for the phenomenon of difficult peacemaking in these so-called Buddhist societies.

### Explanation

Based upon his paper titled, "Buddhism and the Struggle for Peace: Can Our Institutions be Transformed?", Prof. Bobilin succinctly pointed out that the relationship between Buddhism and the State holds the key to the success or failure of peacemaking in all the cases discussed. He suggested that the more Buddhism in a given society is separated from the state, the more likely its tendency to support peacemaking. Interestingly enough, he thought that Max Weber would have thought of Buddhism as a "culture carrier" (Kultur Trager) rather than a change agent. In this sense, Buddhism is perceived as performing a supportive or non-supportive role in relation to peacemaking rather than having an active role. This understanding should be subjected to more research, studies and debates to further scholarly understanding of the role of religion and peacemaking.

After that hypothetical explanation had been offered, these cases are then examined by participants who are either a noted theoretician

of peace, a nonviolent academician or a Buddhist visionary. From their contributions, abstract solutions to the enigma or Buddhist contexts and peacemaking emerged.

### Abstract and Concrete Solutions

Joanna Macey, the noted author of *Dharma and Development* and *Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age* talked on "Buddhist Principles of Peacemaking". She argued that the notion of interrelatedness is central to Buddhist thinking. In order to work effectively for peace, a Buddhist must view the world as one constituted by the inter-relatedness of beings-in-the-world.

Johan Galtung, the father of the famous *Journal of Peace Research*, was asked to give a talk on "Principles of Non-Violent Action". His central question is "what is the relation between the parties in the conflict under which non-violence might have the highest, and by implication the lowest, probability of success?" In order to maximize the probability of short-term success, an intermediary which is capable of linking the oppressors and the oppressed without any social distance has to be created. He concluded that the long term approach would be to struggle against the sources of dehumanization by bridging gaps within and between societies. Certainly, Galtung's intermediary should share Macy's view of the world as one in order that social distance will be reduced, if not disappeared.

Dr. Ronald McCarthy from the Program on Nonviolent Sanctions in Conflict and Defense at Harvard University was asked to share his thoughts on "Principles of Nonviolent Action". He did it in the form of a paper titled: "the Technique of Nonviolent Action: Some Principles of Its Nature, Use, and Effects." Relying on Arthur Waskow's work, he termed the use of nonviolent means to impose greater costs on people who want to keep current benefits "creative disorder." In order to work effectively, nonviolent protagonists have to understand that if unity is too high, decentralization of power is needed and disorder would result. But if diversities or differences are too high, then creativity may have to give room for

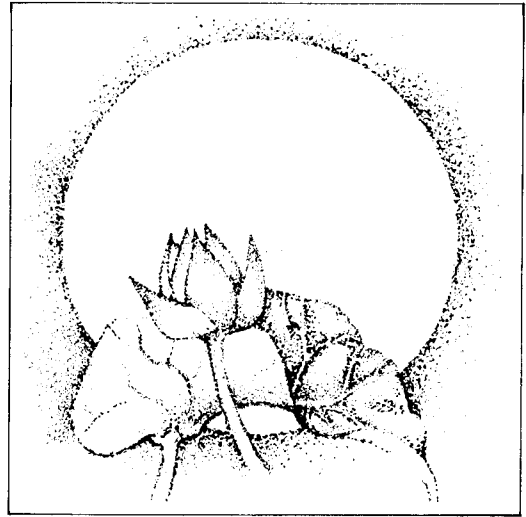
centralization and hence, order. McCarthy's proposition for creative disorder as an abstract solution for peacemaking efforts found support in the work of Acharya Tulsi, a Jain Master who pointed out that "Any program of non-violent opposition must be preceded by proper preparation in which I will give top priority to training in nonviolence." These words were echoed by Motilal Ranka and S.L. Gandhi who brought forth the peace message from their Acharya.

In addition to various theoretical insights being discussed, Prof. Tadashige Takamura from SOKA University was kind enough to furnish the seminar with a concrete solution for peacemaking. In his paper titled, "Soka Gakkai's Principles for the Creation of Peace", he helped elucidate concrete conditions that are conducive to peacemaking in relation to Buddhism. Instead of working outside the political system like so many peace-oriented groups discussed in the cases mentioned above, the Soka Gakkai turned itself into a force which the power that be in Japanese society has to reckon with. The message of peace supported by the Soka Gakkai has been heard in Japan and elsewhere in the world through three basic mechanisms. First, as a vehicle of education, SOKA University with its emphasis on peace education works well to propagate the SOKA's idea of peace. Second, in relation to domestic politics of Japan, a political party tends to voice its opinion in accordance with that of the Soka Gakkai. Third, at the international level, books on Mr. Daisaku Ikeda's ideas and his dialogues with the historian Toynbee are prevalent and have been translated into many languages.<sup>10</sup>

There were other participants whose names did not grace the pages of this brief report. But anyone who was privileged enough to be among them would not deny that the learning experiences were unforgettable, the firendship unbreakable. Yet, when all is said and done, the question is: what does one learn from such a conference besides what has already been discussed?

### **Conclusion: Lessons in Political Enlightenment**

According to the Jain Master, Acharya



Tulsi, "Objectivity and humility are the pillars of nonviolent (read: peacemaking) opposition." It goes without saying that peacemaking does exist in a context. Therefore, as one participant in the seminar commented, "it is important that peace and justice has to be expressed and fought for and *within* a Buddhist context. The context needs to be in front of the peace caravan." Consequently, the context has to be taken seriously. Moreover, the lack of systematized knowledge both at the theoretical and practical levels about Buddhism and Peacemaking seems to be rather salient.

The idea of "enlightenment" seems to be central to Buddhism. The truth that the Gautama Buddha discovered is called "four noble truths". They are suffering, causes of suffering, cessation of suffering and ways towards such cessation of suffering. The world we live in is plagued with violence. Human beings suffer. Causes and cessation of this kind of suffering have been studied. But ways towards the cessation of violence may not be forthcoming in the form of a blueprint from Buddhism. For, as other great traditions, Buddhism as a vision cannot be concretized. Peacemaking in a given society cannot avoid being political in the final analysis. But in Buddhist contexts, perhaps, this politics should not ignore the vision inherent in its own tradition. The likelihood of success of peacemaking will also be significantly enhanced if studeis and experiences of nonviolence and peacemaking that exist everywhere in the world are taken

into serious consideration. To attain enlightenment in the politics of peacemaking, perhaps, ignorance about peace and nonviolence needs to be tackled first.

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Peace Information Center  
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#### Footnotes

1) See the three papers presented in this first conference in Glenn D. Paige (ed.) *Buddhism and Leadership for Peace* (Honolulu, 1984).

2) See the papers presented in this second conference in Tadashige Takamura (ed.) *Buddhism and Leadership for Peace* (Tokyo: SOKA University Peace Research Institute, 1986).

3) See Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. VI No.3 (1969), pp. 167-191.

4) A.T. Ariyaratne's paper: "Peace Making in Sri Lanka in the Buddhist Context" is also recommended by the editor of *Seeds of Peace* Vol.3 No.2 (May 1987), p.19. This is a special issue on an international symposium on "Buddhism and Peace: Seeking a Peaceful Solution to the Present Conflict in Sri Lanka". The symposium took place in Bangkok from February 21 to 28 this year.

5) Dr. B. Wimalaratana Thera, "When Buddhist Culture is at stake, what could Buddhist monks and laymen do?" *Seeds of Peace* Vol.3 No.2 (May 1987), p. 15.

6) Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research".

7) See Beverly Woodward, "Nonviolent Struggle, Nonviolent Defense, and Nonviolent Peacemaking," in Carolyn Stephenson (ed.) *Alternative Methods for International Security* (New York: University Press of America, 1982), p. 141.

8) The seminar took place while riots in the street of Seoul were going on severely. President's Chun's softened stance towards democratizing his country came later.

9) Viwat Khatidharmmanit, "Peace Rebellion," *Thammasat University Journal* Vol.14 No.2 (June 1985), pp. 5-38. (In Thai)

10) The dialogue between Arnold Toynbee and Daisaku Ikeda, *Choose Life* has recently been translated into Thai by Khun Sodsai santivorapong. It is published by Kledthai in Bangkok this year.

