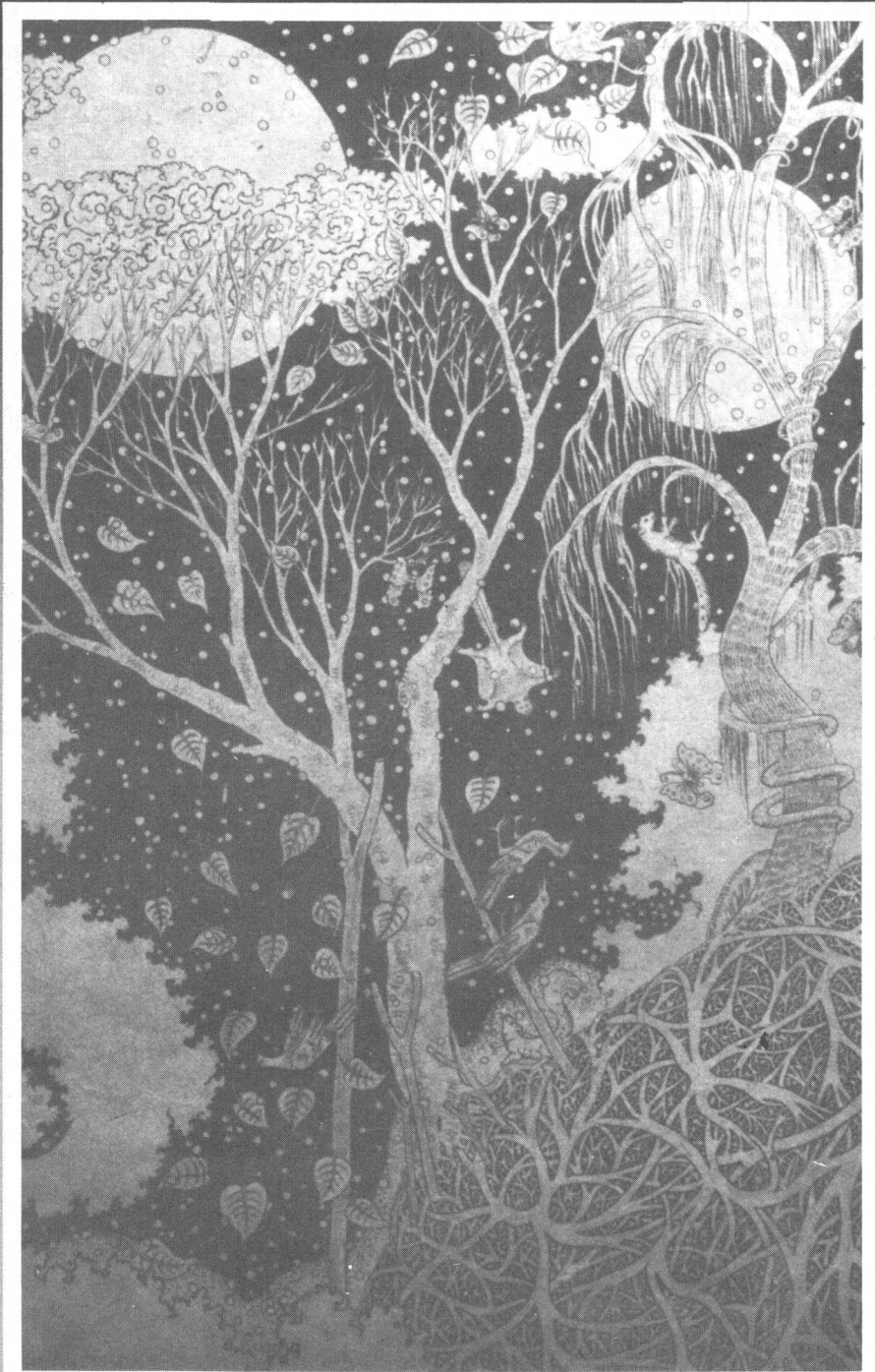


SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol.3 No.1 January 2530 (1987)

*TILL THE WORLD
IS WITH PEACE*

*BUDDHISM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
PEACE THROUGH NONVIOLENCE*



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.

Editorial Staff

Laddawan Tantivitayapitak

Cover

Yellow Rain

By plake Kitfuengfu



**THAI INTER-RELIGIOUS
COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT**
GPOBOX 1960
BANGKOK 10501 THAILAND

Contents

- 3 Editorial Note
- 4 Critique Review on Thailand Peace Movement *By Chaiwat Stha-anand*
- 10 Statement On Violence
- 12 Till the World is With Peace *By Buddhadasa Bhikkhu*
- 16 Bringing Buddhism to Bear on the Solution of Thai Problems *By Phra Rajavaramuni*
- 20 Peace Belong to Us *By Max Ediger*
- 23 Buddhism and SoCial Justice *By Pracha Hutauwatra*
- 28 Peace Through Nonviolence *By Phra Paisarn Visalo*
- 30 The Directory of Buddhist Monk (A developer)
- 33 Former Activist now finds peace in Buddhism
- 35 Eucalyptus Trees : *Is Thailand Inviting a Case of Ecological AIDS.?*
- 36 Buddhist Monks from Sri Lanka Study Nonviolence in Thailand *By Jake Buhler*
- 38 Book Reviews : *Popular Buddhism in Siam*
: *Ahgkarn Kala yanapongse*



EDITORIAL NOTE

To take part in celebrating the International Year of Peace, TICD. has asked the Coalition for Peace and Development to edit the last issue of the year of **Seeds of Peace**. This will be a special issue on Thai peace initiatives.

The Coalition for Peace and Development is a joint effort of many Thai NGOs and concerned people to carry out the campaign on peace and development. Throughout the year 1986, 12 activities were promoted to stress the important role of peace amidst the violence of society. It was a year of hard work planting the seeds of peace in the minds of people, to spread it from one heart to the next, from one mind to the other. It is peace that brings us together, that unites those from different parts of the world, who are different in belief, thinking, ideology, and lifestyle. We believe that these bridges of peace will enhance love and harmony throughout the world.



TICD

Commissioners

1. Dr. Prawase Wasi, Chairman of the Commission
2. Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa, Chairman of the Administrative Committee
3. Mr. Seri Phongpit, Vice Chairman and Hon. *Treasurer*
4. Mr. Anant Wiriyaiphinit, Executive Secretary
5. Mr. Chaiwat Sath - Anand
6. Mr. Ruang Suksawat
7. Mr. Lerkiat Wongsanphikul
8. Miss Laddawan Tantiwittayaphitak
9. Ms. Chatsumarn Kapilsingh
10. Ms. Ananya dhuchongkul
11. Mr. Daycha Siripatra
12. Mr. Jitkasem Sangsingkeo



“It is not enough to sit at home, watch tv and do daily chores. You have to engage yourself, because it is the sum of all public opinion around the world that will make it possible to achieve political solutions.”

***Gro Harlem Brundtland
Norway, 1984***

CRITIQUE OF THE PEACE'86 PROGRAM**



Introduction

A couple of years ago, a young active Political Science student at Thammasat University questioned her own teacher concerning the limited role he chose to play in relation to peace efforts. She convincingly argued that waging peace behind the walls of the university was far from adequate. She urged him to reach out to people beyond his classrooms. Her criticisms prompted the organization of Peace Week '84 under the auspices of the Subcommittee on Peace and Human Rights, Ministry of Education. Peace '85 which marked the sad 40th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic atrocity was much better organized. Thanks to the tireless and almost charismatic power of Dr. Gothom Arya, an engineer cum social activist, various NGO's came lending their hands. The notion

of "Peace" was heard more frequently. The idea of "Peace" became more visible. Then entered the International Year of Peace and Peace '86 or Coalition for Peace and Development was born. While Peace '85 chose to emphasize the issue of nuclear weapons as the highest (?) stage of destruction and its socio-economic-political relationship, Peace '86 considers the notion of "peace is development" as its theme. For the past ten months, beginning from March of this year, the program works hard trying to identify the link between the problems of underdevelopment, violence at the community level and structural violence. Its main focus is to encourage the Thai NGO's to realize that their ultimate aim is one, the creation of a peaceful society.

This short article is an attempt to critique the Peace'86 Program. The term "critique" is problematic. It can be seen, following Horkeimer's **Eclipse of Reason**,¹ as oppositional thinking or an activity of unveiling or debunking. But according to Kant or Chomsky, critique can be considered a "reconstruction". More importantly, perhaps, is the fact that critique is useful for any healthy individual or social actions. As I consider myself a part of the Program, it may be fair to point out that the following critique will not be hostile, but performed in the spirit of friendship.

The Program

The Coalition for Peace and Development organizes Peace'86 Program with three prime objectives. They are: to campaign for peace at the national as well as international levels in accordance with the United Nations' policy directives; to raise the people's awareness concerning the issues of peace and their own roles to promote peace; and to campaign against the use of violence, both nuclear and conventional, which threatens world peace.

In the beginning, Coalition for Peace and Development planned to fulfil the above objectives through 9 activities. Later on, three more activities were added. Up to now (December 1986), it seems that all the planned activities can be somewhat assessed. These twelve activities can be grouped into six different types of activities.

1) "Peace" official style

Peace'86 together with the Bahai's in Thailand and the Ministry of University Affairs held a competition for essays, poetry and mottos. There were 101 essays, 248 poetry and 317 mottos coming in from ordinary people, secondary students and university students. Deputy Prime Minister, Pong Sarasin was kind enough to come and presented prizes to all the winners on September 16. These essays, mottos and poetry were all published in **Peace is Life** and copies of this book were widely disseminated. The first-prized poetry was read and broadcasted by radio nation wide.

This method of peace promotion is extremely convenient and seems to be most favorite within officialdom. The significance of "peace"

official style may not lie in its contents or messages contained in the winning pieces. Instead, it may lie in the fact that the idea of "peace" is officially approved. Therefore, despite its seemingly low value in popular participation, its significance as legitimating factor for peace efforts in Thailand cannot be neglected.

2) Symbolic "Peace"

Together with the Coordinating Group for Religions in Society, Peace'86 organized an inter-religious affairs at Chulalongkorn University on August 16 to mark the Thai Peace Day. Forty one years ago, Dr. Pridi Bhanomyong declared that the Thai government's earlier declaration of war against the Allied Powers was invalid. This year, religious rituals were performed in an ecumenic atmosphere after which a play is followed. Then, some 100 people walked to Suan Lumpini Park to plant trees and erect Peace Poles given by the Japanese. Ten days earlier, another symbolic action took place. Dr. Gothom Arya, vice president of Peace'86 handed in a petition for "Bangkok Nuclear Free Zone" to the Governor of Bangkok, Maj.Gen. Chamlong Srimuang. The petition was warmly received by the Bangkok administration.

These two activities are primarily symbolic. According to Prof. Ernst Cassirer, when all mental processes fail to grasp reality, and in order to represent it or to hold it at all, the use of symbols is indispensable. For peace movement in particular, symbolic actions seem to be quite popular. But they are not without problems, however. It should be noted that all symbolism harbors the curse of mediacy. It is bound to obscure what it seeks to reveal.² People working for peace may rest comfortably after using symbolic actions feeling that they have done something significant. Significant? Certainly. But is it adequate? It is necessary to point out that these symbolic actions were used in a specific context while other kinds of activities were also being carried out.

3) "Peace" on Stages

On March 17 and 24 this year, "Peace" took its first bow on stage in Thailand. To disseminate ideas of peace among children, and the public at large, a jazz drama was performed. The jazz drama "White Lines" reached the au-

dience of approximately 1,800. The drama was so well received that it was taped and broadcasted on television. Then on August 16, there was "Concert for Peace" at the grand auditorium, Thammasat University. The theme this year was "Peace to Rural Areas". There were five popular music bands who took part in this concert. In addition to the excellent music, there were slide presentation and poem reading by a renowned poet, Naowarat Pongpaibul. In terms of publicity gained, concert for peace is one of the most successful activities this year. The concert had been publicized widely prior to its schedule. Artists who participated in this concert expressed enthusiasm for further collaboration with the Program. But in terms of expected results, there are some problems.

Using popular musical bands to promote peace is an excellent idea. But to what extent were the audience's consciousness raised relevant to "peace" is difficult to determine. Music as a means of peace education is commonly used but the songs must convey the intended message. Caravan's "Hiroshima" is a case in point. The song is powerful, the message is fairly clear and the band's struggle for justice and freedom which has made Caravan a legend in its own right is widely known. These factors combined can significantly help raise public consciousness. But for general popular "stars", the effect may not be so remarkable. In other words, at times the stars' magic came into conflict with the songs' messages. However, in this case, slide presentation, interviews with the musicians and short speeches help elucidate the essential relationship between peace and development with a strong emphasis on the problems of fundamental public health.



