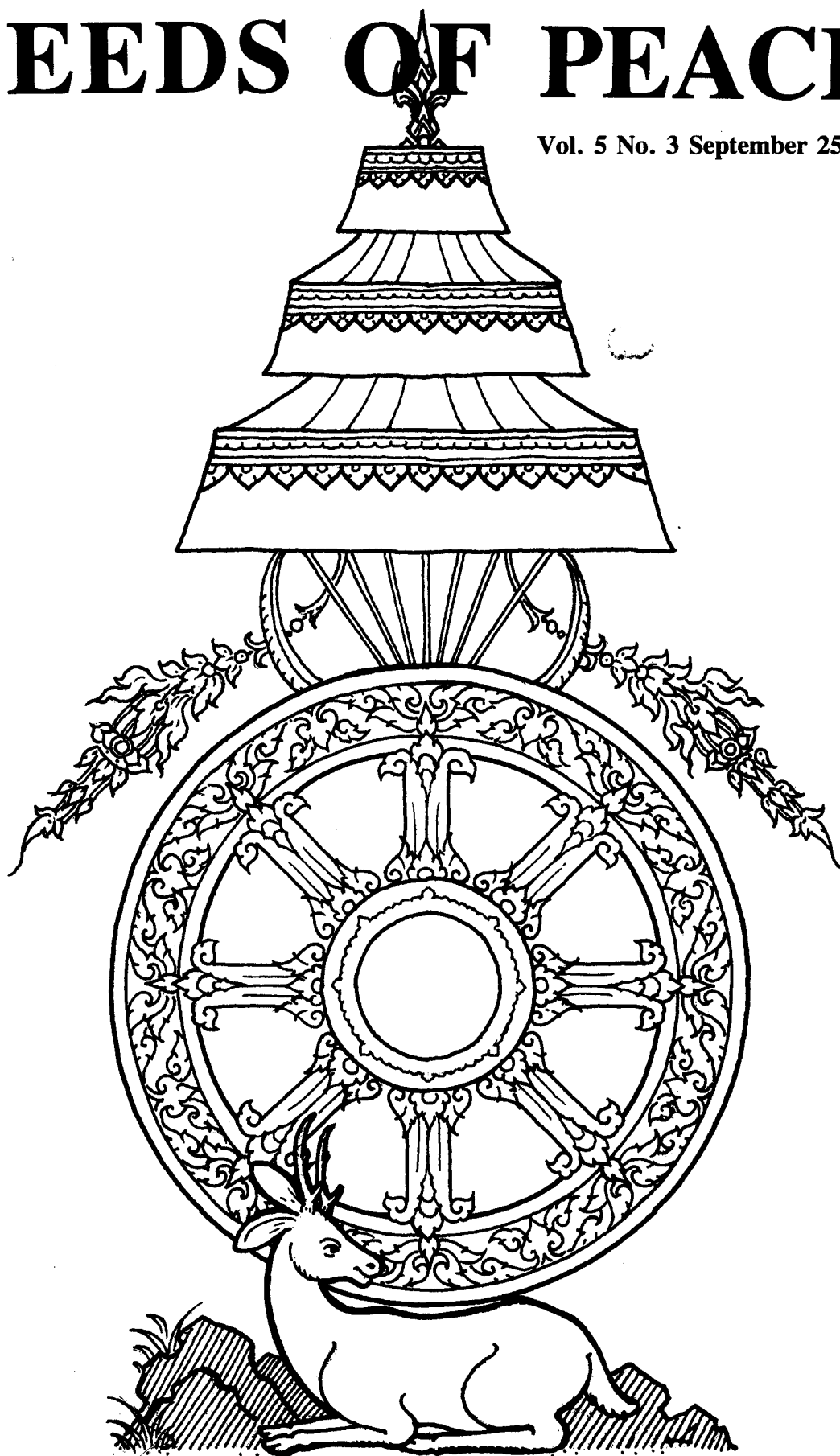


SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol. 5 No. 3 September 2532 (1989)



CONTENTS

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

1. Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts...4
2. A Cry for Democracy to A Smile for Democracy.....6
3. Probe in rape of Burmese student on Thai border continues8
4. Burmese rape case forwarded to court...8
5. Peace Work on Burma Issue.....9
6. Relief and Rehabilitation Program in Sri Lanka.....10

WOMEN'S ISSUES

1. Is It True that the Buddha Never Wanted Women in the Sargha?.....12

PEACE WORK

1. World Religions for World Peace14

THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Forestry in Thailand.....17

SPIRITUALITY AND ACTIVISM

1. Activism & Spirituality.....19
2. A Day of Mindfulness for Activists.....23

PROFILES

1. The Buddhist Peace Fellowship.....24

2. Towards a Socially Engaged Buddhism 26
3. The International Network of Engaged Buddhists28
4. The Thai-Tibetan Center.....29

POETRY

1. The Development Set.....31

PLACES OF INTEREST

1. The Forest Monastery of Suan Mokh...32
2. A Monk Repays His Debt to Villagers..33

OBITUARY

1. Chaem Phromyong : One of the last revolutionaries.....35

BOOK REVIEWS

1. The Great Turning:.....37
2. Turning the Wheel :38

FOR THE RECORDS

1. Sulak urges Santi Asoke to change its name40
2. A story in every picture41
3. The Dalai Lama visit New York.....46
4. Minors In Need Of ReSettlement.....47



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. Personal cheques from UK and USA are accepted.

Objectives of TICD

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

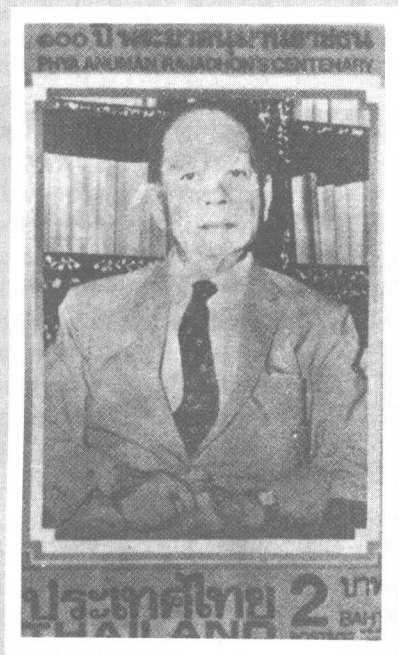
Guest Editor : Sherry Yano

Cover : Pong Sengking



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

Phya Anuman centenary stamps



THE Communications Authority of Thailand has printed stamps to commemorate Phya Anuman Rajadhorn's Centenary priced at Bt2, which will be on sale from tomorrow onwards.

The CAT has released this stamp collection in order to spread appreciation and renown of Phya Anuman Rajadhorn on the occasion of the scholar being named Outstanding Cultural Person by UNESCO.

from THE NATION | Friday
June 30, 1989

Notes from the Editor

Buddhist contries often make it into the international headlines, but seldom it seems, for events inspired by compassion, selflessness or loving kindness. Much of this rainy season edition of *Seeds of Peace*, then is dedicated to investigating a few of the current issues in Buddhist lands.

Mr. P.J. Chakma, a member of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), submitted an article on the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. As well, the letters section of this journal contains a note from Ven. Bimal Tishya regarding the CHT.

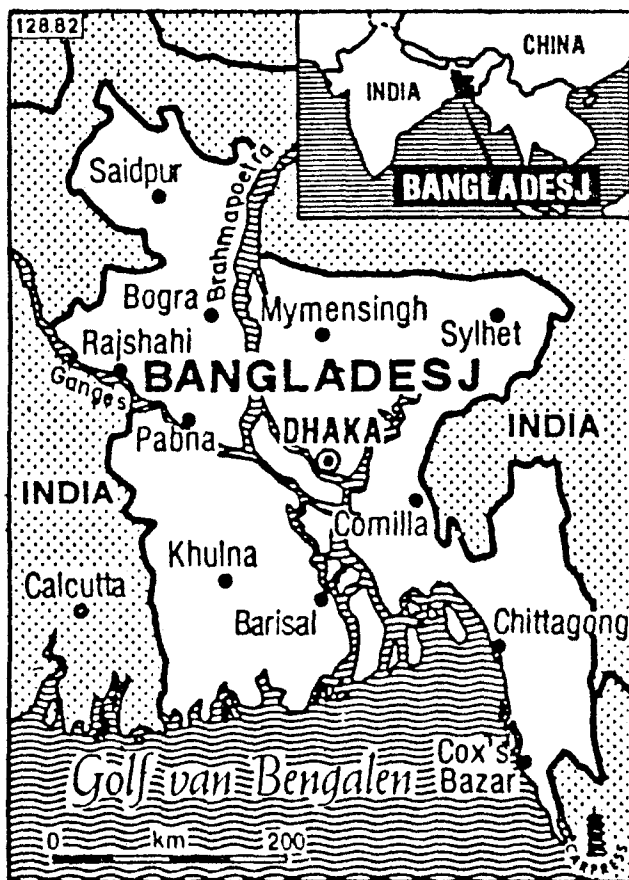
We also printed a few articles on Burma, as well as two proposals to Peace Brigades International (PBI) written by the INEB secretariate to help towards reconciliation in Burma and Sri Lanka. If anyone is interested in obtaining more information about these projects, please contact the Peace Brigades International representative for Southeast Asia through the INEB office in Thailand. The project proposal for PBI in Sri Lanka was written by one of the members of the international Buddhist peace delegation which was sent to that country in March of this year through TICD

As a counterpoint to all this material on human suffering, we also wanted to include two articles on spirituality and activism. Both contributors remind us that in order to bring about peace and positive growth in the world around us, we must allow these things to flourish within us.

We are very grateful to everyone who contributed articles and input for this issue. Indeed, criticism, ideas and material are always welcome and much appreciated.

THE GENOCIDE IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

The Bangladeshi regime is systematically exterminating the indigenous tribal people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in order to confiscate their villages and farmlands for Bengali Muslim settlers. The vast majority of the indigenous tribal people sided with the Bangladesh Liberation Army (Mukti Bahini) during the 1971 Bangladesh independence war; however, the Bangladesh Liberation Army began killing tribal people even before Bangladesh became independent. For instance, on December 14, 1971, the Pakistani Army withdrew from the Panchari area (northern CHT). Immediately, the Bangladesh Liberation Army entered Ku-



kichara village, shot dead at least 32 tribals who came out to welcome the victorious Bangladesh Liberation Army, and burned about 200 village homes. The Pakistani Army surrendered to the Indian Army on December 16, 1971. On that same day, the Bangladeshi Army killed another 16 people who took shelter in a trench near Kukichara village fearing for their lives. After

massacre of innocent unarmed tribal men, women and children; the Kalampati (Kaokhali) massacres of March 25, 1980; Banraibari, Beltali and Belchari massacres of June 26, 1981; Thilafang, Ashalong, Guran-gapara, Tabalchari and Barnala massacres of September 1981; Bhushanchara massacres of May 1984; Matiranga Lakshmichari, Panchari, Khagrachari and Dighinala massacres of May and June 1986; Baghai-chari massacres of August 8-9, 1988; and Langadu massacres of May 4, 1989 are just a few of the innumerable slaughters committed by the Bangladeshi security forces in league with the Bengali Muslim settlers.

To depopulate the

tribal villages, the Bangladeshi security forces and the new Bengali settlers jointly attack villages, loot all valuables, rape tribal women and girls, torture villagers, burn houses, abduct beautiful tribal girls and convert them to Islam against their will, desecrate and destroy Buddhist places of worship, and kill tribal men, women, children as well as Buddhist monks. After clearing the area of the indigenous people, the Bengali settlers are resettled there.

As part of the government's programme to systematically annihilate the tribal people, the Bangladeshi regime is depriving the tribal people of job opportunities and the economic benefits of many of the development works. An example of this is the Kaptai hydroelectric dam project which took up about 40% of the best agricultural land in the CHT and displaced some 100,000 plough-land farmers and 50,000 hillside farmers. These people were nominally compensated and no tangible steps were taken to rehabilitate them. No tribal people were hired either in the construction stages or after start-up. And in the end, the tribal people were not given access to this electricity. Similar events have taken place in the fishing industry.