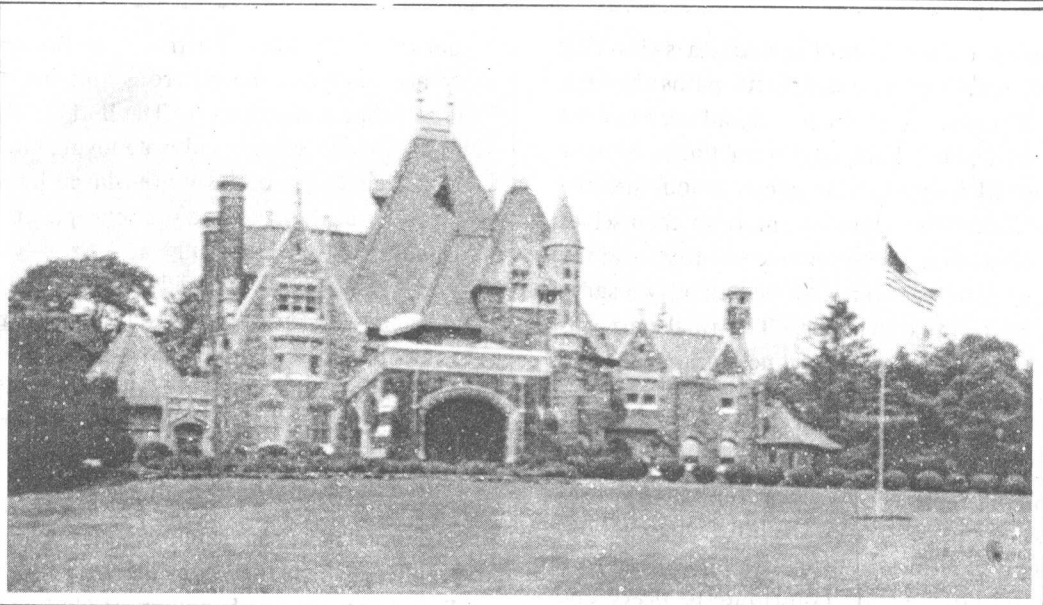
## Mother Divine : The Lady of Peace

Few years ago, when I studied in the University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A., I experienced so many good things and made friends with so many good people. Even though I have already been back to my native country, all those wonderful memories still linger on. Of all that impresses me, one worth mentioning is the opportunity to have a personal contact with Mother Divine.

Mother Divine or Mrs. M. J. Divine is the active director of the Peace Mission Movement founded by The Reverend, M. J. Divine or Father Divine in 1942. The Peace Mission Movement is spiritual as well as social. It is directed on the basis of freedom, equality, and peace of all human beings. All of its members come from different faiths such as Catholicism, Judaism, and various denominations of Protestantism, as well as from different nationalities and racial backgrounds. Nevertheless, they are treated equally and lovingly by Mother Divine and are trained to live a communal life in which no racial prejudice and dehumanization are allowed to exist.

The Peace Mission Movement is responsible for various kinds of its activities and business including the Circle Mission Church, Home, and Training School of Pennsylvania, the Unity Mission Church, Home, and Training School, the Nazareth Mission Church, hotels, and numerous small business such as groceries and dry cleaner. Because the Movement provides numerous services to public, I then had a chance to stay at one of its hotels, the Divine Tracy Hotel, which offered accommodations at rates comparable to the YMCA to all who was able to comply with its moral code. During that time, I was searching for a low-cost apartment which was clean and far from all disturbing sounds. It was so difficult to find such a place in Philadelphia. Finally, I decided to enter the Divine Tracy Hotel. At first, many of my close friends were afraid that I might not





WOODMONT — *The MOUNT of the HOUSE of the LORD*

be able to comply with its strict moral code. For example, all female guests must wear stockings, all guests must not let visitors in their rooms, and so on. Fortunately, I could behave quite well. Not only the guests but also some Peace Mission members stay in the hotel. All hotel workers are expected to adhere to Father Divine's International Modest Code: "No smoking, no drinking, no obscenity, no vulgarity, no profanity, no undue mixing of sexes and no receiving of gifts, presents, tips or bribes." I have known many hotel workers who are elevator ladies, ladies at the front desk (I never heard that they were called "receptionists"), and cleaning ladies. The rare chance I had to converse with the workers was only with some elevator ladies while the elevator was going up or down to or from my room on the fourth floor. Our friendship have developed gradually despite our differences in faith and nationality. I learned that no attention was paid to the so-called race, creed, color or national origin, except to have individuals of different complexions. Guests stay in their single rooms. The Peace Mission members and co-workers, however, eat, sleep, and live together as roommates. They learn to love and respect one another. According to the Peace Mission policy, "followers may work at whatever labor, trade, or profession they choose, and

they may do whatever they wish with what they earn or possess. However, they donate for living accommodations, meals, and other services such as laundry, dress-making, tailoring, barber service and transportation." Staying in the Divine Tracy Hotel thus contributed to my knowledge of an ideal peaceful life on earth. Soon, I was invited to meet Mother Divine and became one of her regular guests at the Holy Banquets in the "House of the Lord."

Mother Divine is a graceful middle-aged lady with a pleasant personality and all graciousness. Occasionally, she comes to conduct the sermons and church services in the communion hall of the Divine Tracy Hotel. Mostly, she stays in her residence on the Mount of the House of the Lord in the Woodmont Estate which is comprised of approximately 70 acres and located at 1622 Spring Road in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania. Here is the place where all the Peace Mission members join the Communion Banquets, celebrate their holy anniversaries, and participate in all important religious services. Sometimes, they are at leisure here on Saturday or Sunday afternoons. Woodmont is the show-place estate of the Movement located in one of the most exclusive sections of the Philadelphia suburbs. It's huge castle-like main house is elegantly constructed surrounded by beautifully landscaped lawns and gardens. A view of many

miles of estate country includes a swimming pool, tennis courts, delightful paths through forest, lawns, and gardens. I had been invited to join the Holy Banquets several times. Mother Divine likes to invite her guests to join the holy celebrations in order to entertain themselves and to witness the abundance of food and the joyful congregation. At that time, we sang, ate, and drank together. The final part was Mother Divine's speech concerning peace and love for all beings.

Since the physical death of Father Divine in 1965, Mother Divine has become his only righteous representative. She runs all the Peace Mission business, leads the holy congregation, and gives sermons during the church services. Her sermons always contribute to peace and happiness of the world beings. Once, at the Unity Mission Church Annex, Philadelphia, U.S.A., Mother Divine gave an interesting and worthy sermon:

It's so wonderful that there are those who are freeing themselves — from that mind of trying to get something for nothing to really be willing to give more than you try to get....It's so wonderful to live in the company of people who are honest, not just from not wanting to steal or rob, but people who can just be themselves and are real in their sincerity and love for God and you can feel comfortable and you don't have to feel that you have to appear to be what you are not by putting on a big front; to be among people who understand if you make a mistake as long as you are willing to confess and right your wrongs and do better. I think it's wonderful to associate with people who are aware that we can ascend from the human race into the angelic race and people who are really looking at the truth of themselves, looking at the truth and seeing themselves as they are and are willing to make the changes for improvement. I think it's wonderful to be with people like this.

As a Buddhist, I find Mother Divine's sermon quite astonishing and impressive. The essence of the sermon is nearly the same as

that of the Buddhist doctrine. In Buddhism, we are trained to be generous and free from all selfishness and egoism. The Buddha always teaches his disciples to cultivate loving-kindness to all beings. If one is not enslaved by one's own avarice, hatred, and misconception, one will be able to live peacefully and happily with others. Mother Divine used to discuss religious concepts with me. We agree that all religions carry the same essential doctrine, i.e., the doctrine of love and peace for all. The problem is whether all religious followers really understand their own faith.

The Peace Mission Churches are unorthodox. They propagate particular beliefs and practices which they consider true Christian. They believe in the Kingdom of God on earth which will be attained only through the unity and peace of all mankind. All followers live a celibate life like priests and nuns. They do not encourage the idea of procreation since there are enough people in the world to serve God and to help one another. Their mission is how to make all human beings virtuous and peace-loving. In order to join the Peace Mission Movement, one should be inspired by Father Divine's doctrine and live the life of Christ through particular convictions and practices which provide their ideal characteristics as follows:

1. They are real Americans in that they are people of different racial, national, religious and social backgrounds.
2. They believe in the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God and never use terms that separate or designate one from another in a discriminating way.
3. They live celibate lives and do not associate with the opposite sex except when necessary for conducting business.
4. They are industrious, thrifty and honest, giving an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.
5. They are completely independent and self-supporting in every way.
6. They will not beg, borrow or steal.
7. They will not accept gifts, tips or bribes, vacation pay, social security benefits, insurance benefits or legacies or anything they have not



*Mother Divine*

earned or paid for.

8. They pay all their debts and pay cash for all purchases and buy nothing on credit or the installment plan.

9. They do not smoke, express vulgarity, profanity or obscenity.

10. They do not imbibe intoxicating liquors or drugs.

11. They do not gamble, wager or patronize lotteries.

12. They do not insure their lives, the lives of others or their possessions.

13. They are happy, peace loving and work for brotherhood and unity and are opposed to fighting, war and violence of all kinds.

All the Peace Mission members try to live up to these ideals. They take Father Divine's doctrine very seriously. Sometimes, I wanted to express my gratitude to their good services at the hotel. I, however, dared not give them presents lest that would break their rules. They were very thoughtful to consider gifts and tips as means of greed. If all human beings perform their duty for duty's sake, and not for gifts and praises, they will always live in peaceful happiness.

The marriage of Father Divine to Mother Divine in 1946 was one of the most significant and auspicious events for all the Peace Mission members. Socially, it signifies the unity of different races and skin colors since Father Divine is a dark-skinned American and Mother

Divine is a light-skinned Canadian. Their marriage reveals to the whole world that true love and honesty can transcend all enmities and prejudices. Spiritually, for all the Peace Mission members, the marriage signifies the Christian concept of the marriage of the Lord to His Church or to His Virgin Bride since it excludes any sexual relationship of the couple.