The last leg of "peace" on stages in Bangkok was a play, Brecht's **Mother Courage and her children**, performed by members of the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University from November 30 to December 8, 1986. Brecht's play is quite powerful but the performance and interpretation of the one I saw left much to be desired. The issues of war and peace seemed to be undermined by family's melodrama. The music was splendid but to turn Brecht's **Mother Courage** into a musical occasionally clouded the meanings inherent in the play.

4) "Peace" goes places

This year "Peace" went to several places and in different forms. Three activities can be placed in this category. They are: peace on the road to the rural areas; peace week at Hyatt Central Plaza and peace activities among Buddhist monks.

"Peace on the Road" travelled to 31 provinces all over Thailand. It went to 26 schools, 7 teachers' training and vocational colleges, 3 universities and one public place. Approximately 40,000 people participated in this activity. It can be called a multi-dimensional show. There were plays, musical show, Video tapes show, exhibitions, and lectures. Pamphlets were distributed. Books were given to local libraries.³ Before embarking on this journey, several daily newspapers were kind enough to help promote the program. Since "Peace on the Road" is complex in nature, some technical difficulties arose. Cooperation among different coordinators was always a problem. At times conflict among participants did arise. But the whole process can also be seen as quite educational for participants. In terms of reaching out to people in the rural areas, this activity seems to excel.

“Peace goes to a department store” is another quite successful activity. It stayed at the Hyatt Central Plaza Hotel for 6 days. Again this program was multi-dimensional. There were exhibitions, arts exhibition for peace, stage shows (music, local performances from different regions of Thailand, public debates), and video shows. This particular activity was a joint effort between Peace’86 and the Ministry of University Affairs. Approximately 6,000 people had a chance to come to this activity.

Both programs mentioned above are similar in nature. Due to their multiplicity, they could probably reach different levels of audience. “Peace” at the department store” may not be able to sink deep into the consciousness of the public but it certainly made the public more familiar with the word “peace”.

“Peace in yellow robes” was another activity. A group of student monks at Maha Chulalongkorn Rajavidyalai Buddhist University organized a series of seminars involving 35 student monks inviting speakers from different corners to discuss peace. Issues such as nuclear weapons, global conflict, local problems, non-violent conflict resolution and the ideas of peace in general were discussed. At the end of the program, these student monks went for peace camp in Chiangmai where they had a chance to observe monks’ role in using nonviolent conflict resolutions to solve community problems. In addition, the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development sponsored a program called “ordination for society and peace,” Twenty novices were ordained in this program.

“Peace in yellow robes” cannot be seen as an attempt to instill the idea of peace among Buddhist monks. In Buddhism, the idea of peace is already exceptionally salient. But through this program, the idea of peace was expanded, issues relevant to the modern conception of peace were discussed. Moreover, it is indeed encouraging that one of the most important institutions in Thai society began to take the problems of peace seriously. As a significant moral agent in this society, monks can certainly contribute much to peace efforts in the future.

5) “Peace” across the Border

Perhaps, this activity is the most problem-



atic of them all. From the Peace’86 organizers’ point of view, it was only logical that the Thais should try to realize the ideal of peace by beginning to alter the unsettling hostile attitude towards some of her neighbors across the borders. At this stage to deal with other countries may be too difficult. So, Lao was chosen for cultural and historical reasons.

In June an academic seminar was organized on Thai-Lao relations. It was concluded that the Mekhong River should not only be looked at as a demarcation line between the two countries, but also as a channel of communication between them as well. In effect, the seminarians urged and strongly supported a better relationship between the two countries. Peace’86 also planned to organize a friendship boat-tour between the two countries and engaging in symbolic activities such as exchanges of gifts and planting trees. But after consultation with the National Security Council, and the Nong Khai governor, it was not materialized. However, later on in December there was a group of Laotian artists who were allowed to come to Thailand to perform on stage at several auditoriums in Bangkok and Chiangmai. Another activity which Peace’86 gave up the idea was “Student Peace Forum” because the NSC pointed out that it might be too sensitive at this point.

Taken together, to engage in peace efforts across the borders was more difficult because of security reasons. It does not mean that the Thai authorities did not want to normalize relationship between Thailand and her neighbors. Perhaps, they do, but the efforts need to be made under close supervision and in accordance

with the directives given by the government and the powers that be in Thai society. To let the NGO's do it is to risk deviance from mainstream national policies. As a result, such activities were generally discouraged.

In addition to all peace efforts mentioned above, Peace'86 also submitted articles relating to peace issues and they were regularly published in **Matichon**, an influential daily paper. There were some problems about getting these articles printed because some of the writers could not keep up with the deadlines suggested by the organizers. But it is believed that the articles which have yet to be written will appear in **Matichon** even after December 31, 1986.

Concluding Critique

Writing on the very last day of the International Year of Peace, I cannot help but ponder thankfully for the effort of numerous men and women, boys and girls whose faces rarely grace the pages of daily papers for making this year an eventful one. The effect of their actions may be difficult to assess. But the fact that the Word - "Peace" seems to reach four corners of the land attests to the significance of their activities.

In order to meaningfully critique Peace'86 Program, three basic factors need to be discussed. They are: leadership of the Program, organization of the Program and the social context surrounding the Program.

It must be noted that the chairmanship of Professor Sem Pringpuangkaew lends a tremendous support to the Program. Being a former cabinet member of the Thai government, his acceptance in being the Program chairman helped boost the official acceptance of the Program. But more importantly, he was by no means a rubber stamp. His wisdom did guide the Program through its sometimes difficult phases. His fatherly care indeed helped enhance the family feeling among working teams. His sincerity contributed much to bridging the gap between the younger members who were filled with enthusiasm and impatience and the older ones who were more cautious. While Professor Sem served as the heart of the Program, Dr. Gotham Arya can be best expressed as the head of the Program. He is indeed the locomotive

behind the Program. His commitment to Peace and reputation among the NGO's did serve as a platform where people from different groups could come and work together with him. Being in the field of human rights and development activism for a number of years, he was able to conceptualize the notion of Peace from a structural perspective which shade into both issues of his original interest. Being a scientist, aspects of relationship between peace and technology such as the technical dimension of nuclear weapons can be convincingly explained by him.

The strength of a leader can sometimes become the weakness of the organization as a whole. I think it is not further from the truth to point out that Dr. Gotham' rather confident and decisive style was quite powerful. Some people might feel that for the sake of activities the principle of democracy within the organizing committee had been mildly compromised. But part of the problems could be attributive to the weakness of the organization itself. Perhaps, a significant number of the Program organizers were not sufficiently equipped with the conceptual tool to accomodate a rather broad notion of peace portrayed by the Program leadership. At times some of them failed to see the connection between peace activities they were working on and their particular interests in social issues such as slum and children's problems. Perhaps emphasis on the danger of nuclear weapons during the past two years did contribute to the rather limited understanding of peace among some of the program organizers.

Compared to the past two years, the Thai social context has been much more responsive to the idea of peace. This is both the result of international as well as national atmospheres. The International Year of Peace proclaimed by the U.N. did provide a congenial context for peace activists. As a committee member of this world body, the Thai government had done a number of things to promote peace. A national seminar on "The Promotion of Peace Dharma in Thai Society" organized by the national committee for the International Year of Peace is but an example. The fact that the Prime Minister of Thailand, General Prem Tinsulanond, presided over the opening ceremony of the inter-

national seminar on "Higher Education and the Promotion of Peace" organized by Chulalongkorn University and the Ministry of University Affairs showed clearly that the Thai government does support academic efforts to promote peace. Collaboration between government agencies and the Peace'86 Program had become better. Only when the Program tried to extend itself to include people in the rural areas or across national border did some of the organizers felt that some government organs might frown upon them. If some government officials did feel at odds with the Program's effort in the rural areas, it might due to some misunderstandings. Failure to comprehend the significance of peace may be coupled with fear of the NGO's activities in general. This fear is, unfortunately, a legacy of the time when democracy was young and dictatorship reigned supreme in Thailand.

Jurgen Habermas, a leading West German philosopher, has pointed out that during the last two decades new conflicts have emerged which are somewhat different from the institutionalized conflicts concerning the allocation of material goods. Instead they concern the priorities of values⁴ and manifest themselves in the forms of cultural activities. Symbolic activities, songs or plays, were used not to directly change the established policies of peace and war in a society. The purpose of cultural peace efforts is basically to attract attention and create publicity. With proper information back up, public consciousness can be raised. But these symbolic actions can sometimes be perceived as a challenge to the whole established society. For the European peace movement in this decade, one scholar has argued that in addition to superpowers' manipulations, human fear of nuclear war and NATO's double track decision in 1979, it is a general critical attitude to established social values of the movement itself that can be accountable for its distinctive growth.⁵ Such critical attitude to established social values certainly relates to a broad conception of "Peace".

One of the dangers of an expanded notion of Peace is that it can be considered by many as a challenge to the established social order. But challenge may be too strong a word. "Peace" efforts in Thai society can be seen as an invitation

for all who are interested in goodness and justice, freedom and compassion to reflect and seriously think about the betterment of human society. Invitation to walk the avenue of peace is not a challenge. It is indeed a duty for those who do care for themselves, their children and their fellow human beings at present and in the future. The Thai Peace'86 Program has been an endeavour in that direction.

Notes

**I am thankful to a number of people whose patience and assistances are invaluable. Khun Laddawan Tantiwithayapitak loaned me an extremely useful article she wrote in November 1986 titled "Peace Campaign in Thailand". Khun Vivat Khatithammanit shared Kim Salomon's "The Peace Movement" (cited below) with me. Both materials are extremely useful for writing this brief article.

- 1) Max Horkheimer, **Eclipse of Reason**. (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974).
- 2) See Ernst Cassirer, **The Myth of the State**. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975)
- 3) Peace'85 organized the translation of John Turner's **The Arms Race** last year. Copies of the Thai translation have been distributed.
- 4) Jurgen Habermas, "New Social Movements," **Telos**. No.49 (Fall 1981), pp. 33-37.
- 5) Kim Salomon, "The Peace Movement - An Anti-Establishment Movement," **Journal of Peace Research**. Vol.23 No.2 (June 1986), pp. 115-127.

Chaiwat Satha-Anand
Peace Information Center (Thailand)
Thai Khadi Research Institute
Thammasat University
December 31, 1986

STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE

A Note to the Readers

I have received "Statement on Violence" as a New Year gift from my teacher, Prof. Glenn D. Paige of the Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii. In his letter, he urged me to share this very material with *Seed of Peace*. Scientific theories and data have been misused to justify violence and war. This statement is a powerful to rectify the situation.

Chaiwat Satha-Anand

Believing that it is our responsibility to address from our particular disciplines the most dangerous and destructive activities of our species, violence and war; recognizing that science is a human cultural product which cannot be definitive or all-encompassing; and gratefully acknowledging the support of the authorities of Seville and representatives of the Spanish UNESCO; we, the undersigned scholars from around the world and from relevant sciences, have met and arrived at the following Statement on Violence. In it, we challenge a number of alleged biological findings that have been used, even by some in our disciplines, to justify violence and war. Because the alleged findings have contributed to an atmosphere of pessimism in our time, we submit that the open, considered rejection of these mis-statements can contribute significantly to the International Year of Peace.

Misuse of scientific theories and data to justify violence and war is not new but has been made since the advent of modern science. For example, the theory of evolution has been used to justify not only war, but also genocide, colonialism, and suppression of the weak.

We state our position in the form of five propositions. We are aware that there are many other issues about violence and war that could be fruitfully addressed from the standpoint of our disciplines, but we restrict ourselves here to what we consider a most important first step.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors. Although fighting occurs widely throughout animal species, only a few cases of destructive intra-species fighting between organized groups have ever been reported among naturally living species, and none of these involve the use of tools designed

to be weapons. Normal predatory feeding upon other species cannot be equated with intra-species violence. Warfare is a peculiarly human phenomenon and does not occur in other animals.