As well, there are few tribal people employed by the government or industry. The Swedish government terminated their involvement in the forest development project in the CHT because the Bangladeshi government refused to employ tribals in that project. Similarly, the Australian government withdrew its aid for the Chengi Valley Road project because the Bangladeshi regime was using the road to launch military campaigns against the tribal civilians and open the interior to the Bengali immigrants.

On May 26, 1979, Brigadier Hannan and Lt. Col. Salam declared in public, "We want the land, but not the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts." In keeping with this policy, the Bangladeshi armed forces are Bengalizing and Islamizing the tribals' homeland by systematically exterminating and terrorizing the 10 ethnic groups of indigenous people—Chakma, Marmas, Tripura, Chak, Khyang, Khumi, Murung, Lushai, Panko, and Boam—who are Buddhist, Hindu and Christian by faith (all tribal people are non-Muslims). Tibeto-Burman (Mongoloid) by race and culture, and by resettling the members of the majority community of Bangladesh in their place. The indigenous people are being forced to flee the area. As a result of the Matiranga, Lakshmichari, Panchari, Khagrachari and Dighinala massacres of May and June 1986 alone, some 50,000

Chakma refugees were forced to seek refuge in the Tripura state of India. It is interesting to note that the Bangladeshi government is extremely reluctant to repatriate them.

These atrocities are a gross violation of the CHT Regulation of 1900 which recognizes the CHT as the homeland of the tribal people and protects their political, economic, social and cultural rights. Outsiders are forbidden to settle or buy land in the CHT, and anyone found guilty of doing anything prejudicial to the interest of the indigenous population could be arrested, punished and expelled from the area. During British rule, almost all officers of the CHT administration were tribal people, the local police force was mainly recruited from the resident population, and though the administration remained in the hands of the British Deputy Commissioner, the people of the CHT virtually ruled themselves.

The people of the CHT have appealed to the Bangladeshi government to resolve the CHT crisis through constitutional and political means. All of the proposals put forth by the people have been turned down. The present military dictator, Gen. Hossain Mohammed Ershad, is persecuting the tribal people with more vigor and Islamic zealotry than any of his predecessors, which has resulted in 60,000 Chakma refugees seeking shelter in India during his regime.

Under tremendous international pressure, the Ershad government reluctantly held the first round of talks with tribal leaders on October 21, 1985. Demands submitted by the leaders from the CHT included: 1) the removal of non-tribal settlers from the CHT, 2) the withdrawal of all Bangladeshi armed forces, including the non-tribal CHT police force, from the area, 3) provincial autonomy for the CHT with a separate legislature, 4) adequate financial help for the rehabilitation of the tribal refugees and the return of their ancestral villages and farmlands to them, and 5) the implementation of these measures under the auspices of the U.N. These demands were refused on the grounds that provincial autonomy is outside the framework of the unitary system of the Bangladesh Constitution. It was agreed, however, that the issue was a political and national problem and therefore required a political rather than military solution. Both sides agreed to meet on December 25, 1985. Unfortunately, the Bangladeshi officials declined to show up without stating their reasons.

International pressure forced the regime to engage in a second, third, fourth and fifth round of talks with the CHT leaders. Unfortunately though, no meaningful results were attained.

As a people, the indigenous population of the CHT has a right to exist and to preserve their identity. Their existence in the Islamic State of Bangladesh is possible only if provincial autonomy is granted. Thus the constitution must be amended to restore the tribal people's right to self-determination.

The government responded with an proposal (Rupa Rekha) which was rejected by the tribal delegation on the grounds that it did not safeguard the interests of the indigenous population at all.

After the fifth dialogue, the regime used force to "persuade" the tribal people to accept the government proposal. The army was ordered to carry out the Baghaichari massacres on August 8-9, 1988, in which 500 civilians were slaughtered. During these attacks, army officers threatened the people saying that the tribal people of all other areas would meet the same fate if they did not accept the Rupa Rekha.

The indigenous delegation modified its demands to a Scottish type of autonomy rather than provincial autonomy at the sixth round of talks on December 14-15, 1988. This move served to satisfy the terms and conditions of the government delegation at previous meetings and could be implemented without amending the constitution. Still, the demands were rejected, thus calling into question the regime's sincerity in solving the issue, and giving rise to speculation that the government had only entered into the negotiations to put on a show for aid-donor countries. During the period from 1972 to 1984, Bangladesh received a total of U.S.\$ 11 billion in foreign aid. In 1985, military spending in the country reached U.S.\$ 226 million while U.S.\$ 90 million worth of arms were imported. The administration acknowledges its complete dependence on foreign aid. A large portion of this aid is spent on the army rather than development. Indeed, one third of the army is deployed in the CHT.

The Bangladeshi government forced certain tribal leaders to sign the draft of the District Council Law on October 5, 1988 under duress, and abruptly introduced four bills based on the Rupa Rekha to the National Parliament on February 15, 1989. These laws were imposed on the people against their will, and the killing and terrorizing tactics of the government continue. Thus, the people of the CHT have rejected these laws and urged the international community to bring pressure to bear on the Bangladeshi regime to nullify them.

The people of the CHT urgently need your help in their struggle for survival. We are very

grateful to all the humanitarian organizations whose concern and assistance has provided a hope for our survival against the continuing atrocities and oppression.

P.J. Chakma

A Chakma Representative

FROM A CRY FOR DEMOCRACY TO A SMILE FOR DEMOCRACY IN BURMA

For the past 27 years, Burma has been suffering from a political, social and economical paralysis under Ne Win's military authoritarian rule. The nationalization of factories, industries, banks, and shops, the repeated demonetizations of currency notes without compensation, and the mismanagement and the exercise of excess authority were the main causes that broke the back-bone of Burma's national economy. Ne Win and his lackey generals have succeeded in transforming Burma known in the past as the "Rice Bowl of Asia" into the present "Rice Hole of Asia". The United Nations gave Burma the dubious honour of Least Developed Country status. Several peaceful demonstrations have taken place all over Burma due to the political, social and economical dissatisfaction. Whenever and wherever public demonstrations occurred, the military regime responded with violence resulting in an unknown number of dead, wounded, tortured and-detained. Curfews and martial law were immediately imposed; and the Universities, Colleges and schools were closed indefinitely.

The recent national uprising in Burma from March to September 1988 was the most outstanding and challenging in the young history of independent Burma, the results of which can be portrayed by two faces: with a crying face one ponders:

- the death of unarmed civilians, including students, women, school children and Buddhist monks which numbered 8000;
- the number of wounded, tortured, arrested and those who "simply" disappeared is unknown;



- over 10,000 students and youths including monks have been forced to flee to the jungles at the Burmese border due to the intense brutality of the military regime;
- thousands of public servants including diplomats and military personnel were suspended, forced to resign or dismissed from their offices due to their participation in peaceful demonstrations. With a smiling face one can ponder:
- the resignation of Ne Win from the State Presidency and one party-chairmanship;
- the resignation of his lackey successor General Sein Lwin (well known as the "Butcher of Burma") after 17 days in office
- the ouster of Dr. Maung Maung, the puppet

civilian successor of Sein Lwin by Ne Win's Defence Minister, General Saw Maung, after about four weeks of full-blown demonstrations;

- the abolition of the one-party system;
- the recognition of a multi-party system;
- a promise of multi-party elections;
- a narrow beam of the light of democracy is now barely visible after 27 years of political, social and economical darkness.

At present Burma is already bankrupt with a foreign debt of about 5,3 billion US dollars and a debt servicing-ratio approaching almost 100%. Hence the present military regime, to prolong its survival, is cynically selling away what Burma has left, such as young teakwood, fishing rights, gems, crops, etc. The most regrettable thing is that the cynicism of the Burmese military regime has immediately found ready partners amongst its neighbours, such as Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, as well as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and Australia. The money thus obtained will just prolong the cruelty of the military regime and equip the bloodstained army with more powerful Swedish-made Gustafrockets and deadly weapons produced by the West German Fritz Werner arms and ammunitions factory in the country so that they remain prepared to shoot unarmed civilians in future demonstrations.

In order to counteract the present military regime, an underground opposition front was formed in November 1988, namely the **Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB)**, consisting of 10 ethnic national organizations under the auspices of the National Democratic Front (NDF) and 13 non-NDF organizations including the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), All Burma Young Buddhist Monks' Union, International Committee for Restoration of Democracy in Burma (CRDB), Overseas Burmese Organizations, etc. This national-flavoured DAB was formed objectively:

- to work for the achievement of internal peace in Burma,
- to help restore democracy to Burma and
- to bring about the establishment of a genuine Federal Republic of Burma.

The DAB hopes for support and encouragement from the democratic international community.

NWE AUNG

Chairman

*Committee for Restoration of Democracy in Burma (CRDB),
West Germany*

Probe in rape of Burmese student on Thai border continues

MAE SOT, Tak—Police yesterday continued their investigations into the rape of a Burmese student as the deadline for dissident Burmese students staying in Thailand expires today.

An official in the Mae Sot prosecutors office, Somsawat Chomchuen said officers finished investigating the woman 24, a final-year law student from Rangoon University, who was assaulted and raped last Wednesday night by three men.

The officers continued their questioning of the two witnesses one of whom is the victim's husband.

Somsawat said the three suspects, Mana Kam-ngarm, 40, a traffic policeman of Mae Sot district, Thirawat Charnprasert, 26, and Thaweesak Ruangwat, 22, who were rejected bail on Wednesday are still in custody at Mae Sot police station.

Mae Sot court will try to speed up the case by having the suspects charged and stand trial on the same day.

The government set today as the deadline for dissident Burmese students to leave Thailand. From tomorrow students taking refuge in Thailand will be considered illegal immigrants.

Burmese rape case forwarded to court

MAE SOT, Tak — Police have finished investigating the three suspects in the alleged rape of a Burmese woman allowing the case to be

forwarded to the court later this week, a senior Mae Sot policeman said yesterday.

Pol Lt Col Thongbai Sidadej said the investigation report has been forwarded to Tak police chief Pol Col Amphon Ngarm-chit for examination.

Late last month the 24-year-old Burmese woman together with her husband and a friend were walking to a night market when they were stopped at a police booth by three men who asked to see their identity cards. The men locked her husband and friend in the police booth before forcing her to nearby bungalow where they assaulted and raped her.

The three suspects in custody, Mana Kam-ngarm, 40, a traffic policeman of Mae Sot district, Thirawat Charnprasert, 26, and Thaweesak Ruangwat, 22, have denied the rape charge throughout the investigation, Thongbai said.

Thongbai said police officer Mana has been suspended from duty and would be fired if found guilty.

The three Burmese are not students as was earlier reported in the press. The woman is a law graduate from Rangoon University and has one child.

Tak police chief Amphon had earlier said the woman may be charged under Thai immigration laws if she was found to have illegally entered Thailand.

Last Friday was the deadline set by Thai authorities for dissident Burmese to return to Burma. Since April 1 students taking refuge in Thailand will be considered illegal immigrants and be charged under the law.

Meanwhile, Thongbai Thongpao, a well-known human rights lawyer yesterday said he would act as the woman's lawyer in the rape case.

He said he would also defend her if she is charged with illegal entry. Thongbai said the woman had the right to take refuge here under the Human Rights Law No 14'1 because she had fled her country fearing political persecution.

The Nation Bangkok
05.04.1989

**Friends of women is currently assisting in this case.*

Peace Work on Burma Issue

A Proposal to Peace Brigades International

The Situation

In August 1988, immediately after Saw Maung took power and killed many thousands of people, mostly students, in Rangoon, approximately 10,000 people fled to the border areas, (India, China and Siam, and settled in camps in the minority-controlled areas of the Kachin, Karen, Kareni, and Mon.

At present, after 10 months, fewer than 3,000 remain in 11 camps along the Thai-Burma border. Some have gone back to Rangoon for various reasons including the hardship of life in the camps and the possibility of making connections with friends fighting in Rangoon. At the same time many have come or returned to the border because they were unable to find security within their country. Political activity is severely restricted. Secret policy follow their every move. From the latest news, even a major opposition leader who is openly campaigning for the promised election has been badly harassed. A greater number of students and activists, then, are likely to join the camps on the border.