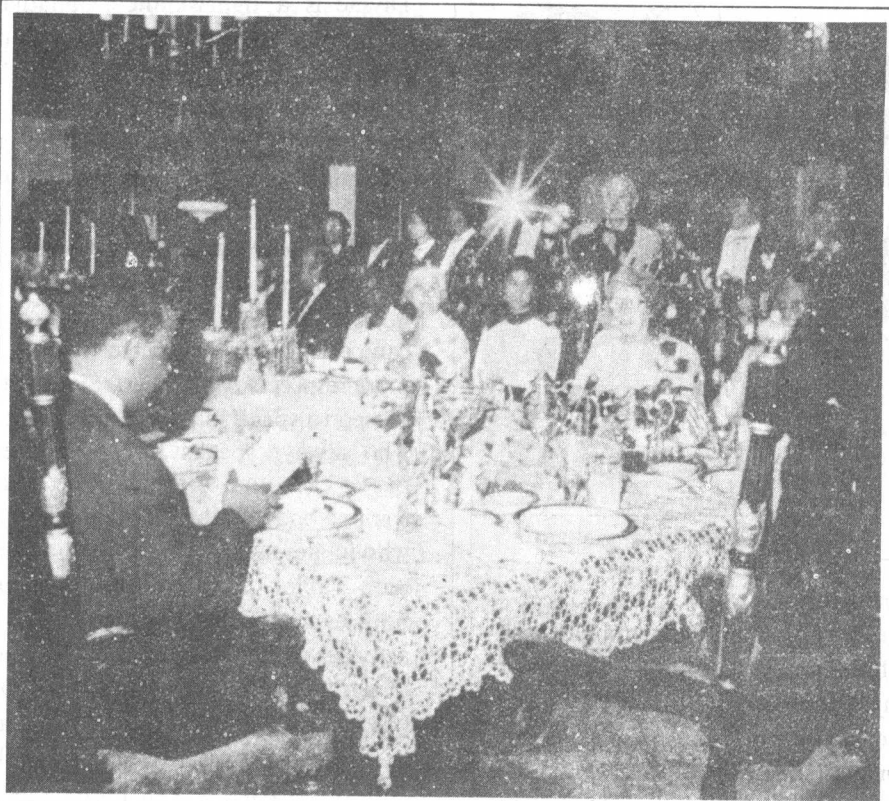
Though Mother Divine has taken so great responsibilities for her Movement, she can perform her duty perfectly well. More and more respect is paid to her. Since Father Divine ceased to speak in public in 1960, it is Mother who always speaks for the Movement and passes each item at the Banquet to Father (his spiritual body) for his blessing. She is the hostess who invites all visitors to speak at the Communion Table. She now assumes a crucial role both as symbol and participant in the public activities of the Peace Mission Movement. Particularly, the Council of the City of Philadelphia has presented her the Resolution commending the Peace Mission Movement as follows:

WHEREAS, The Peace Mission Movement, founded by The Reverend, Major J. Divine, better known as Father Divine, over 50 years ago, has fought long and hard against discrimination of all types; and

WHEREAS, The world-wide Peace Mission Movement has provided more than 40 years of service to the Philadelphia community through its churches, hotels, cafeterias, food markets, dress shops, barber shops, gas stations, shoe repair and dry cleaning establishments, and such other services that provide the necessities of life, generally at lower prices than can be found elsewhere in the community; and

WHEREAS, The Peace Mission Movement has fed the hungry, clothed and sheltered thousands of people who were destitute, homeless, and in despair, without any charge to the recipients; and

WHEREAS, The followers of Father Divine are dedicated to the Law of Americanism, Brotherhood, and Christianity, and the followers exemplify



*The Holy Banguet*

through their works, words, and deeds high respect for the dignity of every human beings; and

WHEREAS, The Peace Mission Movement has been active in encouraging neighborhood children to do well in school by providing afterschool classes and individual tutoring and has provided recreational programs that offer young people constructive alternatives to gangs or other forms of anti-social behavior; and

WHEREAS, The followers of Father Divine are peace loving, work for brotherhood and unity, and are opposed to fighting, war, racism, and violence of all kinds, and the followers eschew personal habits which are destructive to the mental, physical, or emotional health, including all forms of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, as well as

coarse language; the followers greet each other with love and peace, which they wish for all the peoples of the world, which sets an example for individuals, families and nations to emulate; therefore.

Resolved by the Council of the City of Philadelphia, That we hereby laud and commend the Peace Mission Movement for over half a century of dedication and service to God and the community.

Mother Divine is thus truly the "Lady of Peace." She works for peace from within herself and her community. She reminds us through her virtuous conducts that peace in the outside world can never exist unless we first find peace and love in our own hearts.

**Ms. Pataraporn Sirikanchana**

Faculty of Liberal Art, Thammasart University Bangkok

# REPORT ON AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BUDDHIST NUNS

**The International Conference on Buddhist Nuns** was held in Bodh Gaya, India during February 11-17, 1987. From the press release prepared by the organizers, this conference "will be the first time in history that Buddhist nuns come together to pool their talents, ideas and resources for the enrichment of all. The Conference is attracting the attention not only of nuns from all over the world, but also of scholars, journalists and feminists, and Buddhist lay people from countries as far afield as Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Norway, South Africa and the United States. It is becoming widely recognized that a strong community of female monastics is an asset in the spread of the Buddhist teachings, especially in Western countries.

In general, the nuns of the various Buddhist countries have remained isolated in their own localities, pursuing their practices without communications with their sisters in other land. They have had little opportunity to share their common concerns or to explore the spiritual links that join them one to another. In the present day, when there is a heightened awareness of women's potentialities, and simultaneously, an increasing interest in the teachings of the Buddha throughout the world, it is understandable that women who

*Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsoms (centre) at the pre-meeting with volunteers.*



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama presided over the opening ceremony of the International Conference On Buddhist Nuns, Bodh Gaya, Feb., 11, 1987.*

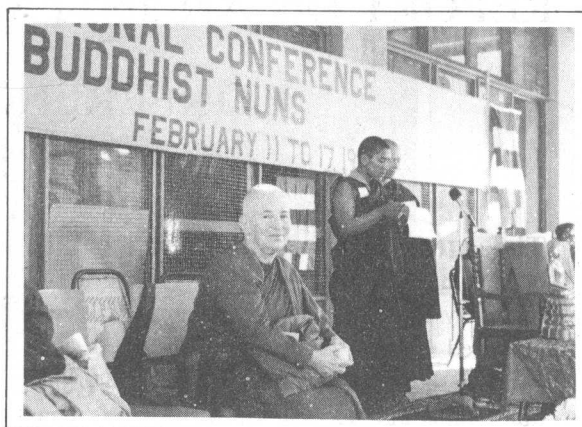
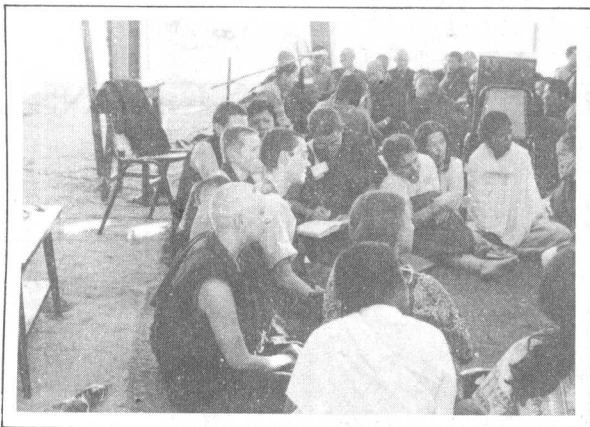
have dedicated their lives to the Buddhist path should wish to meet together.

The conference is open to all, regardless of gender, profession or nationality. One of the express intentions of the conference is to draw attention to the fact that women are ready to take a more active role in the propagation of the Buddhist teachings and in projects designed to apply those teachings to the problems of our troubled world. Heart to heart exchanges of information and personal experience will broaden the base of international potentialities of Buddhist women so that they may take a greater part in the betterment of humanity as a whole.

The vision of an International Conference on Buddhist Nuns arose spontaneously in the minds of several friends in far-flung places, with few resources, but strong faith that such a convocation will encourage the growth of the Bhikshuni Sangha and foster the establishment of an International Buddhist Women's Association. The conference will be followed by a week-long pilgrimage to the sacred Buddhist sites of Rajgir, Nalanda, Sarnath, Lumbini, Kushinagar and Sarvasti.

The Conference is being coordinated by Sister Ayya Khema, an internationally known





meditation teacher and founder of the Parapuduwa Nun "Island in Sri Lanka, Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Professor of Religion and Eastern Philosophy of Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand and Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo of the Buddhist School of Dialectics, McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, India."