The fact that warfare has changed so radically over time indicates that it is a product of culture. Its biological connection is primarily through language which makes possible the coordination of groups, the transmission of technology, and the use of tools. War is biologically possible, but it is not inevitable, as evidenced by its variation in occurrence and nature over time and space. There are cultures which have not engaged in war for centuries, and there are cultures which have engaged in war frequently at some times and not at others.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that war or any other violent behavior is genetically programmed into our human nature. While genes are involved at all levels of nervous system function, they provide a developmental potential that can be actualized only in conjunction with the ecological and social environment. While individuals vary in their predispositions to be affected by their experience, it is the interaction between their genetic endowment and conditions of nurturance that determines their personalities. Except for rare pathologies, the genes do not produce individuals necessarily predisposed to violence. Neither do they determine the opposite. While genes are co-involved in establishing our behavioral capacities, they do not by themselves specify the outcome.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behavior more than for other kinds of behavior. In all well-studied species, status within the group is achieved by the ability to cooperate and to fulfill social functions relevant to the structure of that group. "Dominance" involves social bondings and affiliations; it is not simply a matter of the possession and use of superior physical power, although it does involve aggressive behaviors. Where genetic selection for aggressive behavior has been artificially instituted in animals, it has rapidly succeeded in producing hyper-aggressive individuals; this indicates that aggression was not maximally selected under natura

conditions. When such experimentally-created hyper-aggressive animals are present in a social group, they either disrupt its social structure or are driven out. Violence is neither in our evolutionary legacy nor in our genes.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that humans have a "violent brain." While we do have the neural apparatus to act violently, it is not automatically activated by internal or external stimuli. Like higher primates and unlike other animals, our higher neural processes filter such stimuli before they can be acted upon. How we act is shaped by how we have been conditioned and socialized. There is nothing in our neurophysiology that compels us to react violently.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that war is caused by "instinct" or any single motivation. The emergence of modern warfare has been a journey from the primacy of emotional and motivational factors, sometimes called "instincts," to the primacy of cognitive factors. Modern war involves institutional use of personal characteristics such as obedience, suggestibility, and idealism, social skills such as language, and rational considerations such as cost-calculation, planning, and information processing. The technology of modern war has exaggerated traits associated with violence both in the training of actual combatants and in the preparation of support for war in the general population. As a result of this exaggeration, such traits are often mistaken to be the causes rather than the consequences of the process.

We conclude that biology does not condemn humanity to war, and that humanity can be freed from the bondage of biological pessimism and empowered with confidence to undertake the transformative tasks needed in this International Year of Peace and in the years to come. Although these tasks are mainly institutional and collective, they also rest upon the consciousness of individual participants for whom pessimism and optimism are crucial factors. Just as "wars begin in the minds of men," peace also begins in our minds. The same species who invented war is capable of inventing peace.

The responsibility lies with each of us
Seville, May 16, 1986

David Adams, Psychology, Wesleyan University,
Middletown (CT) USA

S: A. Barnett, Ethology, The Australian National
University, Canberra, Australia

N. P. Bechtereva, Neurophysiology, Institute
for Experimental Medicine of Academy of
Medical Sciences of USSR, Leningrad,
USSR

Bonnie Frank Carter, Psychology, Albert Einstein
Medical Center, Philadelphia (PA) USA

José M. Rodríguez Delgado, Neurophysiology,
Centro de Estudios Neurobiológicos,
Madrid, Spain

José Luis Díaz, Ethology, Instituto Mexicano
de Psiquiatría, Mexico D.F., Mexico

Andrzej Eliaszyk, Individual Differences Psycho-
logy, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw,
Poland

Santiago Genovés, Biological Anthropology,
Instituto de Estudios Antropológicos,
Mexico D.F., Mexico

Benson E. Ginsburg, Behavior Genetics, Uni-
versity of Connecticut, Storrs (CT) USA

Jo Groebel, Social Psychology, Erziehungswissen-
schaftliche Hochschule, Landau, Federal
Republic of Germany

Samir-Kumar Ghosh, Sociology, Indian Institute
of Human Sciences, Calcutta, India

Robert Hinde, Animal Behavior, Cambridge
University, UK

Richard E. Leakey, Physical Anthropology,
National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi,
Kenya

Taha H. Malasi, Psychiatry, Kuwait University,
Kuwait

J. Martín Ramírez, Psychobiology, Universidad
de Sevilla, Spain

Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Biochemistry, Uni-
versidad Autónoma, Madrid, Spain

Diana L. Mendoza, Ethology, Universidad de
Sevilla, Spain

Ashis Nandy, Political Psychology, Center for
the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi,
India

John Paul Scott, Animal Behavior, Bowling
Green State University, Bowling Green
(OH) USA

Riitta Wahlstrom, Psychology, University of
Jyväskylä, Finland



Till the World is With Peace*

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

Dear followers of the **dhamma**, today, I will give the thirteenth lecture of the *Āsālha-pūjā***series, held consecutively every Saturday. This will be the last lecture, in this series, entitled “Till the World is With Peace.” In previous lectures, I have shown you the crisis of the world, its cause, and the nature and origin of world peace based on the Noble Eightfold Path (Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration). Any society or anyone adhering to the Noble Eightfold Path will be endowed with right knowledge (**nāṇa**) and be free from all difficulties. This kind of freedom is called peace. Each individual is a social unit responsible to promote peace in his/her society. The lecture today will thus focus on the qualities of an individual, a political system, and the relationship between the government and citizens contributing to social peace and happiness.

Human beings today blindly believe in the power of economics. They think that an economic success would lead a nation or the whole world to peaceful happiness. In fact, economics is the foundation of selfishness. An economic success without a moral restraint usually encourages human beings to struggle for more possessions and destroy others for their own benefits. Thus, both individuals and the government should learn to cultivate their moral qualities in order to make the economic success contributive to peace in their country.

An individual who is able to be a peace maker should be, in the first place, well-educated, especially in morality. Educational system nowadays can be compared to a dog whose tail is cut off because it emphasizes only on an academic knowledge, intellectual capacities, technology, and so on, promoting more selfishness and regardless of the knowledge of the **dhamma** (morality) that guides human beings to right

thoughts and right conducts. Education should be directed to cultivate humanity and make all humankind righteous and peaceable.

Secondly, a peace maker is a healthy person, physically, mentally, and spiritually. In order to be healthy physically, one should be free from all excessive enjoyments and indulgence. To be healthy mentally is to be free from all defilements and fetters. And to be healthy spiritually is to be free from false conceptions and blind faith. Those who are unhealthy are slaves of their own selfishness, defilements, worldly enjoyments, and other trivial elements of life. They disregard and abhor the **dhamma**. We can establish a peaceful society if we have more healthy social members.

Thirdly, a peace maker should come from a righteous and peaceful family. The righteous and peaceful family is a family whose members conduct themselves according to the Buddha's teaching of the Six Directions (six kinds of social relationship). These family members should know how to behave toward their parents (the front), teachers (the right), spouse and children (the back), friends (the left), their superior (the upper direction), and their inferior (the lower direction). Human beings today do not realize that they have some duties and obligations to others. For example, the superior do not know that they should treat the inferior with loving-kindness; children do not know that they should respect and take a good care of their parents, and so on. A peace maker, on the other hand, is the one who treats other social members and behaves properly toward others according to the Buddha's teaching of the Six Directions.

Fourthly, a peace maker should live with a good economic plan. S/he is moderate in living, spending, and possessing. S/he is neither too poor nor too rich. S/he lives comfortably enough to work for the good of him/herself and others. Whenever s/he has more than s/he needs, s/he donates the rest to others. This is the **setthi**'s way of life in the time of the Buddha. "**Setthi**" literally means "the noblest." Nowadays, we have only selfish capitalists who always oppress

and take advantage of poor people. We cannot find the **setthi** who are philanthropic and righteous. The **setthi** in the time of the Buddha treated his slaves as well as other human fellows. They worked together, ate the same kind of food, observed the Buddhist Sabbath together, and so on. Especially, the **setthi** then built alms-houses to serve poor people, ascetics, and all the needy. A peace maker should adopt the spirit and practices of the **setthi** in the Buddha's time so that all social members could live happily and peacefully together.

Fifthly, a peace maker should know and practice the **dhamma**, the life-saving duty of all human beings. Those who deny to practice the **dhamma** (duty) cannot survive happily in this world. On the contrary, those who follow the **dhamma** always enjoy working, performing their duty, and so on. God will help only those who help themselves first. In short, the life-saving duty of all human beings is to help one another and to be free from selfishness and self-attachment (**tua-koo-khong-koo**). There are two kinds of duty, worldly and transcendental. Worldly duty (**lokiya**) is the duty to survive on earth. Transcendental duty (**lokuttara**) is the duty to escape from all worldly difficulties and oppressions. Both kinds of duty encourage human beings to live in this world without being enslaved by it. Since we are living in the world of suffering and temporariness, we should free our mind from all attachments, the primary causes of all-suffering. Anyone who can be free from all attachments knows that duty is dhammic and is willing to do duty for duty's sake. S/he is the peace maker we need.

Sixthly, a peace maker should be unselfish and altruistic. S/he realizes that all human beings are fellows of birth, old age, sickness, and death; thus, it is useless to cause trouble to one another. S/he knows that we have to co-operate with one another in order to establish a peaceful and affectionate society, the ultimate society called **Sriariya-maitreya**).

Seventhly, a peace maker should be a moral person in his/her thoughts, words, and actions.

Morality (**sila-dhamma**) literally means that which promotes normal conditions. Those who think, speak, or act morally are those who behave according to the normal condition of life leading to the peaceful happiness of all beings. On the contrary, those who act against normality certainly disturb and cause trouble to others. Thus, morality is necessary to keep the world in normal condition. Particularly, it is an indispensable property of a peace maker whose goal is to realize peace on earth.

Eighthly, a peace maker should have the right view (**samma-ditthi**). S/he should think, believe, and understand things correctly and properly. Modern people usually take “**samma-ditthi**” lightly because they do not know and understand the real sense of the word. **Samma-ditthi** is the fundamental knowledge of morality. One cannot conduct oneself morally unless one understands the real meaning and value of morality. According to the Buddhist doctrine, one can be free from all suffering if one has the right view (**samma-ditthi**) guiding one to practice accordingly. The knowledge of **samma-ditthi** is epistemological demonstrating how and why one needs to act morally. It gives justification for the enduring practice of morality. Without the knowledge of **samma-ditthi**, one can hardly control oneself and overcome other external obstacles in the struggle toward one’s moral perfection

Ninthly, and finally, a peace maker should have a “cooled” life. S/he is cooled down from all disturbances and desire. Whenever defilements are eliminated from human mind, his/her life is “cooled down (**nibbana**).” **Nibbana** which can be experienced in this life is generally understood as two stages of a peaceful life, the ordinary stage and the ultimate stage. The ordinary or worldly stage of **nibbana** is the “cooled” life of ordinary people. The ultimate stage of **nibbana**, on the other hand, is experienced by holy people (**ariya**) or saints (**arahant**). The amount and intensity of defilements in the mind of ordinary and holy people signify the degree of their “coolness.” The cooler their lives are, the less

defilements they have in their mind, and vice versa. One needs to practice meditation and cultivate mindfulness in order to be alert and ready to save oneself from the domination of defilements. If all human beings have “cooled” lives, the whole world will certainly be in peace.

Apart from each individual’s moral virtues, an appropriate political system is no less crucial for promoting peace. The right system of politics and economics is dhammic socialism (**dhammika-sangama-niyama**) in which both the rich and the poor work together for the benefits of the entire society. The dhammic socialism contributes most to the growth of natural resources. It aims primarily at the benefits and the progress of society, not of individuals. It serves the rich as well as the poor and makes them live happily together in the same society. We need a political system which provides peace and happiness to all people without the use of weapons and coercive power. We need the Parliament whose members are righteous and work only for the good of the people. A good political system should permit only one political party working for the whole nation. A political system with more than one political party tends to encourage internal conflicts among their members. Thus, the nation with several political parties can hardly find peace and prosperity. If all members of the Parliament are righteous and unselfish, it will be unnecessary to have opposition parties to countercheck the government. The righteous government party alone is able to fulfill its work for the good of the nation. Considering the government and the opposition parties today, one can find that they do not perform their duty properly. The opposition parties try to oppose the government by all means. Similarly, the government party works merely for the benefits of its members. No party works for the people. In fact, all political parties should adhere to the **dhamma**. The government, the Parliament, the magistracy, and so on, in the administrative system, should be with morality (**sila-dhamma**). **Sila-dhamma** is the principle and the foundation of all nations. A moral nation is a nation with appropriate

culture, religion, tradition, and government system. All members should work with **sila-dhamma**. In order to provide **sila-dhamma** to all national bureaux, we should establish the Ministry of Morality. This Ministry will be able to inculcate **sila-dhamma** in all officers and government workers and encourage them to work for the benefits of the people.

We do not want merely a democratic government. We need a dhammic, democratic government in which all members adhere to morality. The meaning of “morality” includes that of culture. Culture means that which contributes to progress. The word “culture” in its original Pāli sense is ambiguous. Culture (**vad-dhana**) means the progress of either good or evil things. It signifies an increase of something, e.g., the increase of hair on one’s head. Nevertheless, in order to develop our country, we should take “culture” in a positive sense. “Culture” should promote peace and not war. And “religion” should also teach the people to love peace. We should establish a proper educational system promoting humanity and the moral intellectuals. “**Manuṣya** (human being)” in its original sense means the “noble heart.” The right educational system should endow students with noble hearts. It should make one a good student for one’s instructor, a good child for one’s parents, a good friend for one’s friends, and so on. It should make one a perfect human being and not just a sentient being.