When these students first arrived at the camps, they had high expectations of an armed struggle to get rid of the oppressive regime and to return home within a short time. But arms are not available at the border. Even the minorities themselves have scarcely enough for their own armies. As a result, most of them end up doing nothing in the camps except getting malaria which is prevalent in the jungle areas. Though a small number have joined the minority armies and others are still expecting to get weapons from somewhere unknown to them, the leaders and many others have become more realistic and are looking for other alternatives and ways to improve their present situation. Returning home is not a viable option for many in the near future.



NGO Involvement

NGOs in Siam have been active on this issue. At present, supporting groups have been formed to aid in coordination in three areas.

1. Humanitarian aid: NGOs, mostly foreign, with experience in other refugee situations, have formed a consortium called "the Burma Coordination Group." They have raised funds which will cover the basic needs of the student camps over the next year.

2. Political Pressure: The Thai human rights NGOs, particularly the Federal Student Union of Thai, have been very active and subsequently many other Asian NGOs have joined them. so that now an International Action Committee for Democracy in Burma has been formed with a secretariat in Bangkok.

3. Educational Assistance. The Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development has started a few programs, e.g. basic medical training, supplying books and writing materials to keep the participants mentally active, exposure to some of the present world realities and peace negotiation training for the minorities.

In short these are the efforts mostly from within Siam to support democracy, justice and peace in Burma. But their work is restricted by the Thai political milieu, because the prolonged

ethnic conflicts between the Rangoon regime and the minorities have resulted in huge vested interests among some factions of the Thai Military-Politicians. And the recent uprising in Rangoon has opened an opportunity for the same groups to bargain directly with the present regime in Rangoon to gain economic advantages from the rich natural resources of Burma. So the longer the conflicts remain the more these vested interests escalate. Any move for peace means moving against these interests. That is why the Thai NGOs have to be very careful and are limited by local political realities and by their own limited experience in large-scale peace work.

A Request for Peace Brigade International

Because of the limitations of local NGOs and the quest for alternatives to a violent solution on the part of the Burmese students and minority freedom fighters, a team of experienced peace workers from the international community would be most welcome to work for reconciliation in this region.

1. Initially, the group can work in Bangkok to study available information and meet concerned people.

2. The second step would entail getting acquainted with parties involved. To gain understanding and the trust of the victims of the situation, it would be ideal for some of the group to stay within the student and minority camps.

3. One of the main responsibilities of the team would be peace education which should include areas such as:

- peace negotiation, both principles and case studies
- non-violent struggle, principles, strategies, tactics and examples of successes and failures
- world trends, mainstream and alternative
- basic political studies; what are the meanings of different present days "isms," both in theory and practice

- Advanced English language training for leaders and potential leaders. A better command of English would provide better chance for making contact with outside sources and understanding the realities within and outside their country.

4. Another main task of this peace team is to provide opportunities for mediation, which is badly needed even within the students movement itself, not to mention among the different ethnic minorities. This is a rather longterm task which depends on the above-mentioned and other causes and conditions.

5. In order to help end the 45-year-old conflict, at least one or two main people are requested to stay for 2-3 years while other members can be replaced earlier if required.

**INEB Secretariate
Bangkok**

Relief and Rehabilitation Program in Sri Lanka:

A Proposal to Peace Brigades International

Background and Rational

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka which led to the outbursts of communal violence and escalated, finally to civil war (since 1983) is a tragedy which has affected the entire population of this country, regardless of religion, culture and race. Many thousands (6,000 by official estimates) have lost their lives, while almost one million have been displaced, their houses destroyed, and children malnourished. Many solutions have been proposed and tried but to no avail. Instead of settling the problem, military measures frequently employed by the government have jeopardized the people and the country.

In 1987, the prospect of a settlement to the ethnic conflict seemed likely with the signing of the Indo-Lankan Peace Accord. In conforming to this agreement, many Tamil militant groups surrendered their arms to the government and

the Indian troops which arrived in the North and East of Sri Lanka as a Peace Keeping Force. It was the hope of the Sri Lankan people both Sinhalese and Tamil, that the Indian Troops would end the civil war. Within a few months, however, the people realized that the slaughter and hostilities were continuing, especially in the area under the mandate of the IPKF. The "Search and Destroy" policy of the IPKF aimed to suppress the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a Tamil militant group which did not give up its arms, inflicted great suffering on Sinhalese, Muslims and Tamils alike. Being incited by the LTTE's counter attack, the IPKF used stronger measures on a



larger scale indiscriminately. Civilian deaths and injuries have occurred in the course of crossfire and as a result of aerial attacks. Vast numbers of people, mostly Tamils, were displaced. In Jaffna alone, 350,000 residents, nearly half of its population, became refugees within the few months after the peace accord. Last year it was estimated that at least 800,000 Sri Lankans in the northern and eastern provinces had to leave their homes and seek refuge in such places as schools, temples. Large numbers of people fled further to districts in the Central province (i.e. Anuradhapura) where no Indian Troops are stationed.

Since these places of refuge were totally unprepared for such a vast influx, people were then confined under poor conditions. Many thousands were camping out, often in the open, with inadequate facilities. Children were, and are, malnourished and left without appropriate

medical care. Government aid to these displaced persons is insufficient while only a few voluntary agencies are concerned about these terrible conditions.

Despite the new policy of the Sri Lankan government which has requested the withdrawal of the Indian troops, the situation of this country would not improve dramatically in the short term. Since uncertainty and insecurity still prevail, the number of refugees will not decrease significantly. Those who returned to their homes are in need of assistance to repair their houses and resume their normal lives.

Relief work is badly needed for victims of the war in Sri Lanka. There are many roles that the international community can play to encourage peace for the Sri Lankan people. Refugee camps seem to be appropriate places for international voluntary agencies to start these programmes. Despite a certain degree of instability, it may still be possible for organizations to extend their activities to villages that have been affected by the fighting.

Medical care and other necessities, including technical skills and appropriate education are essential for rehabilitation. The international community can share hope which is no less important than these facilities, with the Sri Lankan people. In Sri Lanka people lost not only their friends and family, and their properties, but their hope as well. People fall victim to the feeling of despair; despair about their life and their nation. Concern and active involvement of the international community, however, would light their hope and encourage them to participate for the brighter future of their own country.

Once a greater degree of stability is affirmed relief and rehabilitation programmes can be extended to people outside refugee camps, to draw Sinhalese and Tamil to work together in restoring their houses. Such initiatives will lead to a wider scale participation for reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

II Organization

Considering the religious and ethnic nature of the current conflict in Sri Lanka, relief and rehabilitation programmes should be undertaken, at least in the first phase, by such international organizations with no specific religious identities, such as Peace Brigades International. Volunteers with Buddhist and Hindu backgrounds, however, can participate under PBI's umbrella. The

programmes can start with a core of 5 people working for at least a year. Other volunteers may stay for shorter periods.

Location

Appropriate locations for the programmes to begin are Jaffna and Vavuniya (in the Northern Province) Trincomalee and Batticaloa (in the Eastern Province) and Anurathapura (in the Central Province).

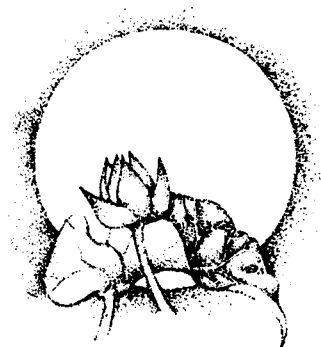
Activities

The first phase of activity should take place in refugee camps; to provide medicine, and skills for medical care (physical and psychological) and those needed for restoring and improving the physical and social surroundings (both in the camps and their localities).

The second phase of activity should be geared towards rehabilitating people. The following activities would be appropriate.

1. Rebuilding and repairing houses.
2. Rebuilding and repairing Hindu temples.
3. Rebuilding and repairing Buddhist Viharas.
4. Repairing hospital facilities.
5. Setting up day care centers for malnourished children in the villages and training the youths from those villages to look after them.
6. Digging and repairing wells.
7. Clearing overgrown farmland for new or returning tenants, and aiding in the start-up of farms.
8. Organizing international family-to-family and school-to-school financial assistance.
9. Meeting local people, speaking in schools, promoting understanding between the two communities, seeking involvement among Sinhalese and Tamil communities in the spirit of volunteers.

**The TICD Secretariate
Bangkok**



IS IT TRUE NEVER WOMEN IN THE

Is it true that the Buddha never wanted women in the Sangha? This is the prevailing attitude Buddhist women face when they try to seek ordination, especially in the Theravada tradition.

What brought about such a belief? This belief and many other negative misconceptions about women came from erroneous interpretations of certain passages of the Buddhist texts.

The first incident on record is the Buddha's refusal to accept women in the Order; however he eventually came to accept them when he was confronted with Ananda's question as to whether women were capable of spiritual enlightenment or not. This is very crucial to this issue. It shows that he accepted that women are equally capable to attain spiritual enlightenment. Such acceptance was unique: never before in human history had any religious leader recognized women in this way.

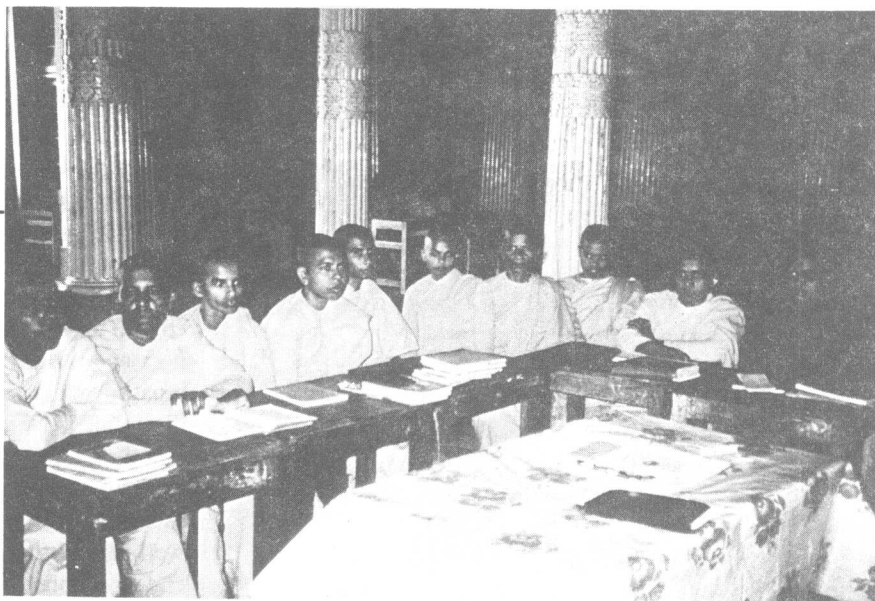
The Buddha's first refusal must be seen within the social and historical context of his time in order to understand the situation. To join the Order of that time meant to lead a homeless life and survive on alms given by villagers. The first woman who asked to join the Order was a queen, the Buddha's aunt and step-mother, the person closest to him next to his own mother. He was very concerned. It was almost impossible for him to imagine the queen living in the forest and going out begging for food. It was out of his compassion that he did not want her to lead a most uncomfortable life. However, this queen and her female followers had proved their sincerity and determination by following him from one village to another. After reconsidering the issues carefully, he was certain that any possible obstacles could be overcome, and thus he accepted them.¹ His initial refusal has often unacademically

THAT THE BUDDHA WANTED SANGHA?

been used to justify barring women from entering the Sangha

After accepting women in the Order, he set down 8 important rules (Gurudharmas)² for women to observe. In short, these rules were designed to keep the women's Order under the guidance and protection of the male Order. Again this can be better understood by looking at the social and historical contexts of that time. The Order was nothing but a group of men from Indian society full of social bias, etc. The Buddha had already done the unthinkable, namely accepting women in the Order, and declaring their spiritual equality. In order for the two groups to live harmoniously, for functional purposes, the sisters who came later must follow the brothers—namely the monks. The Buddha was well aware of the shortcomings of the monks, therefore the 8 important rules were given to the women, not to suppress them but rather to protect them.