At 1 P.M. on February 11, 1987 His Holiness the Dalai Lama graced over the opening ceremony which drew a large audience of more than 1,000 people. His address was warm and encouraging to Buddhist sisters, he urged them to study the dharma. He agreed and supported the idea that women should have opportunity for full ordination and the positive role could help benefit the Sangha and the society in general. All the nuns and participants of the conference were deeply inspired by his presence and his speech.

Both nuns and lay people attended the conference were from 24 countries, namely; Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, Nepal, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam, Australia, England, W. Germany, Canada, South Africa, Sweden, The Netherlands, U.S.A., France, Poland, Switzerland, New Zealand, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Tibet. The number of registrations exceeded 120 but there were also many unregistered observers who happened to be in Bodh Gaya at the time and were interested in the conference.

The conference were organized with various discussions including topics e.g. The Status of Nuns in Various Countries The Livelihood of

the Sangha, The Possibility of International Bhikshuni Sangha, The International Buddhist Women's Organization, etc.

After each panel discussions, participants had opportunities to discuss and exchange their views in further details in workshops. Then there were special group discussion provided at the end of each day. Some of these special topics included "Setting up of Nunnery" etc.

There were religious activities for participants which were received with great enthusiasm. There was a meditation course offered every morning before each day schedule. These meditation course were led each day by nuns from various traditions. At 5 P.M. in the evening there were evening chanting from various traditions e.g. Sri Lankan, Chinese, Thai, etc. This interchange of rituals and religious practices intended to offer participants richer experience and opportunity to open themselves up for better understanding of other traditions.

To provide further information for those who are interested in full ordination, video on Bhikshuni ordination was also provided, many participants found it both educational and inspiring.

The scenes behind stage should also be mentioned. Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo deserved full credit for all the hard and tedious work of preparations for this historic conference. And the three coordinators would like to express their thanks and appreciations for all the help they received financially and in kinds, thus



brought about the success of the conference. The scenes of volunteers helped scrubbing the floor of the dining hall, carrying chairs to the conference site, etc. were only among the many

scenes deserved mentioning. The genuine and selfless efforts shown by nuns, monks and lay people for the conference were simply beautiful and memorable. If I am permitted to mention just a few of them, Sam Uddall from U.S.A. helped with all the last minute endless typing; Sam Canyon from U.S.A. helped with the sound system; Wendy Barzetovic from England helped organize the kitchen and dining rooms; Ven. Jampa Tsedron flew in early from W. Germany and ironed out registration and accommodation list, etc.

The conference was fully recorded and filmed. Thanks to our camera crews, Robyn Brentano, Ngawang, Elda Hartley and Robert Mathews.

The followings are the resolutions from the conference and the committee set up in full.

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## RESOLUTIONS AGREED UPON AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BUDDHIST NUNS BODH GAYA, INDIA FEBRUARY 11-17, 1987

Whereas, although our specific practices and lineages may vary, we are all sisters and brothers in the Buddhadharma and share a common source, and

Whereas Buddhist women wish to improve themselves and take their just and equal opportunity and responsibility in society, and

Whereas there is convened at Bodh Gaya, India, the place of Lord Buddha's enlightenment, a Conference on Buddhist Nuns from many countries around the world,

We, therefore, resolve that on this 16th day of

February 1987, we establish SAKYADHITA, World-Wide Buddhist Women, an international organization formed to assist Buddhist women around the world.

It is further resolved that an interim executive committee begin effecting the establishment of such an organization and

It is further resolved that the goals of this organization shall be:

1. Foster World Peace for all sentient beings.
2. Work in harmony with all Buddhist Sang-



has, traditions and communities.

3. Establish and promote harmonious understanding with other religious communities.

4. Hold conferences and seminars on Buddhist women's issues.

5. Establish a system of communication between Buddhist women all over the world.

6. Research into women's role in the Buddha dharma.

7. Improve education for Buddhist women (general and dharma).

8. Encourage and improve Buddhist practice for nuns and lay women.

9. Educate and train women as teachers of Buddha dharma.

10. Preserve the teaching and make it available throughout the world.

11. Research into the Vinaya of the different traditions.

12. Establish an international Bhikkhuni Sangha organization.

13. Introduce Sramaneriya, Sikhmana, Bhikkhuni ordinations where they currently do not exist.

14. Provide help and assistance to Buddhist nuns and those who wish to ordain.

15. Establish committees to carry out the organizations' goals.

16. Set up by-laws, constitution and effect registration of the organization.

The following Committees are established for the implementation of the above goals:

1. Executive Committee (interim)
2. Vinaya Research team
3. Development Committee
  - a. Training program
  - b. Educational program (5 sections)
4. Financial Committee
5. Publications Committee
6. National Representatives

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## SAKYADHITA WORLD-WIDE BUDDHIST WOMEN

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### I. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (interim)

Chairperson: to be nominated.

(Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Thailand was nominated in her

absence, she suggested Ven. DR. Karuna Dharma to chair the committee, her suggestion is yet to be approved by the committee.)

Members: Ven. Bhikshuni Pema Chodron, Canada

Ven. Dr. Karuna Dharma, Los Angeles, U.S.A.

Ven. Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo, India

Ven. Bhikshuni Yung Kai, Taiwan

Ven. Sramaneriya Jampa Chodron, France

Khandro Rinpoche, India

Mrs. Kusuma Devendra, Sri Lanka

Mr. A. Weerakoon, Sri Lanka

### II. VINAYA RESEARCH TEAM

Members: Ven. Bhikshuni Jen Hua, Taiwan

Ven. Bhikshuni Jampa Tzedron, W. Germany

Ven. Sramaneriya Lobsang Dechen, India

Ven. Sramaneriya A. Jampa Chodron, France

Dr. Friedgard Lottermoser, W. Germany

Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Thailand

Mrs. Kusuma Devendra, Sri Lanka

### III. DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

#### 1. Training Program

Members: Ven. Bhikshuni Pema Chodron, Canada

Ven. Bhikshuni Ihan, U.S.A.

Sister Ranwalla, Sri Lanka

Sister Dhammawati, Nepal

Ven. Sramaneriya Sangye Chodron, Nepal

Mr. A. Weerakoon, Sri Lanka

#### 2. Educational Program

##### a. Buddhist Studies

Ven. Tesho Kondo, Japan

Ven. Sramaneriya Thubten Dekyong, Nepal

Ven. Sramaneriya Tenzin Drolkar, India

Khandro Rinpoche, India

Mrs. Weerakoon, Sri Lanka

Ms. Violet Themnimulle, Sri Lanka

- Ms. Indrani Fernando, Sri Lanka
- Ms. Gnana Ranasinghe, Sri Lanka
- b. English as a second language  
Ms. Gnanwathie, Sri Lanka
- c. Social Service training  
Ven. Sramanerika Thupten Lhundup,  
U.S.A.  
Ms. Ranjani de Silva, Sri Lanka  
Ms. Chandrani Jayawardena, Sri Lanka  
Ms. Clara Perera, Sri Lanka  
Ms. Priti Kana Barua, Bangladesh  
Ms. Jharna Barua, Bangladesh  
Mrs. Weerakoon, Sri Lanka
- d. Counselling Training  
Ven. Sramanerika Thupten Sangye,  
Germany  
Ms. Wendy Barzetovic, England
- e. Vocational Training  
Ven. Bhikshuni Kunga Zangmo, U.S.A.  
Ms. Anula Rajapakse, Sri Lanka
- f. Meditation  
Ven. Sramanerika Sangye Khandro,  
U.S.A.  
Ven. Sramanerika Sumedha, U.S.A.  
Sister Dhammapali, Sri Lanka  
Sister Uttari, Sri Lanka

#### IV. FINANCIAL COMMITTEE

- Ms. Chitra de Silva, Sri Lanka
- Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Thailand
- Ms. Tessa Bartholomew, U.S.A.

#### V. PUBLICATIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

- Ven. Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo,  
India
- Ven. Bhikshuni Miao Kwang Sudharma,  
U.S.A.
- Ven Bhikshuni Kunga Zangmo, U.S.A.
- Ven. Sramanerika Thupten Sangye,  
Germany (chair)
- Ms. Sallie Davenport, Nepal (Vice-chair)
- Ms. Cynthia Josayna, U.S.A.
- MRs. Weerakoon, Sri Lanka

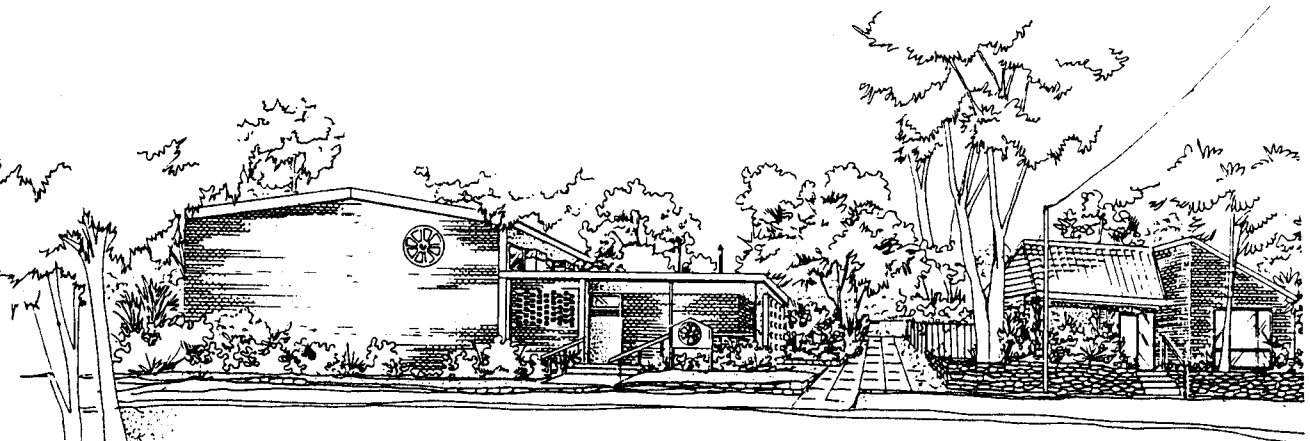
#### NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