Furthermore, we should have a good ecological system. A good ecological system deals not only with the eradication of material pollution but also with all aspects of social life and establishments. It is better to have a small social unit than a big one since the former can be easily managed, regulated, and taken care of. If we can regulate our social units both physically and mentally, we will be able to bring peace and happiness to all social members.

I would like to emphasize that the Buddhist doctrine can provide us with a good ecological system, an appropriate political system and government, and moral and peaceable people. The

doctrine of the Noble Eightfold Path enables us to think, speak, and act properly. It is the foundation of righteousness and morality of both the individuals and the society. The knowledge and practice of the Noble Eightfold Path can free us from all difficulties. Gods and spirits cannot help us solve our problems. We must help ourselves by performing our duty according to the Noble Eightfold Path. In short, the world will be with peace if it is composed of moral people, an appropriate political system, and a righteous government.

**Translated and edited by Pataraporn Sirikanchana,
Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University.*

***Āsālha-pūjā is the Buddhist worship on the full-moon day of the eight lunar month in order to commemorate the First Sermon of the Buddha and the Foundation of the Buddhist order.*



Bringing Buddhism to Bear on the Solution of Thai Problems

by Phra Rajavaramuni (Prayudh Payutto)

Translated by Grant A. Olson

The following article is an edited portion of a larger work by one of Thailand's foremost Buddhist thinkers, Phra Rajavaramuni (Prayudh Payutto), entitled *Looking to America to Solve Thailand's Problems* (Mong America ma gae panha Thai), translated by Grant A. Olson, Cornell University, and soon to be published by the Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation in Bangkok (more information about this forthcoming edition can be obtained by contacting *Seeds of Peace*). At first glance, many readers' initial reaction to the title of this larger work by Phra Rajavaramuni may be to ask if the author is advocating or criticizing the tendency for Thailand (and perhaps many other "developing" countries) to follow the Western pattern of development. To clear up this question right away, the following essay stands as a very unique Buddhist critique of the above tendency. It is unique in that Phra Rajavaramuni speaks from first-hand knowledge based on his own sojourns to America to lecture at Swarthmore College and Harvard University. From this direct experience, we are given a very clear, often critical and challenging, account of his views concerning the good and bad aspects of both American culture and Thai culture. After discussing America's evolution from an "industrial culture" to a "consumer culture," to the "cultural transformation" consisting of the younger generation's rejection of consumer culture values, the author tells the Thai people to investigate the real conditions in American society before they so willingly embrace their ways and pattern of development. He goes on to state that maintaining superstition or building a system of laws to instill fear and coerce people into ethical behavior will only break down and lead to failure; and ends by suggesting that attitudes must undergo a more fundamental change, based primarily on cultivating the Buddhist notion of *chanda* (proper resolve), before development or even democracy, another Western import, can succeed. The following section is only a part of the heart of the larger work in which Phra Rajavaramuni attempts to apply Buddhism to social issues:

I wish to take Buddhist principles and apply them to the solution of some problems of education in Thai society. *The Buddha-dhamma has an overriding principle: The solution of problems or the development of human beings must be accomplished from two angles simultaneously. These two are: 1) From the external to the internal, which is called vinaya; 2) From the internal to the external, which is called*

dhamma. Buddhism has these two major principles called dhamma and vinaya; together they are the original name of Buddhism which is referred to as **Dhamma-vinaya**. We often forget this principle and if we see only the dhamma, we can say that this kind of Buddhism will solve only the internal problems, but will not be concerned with the external. Actually the Buddha teaches that both must

be woven together and linked. What is vinaya? Vinaya does not have the narrow meaning that we usually understand in Thai as *winai*, that is the order of life and the social system which was established in accordance with dhamma, using dhamma as its foundation.* What is dhamma? *Dhamma* is the true principles, correct and excellent, that we recommend everyone study and use in training themselves; this is the main principle. After this, I will only speak about the aspects of dhamma, just mentioning some important parts of it.

The first part that I will mention deals with an argument about a problem of development often attributed to Buddhism--I think it is time we go beyond this, because if we do not we cannot solve the problems before us, and we cannot proceed. It is the problem of wants and desires. Just a moment ago, I said that *in solving the problems of Thai society, part of the job is to promote desire which has a high regard for dhamma*. In the recent past that we are aware of, there were two groups of people: One group said that in developing the country and the society we must create desires in people, such as desire for wealth and riches, desire for luxurious things to use, desire for rank and position, and then they will do their work quickly and the country will develop successfully--this is one approach. Another group says that desire is craving (**tanha**) and Buddhism teaches us to sever craving and extinguish desire. Buddhists, therefore, must be people who do not desire anything. When they begin to have the characteristics of people who desire nothing, then accordingly, good Buddhists start to become very lifeless, inactive and lethargic. Now, how are these correct? This is something we must be concerned about. Here, both groups are wrong. Why? The first method will bring about a kind of misleading development, a development headed in the wrong direction which some Westerners call **False Development** or **Misdirected Development**, or it may create the condition of being "Modern but not developed," as I mentioned before, or it may just as likely lead to a condition

of being "Modern but disasterous." The first type of development will bring us to this state by promoting desire and the second group, who says that we cannot desire anything or you will not be Buddhist, perpetuates a misunderstanding of the Buddha-dhamma. Before we can go on, we must come to an understanding about this first.

What is the point of view of the Buddha-dhamma on desire? From the point of view of the Buddha-dhamma, the problem does not reside in whether a person desires or does not desire; rather, the problem resides in what kinds of desires are good, which desires are mistaken, and which are correct. This is where the problem lies. Please just understand that in Buddha-dhamma, the Buddha divided desire into two types:

- 1) A desire to consume and lavish things upon yourself.
- 2) A desire for knowledge and action which is correct and excellent.

The first type of desire he called *tanha--a desire which raises problems for development*, such as deceitfulness, laziness and delusion, and looking for beneficial results by taking shortcuts. These are desires which must be carefully watched over so the direction of these tendencies may be altered and turned into something positive and useful. Please think for yourself about what I just said. Even Western civilization--when it was an industrial society and building itself up some 40-50 years ago--was curbing its *tanha* and desires, that is to say it was teaching people to hold back on their desires for the time being and not follow their own immediate personal wishes to seek happiness, and they, with this ethic, built their society to be progressive and replete.

The second type of desire is called *chanda--a desire which is necessary for solving all types of problems*. Called by its full name, it is known as dhamma-chanda. This dhamma-chanda is something which we must come to understand further as we go along. If we translate it very simply, it can mean desire in dhamma or with

regard for dhamma. What does dhamma mean? In one sense, dhamma translates as truth. What is truth? Truth is something that we ought to know. The things that we associate with truth are the things we must know. Chanda, in this sense is, therefore, related to truth. Thus we can translate the desire for knowledge or an interest in knowledge as a desire to know the truth. The word chanda, in this first sense, is the desire to know, an interest in knowledge.

Dhamma, in the second sense, translates as correctness, excellence. What are correctness and excellence? They are the things that we ought to practice or make happen. Chanda, in this sense, can be translated as the desire or will to do; in other words, wanting to do excellent things, wanting to act correctly in order to bring these good and beautiful things into being.

To summarize, chanda can be translated as the desire for knowledge, an interest in knowledge and wanting to do, or taking an interest in doing what is correct and excellent. I believe that *chanda is the axis of development*, it is the thing that education must instill, and then we will not have the problem of desiring or not desiring, and we can stop talking about it altogether. This is very important. We must make a distinction between a desire that is *tanha* and a desire that is dhamma-chanda. Let me raise an example about establishing order and discipline: If a person has *tanha*, or desire based on *tanha*, order and discipline cannot be successfully established. On the contrary, increased disorder and a lack of discipline (**winai**) will come about. *In this society which lacks order and discipline, that lack can be attributed to tanha. If you want this society to have order and discipline, you have to have chanda.* You can see that people who have *tanha* only partake of benefits for themselves. A system based on *tanha* is a system of gain, a system in which you grab things for yourself and make yourself comfortable. In a society like this, even typing paper does not have standards. Please examine even this tiny little phenomenon: these pieces of letter-size typing paper are not the same size.

If you buy some from one store, they might be a bit short, when bought from another, a bit too long, or too narrow or wide. We know that often sellers look for a way to gain more, so they cut the paper a bit short or narrow in order to increase the yield of sheets; this, in turn, will increase their profits and benefits. In seeking profit and benefit like this, with overpowering greed and craving, there is a lack of order and discipline. The paper, therefore, lacks a standard.

If these paper merchants in our country had a strong sense of chanda, a love for correctness excellence and truth--even if they wanted to receive benefits--*if they had a strong sense of chanda, if their desire for the good and an interest in dhamma were powerful, they would win out and tanha would not be successful in overpowering them.* They could cut paper according to a standard of measurement and desire for discipline and be able to exist just fine. *Seeking comfort and convenience for yourself is tanha. Love of truth, correctness and excellence are chanda.* We must establish chanda as a force stronger than *tanha*. We are willing to accept that each and everybody has *tanha*. If chanda does not become the stronger force for common people, we cannot succeed in correcting anything. We should not be deluded into talking about getting rid of *tanha*, but we must bring another kind of desire to bear on problems in order to solve them. A correct desire can be applied to curb the misguided ones.

Here is another example: In developing the countryside, it is not necessary to speak only of the villagers, take a good look at the people who go out to do the development work first. The developers enter the countryside with two kinds of desire: The first kind is typical for most people. Their *tanha* wants to reap benefits, such as their monthly salary--which is often quite substantial. Later, the second kind of desire, chanda, may take over; they may have the desire to help villagers live well with happiness, free from poverty, and would like to make their dwelling peaceful and safe from disease. If only the first kind of desire, *tanha*, exists, the worker

will certainly not be able to accomplish the work of development and will be more likely to increase the problems of deceitfulness. But due to successfully controlling taṇha and doing work with desires based on chanda, the development work will succeed.

Taṇha asks: "What can I gain?" But chanda asks: "What can I do?" If chanda were to ask "What can I gain?", this would mean what good results will come from our work, not what personal benefits can be gained. At the present time, a widespread system of taṇha is causing problems all over. If we are to solve these problems and really develop society, we must quickly bring about a system of chanda and not foolishly ask "What can I get?" We should ask "What can I do?" or "What must I do?"

When you already have chanda--a desire for and interest in knowledge, and a desire to do things right--you will seek out wisdom in order to know truth; you will discover what correct and excellent things need to be done. These are interconnected things. When students search for wisdom, the teacher can be a supportive friend (kalyānamitta), a person who helps to point the way, always giving information, suggestions and ideas. The teacher thus trains the students in critical reflection and helps them to become people who know how to think and develop wisdom. This is the process of a Buddhist education. If education can successfully establish this, then the goal of our education will be fulfilled.

Let me just say a little bit more about chanda. Research has been done on the problems of development in Thailand. Some researchers say that the average Thai person is content, and they may be the very same people who, having done further research, say that Thai people have a value of consumption (that is to say, they have a lot of taṇha), but do not like to manufacture anything. I feel this is contradictory. *If Thai people were content, they would not have a strong value of consumption, and if Thai people have a value of consumption, they cannot be*

content. This is contradictory. It shows that we have not come to the end of this, it is still a problem. If we cannot pass beyond this point, what else can we accomplish? We cannot proceed to anything else. We are stuck, therefore, on a very fundamental problem. We say that Thai people are content, yet we say that Thai people have a value of consumption; these do not go together.

Let's leave this issue alone and cease fighting about it anymore. How can we stop? We can stop by realizing that this contentedness is actually never complete in itself; it is a virtue which can be put into practice with other virtues. We cannot use contentedness alone to make this decision. *If people are ignorantly and aimlessly contented, what result will follow? Taṇha may follow and then people become happily lazy.* This is a floating kind of contentedness which leaves an opening for taṇha to enter in, for becoming lazy and happy, like some of the villagers in our country (actually, many of them) who claim that they do not want anything, but if they have some money, they sit in a circle and drink liquor or gamble, passing the days like this; and when the money runs out, that is when they think about working to get more money again. In this case, contentedness comes along with taṇha. They have one sort of happiness, but are confined by suffering more and more each day. Now, if we take this contentedness and mix it with chanda, what will be the result? *If you take contentedness and mix it with chanda, you will become a hard-working, dedicated person.* In other words you will not be selfish about anything at all because you are not aiming to receive personal benefits. You do your work thoroughly and dedicate your time because you aim to know the truth or aim to do excellent things successfully. **The most important work that we can succeed in doing, or the really big work with the greatest value, can usually be attributed to a person who has chanda, especially chanda that is accompanied by contentedness.** I say that the problem of contentedness should, therefore, come to an end.