As it turned out, the nuns were not treated as younger sisters as planned by the Buddha. The monks often took advantage of the nuns. There was a case of one young monk who out of laziness would accept alms from a 120-year old nun. This went on for 3 consecutive days. The old nun collapsed on the third day, and only then was the case brought to the Buddha. Hence from that time on, the monks were not allowed to accept alms from nuns. There are many similar rules for the monks to observe which protect the nuns. Yet there are still prevalent beliefs that the nuns have to observe more rules than the monks because the Buddha intended to make it more difficult for them, so as to prevent women from



joining the Order. Such understanding reflects nothing but a great deal of ignorance—a lack of understanding of the issue, and it is to rationalize one's prejudices.

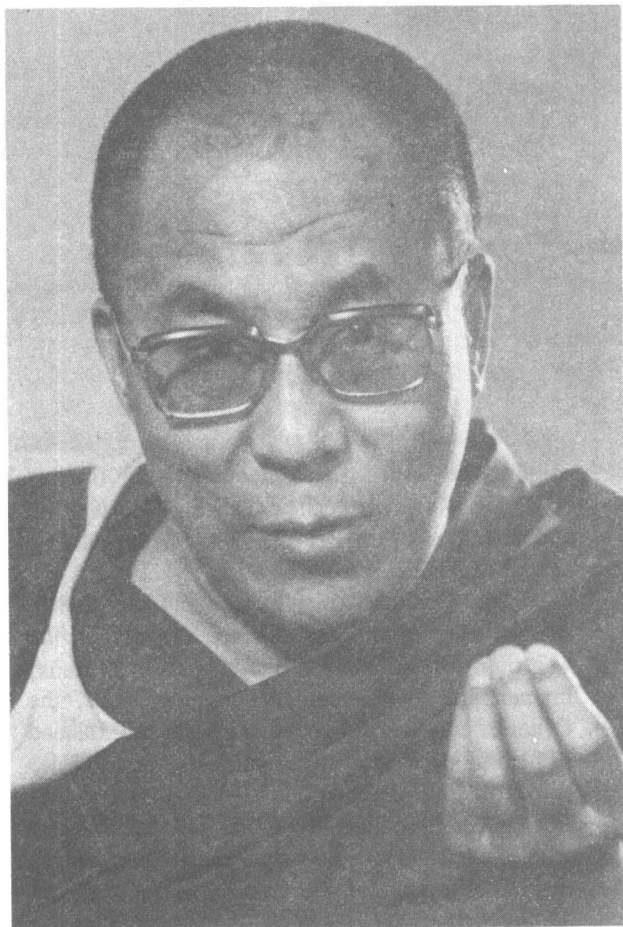
The Buddha made it clear that the growth or decline of Buddhism depends directly on the 4 groups of Buddhists, namely—monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. In some countries, the Order of nuns has not yet been introduced. Instead of helping each other to establish the nuns' Order to fulfill the completion of the 4 groups of Buddhists so as to strengthen Buddhism as a whole, we find many so-called Buddhists resisting the establishment of the nuns' Order. How can we strengthen the Buddhist communities if we do not help each other? Where is our Buddhist understanding? Where is our compassion? Let us manifest these principles in practice. Let us have more compassion and understanding for our nuns who have been ill treated throughout our Buddhist history.

May peace and inner strength be with us all.

CHATSUMARN KABILSINGH

¹I have discussed this in full in my book on *A Comparative Study of Bhikkhuni Paṭimokkha*, p.21 ff.

World Religions for World Peace



I maintain that every major religion of the world—Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism—has similar ideals of love, the same goal of benefiting humanity through spiritual practice, and the same effect of making their followers into better human beings. All religions teach moral precepts for perfecting the functions of mind, body, and speech. All teach us not to lie or steal or take others' lives, and so on. The common goal of all moral precepts laid down by the great teachers of humanity is unselfishness.

The great teachers wanted to lead their followers away from the paths of negative deeds caused by ignorance and to introduce them to paths of goodness.

All religions agree upon the necessity to control the undisciplined mind that harbours selfishness and other roots of trouble, and each teaches a path leading to a spiritual state that is peaceful, disciplined, ethical, and wise. It is in this sense that I believe all religions have essentially the same message. Differences of dogma may be ascribed to differences of time and circumstance as well as cultural influences; indeed, there is no end to scholastic argument when we consider the purely metaphysical side of religion. However, it is much more beneficial to try to implement in daily life the shared precepts for goodness taught by all religions rather than to argue about minor differences in approach.

There are many different religions to bring comfort and happiness to humanity in much the same way as there are particular treatments for different diseases. For, all religions endeavour in their own way to help living beings avoid misery and gain happiness. And, although we can find causes for preferring certain interpretations of religious truths, there is much greater cause for unity, stemming from the human heart. Each religion works in its own way to lessen human suffering and contribute to world civilization. Conversion is not the point. For instance, I do not think of converting others to Buddhism or merely furthering the Buddhist cause. Rather, I try to think of how I as a Buddhist humanitarian can contribute to human happiness.

While pointing out the fundamental similarities between world religions, I do not advocate one particular religion at the expense of all others, nor do I seek a new 'world religion'. All the different religions of the world are needed to enrich human experience and world civilization. Our human minds, being of different calibre and disposi-

tion, need different approaches to peace and happiness. It is just like food. Certain people find Christianity more appealing, others prefer Buddhism because there is no creator in it and everything depends upon your own actions. We can make similar arguments for other religions as well. Thus, the point is clear: humanity needs all the world's religions to suit the ways of life, diverse spiritual needs, and inherited national traditions of individual human beings.

It is from this perspective that I welcome efforts being made in various parts of the world for better understanding among religions. The need for this is particularly urgent now. If all religions make the betterment of humanity their main concern, then they can easily work together in harmony for world peace. Interfaith understanding will bring about the unity necessary for all religions to work together. However, although this is indeed an important step, we must remember that there are no quick or easy solutions. We cannot hide the doctrinal differences that exist among various faiths, nor can we hope to replace the existing religions by a new universal belief. Each religion has its own distinctive contributions to make, and each in its own way is suitable to a particular group of people as they understand life. The world needs them all.

There are two primary tasks facing religious practitioners who are concerned with world peace. First, we must promote better interfaith understanding so as to create a workable degree of unity among all religions. This may be achieved in part by respecting each other's beliefs and by emphasizing our common concern for human well-being. Second, we must bring about a viable consensus on basic spiritual values that touch every human heart and enhance general human happiness. This means we must emphasize the common denominator of all world religions-humanitarian ideals. These two steps will enable us to act both individually and together to create the necessary spiritual conditions for world peace.

We practitioners of different faiths can work together for world peace when we view different religions as essentially instruments to develop a good heart—love and respect for others, a true sense of community. The most important thing is to look at the purpose of religion and not at the details of theology or metaphysics, which can lead to mere intellectualism. I believe that all the major religions of the world can contribute to world peace and work together for the benefit of humanity

if we put aside subtle metaphysical differences, which are really the internal business of each religion.

Despite the progressive secularization brought about by worldwide modernization and despite systematic attempts in some parts of the world to destroy spiritual values, the vast majority of humanity continues to believe in one religion or another. The undying faith in religion, evident even under irreligious political systems, clearly demonstrates the potency of religion as such. This spiritual energy and power can be purposefully used to bring about the spiritual conditions necessary for world peace. Religious leaders and humanitarians all over the world have a special role to play in this respect.

Whether we will be able to achieve world peace or not, we have no choice but to work towards that goal. If our minds are dominated by anger, we will lose the best part of human intelligence—wisdom, the ability to decide between right and wrong. Anger is one of the most serious problems facing the world today.

H.H. The Dalai Lama
taken from

A Human Approach to World Peace

Thai Dilemmas

I think the Thai dilemma at the national level is similar to that of other countries, namely how to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor on the one hand and to adapt the nation to fit in with the regional significance on the other. The Thai government, it appears, has chosen the former i.e. to play a leading role within ASEAN to help solve the Kampuchean conflicts and promote friendship with the three Indochinese States—not for moral or cultural reasons, but merely for economic motives. The Thai Prime Minister even said that “We should change the battle field into a market place.” The same motives can be seen in the rush to recognize the repressive regime of Burma. To me, this is a very short sighted view and will bring much political and cultural tension to the region in the future.



Likewise ASEAN is becoming more and more like JASEAN i.e. we just blindly follow Japan, which lack moral or cultural leadership. The so-called catching up with NICS is another dilemma for Siam and SEA. The only country in the region which is really a NIC is Singapore, which is very much disliked and distrusted by her neighbours.

I agree with the statement that change at a national level must first of all look to its own cultural roots, with humility and self criticism; otherwise it could breed a kind of ultra nationalism. We should certainly look at regional and global imperatives, but must not blindly follow the rich, to be swallowed up by consumerism and gross material success at the expense of moral standards. That is, we cannot afford to ignore basic human rights within our own nation, or even in other countries. The Japanese have no right to maltreat the Koreans in Japan or the Chinese, the Tibetans. To me this is not a matter of be left to internal politics, but basic human rights which concerns us all.

The success of NICS and the Japanese can infact be linked to neoconfucianism, i.e. we must work hard for our own well being—our family, our nation and our culture—as the

barbarians outside our boundaries can be left to suffer. The other countries are of interest to us because they have natural resources for us to plunder, they have cheap labour for us to exploit and they are a good potential market for our products.

Confucianism in fact produces only scholars, philosophers, writers, poets and professors, not intellectuals.

Intellectuals are not, of course, superior beings, they are the ones who can be critical of the establishment fundamentally—be it the government in power or the leading companies who control public opinion. They need to search for new paradigms in national, regional, and global development. An intellectual must act like a prophet, not like a priest who only wants to serve the status quo.

Unless we seek an alternative form of development seriously, we shall not find one; instead we will blindly follow the rich and the powerful who are everywhere morally bankrupt.

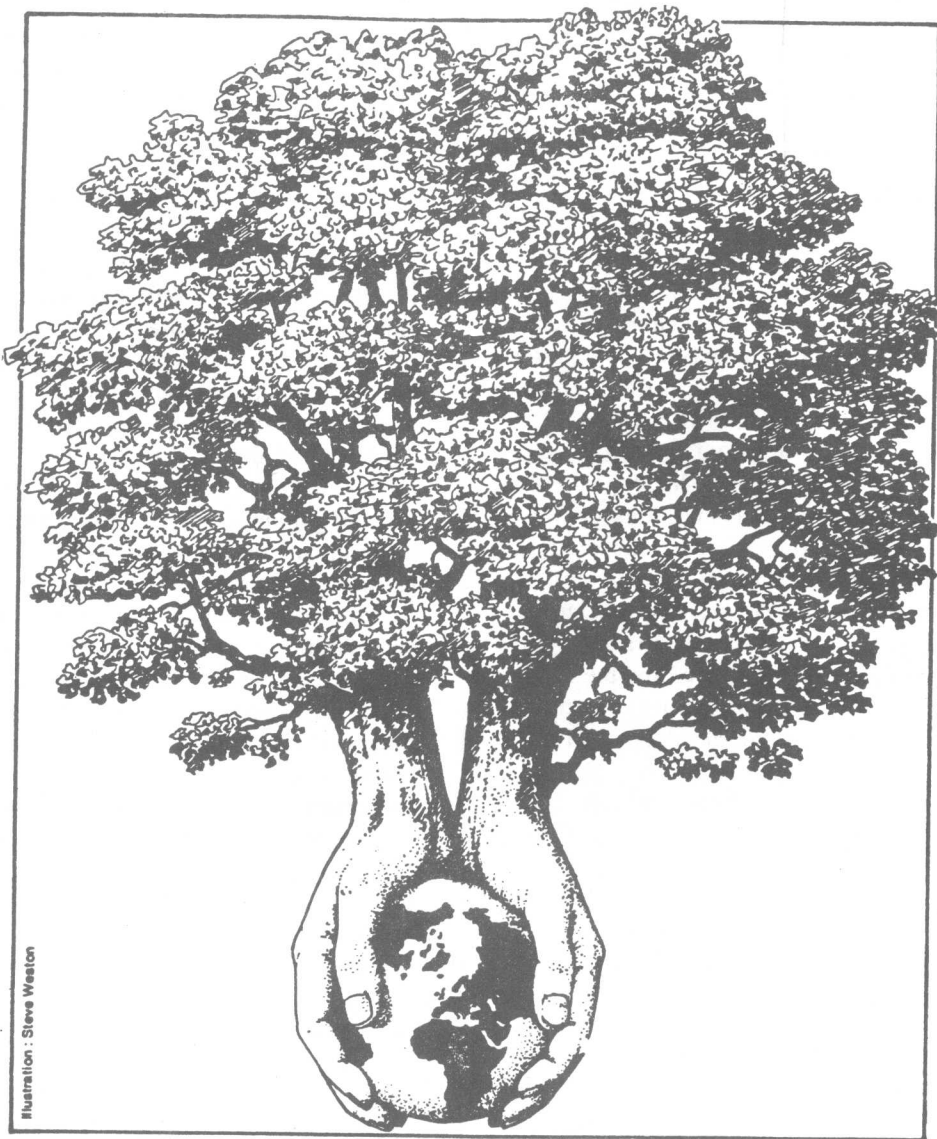
My answer as a Buddhist is that we should take the poor much more seriously and confront the problem of suffering mindfully. We must take time to examine ourselves, not to rush towards success or to adapt our country to fit into the regional or global destiny, which is like a fast train running without a clear direction. Only then is it possible for the world and the region to become subordinate to local and individual levels (of development).