- Australia: Ven. Thupten Lhundup
- Bangladesh: Mrs. Priti Kana Barua
- Cambodia: Ven. Maha Ghosananda
- France: Ven. Tenzig Chodron
- Germany: Ven. Jampa Tsedron
- Japan: Ven. Kyozen Kitagawa
- India: Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo
- Malaysia: Ven. Yi Hwa
- Nepal: Sister Dhammawati
- North America: Ven. Pema Chodron
- Poland: Ven. Karma Tsultrim Palmo
- Sri Lanka: Mr. Abeya Weerakoon
- Taiwan: Miss Wang Hsu-Hsien
- Thailand: Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh

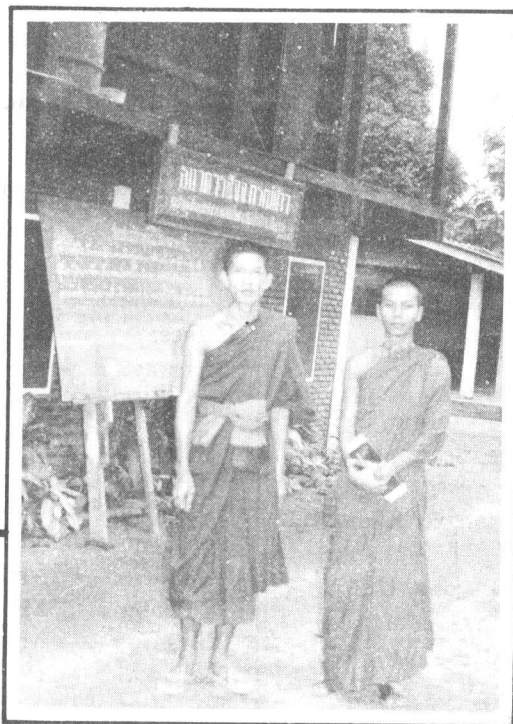
Reported by

**Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh**

Faculty of Liberal Art, Thammasart University  
Bangkok



# Abbot Thawal and Sitchakorn Rice Bank of Wat Mae Chedi



*Abbot Thawal (left hand)*

Mae Chedi is a very old village located on Chiangmai-Chiangrai Highway within the boundary of Vieng Pa Pao District, Chiangrai Province and with about 200 houses. The main occupation is rice farming combined with planting of corn, soybean, onion and tobacco, as well as doing hired work in a tobacco curing plant located in the village. Electricity is available in the village. There are three waterworks, one public elementary school and one private kindergarten.

The school headmaster and the village headman are quite influential in the village. They are both loan sharks and "green-rice" capitalists.

Abbot Thawal Prakukaro, 30, 10 years in monkhood, is a native of this village. He became abbot in 1977. At present (1986) there are five monks and nine novices living at the village wat. In 1983 he was appointed chief of abbots of the subdistrict with 10 wats under

the jurisdiction.

The abbot planned a rice bank project due to the basic need of the villagers. That is, they did rice farming but did not get enough rice to last through the year. In some years, complete crop damage was caused by floods. Many families did not own land. Rice-farming villagers had to sell their "green rice" to capitalists in the village who would give them a low price, or sometimes pretend to be unwilling to buy or bargain the price of paddy down as low as possible while the villagers could find no alternative. The abbot's own family, before he entered monkhood, had experienced similar problems, and he had been thinking for thorough-out for finding a solution.

After he had entered monkhood, he got opportunities to make observation tours and on several occasions and at several places he attended seminars on the role of monks in assisting the people, until he gained some know-

ledge and understanding about the concept of a rice bank. He started to work in 1980.

His method of establishing the rice bank was by dividing the villagers into six groups and meeting with each of them each night for six consecutive nights. He explained to them the benefit and principle of a rice bank by placing emphasis on mutual assistance and on merits to be derived from it. After he had spoken to them he allowed them to discuss and exchange views among themselves, and at the end of the session he asked for their contributions and asked them to join as members. On his first campaign he obtained a donation of 50 bins of paddy. Following the start of the project, within that year he obtained another 100 bins of paddy, then 441 bins in 1981, 1,000 bins in 1982 and 3,000 bins in 1986. At present, all families are members to this rice bank except those getting rich. However, even some rich people joined as members because they want to gain merits.

This rice bank offers loans of rice to the villagers at the rate of 5% a year. The period can be extended in case of crop damage in some years.

Because this rice bank posed a conflict of interest directly with capitalists in the village, at first the abbot came under a series of verbal attacks. For instance, he was charged with cheating money from the villagers in order to take it away with him when he derobed. He got several letters of rebuke and was faced with several attempts to expel him elsewhere. When he got anonymous letters he read them through the loudspeaker to be heard by the villagers and made his own serious responses, resulting in charges against which took to the attention of the district officer and an interrogation was made to him. He explained to the district officer what he was doing, and fortunately, he was understood.

For his seriousness and steadiness for the benefits of the villagers, he steadily gained increased cooperation. Those capitalists who had demanded high-rate interests had to lower their rates as no one wanted to borrow from them.

At present, the rice bank project has extended to Wat Bangkrai (1983), another wat

under the abbot's administration where villager used to face the problem of insufficient rice supply and had to sell "green rice" too.

Besides his rice bank project, the abbot also heals sick villagers with medicinal herbs. He learned this art from his grandfather who was a capabel healer.

He collects his medicines from the forest, and if he cannot find some kinds he would buy them from town, and he has grown a garden of medicinal herbs in the compound of his wat.

He would grind his medicines and bottle them neatly. Formerly, he ground his medicines with a primitive grinder. Later, a japanese Buddhist donated a modern one to him. He allows villagers to use it too.

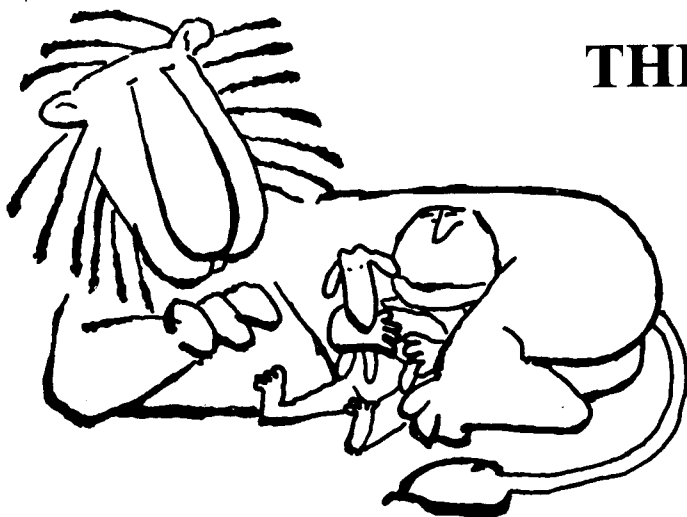
He cures illnesses from common fevers and seasonal remedies to stomach complaints and paralysis. About 5-20 villagers come to him for treatment each day.

In addition to healing of the sick, he also makes use of his time to give spiritual instructions to those receiving treatment from him. He instructs them to keep Buddhist precepts and practise meditation. It helps to recover them from illness sooner, he would say.

Last year, he held an exhibition on "Herbs On Hand" in the monastery grounds to import knowledge to the villagers about medicines round themselves so that they would know how to prepare medicines for their own use or to cure minor illnesses without having to resort to hospitals.

Abbot Thawal is a noteworthy young monk. Besides his development efforts for the villagers, he himself practises meditation regularly. He is supported and trusted by the chief of abbots of the district, who has also started a similar rice bank project.

Moreover, Abbot Thawal has a very active assistant: Phra Subin Katapunyo, 25, three years in monkhood, a native of the same village. The abbot often asks his assistant to carry out works and play roles on his behalf so as to make him a co-worker and his successor-to-be, a way to solve a problem faced by most social worker monks, that is, the problem of a lack of assistants and successors.



# THE NON-VIOLENT CHAT SHOW

**She: (Waving wire cutters)** Let's face it. In the long run the only way we're ever going to get peace and social justice is through massive non-violent direct action. Bringing in your 'pacifism' and your 'Buddhism' only repels ordinary, down-to-earth people. For them that's all never-never idealism, whereas what they desperately want is a workable strategy for change which has some hope of achieving something.