Please let me make one small insertion here: In the process of progress in the West--of about 40-50 years ago--their people looked as if they had enough chanda to reach their goal, to solve the problems of their lives and society (with values related to religion) and had a great deal of contentedness as well. Thus, they progressed successfully. But the thing that has become a problem in these confusing times is they missed the point that the goals they had set were too short-sighted and narrow. Even if they were able to solve the problems of scarcity and build an abundance of material goods, when the goal

was accomplished, they began to drift aimlessly. Chanda lost its hold, the future lost its meaning, and so they started searching for new things. Moreover, the goal of material abundance became bait for the trap of tanha, then problems from tanha followed to the point of creating the current problems and confusion. This is just a suggestion for something to think about further.

**Ordinarily, vinaya refers to the basket of teachings dealing primarily with moral discipline and rules of conduct for monks; this basket of teachings is usually referred to as the Vinaya-pitaka.*

PEACE BELONGS TO US



The Mekhong river marks the dividing line between the countries of Thailand and Laos. This river is as changing as the political relations between the two countries. Sometimes it flows gently and peacefully down towards the sea

while other times it rages, changing its course and washing away anything built too close to its shores.

The people living on both sides of the river are historically brothers and sisters. They share the

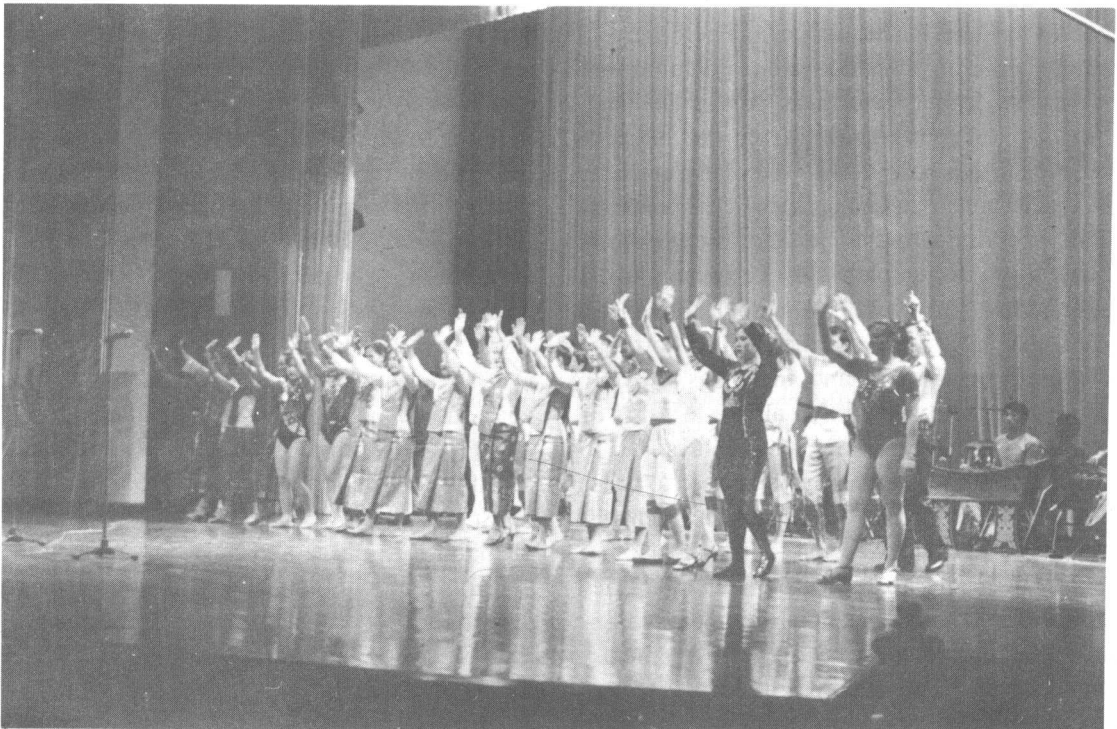
same language, culture and religion. However, for the past 11 years the river separating them has become an invisible political wall preventing their normal trade and exchange which, for centuries, they have engaged freely in. Bullets and shells have crossed the river instead, causing death and suffering to villagers on both sides. It seems that every effort has been made to make the two peoples enemies. Instead of a river which joins the two countries together in peace and friendship, the Mekhong has been turned into a dividing line to prevent these brothers and sisters from meeting in peace and friendship. Government initiatives for peace result in very little. The purpose of any government negotiation is to gain politically as well as to get control of the propaganda war in order to control world opinion. The desire for peace by the people living on both sides of the Mekhong river is not a determining factor in why and how the governments carry out their negotiations for "peace". The people must either sit silently and suffer as the victims, or they must finally decide that the future for peace lies in their hands and that they must take decisive action in order to once again live peacefully with their brothers and

sisters on the other side of the river.

Thus it was that the Coalition for Peace and Development or Peace 1986 committee decided that, along with raising issues of the dangers of nuclear war around the world, they must also address the conflict which has flourished along their border with Laos for the past eleven years. Their dream was to bring the culture of the two countries together to illustrate that there are far more commonalities than differences, and that the conflict which seems to never die away is not the desire of the peoples of the two countries.

It was indeed a dream. Many people fully supported the dream, but deep down inside never believed that it could become a reality. Political issues are usually considered too complicated for common people to become involved in, and the power of governments too great for common people to confront. However, the dreamers were committed and confidently began working on the project.

Months later, much to the surprise of the skeptics, the Peace Coalition stood on the banks of the Mekhong river, welcoming 61 members of the



Lao cultural team to Thailand. It was a momentous occasion. After 11 years, the people of Thailand and Laos were meeting. The meeting was filled with excitement and happiness, for in the eyes of the common people, they have never been enemies.

The Lao cultural team consisted of musicians, singers, acrobats and dancers. They had obviously prepared well for this visit. Almost all of their songs concerned the friendship and solidarity between the peoples of Thailand and Laos. The Mekhong River was referred to as a river of unity, which binds the people together into one family.

One wonders what the Thai audience was thinking before the curtain rose on that first performance. Perhaps some of the people were thinking that at last they would get to see the vicious enemy which they had heard lived on the other side of the river. Perhaps others thought they would see a simple, unprofessional performance by a very poor and undeveloped country. Whatever they were thinking, the opening curtain revealed a young, energetic group performing professionally and beautifully. But it was something entirely different that brought tears to many eyes in the audience. What they saw on the stage were young people who looked no different than the Thais in the audience. There were so many commonalities that the team could well have come from the Northeast part of Thailand. The spontaneous response from the audience as the curtain rose said, "We really are one. We really are brothers and sisters". The politically barrier built down the middle of the Mekhong River began to crumble. As the Lao team traveled around Bangkok and then up into the provinces, the wall crumbled even further. In the short time that they spent in Thailand, more was probably done to build peace than in all the 11 years of political negotiations and power plays.

The Lao cultural team has now returned to Laos. It has been an historic visit and one which will certainly affect the two countries for a long time. Before it begins to fade from our memories however, we should look at what it means to us. Peace belongs to us. We, not the governments, are the ones who will make peace become a reality. We must dream dreams, and we must act to carry

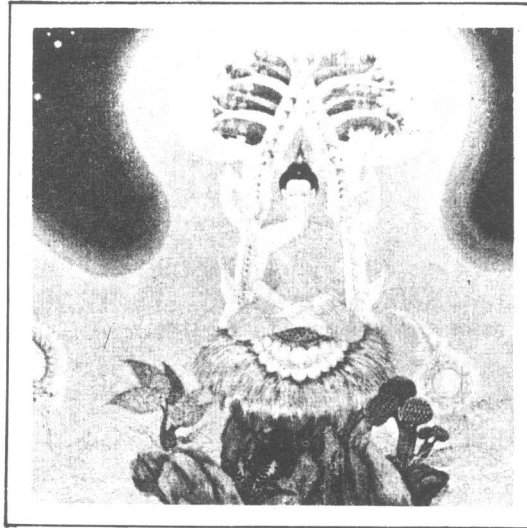
out those dreams, for if we the people truly do want peace and if we believe that we really are brothers and sisters, we can and must do something about it. Peace will not, **can not**, come from political negotiations and military might. It can only come from the determination of the people to live together in harmony. We must determine what our governments will do and how they will relate to our neighbours. Our voices for peace can be very powerful if lifted up in unison.

But it is not easy. Simply shouting for peace is not enough. We must find practical ways of demonstrating our commonalities and our ability to live together in peace. More than anything else, the visit by the Lao cultural team demonstrated that the Thai and Lao can live together in peace, and further more, they demand the right to live together in peace. This is a message that the government can not ignore. We must build on this message and expand it. We must build more links with people from other countries, and we must especially take the risk of seeking friendship with people from countries labeled "deadly enemy" by those in power. If we take that risk, we may well prove that once again, the commonalities far outweigh the differences. This is the challenge against war and violence, and the foundation for a future of peace. What greater threat is there to the vast military machines of the world than people refusing to support those machines because they wish no harm to come to their neighbours? Saying "no to war" must be done in very practical actions just as saying "yes to peace" must be done in non-verbal positive actions. This lies entirely with us and our readiness to take the risks involved.

The visit by the Lao cultural team has opened many new doors of friendship and understanding. However, it is only a small start. We must build on this foundation which has been laid. We must seek more activities and more ways to demand that peace and harmony replace the tensions and conflicts which separate the two countries... If we sit back passively now, all this work may well fade into oblivion. Peace belongs to us!

Buddhism and Social Justice

by Pracha Pasanathamo



*On the occasion of the cremation ceremony
of Professor Supha Sirimanon
At Wat Sommanatworawihan
Wednesday 25 June 1986: 9.30 A.M.*

Basic Moral Concerning Justice

Buddhist teaching is composed of two parts: Dhamma (the Doctrine), and Vinaya (the Discipline).

The most important Dhamma which is fundamental in defining social relationships is the principle of equal relationships between man. The Buddha rejected the four 'caste system' of Brahmanism. The Buddha applied the principle to the 'Sangha' society: the ideal society he set up to oppose the main stream of society at his time by providing opportunities for men of all classes to be members. 'Sangha' (or the community of monks) since that time is a movement that confirmed the principle of equality.

In adapting Dhamma into Vinaya for the Buddhist Order, the Buddha decreed the discip-

line in detail, but for the secular society, he offered only fundamental principles and general concepts.

We can observe that Sangha's organization according to the discipline is characterized by:

1. the confirmation of the principle of equality and the eradication of the caste system held by heredity, wealth or intellect. All men are given equal opportunities to join in the Sangha;
2. the regulation that it be a small, decentralized community, no hierarchical administration is allowed;
3. the democratic decision-making in which all members participate and are bound by the consensus;
4. the non-private ownership of the community's possessions, except for the basic necessities not to exceed those regulated in the Discipline.

The Application of Dhamma for Secular Society

1. There was a fundamental principle of justice, a minimal level at which man should behave toward each other, no matter who they are. In other words, there were universal fundamental duties and rights the Buddha regulated--that is the five moral precepts.

a). everybody has the duty to respect the rights of lives and bodies of other people including those of animals;

b). everybody has the duty to respect other people's property;

c). everybody has the duty to respect the rights of other people's husbands, wives or other beloved ones;

d). everybody has the duty to respect the rights of other people in gaining true information;

e). everybody has the duty to respect the rights of other people in obtaining mindful communication.

2. The Buddha also laid down the rules for social justice that are in consonance with the existing social structure of the times by defining the rights and duties of an individual according to his varying role in society. For example, in **Sikkhalovata Sutta**, he decreed the rights and duties between parents and children, teachers and pupils, husbands and wives, friends and associates, masters and servants or superiors and subordinates, and laymen and monks. No rights were bestowed without accompanying responsibilities. The essence of these rules, in fact, lies in the basis of non-exploitation of each other, respecting each other and helping each other.

The Political Application

3. In regard to the relationship between the ruler and the subject, it is noticeable that Buddha changed the organization of the Sangha from the governing system of "Samakkhi Dhamma" whereas the Sangha eliminated any class differences. Nonetheless, when the Buddha expressed his political ideas, he hardly emphasized that the ideal model had to be a republic. When the rulers of the republics sought his advice, the Buddha --- referring to Dhamma--- demonstrated how to rule justly and perpetuate such

a governing system. In some cases, he even succumbed to the ruling principles of those rulers and then applied them to the Sangha. On the other hand, when the monarchical rulers sought his advice, he proposed principles that would bring peace to the people as well as give guidelines on the kings' personal conduct to assure that there would be no exploitation of each other. Some of his teaching on occasion included the 10 Rajadhamma (virtues of a king), 12 Cakkavatt-vatta (duties of a universal king), and 4 Raja-sangahavattu (a ruler's virtues for national integration). In other words, in politics, the supremacy of Dhamma is to be held, not the supremacy of self, and certainly not the supremacy of the world (or public opinion).

It may be doubtful why the Buddha, in his favour to the republican system of government, yet supported the monarchy. Here, we may explain that

a). he emphasized the content: the unexploitation rather than the form;

b). the Buddha might see that for secular society or for the existing period, it was unfeasible to make a just society like the Sangha. Since the Buddha himself did not have any political power, he therefore proposed, in a socialist term, "a class compromise".