Power, wealth and technology may then become less significant than morality and spiritual commitment to eliminate hatred, greed and delusion.



(A Talk by S. Sivaraksa at An Asian Cultural Forum, Keidaren Guest House, Japan. 19 April 1989)

Forestry In Thailand: The Logging Ban And Its Consequences



The forest conservation movement in Thailand, which has been growing steadily in the last few years, achieved its most striking success so far on January 10th, 1989, with the approval by the Cabinet of Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan

of a nationwide logging ban, possibly the first of its kind in the world.

The ban, which went into effect on January 18th, was the result of public pressure of three types. The first consisted of increasingly strident

protests from rural villagers, particularly in the hilly north of the country, against the timber companies' destruction of catchment areas and traditional irrigation systems crucial for agricultural subsistence. The second was a campaign among conservationists and others against a 1988 Judicial Council ruling that unexpectedly reactivated logging concession agreements in some of the country's most important wildlife sanctuaries and other protected areas. The third (and most decisive politically) derived from the widespread public shock and outrage at deforestation-related mudslides in South Thailand in November 1988, which took the lives of hundreds and buried villages and farmland under metres of logs, uprooted trees, and sand.

Grassroots Movement

With the effects of decades of commercial forest exploitation increasingly threatening the well-being of the rural majority, historical conditions were ripe for the growth of a grassroots movement powerful enough to force the Government into defying the politically well-connected logging interests. By last year, with forest cover down to 18 per cent of the land area from 53 per cent in 1961, few Thais at any level of society had been able to shield themselves from recognition of the connections between deforestation, and erosion, floods, and drought. There was thus perhaps more potential for the growth of environmental politics than in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, or Brazil, where tree cover remains more extensive and the consequences of large-scale deforestation are less a matter of everyday experience for the population as a whole.

The Thai ban is not without loopholes which will facilitate a certain amount of cheating by timber firms for another year or so. And perfect enforcement will not be easy. Nevertheless, it will be reasonably difficult for logging companies to get around the ban, or to make exaggerated demands for compensation. Part of this is due to the specificity of the clauses of the laws themselves, some of which were modelled directly on environmentalist's suggestions. (One clause states, for example, that timber companies wishing to remove logs remaining in the forest must prove that they were legally felled prior to the ban; another voids pre-existing concessions in any forest gazetted as a wildlife sanctuary.) More important, however, will be the vigilance of the public and press, which will now have a green light to agitate against surrep-

titious activities by commercial loggers. Parliamentarians, army officers and other bureaucrats, for their part, in the foreseeable future will be reluctant to risk their political careers by openly trying to overturn the popular ban.

Switching to Other Sources

The victory over commercial logging is rapidly helping to bring other environmental issues to the fore. Since the momentum began to build-up to stop domestic logging, Thai businessmen and bureaucrats have been vigorously seeking new sources of timber for the country's thousands of sawmills from Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, even the Ivory Coast. The challenge to Thai environmentalists is to suggest ways of reducing demand for tropical timber at home and to offer renewed support for forest conservation attempts abroad, in order to ensure that Thailand's forest problems are not simply exported elsewhere.

Multinational Involvement

Another challenge is posed by the incipient attempt of multinational corporations and their allies in international organizations to take more of a hand in the 'conservation' of protected areas. Taking advantage of the current climate of concern for tropical nature, many companies are mapping out ways of getting a lock on endangered genetic raw material in primary forests (as well as the knowledge of forest natives about its uses), so that it can one day be turned into patented agribusiness, pharmaceutical, or biotechnological commodities. Already, ambitious "biodiversity preservation" plans are being drawn up for Thai and other Southeast Asian forests which will bring together bodies such as the World Resources Institute, Weyerhaeuser, European pharmaceutical companies, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, USAID, World Wide Fund for Nature, and various national governments. Grassroots-oriented environmental campaigners, who see risk both to democracy and to nature in allowing such organizations to take the control of the forests away from the local peoples who have the most interest in preserving, them quickly are likely to have to reach an agreement on how to handle this issue.

Eucalyptus Plantations

Environmentalists will also have their work cut out in preventing conservationist sentiment from legitimizing the seizure of community land by industrial wood companies. Now that logging is officially

'out' and reforestation 'in' in Thailand, both domestic and multinational corporations are rushing to plant fast-growing eucalyptus varieties on whatever land they can rent or buy, hoping to make large profits off paper-pulp or wood-chip exports. In this, they have the blessing of a government eager for foreign exchange and well aware that it itself does not have the resources to reforest the country.

Reforestation For Whom?

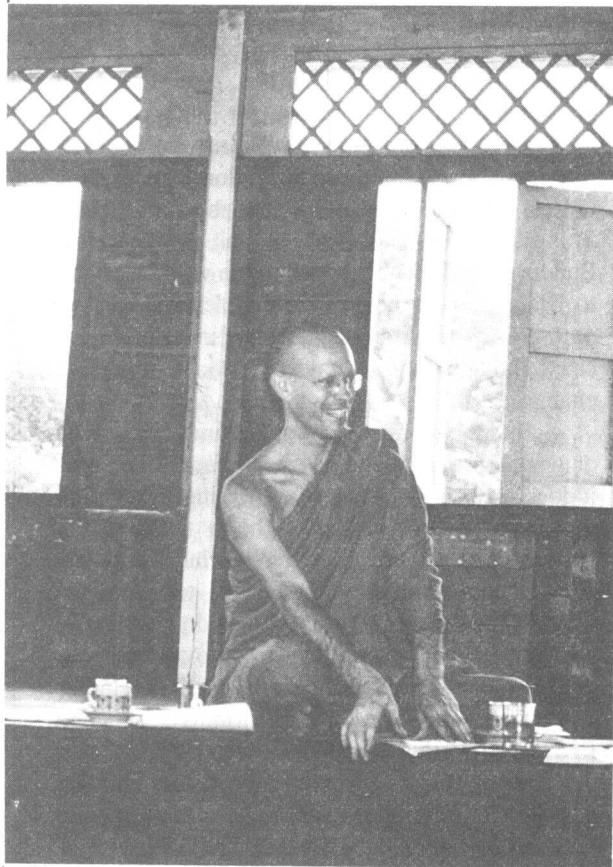
Thai villagers and environmentalists as a whole agree with the goal of reforestation, but want to know: reforestation by whom, with what, and where? Renting so-called "degraded" government forests to private firms for capital-intensive eucalyptus operations, tends to push squatters previously resident on the land to encroach on forest frontiers elsewhere, just as resettlement schemes are doing in Brazil and Indonesia. Without serious attempts at land reform, environmentalists warn, commercial 'reforestation' often only accelerates deforestation. Many squatters are suggesting that they be allowed to keep their land, planting fruit or rubber trees on it for their own benefit and preserving nearby patches of natural forest for the good of the community. Noting that eucalyptus plantations provide few of the benefits rural Thais are accustomed to getting from their varied local forests (including fodder, firewood, mushrooms, game and red ant eggs for protein, herbal medicines, and resins), they point out that eucalyptus plantations overexploit local groundwater and spoil the soil for other crops and trees as well. Environmentalists add that in practice large-scale eucalyptus growers and contractors such as Shell (Netherlands), Siam Cement Company, and a number of Japanese paper interests, tend to promote eucalyptus on large tracts of land which necessarily include patches of either natural forest or relatively fertile land better suited to more conventional crops and orchards.

So far, resistance to commercial reforestation with eucalyptus is confined mainly to environmentalists and villagers who have direct experience of it, particularly in seven or eight provinces in the northeast of the country. Given the current political climate and the deep-rooted conflicts over resource use involved, however, the movement has the potential of spreading more quickly than anticipated.

Larry Lohmann

*Project for Ecological Recovery
Bangkok*

ACTIVISM & SPIRITUALITY



I have been asked to say something about Activism and Spirituality. Please forgive me, but a convenient place to begin is with my own experience.

After toying with ideas about political activism at University, my first real action came in the area of rural development and education, while with the United States Peace Corps here in Siam. That experience brought me in contact with Buddhism, showed me that I could learn and benefit from Buddhism, and led me to taking Buddhism seriously. My participation in this conference completes a circle, then, by bringing me back to activism after a few years of focusing solely on

Buddhism.

There are many people who want to change the world. Whatever their motives, skill, wisdom, or success, we can be sure that there are plenty of them, and we are some of them. My own experience with trying to change the world, or at least the small rural schools and communities where I once worked, showed me that development work was rife with problems. The same holds true for other forms of activism and social change.

I found out that most development workers—both in and out of government—bring many problems to their work. Then, their personal problems become problems for others: partly because these workers don't recognize their problems, partly because they don't know how to deal with them, partly because they don't care. This is where I discovered, bit by bit, that Buddhism had much to offer to the work of trying to bring about a better world. I learned this by seeing how much damage my personal problems caused others as I blundered about trying to change them.

Buddhism aims to solve humanity's fundamental problem and is very practical in how it does so. Its sole concern is suffering and freeing humanity from suffering. It helps us see what our problems actually are, which includes knowing what causes them, and find ways to overcome them. Those of us who are trying to do meaningful social work can use Buddhism to overcome our own problems and better understand the larger troubles. Then we can do much more work, and find more lasting satisfaction and happiness in that work. This requires us to base our thought and action in a deepening understanding and practice of the Buddha's teaching. Otherwise, a complacent, self-satisfied Buddhism would strangle us.

All religions and cultures, not just Buddhists and Asians, face this same challenge of genuinely putting our religion into practice. Most human beings live and work without a true moment-to-moment living of their religion, whatever it may be. If we, as Buddhists, can bring a deep spiritual understanding to our social work, our education work, or whatever kind of service work we do; if we can at the same time use that work as a vehicle for deeper spiritual understanding of ourselves; then we will have something of great value to offer to our friends around the world. It is not enough to cooperate in the social work;

we must cooperate and challenge each other spiritually.

So far this morning, we've heard about a number of rather depressing world problems (political and economic oppression, abuse of women and children, genocide, other human rights abuses, destruction of the environment, and more). Anybody who takes a sensitive and honest look at our world can get easily frustrated by the enormity of some of the things going on. This is one of the dangers of mass communication. It can overwhelm us and lead to frustration and apathy. Or it can lead us into a false sense of understanding, and therefore that something has been done already. We must be very mindful of how we deal with the flood of information and images.

It's very important for us as Buddhist workers not to get frustrated, and not to settle for superficial or simplistic answers. Instead, we must maintain joy and friendliness in our work. This is essential if we are to act with kindness toward everyone. If we get too emotionally involved, regarding child prostitution, for example, then we suffer. And the more we suffer, the less we can do to help the situation. We must free ourselves from suffering if we are to help free others. So we must bring to our work a deepening awareness of our own mental and emotional states. Clearly, Buddhist mindfulness training must go hand-in-hand with our social work.