**Me:** It seems to me that non-violence for you is just a pragmatic **means** to secure specific political **ends**. You've admitted you get quite a buzz from feeling high minded and principled. And you also think you can win public support and sympathy as a result of your long-suffering virtue.

**She:** Cynically put, but about right. It can be a sure way of getting media coverage, anyway.

**Me:** Not once the novelty wears off, as with this afternoon's 'Snowball' job at the perimeter fence. At worst 'the public' think we're fanatics; at best they admire us but without in the least identifying with us. Either way we isolate ourselves. Even as means to an end, your kind of non-violence seems a doubtful instrument.

**She:** Well, what else is there?

**Me:** Look, can't we try to flip over from seeing the situation so exclusively from our own well-worn standpoint? Wouldn't it help if we could just move a bit out of this divisive

and combative slit trench, and go kick the football around with **them** in No Person's Land? Does all our energy have to go into us-affirming and them-rejecting?

**She:** Still hoping for a spiritual revival, eh?

**Me:** On the contrary, I believe that the way we **could** be working would **itself** be part of a spiritual revival, powered by the awful fix we're all in. For a start, forget non-violence for the moment and let's explore more positively, in terms of fellowship, shared feelings and fears, and finding common ground.

**She:** D'you mean finding ways of having the Lady on the Clapham Omnibus actually tell us what she thinks, instead of vice versa? Could be demoralising! Maybe a chat with the perimeter guards who've got kind faces. But surely not NATO generals and Tory politicians?

**Me:** Why not? If not some minimal agreement, at least some mutual understanding. And if not that, at least some mutual respect. Don't you see that this way 'non violence' becomes a sustained attempt at communicating shared humanity, an end in itself on which all your specific political ends depend. For our victories will be hollow in the long run if achieved by just stamping the opposition into the ground. Separating means from ends can be very misleading.

**He:** As a lifelong pacifist I've kept my peace up to now because I've been with you all the way. But couldn't what you've just said

lead to compromising your principles?

**Me:** As long as principles are made clear, I'm willing to negotiate on minimum conditions so long as that will improve mutual understanding, relieve something of the burden of fear and suffering, and open the way for further progress.

**He:** Like Britain strengthening conventional forces if that helps to get rid of nuclear weapons? And I thought you were a Buddhist!

**Me:** I'm not sure what the Buddhist party line is on that. But I am sure it's not about wrapping up 'I' in an idealism which is more important than what actually happens to the world.

**She:** It seems to me that what you're saying is that we should stay within the law and confine ourselves to trying to talk to people who are likely to be too deaf to hear us.

**Me:** Not at all. I do support non-violent action, but I believe that communication is as much a part of it as coercion, and that it needs to be part of a mix appropriate to the situation, rather than the 'open-sesame!' it has become in some quarters. I follow Gandhi in believing we should be resolute and uncompromising about our minimum negotiating conditions on particular issues. The urgent needs of suffering humanity, of class, race, nation, sex, may require us to exert the pressure of law-breaking, strike, non-cooperation and other nonviolent but **coercive** actions, but **at the same time** we must continue trying to communicate our common humanity with our oppressors and our explanations to the bystanders. Neither can I be dogmatic and condemnatory about those who, in their desperation, resort to armed defence, as in, say, Nicaragua.

**She:** Well, it looks like non-violence has at least as many different meanings as the three of us sitting here! Whatever else it is, it's an open question.....

**He:** Yes, and one of those BPF Retreats they're always flogging might be a good place for further exploration, don't you think? However, this afternoon there's other work for us three. Where did you put those wire cutters?

KEN JONES

## ASIAN ACTIVE NON-VIOLENCE COORDINATION TEAM (AACT)



Non-violence is an engine to move people across their differences, harmonizing their beings in order to live peacefully with nature. Steps on the non-violent path needs faith and belief. People with religion, and people with humility can easily catch an essence of non-violence as it centers in spirit itself.

At Dhaka, Bangladesh, on December 1986, the Asian Exchange Seminar on Non-Violence brought together delegates from three Asian countries, namely Thailand as presented Buddhist society, Philippines as presented Christian society, and Bangladesh as presented Muslim society, to share their visions and experiences on non-violence in the light of their religions tradition. The seminar, as mentioned in its report, was an attempt to see if interreligions dialogue, aiming at justice and peace on the bases of active non-violence is possible for all, without any distinction. It was an attempt to see if active non-violence could grow and spread throughout Asia with more dynamism and with more faith through common efforts and close cooperation.

25 people met and expressed their enthusiastic involvement with non-violence. Apart from each country's reports on non-violent work which helped enrich reality of non-violent struggle at the grassroot level, resources persons liked Fr. Jose Blanco S.J.; Prof. Dewan Muhammad Azraf and Ven. Phra Pracha Pasanadhammo also gave deep convictions of non-violence cultivated in religion. A contribution of Asian religions to active non-violence was presented to conceive non-violence as a primary source of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam or Christianity. As said, non-violence is the salvation of Islam, the salvation of Christianity, the salvation of Hinduism and the salvation of Buddhism as non-violence forces us to go back to the original demands of our faith and religion. Non-violence is part of religion. Thus various religions can work together to establish a world of peace.

The seminar ended up with a discussion on the feasibility of continual support for active non-violence by the delegates. Some of the points proposed are:

1. Regular meetings, seminars and training courses to help deepen the understanding of non-violence and have more clarification on its concept and principles as well as its strategy.
2. Coordination among various groups of non-violence will be needed to strengthen the non-violent movement.
3. Publishing news letters, developing literature, case studies and documentation on non-violence also helps to promote understanding and practice of non-violence.
4. Exchanging non-violent workers at national and international level.

A follow-up team has been formed to establish linkages between delegates' countries. Contact persons were named as follows:

Thailand : Laddawan Tantivitayapitak, Coalition for Peace and Development (COPDEV)

Philippines : Tese Ramiro, AKKAPKA

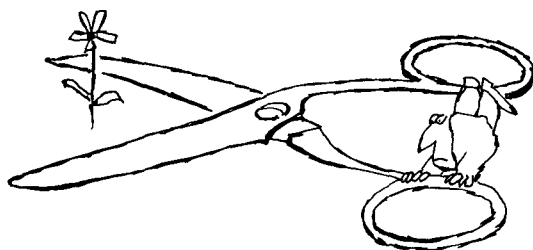
Bangladesh : Fr. Klaus Beurle, DIPSHIKA, a coordinator

The exclusive meeting to work out more concrete plans in strengthening the linkages

was organized on 13-14 July, 1987 in Manila, Philippines to found the "Asian Active Non-violence Coordination Team" (AACT).

Sulak Sivaraksa Yaorat Thiarachow and Laddawan Tantivitayapitak of COPDEV., Fr. Klaus Beurle, Paul Charwa Tigga and three others of DIPSHIKA, and Fr. Jose Blanco, Tese Ramiro of AKKAPKA, attended the one and half day founding meeting. Jean and Hidegard Goss of International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) were also presented.

Before the crucial meeting was held, we were invited to witness the Third Anniversary of AKKAPKA, whose theme was "Active Non-violence; The Challenge to Social Transformation", on July 12. About 2-300 Filipino delegates who had passed through basic non-violent training from various groups all over the country presented to the gathering their deepening understanding of non-violence. The gathering was lively and cheerful to the 3-year efforts in non-violent struggling of AKKAPKA. Reports of Base Groups and AKKAPKA activities gave us impressions of the great commitment that has helped active non-violence to prevail in integrating with Christian belief expanding throughout the country. The Philippines sharings were fruitful. In the meantime, Sulak was invited to give his speech on his outlook of the Thai Non-violent Struggle experience on the overthrown government of the student movement in 1973, perhaps, as a reminder of the days after Philippines February revolution. Paul Tiggar expressed his congratulation to AKKAPKA and shared his country's non-violent activities. The most impressive was the presentation of Jean & Hidegard Goss who gave a speech emphasizing "Giving love and Being loved". They stressed strongly the signi-





ficance of the Philippines second level economic transformation which needs more love, more commitment, more sacrifice to overcome. The more essential is to prove to the world non-violence as a true way of social transformation.

purposes have been brainstormed like country's small visits, documents and media exchanges, non-violent resource persons exchanges, country intense seminars and an Asian Seminar, etc. The other suggestion is to be ready for urgent



#### **THE AACT FOUNDING MEETING ON 13-14 JULY 1987, MANILA, PHILIPPINES**

The AACT's meeting brought closer the relationship among the non-violent commitment members. The attendants were open and straightforward to share their belief and ideas. The ideas were flowing on the platform not only the ideologies in solid linkages among three countries but expanding to others like Malaysia, Indonesia and Southeast Asia countries. Problems and difficulties were also raised up for consideration as suitable activities for coordination. Seeds of Peace has been proposed as a medium for the exchange among the countries. The main issues concerned should be inter-religious, non-violence, cultural aspects and feminism. The activities for coordination

action in case of emergencies.