Regarding the relationship between the monarchy and Buddhism, it should be observed that:

A. From **Akkanya Sutta**, the Buddha rejected the Bhraman's concept of **Devaraja** that the king is Bhrama's successor and inherits special hereditary characteristics. In stead, the Buddha proposed the concept of **Sommutti Deveraja** or an "elected king" chosen by the people. An "elected king" is supposed to serve as is his duly appointed duty---keeping peace in society and supervising the division of agricultural land, as the terms "Kasatriya" or "Khattiya" explicitly show. In the **Pali** text, **Mahasommut** is the representative chosen from the people to help them with their duties, and **Raja** is the one who brings peace to the people through Dhamma.

B. The important duties of the ruler --- apart from solving problems of bandits and disputes among the people---is to tackle economic

problems and poverty. Since the ruler holds the most power in the state, the ways he behaves affect the conduct and practices of his officials and his people which include the whole ecosystem. As it appeared in the **Jatakas**, whenever a raja did not follow Dhamma and there were corruptions among his officials, there would be calamities; the rain and the sun would not come with each appropriate season. In other words, moral and natural laws interact with each other. This belief has also been inherited by the Thais. **In the final analysis, if the people are poor and suffering, it means that the ruler does not rule justly. And if the problems are not solved, the ruler lacks the legitimacy to rule. In fact, the Jatakas reveal many cases in which the people claimed their rights to depose the ruler.**

C. The Buddhist political theory, has been a major political concept in most Buddhist monarchical states, has an interesting aspect that should be applicable to the present society: that is --- the interrelationship between the ruling class, the intellectual and the people. The rulers have the rights to govern, execute the laws and, to a certain extent, exercise economic activities, but they have to listen to, and follow the intellectuals' advice. On the other hand, the intellectuals, although they lack economic and political powers, must maintain wisdom and morality, and must not bend to the whims of those in power. In fact, the intellectuals play an important role in setting social norms.

Because the monks, who formed a part of the intellectual class in the past lived through the charity of the people, and lived modestly like ordinary people, they were widely accepted by the public. Evidently they served as the intermediaries between the rulers and the subjects -- to prevent abuses between both sides.

The Economic Application

4. We can see that the Buddha had compromising attitudes towards the wealthy people as he did with the politicians. Instead of attacking them, the Buddha directed them on how to seek and spend wealth so as to create justice in society.

"...Wealth can belong to a private ownership when its owner serves the basic necessity

to the society-that is he accumulates wealth to make it profitable to the members in society. If not so, wealth is of no value, and the wealthy are worthless. The accumulation of wealth becomes unrighteous."

"...If private wealth does not become wealth of the society, and does not bring goodness, the society should attempt to manage or reorganize the ownership system of that wealth, and distribute it to make it thoroughly reach all the members. This is the basis for the development and individual moral attainment of all the members in society"

Contemporary Points to Ponder

With respect to the application for present and future societies, due to the limitation of time and my own wisdom, only some observations may suffice:

A. Social justice is different from legal justice in that the latter only means an unbiased legal interpretation and legal execution. A society with legal justice---having the concerned officials justly utilize the laws--- may not necessarily have social justice.

In talking about social justice, one needs to raise questions on the management system of the over-all fundamental structure of society: how the various social institutions define their rights and duties in managing the interest of the society. *(For example, why does the government have the right to govern? To what extent does this right cover? What duties should accompany the right? How is the market system managed in society to make it just? Who should own the means of production: state or private enterprises? What are the rights and duties of the capitalists and the proletariats if they should live together in a society? Should the management of the educational system, with its function of implanting values to succeeding generations, be given to the state? And to what extent? Who has the right and duty to control mass-media which can greatly affect the ways of thinking and attitudes of the masses in society?).*

Nonetheless, our concern on social justice aims only on the division between the rights and duties to ensure that there would be no abuses between each sector in the society. We do not intend to cover all aspects and roles of

various social organizations, which would otherwise mean proposing an ideology of the whole social system in which justice is only an important pillar.

B. In the past, the application of Buddhism to social practices was only limited to agricultural societies with monarchical systems of government and low technological development. Thai society, since the end of the Absolute Monarchy and the beginning of industrial development, accompanied by the capitalistic market system and its multi-national corporations, has never applied Buddhist principles to social practices. To do so at the present time, we would need to think seriously about technological problems. The power of the monarchical government is incomparable to the present form of government, with its high technological apparatus -- in particular over the mass-media. The capability in accumulating wealth of the millionaires in those days was small in comparison with that of the modern capitalists who are fully equipped with powerful instruments.

Perhaps in our period, we need to emphasize the "form to ensure the "content"...i.e. the models of producing cooperatives or the joint ownership of the community, and in particular, the models of middle and large-scale state enterprises. The transformation or change in "form", according to Buddhist concept, can signify a progress (i.e. the abolishment of slavery, "Phrai", and the Absolute Monarchy), since it provides more equal opportunity in society, and pushes the society one step closer to the ideal community of **Sangha**. Nonetheless, it is essential to observe not only the transformation of the "form", but also the "content". Professor Supha remarked to me ten years ago that, in fact, slavery has not yet been abolished; at present they are called "workers". I doubt whether the same content is applicable to the relationship between workers and state officials in some of the socialist countries.

C. Though Buddhism believes in the equality of man, it does not mean that man is born equal in all terms. It is a plain fact, appearing in every society under every system of government, that there are some stronger people, some smarter and some less smart than the others.

There is also discrepancy in morality among the people.

A central point of social justice in every society is how to manage power, wealth and status, in other words, how to manage political, economic, and cultural structures to prevent the smarter, stronger, and less moral people from taking advantages of the others, or give them less opportunity to do so.

Buddhism holds that power, wealth and honour have no value in themselves, but they can render good and evil. Since all human-beings have desires, conceits, and false views and we are prone to get attached to those three things, we are warned to be careful in getting involved with them. Power, wealth and honour are more likely to be used in a harmful way than a fruitful one. The more they are pooled to one particular person, the more damage they can cause. Therefore, the management of social structure must ensure that there is the least exploitation possible by distributing power, wealth and honour to the widest possible public as testified in the organization of the **Sangha**.

Political Justice

From the above criteria, we can see that democracy, through the representative government and the balance of the power system (between the legislative, the administrative, and the judicial), as we are practicing at present, can not render justice in the political realm. The true meaning of democracy should cannot the government in which the people participate to determine their fate. Our representative system is meaningless for the mass of the people because the decision-making is in the hands of the few wealthy and powerful elites. Besides, the governing administration is centralized to the point that the rural and up-country areas are almost like colonies of Bangkok.

To take democracy to its full sense, we need to seek for other models or political traditions that would enable the people to really participate in the governing system. For example, before the government or the parliament makes decisions on any major issues, there should be plebiscites. (i.e. Whether to spend an enormous sum of money to buy F 16's? Should capital punishment continue? Should there be Abortion Acts?

Should the profit from state enterprises be taxed and given to social welfare? What should the laws on ownership be?).

We may need to set up new political traditions or new social mechanisms through which people can directly and throughly join in the decision-making.

For the provincial administration, let the people govern themselves as much as possible, beginning from the village level. Those functions like crime suppression, dispute settlements, educational administration, and mass-media supervision, should be under the power of the people in those areas to determine. Administrative officials from the village-level up to district and provincial levels should be elected and given real power in all administrative affairs, and not to follow the orders and policies from the central government.

Economic Justice

E. In terms of economic justice, if we use Buddhist criteria, capitalism is unrighteous because:

1. *The aim of its economic activities is maximum profit which is in contrast to that of seeking wealth according to Buddhist concept.*

2. *The way by which profit is gained causes troubles to the wider public because a greater amount of money is used to assemble the public natural resources and other people's labour. It thus violates the fundamental principle of justice. Besides, most big business at present is involved with arms sales, subsequently violating the first moral precept.*

3. *Capitalism creates a pool of wealth in the hands of the few and empowers them to control the fate of the majority. This trend is in contrast with the concept of equality of opportunity and distribution of wealth in society.*

4. *Capitalism creates consumerism, with "desire" as its proponent, and "lust" as its component, to stimulate unceasing consumers' thirst. In essence, it emphasizes hedonism which is rejected by the Buddha as an extreme way of flesh seeking.*

Many of the issues mentioned have already been investigated by a few intellectuals using non-Buddhist analysis. There also have been attempts to solve the problems, both in compro-

misng and radical ways. For example, in the welfare states in the West, including the communist countries, many measures are taken to solve injustice. We should study those measures and apply them to our society by observing some of the inherent defects. (i.e. In the welfare states, the fact that there can be a comparatively thorough distribution system of wealth, and a considerably high standard of living is partly due to an unjust market system by which natural resources and labour from the poor countries are exploited. As for the communist countries, the degree of its centralization is much stronger than that in the capitalist ones.

In solving economic injustice in Thai society, besides learning from the two systems mentioned above, we should carefully study the Venerable Buddhadasa's "Dhammic Socialism", Pridi Banomyong's "The Economic Draft", Fritz Schumacher's thought on alternative models of ownership of the mean of production and Bertrand Russell's ideas on creating expiring money-papers to prevent accumulation. We should study those leading alternatives on economic justice along the line of our own mode of production and the traditional ways of wealth distribution practiced in our society.

Now, in considering about the value system, one needs to look at the management of education and mass-media to which I would offer the following propositions:

1. The management of education and mass-media must be independent from the state power, or at least seperated from the administrative power, and also has to be independent from the business sector. Since education and mass-media are important apparatus in bringing about the value system in society and the control thereof, they should be free in gaining truth and information. According to the fourth moral precept, and the "right speech" in the Noble Eightfold Path, education and mass-media must be free from state propaganda, commercial and even business classified advertisement. Educational and mass-media services should be given free of charge, or at the minimal cost to be within the hands of those who require them.

2. Since education is conducive to social

mobility and professional skills, it must be given with equal opportunity, and it must be ensured that status by birth does not cause obstructions or provide privileges to any particular groups in society.

3. Regional people should have power in managing their own education and mass-media, in the same way as political and economic affairs, without the interference from the central government, so that varying local sub-cultures are able to flourish. Through such cultural reinforcement, people of all regions will be proud of themselves. And "self-respect" of the people, according to Buddhist concept, is the prime basis of all other virtues.

After all, in Buddhism, social justice in a society can not be totally separated from the "inner" social justice of an individual, since the root of social justice is implanted in the inner-self of each individual. The more we cultivate roots of good actions in ourselves, the more just persons we become. On the contrary, roots of bad actions cause injustice from within, and affect man to behave with prejudices due to "desire", "hatred", "delusion", or "fear".

These four kinds of prejudices arise from ignorance: not knowing the world and life as they are; thus the actions done are motivated by "desire", having "self" at the center. In this way, one will never see others as equals; one is unsympathetic to others; one tends to compete, take advantages, and hurt others;... in order to gain wealth, power, and honour. All these destructive drives are common characteristics shared by all human-beings regardless of class, race, gender, or religion.

We can see that, in order to have a peaceful society, it is not adequate to have only the principle of justice. We inevitably need to think also about brotherhood, liberty, ecology, and the development of equality of life of each individual--- in other words, the practices of the "Noble Eightfold Path" ---. We need to apply these principles to cultivate goodness in ourselves so that it would in time expand to the society as a whole. The practices along the "Noble Eightfold Path" will help us ---lessen ignorance, desire, delusion and all prejudices; guide us to see the world as

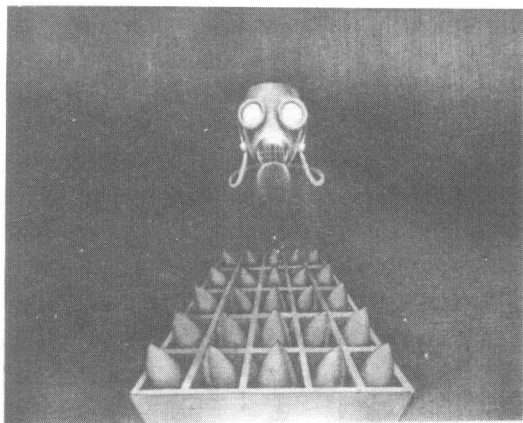
it is (right understanding); change our motivations to right ones (right thought); avoid from speaking or acting in a destructive way to others (right speech, right action); abstain from taking professions which would cause troubles to others (right livelihood); gain perserverance in developing good abilities (right effort); practise self-awareness (right mindfulness); and lay a firm foundation of a peaceful mind (right concentration).

By practicing the Noble Eightfold Path we will move closer to true social justice because ignorance which causes craving and clinging onto the "self" will decrease, enabling us to see things without prejudices---viewing others as equals---, treat other people as men who join the endless sufferings, respect their lives, decisions and opinions.