A crucial observation is that each of the problems we have been discussing is clearly rooted in human selfishness. And this selfishness doesn't manifest only in the powerful and dominant players. It also shows up in all aspects of our own lives: in our work, in our homes, in social groups, in economic structures and political systems, in almost all relationships, and in individuals. All this selfishness comes down to people being too caught up in ego: letting their own wants and needs run the show, letting their own ideas and opinions dominate, playing God.

Buddhism's contribution here is to point out that there is more to be done than simply work on the particular problem which currently troubles us. We must also attend to the causes of the problems. Since ego and egoism are the most fundamental causes, we must find, develop, and demonstrate meaningful ways to counteract the domination of ego and bring it under control. In modern society, selfishness is rampant. In our work, we must develop an alternative, we must

act with more egoless activity, that is, in genuine service. We must limit and remove the tendency to act from and with ego.

I'd like to ask an important question: How can we transform our work into spiritual practice, so that it is not merely a struggle of ego? The so-called Buddhist countries, for example, would be much better off if they had more committed Buddhists. Because our Buddhist education is weak, because many "Buddhists" don't really know what the Buddha taught, our Buddhist practice is lacking. If the generals in Burma and those who oppose them sincerely tried to practice Buddhism, I'm sure the situation there would be much different now. The same can be said for Siam, Japan, and Sri Lanka; and for our Buddhist organizations, temples, and monasteries, too.

How well do we ourselves practice the teachings of morality, meditation, and self-transcendence? In Buddhist practice, we look into ourselves for the sources of the problems and look at others only for what we can do to help. The most crucial need among us in that we Buddhist activists be the best Buddhists we can be, to set an example, as much as possible, for the generals, politicians, businessmen, ordinary people, and each other.

We need "meditation in action" to go along with our more formal and quiescent meditation. The Buddha described the collected and concentrated mind as pure, stable, and active. Meditation is too often misunderstood as being passive, but the only things meant to be passive are thought and ego. In both active daily life meditation and formal sitting meditation, the mind must find right activeness and right non-activity (of ego). Formal and informal meditation should nurture each other when practiced correctly.

Our meditation-in-action involves two integrated aspects, an inner and an outer. These should be understood as not-two. We engage in meaningful activities for the benefit of others (family, community, environment, religion) while constantly being mindful of the birth and activity of ego. At first, we learn to recognize and be honest about the machinations of ego. Then, we learn to ignore its counsels, opinions, expectations, and demands. Thus, we are able to act less selfishly. Concurrently, we examine the ego to see its impermanence, conditioned nature, illusion, and voidness, so that we become

more and more free of this ugly knot of twisted mental energy.

One of the beauties of this understanding of meditation is that it helps bridge some of the divisions that have arisen in Buddhism: Mahayana versus Theravada, lay versus ordained, worldly versus spiritual. We must develop perspectives that heal the divisions within Buddhism. Layfolk and monks are too far separated from each other. We make too much of a distinction between study and meditation. And we thoroughly confuse the distinction between worldly and spiritual. In the process, we have no clue where **nibbana** is.

I know of too many lay people who are frustrated and confused by attitudes and approaches to Dhamma practice that are primarily suited for monasteries and similar situations. Many so-called "Masters" have been content to teach their own views and habits, without seriously questioning what is appropriate for their lay listeners. And few monks live in the intensive meditation environments that are held out as ideal. It's time to present an approach to Dhamma life that is not at odds with the household life. It is foolish to forget the Buddha's many great lay disciples, such as, Visakha and Anathapindika.

In traditional Buddhism, as I know it, there's a huge separation between the monks way up high and the householders way down below. There's too much self-assertion and dependence going back and forth. Almost all Thais think that **nibbana** is impossible for them and only for the monks. Many monks teach this, too. Nowadays, such distinctions are counterproductive and harmful. We must remember, rework, and re-present the original Buddhist teachings in a way that the social responsibilities of the householder are not separated from the spiritual responsibilities of the ordained. So that both monks and layfolk see their social responsibility and spiritual duties more clearly. For us all, both aspects of life must go together in one integrated, whole, happy life.

We must not separate our meditation into two little corners of morning and evening, then forget about mental development throughout the day. Mindfulness practice and Buddhist wisdom must grow into a constant companionship with our daily life. Life is action and Dhamma is the non-action of ego. Challenge ourselves to bring a constant awareness of Dhamma to our social

work, family work, play work, and everything else we do. See Dhamma and search for peace in everything.

I recently attended a Christian meditation workshop. It was attended by a large number of nuns, and a few priests, who had given their whole life to Christian service: teaching, nursing, helping the poor. While that is beautiful, it was sad to see that many were spiritually undernourished. This came out because they were learning something new at the workshop and that something opened wonderful new possibilities for them. They learned about a silent meditation that leads toward emptiness and direct spiritual experience. Many found, for the first time, responses to questions that were aching inside them. It was a joy to see their smiles and excitement. We Buddhists are fortunate in that the contemplative side of Buddhism is still strong. It would be tragic to let happen to us what befell many Christians who lost track of their inner-development.

To me, the word "work" should include both spirituality and social service—together. If we can develop the right understanding, then find appropriate ways to teach it, train it, spread it, especially by joyful example, then I think we will have an extraordinary gift of insight and peace for our troubled world.

we begin to realize the inter-being of everything, of us and the world, of body and mind, of I and you. This makes clear to us our membership in communities and families, our dependence on others. We cannot live without Sangha. With that understanding comes gratitude and a strong sense of responsibility. We must be able to respond to all that others, the world, nature, and Dhamma have given us. As we learn to do our rightful duties—those undertaken out of understanding, not those imposed by authorities—we find contentment with our lives. We are more able to work—duty for duty's sake—because we enjoy serving. From this comes inner peace. If we nurture this peace within, it can be continued and shared with others. Thus we help bring peace into the world. If we develop this peace fully, we come to the experience of **nibbana**, the God of Buddhism.

I think that this way of looking at Buddhism and society has great potential. In it, we see that personal salvation and liberation goes hand-in-hand with communal and social salvation and liberation. The Buddha taught us to seek our own benefit, the benefit of others, the benefit of all. In fact, my benefits and yours inter-are. I can't have any without sharing them with you all. I encourage us all to develop and spread this understanding through our work.

Before this presentation was given, the following questions, along with the above diagram, were distributed to participants.

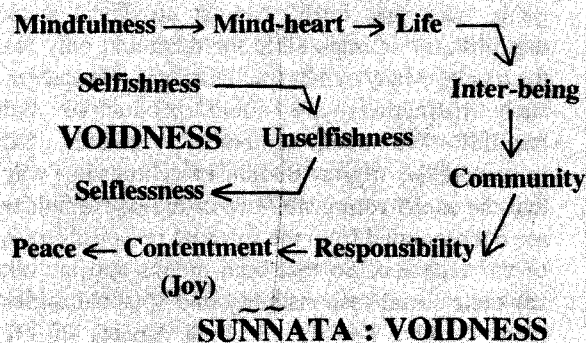
1. What makes "engaged Buddhism" Buddhist? Does it go beyond morality (doing good)? What if the "engagement" isn't a direct and living expression of Dhamma?
2. How does "engagement" differ from "attachment"?
3. Can social activism be genuine spiritual practice, and not merely a struggle of ego? How?
4. Can a Buddhist organization operate according to Right Understanding, both worldly and transcendent together?
5. What is the relationship between **nibbana** and social activism?
6. How can voidness be expressed meaningfully to the materially poor, physically oppressed, and educationally deprived?

Santikaro Bhikkhu
Suan Mokkhabalaram
Chaiya, Surat Thani
Thailand

*excerpts from a speech at the INEB conference
Feb. 1989, Thailand.*

New Wheel of Life

VOIDNESS : SUNNATA



Above is a diagram which tries to express one way of looking at Buddhist life. It begins with mindfulness, with paying attention to life in and around us and being aware of what's going on. This leads to an understanding of mind: that human beings are more than bodies and that our mental existence is important. We learn that the mind-heart is where the drama of happiness and suffering unfolds.

As we explore the mind and its phenomena,

A Day of Mindfulness for Activists



Every day and every hour, we should be practising mindfulness. That's easy to say, but to carry it out in practice is not. That's why I suggest that each person should reserve one day out of the week to devote entirely to their practice of mindfulness. Although, in principle, everyday should be your day, and every hour your hour, the fact is that very few of us have yet reached such a point: we have the impression that our family, place of work and society rob us of all our time. And so I urge everyone to select one day each week as their own day. Saturday, perhaps. If it is Saturday, then Saturday must be entirely your day, a day during which you are completely the master. Then Saturday will be the lever to hold on to in order to form the habit of practising mindfulness. Every worker in the community of service must have the right to such a day, for if we do not, we will lose ourselves quickly in a life full of worry and action. Whatever the day chosen, it can be considered as the day of mindfulness.

If you want to set up a day of mindfulness, you should figure out a way to remind yourself at the moment of waking that this day is your day of mindfulness. You might hang something on the ceiling or on the wall, a paper with the word "mindfulness" or a pinebranch—anything that will suggest to you as you open your eyes and see it that today is your day of mindfulness. Today is your day. Remembering that, you should

smile a smile that affirms that you are in complete mindfulness, a smile that nourishes that perfect mindfulness.

While still lying in bed, begin to follow your breath—slow, long and conscious breaths. Then slowly rise from bed (instead of turning out all at once as usual), nourishing mindfulness by every motion. Once up, brush your teeth, wash your face, and do all your morning activities in a calm and relaxing way, each movement done in mindfulness. Follow your breath, take hold of it, and don't let your thoughts scatter. Each movement should be done relaxingly. Measure your steps with quiet, long breaths. Maintain a half-smile.

At the very least, you should spend a half hour taking a bath. Bathe relaxingly and mindfully so that by the time you have finished, you feel light and refreshed. Afterwards, you might do household work such as washing clothes, dusting and wiping off the tables, scrubbing the kitchen floor, arranging books on their shelves. Whatever the tasks, they must be done slowly and with ease, in mindfulness. Resolve to do them relaxingly, all your attention focused on them. Enjoy them, be one with them. If not, then the day of mindfulness will be of no value at all. The feeling that these tasks are a nuisance will soon disappear if they are done in mindfulness. Take the example of the Zen Masters. No matter what task or motion they undertake, they do it slowly and evenly, without reluctance.

For those who are just beginning to practice, it is best to maintain a spirit of silence throughout the day. That doesn't mean that on the day of mindfulness, you shouldn't speak at all. You can talk, you can even go ahead and sing, but if you talk or sing, do it in complete mindfulness of what you are saying or singing, and keep talking and singing to a minimum. Naturally, it is possible to sing and practise mindfulness at the same time, just as long as one is conscious of the fact that one is singing and aware of what one is singing. But one should be warned that it is much easier, when singing or talking, to stray from mindfulness if your meditation strength is still weak.

At lunchtime, prepare a meal for yourself. Cook the meal and wash the dishes in mindfulness. In the morning, after you have cleaned and straightened up your house, and in the afternoon, after you have worked in the garden or watched

clouds or gathered flowers, prepare a pot of tea to sit and drink in mindfulness. Allow yourself a good length of time to do this. Don't drink your tea like someone who gulps down a cup of coffee during a work break. Drink your tea slowly and reverently as if it were the axis on which the earth revolves — slowly, evenly, without rushing towards the future. Live the actual moment. For only this actual moment is life. Don't be attached to the future. Don't worry about things you have to do. Don't think about getting up or taking off to do anything, don't think about "departing". Do you remember the lines in my poem "Butterfly Over the Field of Golden Mustard Flowers"?:

Be a bud sitting quietly in the hedge

Be a smile, one part of wondrous existence

Stand here. There is no need to depart.

This homeland is as beautiful as the homeland of our childhood.

Do not harm it, please, and continue to sing...

In the evening, you might read scripture and copy passages, write letters to friends, or do anything else you enjoy outside of your normal duties during the week. But whatever you do, do it in mindfulness. Eat only a little for the evening meal. Later, around 10 to 11 o'clock, when you sit in meditation, you will be able to sit more easily on an empty stomach. Afterwards you might take a slow walk in the fresh night air, following your breath in mindfulness and measuring the length of your breaths by your steps. Finally, return to your room and sleep in mindfulness.