After contemplating the details, the co-ordination structure has been formed through maintaining the contact persons from each country and looking forward for one fulltime staff. The exclusive seminar for the AACT founding members has a desire to deepen the understandings, getting to learn more from each other, reflection and meditation to strengthen the non-violent spirituality. Date and place have been planned for the first half of April 1988 in Thailand. The April Seminar will help lay down a firm fundamental of AACT. This might be the new dimension for Asian people movement that the world has to keep watching closely.

**By Laddawan Tantivitayapitak**

Coalition for Peace and Development

# Buddhist Role in Society

## in Shaping Culture & Family



It is usually thought that Buddhism is a religion of renunciation, which is only partly true. For the Buddha stresses that Buddhist society depends on the four kinds of people: namely Bhikkhu (almsmen) Bhikkhuni (almswomen) Upasaka (laymen) Upasika (laywomen). It is true of course that the founder of Buddhism left his home for a homeless life in order to liberate himself from the bondage of suffering and ignorance. He eventually becomes enlightened or he awakes. Hence the title Buddha, the Awakened one, the Enlightened one, the Perfect one and the Compassionate one. He also founded the **Sangha** or the Community of Almsmen and Almswomen, whose main purpose is to restructure their consciousness from selfish beings to become selfless, full of loving kindness, in order to influence and reconstitute lay society to be peaceful, merciful and righteous.

Ideally, members of the Sangha must be spend their full time in educating themselves in order to get rid of greed, hatred and delusion. They must remain single and their life style must be simple. Their views towards their own ego

must be radical in order to develop critical self awareness through meditation — otherwise selfishness will creep in one way or the other. Hence they do not even earn their own living, but depend on alms provided by lay supporters who feel that the Sangha could guide them spiritually, morally, culturally, ethically and socially.

Indeed, through self critical awareness, members of the Sangha become less selfish and become more compassionate. Even without being fully enlightened, they could influence their brothers and sisters positively within the holy community to walk on towards liberation — personally and socially. Rules laid down for the community are for a simple living with detachment to material comfort, in order not to compromise with luxurious or oppressive cultures in a larger society. The Sangha is in fact a commune, with equality and dignity, guided by Buddhist principles of democracy and socialism, which is different from those practised in many states. Through ethical conduct (**Sila**) and meditation (**Samadhi**) that

awareness of the self and the society is possible, and the society should set itself along the law of nature — respecting life of all beings — including animals and plants, birds and bees, water and earth. To understand the law of nature, and to understand oneself as part and parcel of nature — not struggling against it or to destroy it selfishly, — is in Buddhism the supreme wisdom or **Projna**, which is the Middle Way — the non-violent way of avoiding any extreme measure in society.

As for those of us who are lay people, who could not understand fully or intuitively, the law of nature, we have to compromise with life by clinging to our family, working for a livelihood, accumulating wealth, attending seminar to solve world problems etc. We feel that members of the Sangha who devote their lives uncompromising fully, could help us, through their lifestyle and through their teachings, that our family life should be wholesome — issues on self should be approached with gentleness and respect. Over indulgence in anything is condemned as extreme — our work should not be boring, collaboration is encouraged rather than competition, accumulating wealth should not be the end in itself. Although there is nothing wrong to be rich, we must know whether we gain wealth selfishly, exploitingly or rightly and mindfully. Again wealth should not be kept selfishly or use to manipulate over the poor, it should be spent generously and wisely for mankind and all beings.

Within a family, the Buddha sets up certain guidelines which may be even useful nowadays e.g.

“In five ways a child should minister to his parents to the eastern quarter (saying to himself)

- a) Having been supported by them, I will support them in my turn.
- b) I will do their work for them.
- c) I will keep up the honour and the tradition of my family.
- d) I will make myself worthy of my heritage.
- e) I will make offerings, dedicating merit to them after their death.

In five ways his parents, thus served as the eastern quarter, show their love for him:

- a) they keep him back from evil.
- b) They train him in virtue.
- c) They have him taught arts and sciences.
- d) They arrange for his marriage to a suitable wife.
- e) They hand over his inheritance to him in due time.

In five ways a husband should serve his wife as the western quarter:

- a) by honouring her
- b) by being courteous to her
- c) by being faithful to her
- d) by handing over authority to her
- e) by providing her with ornaments.

In five ways a wife, thus served as the western quarter, shows her love for him:

- a) The household affairs are to be well managed.
- b) She should be hospitable and helpful to friends and relations of both her and his.
- c) She should be faithful to him.
- d) She should take care of the goods he brings home.
- e) She should be skillful and industrious in all her duties.”

However, Buddhism as all other leading world religions, need reinterpretation so that spiritual guidelines would be more relevant to the modern society. Unfortunately some words of the Founder are taken literally instead of understanding their essential meaning. Hence rites and rituals, religious institutions and sacred building become more important unnecessarily, especially when members of the Sangha lack self critical awareness, they tend to join the rich and the powerful, at the spiritual expense of themselves as well as becoming oppressive to the poor. At least they tend to maintain the unjust structure of society, rather than trying to liberate it or the people.

The strength and weakness of Buddhism is that it has been working closely with local and indigenous cultures in each society. It tolerates animism and Hinduism in South and Southeast Asia. It collaborates with feudalism and agrarian culture, both positively and negatively. I think Buddhism by and large disappeared from India because it became too Hinduized, rather than by Muslim prosecution.

Traditionally Buddhism had no fear of Christianity, but it was rejected by Christian missionaries as a false religion.

In our way of thinking, there is no false religion. One could start where one is, and one could educate oneself to be less selfish through any creed, faith, or culture, if one's thought become more pure, one's speech become more truthful and one's action become less violent and more compassionate, one is on the right path, whether one calls oneself Buddhist or not, is irrelevant.

From my Buddhist standpoint, the culture which is threatening our family and society nowadays is consumer culture and highly developed technology which links with the fact that who control the mass media and educational establishment, plus means of production and state operators. Consumer culture pretends to be universal culture, it is in fact against in-

digenous culture and any spiritual tradition. It is a powerful ownhand of multinational cooperation which works closely with super powers and militarism, each small nation is now only a client state of those powers. Hence high technology and mass media are bound to promote greed, hatred and delusion.

For those of us who wish to preserve our family to be wholesome and peaceful and our society to be righteous and merciful, we must go back to the spiritual base of our tradition to build up awareness against this new false religion in the name of progress, development, money, power and materialism, so that we can shape our family and culture to be different but with the common elements of truth, beauty and goodness.

S.Sivaraksa

## Common Ground for Thai Buddhists

## and North American Christians?

### An Interview with Sulak Sivaraksa

**Sulak Sivaraksa**, a prominent Buddhist scholar and social critic, is a writer, publisher and teacher, as well as an active leader in a coalition of Thai nongovernmental organizations which are active in urban social service and rural development. He is also the general secretary of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development which seeks to facilitate dialogue and interaction among groups concerned with development and social justice issues in Asia and the Pacific.

Sulak has long been a proponent for renewal of Buddhist values in society, as a basis for spiritual, ethical and social well-being in an age characterized by war, racism, economic oppression and social disintegration.

Taking such a "radical" and "prophetic" stand in Thailand is not without its risks. Sulak

experienced self-exile for several years following the extreme right-wing military coup which overthrew one of the country's few democratically elected governments in 1976. In 1984 he was imprisoned for several months as a result of his views. He was released and charges were dropped following an international outcry on his behalf.

An active voice in the ecumenical Christian/Buddhist dialogue, Sulak's vision of spiritual renewal and social change is a welcome challenge to those of us who find ourselves asking similar questions and taking similar stands within our western context. His message to us is: "Let us learn from one another."

Following are excerpts from an interview which I conducted with Sulak in February 1987

in Bangkok.

*Thai society is said to be founded on the "three pillars" of religion (Buddhism), the monarchy and the nation. Please reflect a bit on the history of these concepts and their application in society today.*

These concepts are quite old, tracing back to the time of the great Indian King Ashoka who lived about 500 years after the Buddha. After King Ashoka converted to Buddhism he made it the state religion. Buddhism prospered — great temple were built and the faith spread. Missionaries carried it to Sri Lanka, to Burma, Siam and other countries of the region.

This king did many good things as a patron of Buddhism. But the bad thing was that Buddhism became the civil religion. On the good side, there is a positive spiritual influence on the state. On the negative side, religion is compromised in the interests of the state. As a result of compromise, Buddhism largely disappeared from India with the decline of Ashoka's empire.

Siam is the only country where a Buddhist monarchy remains — with Buddhism, the monarchy and nationalism entwined.

If you attack these assumptions you may go to jail, as I did. Yet these need to be attacked, to be more clearly separated. You see, if Buddhism becomes too nationalistic it will die as it did in India.

*Could you tell us something of the traditional role Buddhism has played in Thai society? We often have a concept of it as a very personal, ceremonial religion.*

From what missionaries or other foreigners see in Bangkok this may be correct. But traditionally this is not so. Siamese society is rural-based. Buddhism has played a crucial role in forming social and ethical values. In each village the Buddhist temple is the center; not only the spiritual center but also the educational, social and cultural center. It is even the ecological center because all life is spared there. No taking of life is permitted. One is not permitted to fish in the rivers and canals near the temple.