It is therefore evident that to bring about a just and peaceful society, the movement which aims to bring about changes in social structure can not be separated from the movement to change individuals' conscience.

**PEACE
THROUGH
NON -
VIOLENCE**

For many people, peace is simply the absence of war. This simple definition sets rather a negative tone to the concept of peace. More positive-ly, peace is an atmosphere in which people



can live together happily and harmoniously. This definition brings the concept of justice into the picture as well, and concentrates on the respect that society gives to each individual, and the emphasis of the happiness of the majority.

There are two simplistic approaches to contemporary war and peace issues which, unfortunately, tend more to limit the possibilities of peace and come into conflict with each other. One states that peace is an acceptance of the status quo and does not strive to change it. The other states that present society is not in a peaceful state because society is full of unjust and exploitative social structures. The first approach says that peace exists when the people are meek and show no sign of violence and demonstrate no strong demands from society. The second approach contends that violence is inherent in the present social structures and that war is inevitable and necessary to finally bring about peace.

The first approach can not bring about peace because it allows exploitation and injustice to exist unchallenged and their accumulation will finally lead to war. The second approach, if successful in taking over power, will probably corrupt itself in time because of the violent nature which it has developed and nurtured during its struggle for peace through violent means.

Means and ends can not be separated. For peace to truly be the end we achieve, non-violent action is needed which will bring about justice to both sides. If we do not wish others to kill or harm us, we have no right whatsoever to kill or harm them for any reason. What must be destroyed are the unwholesome deeds,

words and thoughts which abide in each of us. We must destroy our ill will, but not humankind.

Non-violent means to achieve peace must not be seen as mere passivity. It requires very active involvement and action. Non-cooperation with an unjust law is a form of passive action. Political non-violent means may mean the establishment of a parallel government in the place of one seen as unjust and anti-people.

Such actions for peace are also anti-corruption oriented as they rely not so much on power achieved by force utilized by a few, but its power base lies with the willingness of the people. This is the guarantee for a democratic society where not only the voice of the majority is the rule, but also the voice of the minority is respected.

Another basic concept of power which many people hold, is that power comes from money and weapons. This concept is only partially correct. When faced with non-violent action of the people, the power of money and weapons is seriously challenged. Gandhi's non-violent fight against the British is a very good example of this. Gandhi said that the use of weapons against people who are resorting to non-violent means of protest is limited as the weapons lose their power when the people have no fear of them.

For more than five thousand years, much research has been done on violent approaches to solving conflict. However, research and record keeping on non-violent actions has been done for only about five decades. Thus Gandhi could not start his non-violent campaign based on the study of past experiences. He started from point zero. Yet the armed liberation of China led by Chairman Mao took the same length of time (25 years) to succeed as did the non-violent revolution which Gandhi led to liberate India.

The good news is that, in the present world, not only private organizations but also some governments are seriously interested in seeking non-violent ways of bringing about peace. It may be too late to actually avert nuclear war, but we must hope that it is not too late and that more countries will join the campaign, for a non-violent approach is now our last resort to truly bring about peace.

The Directory of Buddhist Monk (A Developer)



**Luang-Poh* Buntham of
Ban Nong Kae.**

Ban Nong Kae is a village in Amphur Kaeng Kro, Chaiyapume Province, upper northeast Siam. In 1937, a group of villagers moved from Ban Nong Rua in Kon Kaen Province in search of fertile land for cultivation. After they found a spot in the forest appropriate to their needs, they settled down there and named their new village Ban Nong Kae.

Luang-Poh Buntham grew up in this village as he, at 4, was one of those original settlers. At 15 he ordained as a SAMANERA (Buddhist novice) and at 20 as a BHIKKHU (Buddhist Monk) for 3 years. Then he was pressed to disrobe by the military and served for 2 years. In his early 30's he ordained again. He concentrated on practicing meditation and was trained by various meditation masters. (the last was Luang-Poh Tien of Wat Pa-Buddhayana, Loei Province) Luang-Poh Buntham, at that period, spent most of his time travelling from place to place in the wild forests and mountains as practitioner Bhikkhus often do.

In 1969, he travelled to Pookong, a mountain range near Ban Nong Kae and established a forest monastery there, which he called Wat-Pa Sukato. Two years later he was invited by Luang-Poh Kam Kian, a younger friend from Wat Pa Baddhayana, to jointly teach meditation to the villagers of Ban Nong Kae. These meditation courses have been continued yearly ever since.

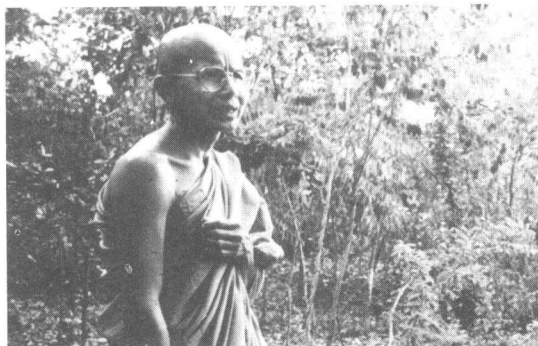
In 1980 he finally accepted the invitation of the villagers to stay permanently as the abbot of Wat Pone Tong in Ban Nong Kae, after refusing for many times. In Ban Nong Kae at that time, like many other rural villages in this country, the traditional value system of the community had been shaken by capitalistic values from urban areas. The villagers wanted to be rich, but there was no structural channel for them to be so, and, as a result, they turned to various kinds of intoxicants and gambling as ways of escape.

**Luang-Poh (literally means "great father") is a little of respect and affection used before the name of elder Bhikkhus.*

When the two Luang-Poh first opened the meditation course there, the villagers were divided into two groups, some for and some against. Only 20 people joined in. But these who joined the first course saw the benefits clearly and asked to have it repeated every year there after. The number of people attending the course increased each year and included people from other villages and other province who, by some way, have heard about the course. In 1985 about 500 people attended the course.

For Nong Kae village, meditation training has changed profoundly the negative aspects of the community. Destructive activities of various kinds decreased step by step. When Luang-Poh first came here, alcohol was sold at the house apposite the monastery gate. Luang-Poh did not directly forbid their immoral behavior. Instead, he gently preached about the harmful results of these indulgences on the Holy Day when the villagers bring food to make merit at the monastery, during the meditation courses, and through the amplier that broadcast into the village every morning (for 30 minutes). Another skillful means of his was that when villagers invited him to their house for religious ceremonies, he made the condition that they waited until he left before indulging themselves and that they should be careful not to have arguments and brawls. When two families acted against his condition, he later refused their invitations to perform religious rituals for them. His authenticity, expressed in these kind of sanctions, strongly and positively affected the attitudes of the community. This caused people to be afraid of offending him and to respect him even more. In this way, together with other means, indulgence in drinking and gambling gradually disappeared from the village completely.

Formerly, in some families, the sons worked very hard, but most of the money they earned was spent by the father for drinking. The sons felt taken advantage of and got into the habit of drinking, too. Changes began in some families which realized the harmful effects of these destructive behaviors. The result was clear. The wealth earned by their hard labor could be kept. The former bickering fighting



in the families disappeared. They became examples for their neighbours. After some years, the whole village became well-known for abolishing all forms of drinking and gambling. When officials from the province visited the village, they had to bring their own liquor knowing that these villagers would not try to pander to them with alcoholic beverages.

The meditation courses last 7 days. participants are required to take 8 precepts, join the morning and evening chanting, listen to the daily preaching, and spend the rest of the time practicing walking and sitting meditation. Once a day, everyone has a personal interview with one of the meditation teachers. Now, some NGOs workers bring villagers from their project villages to join in the courses. Even though so many outsiders come to join in the courses, the villagers of Ban Nong Kae are still willing to treat them with food and other necessary facilities. The villagers believe this is the great opportunity to do merit. So far, 95% of the Nong Kae villagers themselves have passed through the course.

Luang-Poh Buntham loves forests. Thus, he witnessed the severe destruction of the forests in that area with deep sorrow. The double plague of land hungry exported-oriented agriculture and blind concessions to wood traders were the main causes. Both were out of control, the latter even destroyed all the tree in his monastery just to get a few big trees. Though he could do nothing to prevent these disaster determined by faraway influences, he still felt he had to do something. So in his humble way, he decided to reforest the recently destroyed forest monastery.

When he first arrived at village monastery, it too had a few trees left standing. Once after a rain, he dug into the soil to find that only the top one inch was wet. In Sucha condition planting trees is impossible, he knew of a kind of weed popularly known as "Communist grass" because it spreads very quickly and its root can go deep into hard soil. He scattered its seeds throughout the monastery. At the same time, he prepared quick-growing trees like eucalyptus, and horse-tamarind, on the one hand, while on the other hand, in the rainy season, he and some novices went out to collect the various native sprouts of wild plant which grew on the paddy dykes and big anthills around the village.

When the communist grass grew up, he dug into the soil again to see that, now, 7" of the soil was wet. This meant that the ecological state of the soil had renewed. Water and air could go through the soil easily. Just before the communist grass went to seed, he destroyed it and planted the quick growing trees, which had been prepared.

In latter years he gradually interplanted the native wild plants among the quick growing trees together with some fruit-trees. He kept detailed records of his work in order to study the nature of these trees. Now it can be said that Luang-Poh Buntham is an expert on wild plants of the northeast. He knows the different breeds and varieties of wild plants, of growth, the most effective way of planting them, and the kinds of soil appropriate to each kind of tree.

Again, at the start of the reforestation of the monastery land, the villagers did not really agree. But five years after, the result of the abbot's labour bore fruits. The whole monastery become shady, very good for meditation courses, and looked beautiful, there was also some rare fruits to eat. *"To make the villagers love nature and see the value of trees isn't a matter of speaking but of producing results for them to see."* said the abbot.

At present, many families use the land at their houses, which used to be ignored, to plant fruitbearing trees and shade trees, following the example of the monastery.

Besides plants, the abbot also protected



the kinds of animals that remained in that area including ones the villagers see as useless, such as, geckoes and toads. So now the monastery area has become a secure home for many animals: bull frogs, tree frogs, skinks, tostoises, and many kinds of birds. They live peacefully here and their numbers grow more and more. Luang-Poh always preaches to the villagers the benefits of these fellow creatures.

"Every kind of animals on this earth has a role to play in keeping the ecological balance. Eventhough some animals like birds, squirrels and chipmunks do some damage to our crops, they have a great contribution in controlling insects of all kinds. Man should be kind to them and give them food and shelter. Man should not only take advantage of other creatures. Man should share his food and shelter with them. Farmers do not like some birds because they eat rice in the paddy field. The fact is that they eat rice only a few day each year, the remaining more than 300 days, they eat insects of a much large number. We should not forget this fact."

In addition to those works, the abbot also established a rice bank, using the paddy the villagers gave the monastery in a Harvast Offering ceremony as the original stock. When any villager lacks enough rice stock to get through the year, he can borrow from this bank. He must pay an interest of 10% per year. This bank can reduce the burden of debt for many poor peasants, because they do not have to turn to the merchants or rich farmers who often charge interest at high rates. They now have the will

power to earn their living and do constructive work to renew their community life. Nowadays, the storehouse is full of paddy both from the interest and from new amount the villagers donate to the monastery as acts of merit.

Once a district official tried to persuade the abbot to turn the rice bank into a rice cooperative. He refused for the reason that the purpose of a cooperative is more to gain profits than to help the members as an act of merit. Also, it might give an opportunity for the rich farmers to take advantage of the poor farmers.



Former activist now finds peace in Buddhism

HEAD shaven and clad in a dark saffron robe, Sanghamitta is easily mistaken for a monk.

The only tell-tale clues that the serene person in the saffron robe is in fact a woman are the soft, feminine facial features and her womanly walk.

And the soft-spoken voice when she begins to talk.

"I was ordained in Sri Lanka. That's why I'm wearing the dark saffron robe instead of the white one," explains the former Swiss social worker Doris Zeller who made Sanghamitta her name after entering the nunhood two years ago.

"I am actually a nun, and observe 10 precepts like other Thai nuns in white."

Sanghamitta, 34, is the only Buddhist nun at "Wat Pa Nana Chat" or International Monastery Temple hidden in a remote forest in Ubol Ratchathani.

Set up by the disciples of the famous Isarn monk Pra Acharn Cha in 1975, the temple is for foreigners who want to forsake their worldly worries to seek inner peace according to Buddhist teachings.

With Canadian-born Pra Acharn Pasanno as abbot, some 14 monks from Australia, New Zealand, Austria, Switzerland, Japan and Malaysia are living a strict, disciplined life amid the cool and shady trees to meditate and free their souls of attachments and desires.

Like the *acharn*, Sanghamitta came to Thailand as a tourist with a restless soul, and found herself enchanted, then trapped, by the eastern spiritual answer.