Somehow we must find a way to allow every social worker a day of mindfulness. Such a day is crucial. Its effect on the other days of the week is immeasurable. Ten years ago, thanks to such a day of mindfulness, Chu Van and our other sisters and brothers in the Tiệp Hiên order were able to guide themselves through many difficult times. After only three months of observing such a day of mindfulness once a week, I know that you will see a significant change in your life. The day of mindfulness will begin to penetrate the other days of the week, enabling you to eventually live seven days a week in mindfulness. I'm sure you agree with me on the importance of a day of mindfulness!

Thich Nhat Hanh

Taken from *The Miracle of Being Awake*

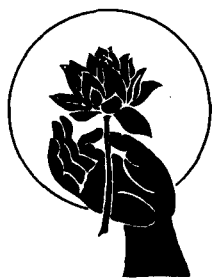
The Buddhist Compassionate

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF) is an international organization founded in order to "bring the Buddhist perspective to contemporary peace and ecology movements" and "make clear public witness to the Buddha Way as a way of peace and protection of all beings." The International Advisory Board reflects the group's dual commitments to spiritual practice and engagement with our common planetary problems; its members are contemplatives and activists, global citizens of many countries.

In the United States, the BPF has grown rapidly since its beginning in the 1970's. Westerners have discovered the profound benefits of Buddhist meditation practice and have experienced the compassion that arises as the mind opens and sees through its own distortions. This awakening of compassion leads one naturally to service, the outer expression of concern for our world. Social action in the BPF, arising out of clarity of mind, serves the practitioner as a vehicle for ongoing insight and mindfulness, and serves the planet with its conscious and committed engagements in the challenges of our time: justice, peace, and the preservation of our environment.

The Buddhist perspective and the Buddha Way that guide BPF members are rooted in the Buddha's teachings regarding the nature of suffering and the interconnectedness of all beings. In these teachings, skillful action are those which lead to the alleviation of suffering; unskillful actions are those that in any way create or perpetuate suffering. Ethics and actions stem from this simple yet profound statement: in my thoughts, words, and deeds, am I doing no harm, causing on suffering, creating no pain? Are my thoughts, words, and deeds skillful, wholesome, and contributing to peace, justice, and the integrity of creation, both globally and within my own family and community?

Peace Fellowship: action on Behalf of Our Planet



As a student of the Buddha Way meditates, s/he comes to understand the wholeness, perfect balance, and interrelatedness of all of nature. We are all, each one of us, children of the universe, jewels in the net of Indra, threads in a fragile and sacred web that binds all life. We are fully interdependent; the well-being and suffering of the one and the many never separate.

In social action, BPF members respond to the alleviation of suffering and overcoming the illusion of separateness. Practitioners of the Buddha Way recognize the primary expressions of suffering in the inner or outward manifestations of three especially unskillful mind states: greed, hatred, and ignorance. These attributes in human behavior are the cause of much pain and the source of our collective inability to achieve a just and healthy world. Gradually meditators develop skills in replacing greed with generosity, hatred with loving kindness and compassion, ignorance with wisdom. The presence of such wholesome mind states in the world, even partially developed as they are in most people, create right and saving actions that move forward the goals of JPIC.

BPF activists are found many places in the world. In Australia, Buddhists are deeply engaged in protecting their tropical rain forests. In the US, BPF members sit in meditation at the Rocky Flats nuclear manufacturing plant and at the Concord Naval Weapons Station. In England, BPF International Advisory Board Member

Christopher Titmuss ran for Parliament as a Green Party candidate.

US members practice compassionate action and attempt to alleviate suffering by befriending Asian Buddhist refugees, by offering support services to people with AIDS, by sending delegations to witness for peace in Nicaragua, by reflecting and refining their actions in BPF group meetings, and by responding to the crises of environmental devastation, militarization, oppression, and exploitation.

One recently emerging vision concerns the 250,000-year shelf life of nuclear waste being produced and "disposed of" by the US nuclear industries. Unable to rely on the government to manage its own nuclear waste, BPF activist and author Joanna Macy is suggesting that we build "Radiant Light Monasteries" on the site of the nuclear waste repositories, training meditators for all future generations as interpreters and guardians of this nuclear fire, this lethal legacy to our children's children.

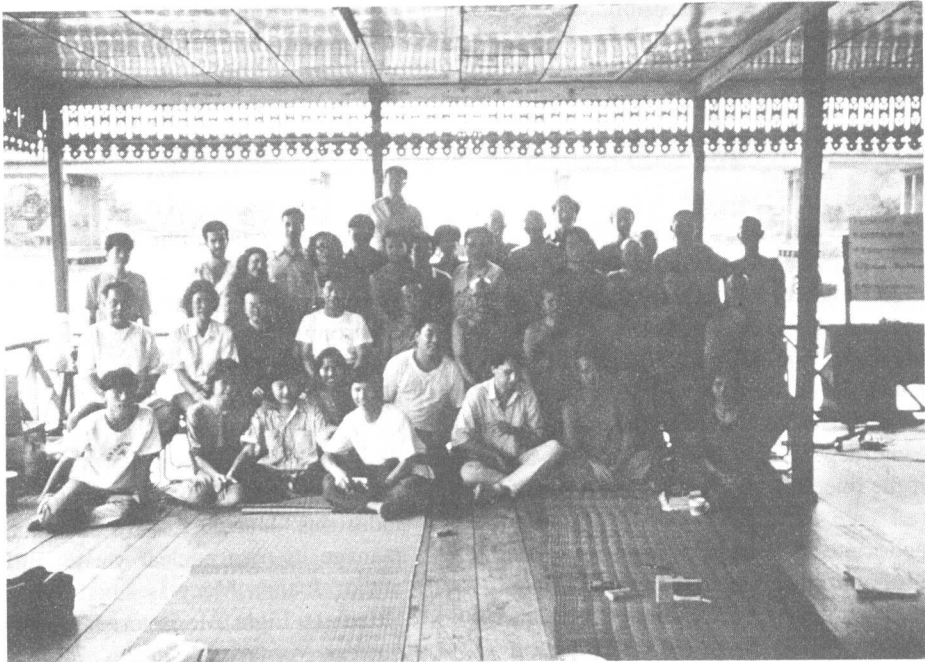
And so Buddhist activism grows. All of the world's major spiritual traditions have at their heart selfless love, loyalty to a larger reality, and a vision of wholeness and peace. Engaged Buddhism is one intentional, conscious, and informed path helping to bring about the actualization of that vision. Through its efforts to respond to the suffering of people and of the planet, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship joins the world's great spiritual and religious communities in efforts to preserve our beautiful earth and to bring peace and happiness to all beings.

Paula Green is a National Board Member of BPF/USA. She is a peace activist, psychologist, and professor.

Taken with thanks from Reconciliation International.

TOWARDS A SOCIALLY ENGAGED BUDDHISM

Some critical remarks by a sympathetic observer



Mainstream Buddhism is obviously in a state of crisis. While new challenges such as rural impoverishment accompanied by urbanisation, spreading consumerism and the increase of various forms of power and violence confront Asian societies and other parts of the world, chanting monks and gorgeous temples often dominate the picture Buddhism gives in Asia. In Japan and the West ritualist and spiritualist regression prevails respectively.

However, there are Buddhist groups and individuals all over the world who envisage and already live another kind of Buddhist practice. Recently some of these engaged Buddhists met to overcome the isolation and lack of exchange among themselves. While the world moves more and more towards greater unification (which often endangers isolated alternative practices and visions of all kinds and sorts), this conference was certainly

well timed to face this danger. Up to now only Christians have been able to establish networks of progressive thinkers and activists, be it within the formal structures of the Churches or outside them, such as in the **Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians** (EATWOT). Socially committed members of other religions have unfortunately not yet succeeded in establishing similar networks. As for the Buddhists, the **World Fellowship of Buddhists** (WFB) is well established but it is doubtful whether they are able or willing to respond seriously to the present challenges. Obviously other, more informal fora are needed.

Therefore thirty-six Buddhists from eleven countries in Asia, North America and Europe recently met in Uthaithani here in Thailand. They represented both the Theravada as well as several schools of the Mahayana tradition. Nine Theravada Bhikkhus, a Taiwanese Bhikshuni, 5 Japanese

Buddhist priests from different sects and the rest laymen and women provided a good cross-section of backgrounds, contributing the richness of their own experiences and traditions both in theory and practice. Issues of common concern were the Human Rights situation in Buddhist countries, and countries with Buddhist minorities, the situation of suffering women as well as of Buddhist education, and finally the interrelationship between spirituality and social action.

Having attended this conference as a Non-Buddhist observer I do not want to report here on its proceedings and outcomes but share some of my personal observations. Having been encouraged to be critical in order to further the process that started with this conference I trust that the readers will not misunderstand the motives of my criticism and realise its constructive intentions. My feelings of sympathy towards engaged Buddhists intensified once I discovered that they encounter very similar questions and difficulties and face similar tensions among themselves as engaged Christians:

(1) How to perceive the different values and roles of men and women, monks and laypeople in a non-oppressive way?

(2) Or: how to relate the different cultural traditions of Buddhism in a productive manner so that the Western cultural pattern does not dominate? That leads us to the deeper problem of...

(3) ...the relationship between religion and culture in general. Let me explain that a little bit more.

One of the recurrent features also of engaged Buddhism is the attempt to recover its original vision. As in any other religion this original vision has gone through several phases of adaptation and even dilution in the process of becoming part of a country's or a region's culture. Thus a culture-critical attitude is essential while the idea of a cultureless Buddhism is a dangerous myth. In fact what is needed is a renewed Buddhist culture, as was expressed several times during the conference. Western Buddhists who have not grown up in a culture shaped by Buddhism may therefore find it on the one hand easier to distinguish between Buddhism (as portrayed in the early texts) and Asian culture; on the other hand, however, they might tend to overlook their own (often subconscious) mixture of Buddhism and western culture.

(4) Because of its extremely important practical implications the methodological approach is a central question; whether to proceed, roughly

speaking, from Buddhist theory to Buddhist practice, or vice versa, from practice to theory. In the working group on 'Spirituality and social action' this question was explicitly raised. Should they start from the texts to approach that issue, or should they try to recall some of the concrete experiences people have already made with it. In the latter inductive approach, people, start from existing issues in which they are already involved and then critically enquire how that relates to the Dhamma, whereas in the deductive approach people would try to start from Dhamma—trying to evolve for instance a 'Buddhist theory of environment'—and then 'apply' that to the reality in each one's daily life.

Neither approach need exclude the other, as evolving a Buddhist theory of environment (to stick to that example) can be very supportive and supplementary for an inductive approach. It is, however, important to know where one wants to start from, since to evolve a theory 'from below' implies in practice the strengthening of people's groups at the grass-roots and improving the linkages between them. To start from the experiences of people's practice thus also differs from the deductive approach 'from the top', as it has a tendency to put strong emphasis on changing the attitudes and minds of the powerful and mighty. Again: both aspects—empowerment of the people and education of the elite—need not exclude each other but one should know where one wants to put one's main energies.

These questions, I guess, will remain a crucial one for the further development of the '**International Network of Engaged Buddhists**'. The formal institution of this network was certainly the most important practical outcome of the conference and is of unmeasurable value as such. It remains however to be seen how their consensus that the network's priority should lie in exchange of people, solidarity and information will now work out in practice. At the end the dynamics of the conference moved a bit too much towards discussing the central structure of the network. This was at the expense of discussing the relationship with the working groups on Human Rights, Women and Education which had previously occupied the main part of the conference. But if the new head wants to become strong it needs a similarly strong body and feet as well. The working groups are certainly strong feet if they can assume their projected roles. And they will be even stronger if they succeed in making new

alliances, including other groups and individuals who were not present at Uthaihani.