While this social model is still used in many parts of the country, things have been changing tremendously since the end of the second world war, and particularly during the so-called

"development decade" (late 1950s-late 1960s). People were traditionally satisfied with what they had; with their religion, their lifestyle. But now society becomes more and more materialistic. Everyone wants to have a car, refrigerator, etc. Religion becomes ritualistic for many with little practical impact for their daily lives.

Buddhism traditionally works well within the context of an agrarian society where you don't need a great deal. To be satisfied is good, craving is bad, lust is bad. Cooperation, working and playing together is good: competition, quarrelling and hatred is bad. As society becomes more urban, more materialistic the challenge is for the essential teaching of Buddhism to become more relevant to that changing society.

The first precept of the Buddha's teaching is not to take life. But what of militarism in our society? Look at our national budget; we spend more on military expenditures than on anything else.

The second precept is not to steal. But what of the current economic system with its domination by multinational corporations and international banking? Are they not, in fact, robbing the poor?

*What do you mean when you speak of "Siam in crisis," as in the title of one of your books?*

The crisis, to me, is the crisis of the traditional values. I don't mean to say that we must all "go back." We must deal with the realities of a changing world. But I can see that our sense of our own values, our own cultural identity, is falling apart. You look at Bangkok today and it could be a second or third rate city anywhere in America or Europe.

We must learn to understand the West but that should not be our primary interest. We must know our own society and culture first, both its strengths and its weaknesses, both the positive and negative.

Our educational system doesn't deal with this. It tries to romanticize the past. I feel that we must learn the facts objectively from the past. Romanticize? Yes, but within the limits of reality.

At the same time, we must be aware of, and concerned with the present. The Buddha

taught that when you see “ills” (dukkha) in self or society, you should look for the cause and then try to find the way to overcome it. This is the essential teaching of Buddhism and this is *relevant* in facing our current crisis. We must have a *resurgence* of our traditional spiritual and cultural values, in rebuilding and renewing a sense of integrity in who we are, and in addressing the ills that we find in our society.

*What is your understanding of the Buddhist teaching on nonviolence?*

This is at the heart of the Buddha’s teaching: The word “Shanti,” or peace.

Firstly, you must be nonviolent towards yourself. This is essential. Most of the time we are very violent with ourselves. We want to work for a good cause, put the world in order and yet it is so restless within one’s heart. We live lifestyles which are harmful to our physical, mental and spiritual health — smoking, eating improperly, perhaps overwork. These personal aspects must be in harmony in order for peace to be realized in the social dimension. While “nonviolence” must be related to the larger needs of society, it must start from one’s inner well-being. Our concern, our action must transcend self to relate to others in society. You must always have the two aspects together.

In our relationships to others, in our social dealings, if our ways are violent that will have a negative impact on our ego. If we behave with nonviolence and compassion towards others that gives us life. Though others may hate me I must learn not to hate them — because that will only poison my heart.

These are the things which I feel are essential for those of us who want to see social justice. You must do justice to yourself and to your friend. You must build up “friendship” with others.

*You have been actively engaged in promoting Buddhist-Christian dialogue, both in Thailand and abroad. Could you tell us about this and share any messages you may have for North American Christians?*

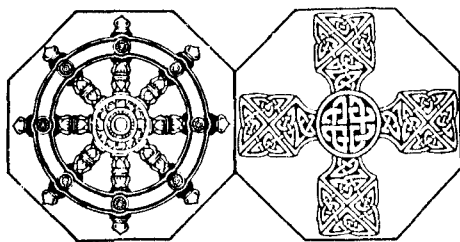
It’s very difficult for me to give a “message” to North American Christians but let me share with you some of my own experiences and observations.

I’ve had a very long and close dialogue with Christians for many years. Many are my close friends. It is always good for friends to share ideas and learn from each other. If anything, I would say: whatever view you hold, don’t hold it too fast. Try to realize that perhaps some other view might have some truth as well. I think that such an attitude helps you to have a positive view as well as to develop a critical self-awareness of your own belief and lifestyle — and of how these may affect others for good or for bad.

My own experience is that when I have allowed myself to be open-minded, to learn from those I might have considered as backward or primitive, I have found that may be they are not that “backward” after all. They have much in the way of rich experience to share with me.

In today’s world, I don’t believe that any one religion or tradition is sufficient for any society. I know that many Buddhists would disagree with me, but I feel that we have to learn from the Christian and other religious traditions. Not that one should become a kind of “religious fruit salad”! You have to maintain your own spiritual path, your own cultural identity. But you must learn to expand your horizons and your understandings of others. We learn to grow and respect our friend’s traditions, accepting whatever may be useful to build up our own tradition, to make it grow, to become more healthy.

If we are not tolerant, if we do not learn from each other, we may become unfriendly. Sometimes religion becomes a violent issue and then politicians may come in, ignorant and reactionary people may come in....this is very, very dangerous. I feel that those of us who are familiar with other religious traditions ought to be a link, a bridge, for different peoples to learn from each other and grow together.



Michael Knowles

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Looking to America to Solve Thailand's Problems.

Phra Rajavaramuni, *Looking to America to Solve Thailand's Problems* (translation by Grant A. Olson; Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa-Foundation, Bangkok, 1987 (pp. 94)



Phra Rajavaramuni is renowned for his intellectually challenging treatises on Buddhist philosophy and the application of Buddhist thought to the problems facing our modern day society. In the book under review, he continues to inform and enlighten us, focusing on the process and direction of change and the need to assure development is neither distorted nor destructive but rather conforms to the dhamma and leads towards the lessening of suffering not its aggrandizement. As a point of departure for his discussion of Thai society and the content and direction of its development, Phra Rajavaramuni describes in the earlier sections of the book the materialistic, consumer oriented, litigious society of the U.S. and the West and the resultant spiritual

confusion leading to crime and suicide.

The most provocative section of the book, and the one which farang will likely find most illuminating, is the last section, wherein Phra Rajavaramuni elucidates Buddhist principles as they can apply to and transform development. The concepts of *dhmma-chanda*, the desire or resolve to achieve knowledge, truth, correctness, excellence; *bhāvita*, training or making progress towards e.g. *bhāvita-kaya*, physical development; *bhāvita-sila*, developed moral discipline; *bhāvita-citta*, developed heart-mind; and *bhāvita-pāñña*, developed wisdom and intelligence, are discussed and dissected at some length.

Phra Rajavaramuni makes a convincing case that only through the liberation of the intellect through reliance on the dhamma can we choose the right path to development not out of fear but out of commitment to correctness and the control of craving.

W.J.K.

Chulalongkorn University

### Religion and Development

Sivaraksa, Sulak, *Religion and Development*  
Bangkok: TIGD, 1987:

#### RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT



3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION

Perhaps Sulak got tired of waiting for the monkhood to synthesize Buddhist doctrine and development ideals. He might also feel that he had to begin to create an outline of the relationship between religion and development. Whatever his reason is, *Religion and Development*, serves this purpose.

This book is in its third printing and basically discusses

Sulak's ideas about *quantitative* and *qualitative* development. He is critical of the former and advocates the latter. He would like to see Thai Buddhism move from just being a business of merit-making to becoming more concerned about human rights, World peace and meaningful development. It is an essential text on this subject which offers the ideas and ideals of an often controversial Thai social critic.

Chalermsee



## Some Traditions of the Thai and other translations of Phya Anuman Rajadhon's articles on Thai customs.

Phya Anuman Rajadhon, *Some Traditions of the Thai and other translations of Phya Anuman Rajadhon's articles on Thai customs*

(Suksit Siam, Bangkok, 1987) pp. 196



Known as a gentleman and a scholar, Phya Anuman laid claim to a humble share of knowledge but revealed in the course of his long and fruitful life a vast knowledge of all that is Thai. Having never studied for a higher degree or travelled abroad, Phya Anuman earned unofficial but universally recognized status as foremost scholar of Siamese studies. Until his death it would have been unthinkable to attempt any authoritative writing on the language, literature or traditions of this country without consulting him.

With the help of at least three editors, this partly reprinted volume represents a lifelong effort on the part of the distinguished author to explain Thai culture to the generalist in a foreign language. Perhaps because of his apparent intention to enlighten the educated but relatively inexperienced reader, Anuman lays his foreground not with the reasons why a particular

tradition holds or how it came into being but rather with an interpretive description of the ritual itself. In most cases, his interpretations come to life not by virtue of photographs or the laborious mechanical style that has been employed to exhaustion by numerous past writers, but by recounting each respective ritual in simple narrative form. Only after this initial, almost impartial description does he relieve the suspense with straightforward, detailed answers linking the most seemingly indiosyncratic Thai ritual action with belief.

The Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development and Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation are to be commended for bringing out this comprehensive translation of Phya Anuman's work. We have no choice but to rank it among the most authoritative or reference texts or even popular literature on the subject of Siamese culture and the preservation thereof.

**M.S.**

*Srinakarinviroj University, Bangsaen  
Abridged from Journal of the Siam Society  
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