"For 15 years, I had been struggling to find the answer in life, to be liberated. I tried everything. Political alternative, feminism, individualism, the Green movement, travelling, you name it.

Those answers, however, failed to calm down her inner turmoil.

"And I guess if it could not make me happy inside, then it could not be right.

"I found that they were not what I really wanted. All of them still could not break loose from possessions. That's why they all end up as struggles against one another.

"When I found Buddhism I suddenly felt

'that's it'. For me, it was like *deja vu*," she said, recalling how she opted to follow a path that emphasises spiritual harmony.

Shunned by a temple in Chiang Mai because she was a woman, Sanghamitta travelled into Burma where she first experienced the practice of mind-purification.

Through meditation, she says she can spiritually observe the formation of suffering and therefore understand how to break the chains and achieve inner peace.

But she decided to give herself one more year living and working back in Switzerland to make sure that it was ordination that she really wanted.

"Life was fine. But I kept feeling there was something missing inside. So I finally decided to be a nun. That was two years ago."

But how does a former feminist think of the inferior status of nuns in the present Sangha order?

"I hope that it changes," answers Sanghamitta. "It's necessary that it should change. Human beings have the same ability, spiritually.

"But right now I'm satisfied and happy to have a chance to practise meditation."

Now spiritually fulfilled, Sanghamitta muses at social prejudices against nuns.

"If men want to enter the monk-hood, people praise them for their high aspirations. If it's women, then it's case of broken hearts.

"I hope that this kind of thinking will change. To clarify your mind, you don't need a broken heart but an open heart," she says with a gentle smile.

Sanghamitta also does not think the much stricter rules governing Buddhist nuns will pose any difficulties for women with spiritual aspirations.

The high number of rules, she says, is only an effort to cover all possible violations.

"But the essence is not with the number of rules. It's with our own heart, our determination to practise."

Womenhood, she comments, makes one's spiritual quest even easier.

"Because we don't have the same pressure to achieve. Women are taught to be humble and easily yielding. And this, in fact, makes it

easier for us to give up things and to purify our minds."

Sanghamitta may be right when she says changes are probably coming soon with more young people actively involved in religion.

"There is a movement towards this change right now in the temple in England," confirms the Canadian-born abbot.

"But this matter is to be handled carefully. We have to ask for advice and approval from venerable monks in Thailand. Even if approved, it will not be nuns in the same sense as monks now," she explains.

A warm smile from Sanghamitta shows she does not let those future worries invade her present calmness.

Every day, she gets up at dawn to meditate. As the warm sun slowly chases away the darkness, she leaves the bare wooden shelter in the serene wood to go on an her alms round.

When joining others for their only meal of the day, Sanghamitta's concentration, like everyone else's in the hall, is with one's own movement, reflecting strict self-control.

Done, she slowly gets up from the floor and collects her bowl. So do the rows of monks who sit above her on the raised platform.

Undisturbed by the token difference, she self-composedly goes on to other daily chores with concentration on the present moment, her mind free of sadness for the past and fear of the future.

"It's the practices that matter. This is what I've been looking for in life. And I am contented."

From Bangkok Post
29/10/86

Eucalyptus Trees: Is Thailand Inviting A Case of Ecological AIDS?

More than a century ago the good people of California--having destroyed most of their local redwood forests to build the city of San Francisco and other budding cities--began to import from Australia a miraculous tree called the "Eucalyptus." It was a fast-growing extremely strong hardwood, rich in water-resistant oils, and seemed ideal for developing the then nascent California ship-building industry.

Hundreds of Eucalyptus trees soon arrived in California, were planted, and quickly reached sufficient maturity to be cut and be turned into the raw material of the potential industry. The only problem was that in addition to its reported qualities, Eucalyptus trees also cracked and split easily--features that obviously made it completely useless for ship-building. Thus, the idea of the new, eucalyptus-based industry died even more quickly than it had been born.

However, that was not the end of it, for it soon turned out that what started as a few hundred trees could, under the influence of California's weather and mobility patterns, rapidly multiply into millions of trees. And within just four or five decades, the easily-borne Eucalyptus seed became the bane of California. The tree's natural invasiveness could neither be predicted nor controlled. Wherever it took root, the tree's natural oils and peeling bark smothered much of the adjacent undergrowth. Since its branches constantly broke and fell haphazardly, it became a perpetual threat to near-by homes. And most significantly, its high combustability (the very feature that makes it so deceptively attractive

as a source of Thai charcoal) turned it into one of California's major fire hazards--a hazard that in recent decades has already destroyed millions of dollars worth of property.

There are of course many varieties of Eucalyptus, and modern genetics has wrought many magical cures to the problems of certain plants. However, it is extremely doubtful whether any of these fundamental features of the Eucalyptus could be reduced or modified. It is man's inability to control these features that makes the eucalyptus so worrisome.

In its rapid modernization. Thailand has inevitably made some mistakes over the years--some large, some small. The unconsidered importation of the Eucalyptus might in the end turn out to be not only a large problem, but a catastrophic one. It is precisely the kind of issue that requires the most carefully researched assessment of its potential dangers and costs, as against its potential benefits.

There already has been an immense amount of research done on the effects of the eucalyptus on the environments of Australia and California--all of which is readily available from the Australian and U.S. governments. The U.S. Department of Interior and the Forestry Departments at the Davis and Berkeley campuses of the University of California would happily share this accumulated knowledge. This information should be read and disseminated widely before Thai authorities make irrevocable decisions about their precious land and environment.

A Thai-land lover

Buddhist Monks from Sri Lanka

Study Nonviolence in Thailand



"We must teach the meaninglessness of racism"

- Rev Pituwala Dammakitti

"We organized because our country is in turmoil"

- Rev Wilegoda Ariyadeva

"We witnessed how humanity went down and how violence went up"

- Rev Mondawala Pannawansa

The idea to bring 4 Sinhalese Buddhist monks from Sri Lanka to Thailand belonged to a Thai, Sulak Sivaraksa, who is that country's best known social critic and possibly its leading Buddhist scholar. The purpose was to set up a peace dialogue between Srilankan and Thai monks. While the Thais have long been known to espouse non-violent teachings, there are a growing number of Sri Lankan monks who have sympathized with non peaceful means to settle differences with the Tamils.

The 4 Sinhalese Buddhist monks belong to a small but active group called "Bhikhu Organization for Humanity", which today numbers 300 persons. Rev Pannawansa told of the July 1983 massacre of Tamils (primarily Hindus), by right wing elements of the Sinhalese population. "It was then", he said, "that we Buddhist monks felt we had to do something to solve this problem of racism. At first there were only a few but we conducted seminars on the meaning lessness

of racism. Other peace-minded monks joined us, so today we have 300 members. We have started a bi-monthly magazine called Vinivida which in English means "Probe". We try to tell the good things about our Tamil countrymen. We explain that Tamils have their own literature and their own culture. We have also distributed leaflets about Tamils and the need for reconciliation."

The 4 Sinhalese monks were critical of their own government and suggested it was using the Tamils as a scapegoat for a floundering economy. The Bhikku Organization for Humanity has started to reach out to the Tamil poor in an attempt to practice reconciliation. In several incidences, Tamil women have actually fled to the Buddhist temples to avoid rape and molestation. The Bhikku group hopes to organize a Tamil/Sinhalese Friendship League where understanding and dialogue will be fostered. "There is a lack of understanding on both sides", reminded Rev Ariyadeva, "and we must see to it that our own people, the Sinhalese, realize the meaninglessness of racism".

While in Thailand, the 4 monks visited various places of interest including MCC's agricultural project in Uthai Thani Province.

Before they left for their home near Colombo, I met with the 4 monks in a Thai Buddhist temple. I explained that I was a Christian and that I received my inspiration from the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. I further explained how the Mennonite Church was committed to teaching and practising the non violence of Jesus. "But", I said, "where do you get your inspiration from?" There was a moment of silence before one of them answered "From our Buddha and his teachings".

As I sat in that Buddhist temple in Bangkok with 4 Sinhalese Sri Lankan monks on April 14, it was a sort of "moment of truth". Didn't I belong to the windswept prairies of Saskatchewan? What was I doing half a world away? They were Buddhist, I was Christian. Here were a group of clergy who cared about the Hindus, a minority group in their own country. I thought of Jesus, quite a member of a dominant religious group, who reached out to the lowly Samaritan woman and gave her dignity.

Buddhists reaching out to Hindus in Sri Lanka.... Jesus reaching out to the Samaritan woman at the well...

by Jake Buhler Mennonite Central Committee

The arms build-up has continued, at painful cost to the world community. The ultimate absurdity is the \$3-4,000,000,000,000 (3-4 trillion dollars) spent since World War II to create a nuclear arsenal which, if used, will mean global suicide.

Violence is on the rise. There are more wars and more people killed in them. Four times as many war deaths have occurred in the 40 years since World War II as in the 40 years preceding it. Increasingly the geopolitical designs of the major military powers are being worked out on the soil of other countries and with other peoples' lives.

While national governments compete fiercely for superiority in destructive power, there is no evidence of a competition for first place in social development. In a world spending \$800 billion a year for military programs, one adult in three cannot read and write, one person in four is hungry.

BOOK REVIEW

Angkarn Kalayanapongse—A Contemporary Siamese Poet contains various articles written about him by different writers with the highlight being many of his poems translated into English. The book's editor, bi-lingual historian, banker and expert-cum-student of things Thai, Michael Wright, confesses translating poetry is normally a "beastly task particularly in the case of the works of Angkarn Kalayanapongse". He did a remarkable job, never the less. Other translators include Sulak Sivaraksa who also writes the Preface; poet Dr. Montri Umavijani and Asian literature scholar, American anthropologist Dr. Herbert Phillips.

Prof. Chetana Nagavajara's famous paper on Angkarn, "The Sense of the Past in the Poetry of Angkarn Kalayanapongse" is also included, uncut. Both Professor Chetana and critic Sulak agree that "...fashionable prizes (like the SEA Write Award) have no

meaning for such a genius". The book is a silver attesting to Angkarn's genius. The poet's winning book, Panitarn Kawee (The Poet's Convictions) was not entirely translated. Only the poem under the same title as the book was selected for translation with the name given in English as "The Poet's Testament":

*I wrap the sky around myself
to keep away the cold
and eat starlight late at night
to take the place of rice.*

*Dewdrops scatter below the sky
for me to find and drink
and out my poems flow
to greet the morn, to last the*

age....

All of Angkarn's poems prove the points made by respected literary critic Cholthira Sattayawattana in her article appearing in the recent issue of *Puan Nak Arn*—that his poetry is both "unique" and "universal" complete with "setting", "atmosphere", "character" "symbol", "imagination" and "emotion". It is this quality of being "universal" that makes Angkarn's works "stand the test of time.... Reading it 20 years ago or today, or a hundred years from now it still retains its literary flavour, fragrant by its philosophy.....", writes Cholthira.

The book is now available at 80 baht a copy at Suksit Siam, 1715 Rama IV Road.



POPULAR BUDDHISM IN SIAM

Popular Buddhism in Siam and Other Essays on Thai Studies...a brief survey of cultural Thailand..

THE Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation together with the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development a couple of months ago jointly produced one book that marks another important step in promoting the understanding of Thai culture. The book, *Popular Buddhism in Siam and Other Essays on Thai Studies*, was written by one of Thailand's most respected scholars, the late Phya Anuman Rajadhon. It is, as the author put it, a "brief survey of cultural Thailand".

As a "cursory glimpse of the Thai", Phya Anuman or "Sathirakoses", the famous penname by which he is better known, sweeps through many aspects from the most revered subjects such as the Wat, the Ordination, the Life of a Monk, and descriptions of customs like the Songkran Festival to a rather morbid subject like the *Phii* (ghosts).

The publication, in English, is a most incisive collection of essays. It's obviously designed not only for foreigners but for the Thais themselves as well. The section on

the *Phii* alone takes up nearly 30 pages. It describes the different varieties of the *Phii* to be found in the Thai world of the supernatural. There are at least a dozen types of *Phii*, would you believe, that are haunting us all. Phya Anuman explains how each kind looks like and where they normally are believed to have their residences.

Like human beings there are both bad and good *Phii*. The "dividing line between gods and devils, like men, is a thin one", remarks the author.

This publication is not a touristic guide. The knowledgeable explanations of each subject contained in this volume give a deeper insight into this nation whose behaviour is often looked at as incomprehensible by many foreigners. Neither is the book boring or academic reading. With ease, the author writes, drawing upon his encyclopaedic knowledge of things Thai.

I'm not sure if you can find the book elsewhere, but for certain it's at Suksit Siam, 1715 IV Road, the book's sole distributor.

REPRINTED FROM BANGKOK POST

**BOOK
REVIEW**



**THAI INTER - RELIGIOUS
COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT**
G.P.O. BOX 1960 BANGKOK 10501
THAILAND

PRINTED MATTER