The realisation of the need to look over the rim of the teacup of one's own brand of Buddhism in Thailand, Japan or elsewhere was the prime motive for convening the conference, and ultimately led to the setting up of the network to continue the newly initiated process. Such a 'look beyond' opens one's mind and broadens one's views to situations others are facing as well as to religious experiences and reflections they are making in them. Thus I am sure that in the future the network will acknowledge the reality not only of the pluralism *within* but also *outside* Buddhism, i.e. that they will later in some form relate to engaged Muslims, Hindus and Christians in order to respond creatively to the challenges at the grassroots that members of all religions are facing alike. Here I am not at all questioning the necessity that engaged Buddhists (and hopefully later also Muslims and Hindus) come together and strengthen the ties among themselves. On the contrary, I am very glad that this happened because I think that also we Christians can then learn a lot more from engaged Buddhists. I see areas where we could learn from them not only in specific issues (like environment for instance) but also more fundamentally in the way to tap the spiritual roots of our faith which lie in God's love for those who are suffering. I sometimes have the feeling that Christians tend to neglect that. I am convinced that we Christians can learn a lot in this area. I am similarly certain that Buddhists can also learn from engaged Christians. For instance I sometimes had the feeling in Uthaihani that a deeper social analysis was needed. But this need was either not felt or not expressed. Spiritual and social analysis go hand in hand, however, Without spiritual analysis social analysis often remains on the surface, but without social analysis spiritual analysis might fall into the traps of political naivety.

Some not necessarily representative remarks made during the conference might exemplify what I mean:

- Being afraid of 'putting pressure' or to 'take sides', to name an evil and evil can certainly indicate a spiritual attitude towards others that has to be preserved. But would this attitude not gain credibility if accompanied by social analysis if applied in the political field? - Who suffers less if progressive Buddhists do or do not take sides?

- Of course it is right to promote the attitude to 'be happy with few and little things' while consumerism is spreading worldwide. But to live this attitude will certainly look different to a Buddhist in North America or Japan than to a Buddhist in Sri Lanka or North-East Thailand who does not even have these 'little things'. - Whom are engaged Buddhists addressing?

- Similarly I am convinced that there is no true social action worth its name without smiling; smiling reveals that life is regarded as worth living and struggling for. But is therefore 'smiling already social action'? - Is one not mixing things up here? Who will be happy with this kind of social action? Can suffering be lessened in this way? I dare to doubt that.

I am sure that engaged Buddhists who keep some of these questions in mind can play a crucial role within their own religious community as well as for others. I am glad to have met some of them in Uthaihani.

Ulrich Dornberg.
ACFOD, Bangkok

International Network of Engaged Buddhists

Many of the problems in Buddhist communities today require international cooperation if they are to be solved. One of the obstacles facing concerned Buddhist groups has been the lack of an international network or forum to facilitate cooperation, coordination and support for action on various pressing issues.

Thus, in February 1989, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists was formed to link concerned organizations and individuals, with the

following objectives :

1. to promote understanding between Buddhist countries and various Buddhist sects.
2. to facilitate and engage in solving problems in various countries
3. to help bring the perspective of engaged Buddhists to bear in working on these problems
4. to act as a clearing house of information on existing engaged Buddhist (and relevant non-Buddhist) groups and activities, and aid in the coordination efforts wherever possible

INEB will initially involve groups and individuals working in the following areas: (This may be expanded in the future.)

1. Alternative Education
2. Spiritual Training
3. Peace Activism
4. Human Rights
5. Women's Issues
6. Ecology
7. Family concerns
8. Rural Development
9. Alternative Economics
10. Communication
11. Concerns of Monks and Nuns

Originally, there were 36 members from 11 different countries; however, since February, the membership has been increasing. An advisory board, executive committee, Thai, Japanese, Indian and Sri Lankan working committees have been established. We wish to invite all interested friends to join us.

For more informations contact the office at:



International Network of Engaged Buddhists

303/7 Soi Santipap
Nares Road
Bangrak, Bangkok 10500
Thailand
Telephone 233-2382, 233-2792



ศูนย์ไทย - ทิเบต

THAI- TIBETAN CENTRE (T.T.C.)

Temporary office:

4753/3 Soi Wat Thong Noppakun
Somdejchaopraya Road
Klong-sarn, Bangkok 10600
Thailand
Phones: 437-9445, 437-9450

HISTORY:

The centre formed itself from a core of Thai people who are interested in Tibetan Studies and Vajrayana Buddhism. This group of people are drawn from different professions i.e. university professors, government official, business people, social workers, students etc. The formation of the Centre began actively with the campaign (in 1987) demanding that the Thai Government should have an independent policy on foreign affairs with regard to the particular case of H.H. the Dalai Lama being refused visa to Thailand to participate in Magsaysay Celebration in Bangkok. Even though the campaign did not bear immediate result in the government's decision, nevertheless it brought about general awareness on Tibetan issues regarding her history, civilization and

Vajrayana Buddhism as practised by the Tibetans. This consciousness moved the core group of Thai people to form Thai-Tibetan Centre to promote discussions, dialogues, researches and general knowledge about Tibet within the Thai community and with foreigners sharing the same interest.

On January 19, 1988 the group of concerned people met officially to set down policy of the Centre. Legally the Thai-Tibetan Centre is under "Sathirakoses & Nagapradipa Foundation"

FOUNDING MEMBERS:

Ven. Ganacharaya Chinadharma -Samadhipatara, head of Chinese Sangha in Thailand,

Ven. Maha Narong Cittasobhano, Director of Buddhist Research Institute, Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University,

Prof. Sathira Bandarangsi, member of Royal Institute,

Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa, TICA,

Mr. Liang Sathirasut, Scholar in Chinese Mahayana Studies,

Mr. Karuna Kusalasaya, Sathirakoses & Nagapradipa Foundation,

Ms Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Thammasat University,

Mr. Thavorn Sikhakosala, Scholar in Chinese Mahayana Studies.

OBJECTIVES:

- To study and make available to the public knowledge on Tibetan culture and society.
- To build up an understanding and good relationship between Thai and Tibetan peoples.
- To promote better understanding between various Buddhist schools.

ACTIVITIES

- To form an information centre on Tibetan studies for general reading and research,
- To publish various books on Tibetan studies,
- To organize lectures and seminars on related topics,
- To organize short/long term retreats,
- To build up a network with other Tibetan centres around the world.

WORK IN PROCESS

Public Relations

To form network of informations with various Tibetan Centres around the world. The Centre is happy to report numerous correspondences and congratulation messages from other Tibetan centres. In return the Centre is able to send them

Seeds of Peace, a TICA magazine published by our associated organization.

Publications

It is the Centre's concern to select and translate appropriate articles on Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism to be published in Thai. The Centre's activities cover also publications of important works for the purpose of fund-raising. The translated and published works include *Preparing for Conscious Death* translation from H.H. the Dalai Lama's teachings, another work is *The Good Things from Tibet* which is collected articles on the visit of H.H. the Dalai Lama to Thailand in 1967. Publications in process are Thai translations of *Bodhisattvacarayavata Sutra* (ed.S.Batchelor), *Death and Dying* by Glenn H.Mullin, *Health Through Balance* by Dr.Yoshi Donden, etc.

Activities

May 29, 1988 Tour of Chinese mahayana Temples in Bangkok to promote better understanding of various schools of Buddhism paving a way for the understanding of Tibetan Buddhism.

The next tour, the Centre is planning to visit Wat Po-Yen in Kanchanaburi to see Tibetan art. The tour will include meditation practice in Tibetan tradition.

Aug. 28, 1988 Ven. Shangpa Rinpoche visited and gave a dharma talk at Wat Po-Man, Chinese temple in Bangkok. This meeting laid the ground for further joint activities with Tibetan Centres in Malaysia and Singapore.

The Centre is planning to organize a slide show through kindness of Ms.Edna Gatz.

Dec. 2, 1988 the Centre arranged to have a Tibetan teacher give a dharma talk for public.

Dec. 24-27. the Centre held a series of Dharma talks by Dieter Kratzer from W. Germany.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BE PART OF THIS CENTRE?

Our centre is at its embryonic stage. We are a small group of people with willingness and intention to establish a better understanding between our peoples. We need your support in various forms : informations on activities, donation of books, financial supports etc. If you know of leading Tibetan teachers passing through Bangkok, we would like to invite them to give dharma talks, hold seminars, etc.

The Development Set

This satirical poem was handed to the editor by a foreigner working in Thailand for a development organization. It is a savagely funny reminder of the traps that often accompany this type of work.



*Excuse me, friends, I must catch my jet,
I'm off to join the Development Set;
My bags are packed, and I've had all my shots,
I have traveller's checks and pills for the trots!*

*The Development Set is bright and noble,
Our thoughts are deep and our vision global;
Although we move with the better classes,
Our thoughts are always with the masses.*

*In Sheraton hotels in scattered nations
We damn multi-national corporations;
Injustice seems easy to protest
In such seething hotbeds of social rest.*

*We discuss malnutrition over steaks
And plan hunger talks during coffee breaks.
Whether Asian floods or African drought,
We face each issue with an open mouth.*

*We bring in consultants whose circumlocution
Raises difficulties for every solution—
Thus guaranteeing continued good eating
By showing the need for another meeting.*

*The language of the Development Set
Stretches the English alphabet;
We use swell words like 'epigenetic'
'Micro', 'Macro', and 'logarithmic'.*

*It pleasures us to be esoteric—
It's so intellectually atmospheric!
And though establishments may be unmoved,
Our vocabularies are much improved.*

*When the talk gets deep and you're feeling dumb
You can keep your shame to minimum:
To show that you too are intelligent
Smugly ask, 'Is it really development?'*

*Or say, 'That's fine in practice, but don't you see:
It doesn't work out in theory!'
A few may find this in comprehensible,
But most will admire you as deep and sensible.*

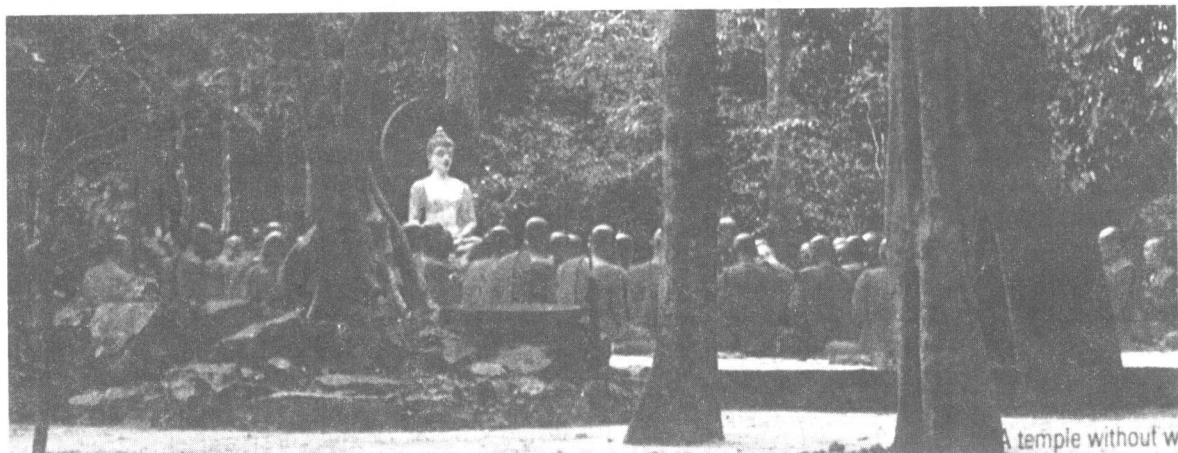
*Development Set homes are extremely chic,
Full of carvings, curios, and draped with batik.
Eye-level photographs subtly assure
That your host is at home with the great and the poor.*

*Enough of these verses—on with the mission!
Our task is as broad as the human condition!
Just pray God the biblical promise is true:
The poor ye shall always have with you.*

--Ross Coggins



THE FOREST MONASTERY OF SUAN MOKKHA



From what we can piece together, Chaiya of nine centuries ago, with its many elaborate temples, served as the center of Buddhist religion in southern Thailand. Interestingly, the recent construction of a new and very different type of temple just outside the modern town has returned Chaiya to prominence as an important religious center.

At a site 5 kilometers south of Chaiya, along the main road back into Surat Thani, lies the 150 acre forest temple of Suan Mokkhabalaram. The creation of Phra Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, a highly revered Buddhist scholar and teacher, Wat Suan Mokkhabalaram was conceived and built as a place in which the teachings of the Buddha might be studied and practiced in an atmosphere of tranquility. Unlike Wat Phra Bormathat, with its ornate and richly gilded architecture, the structures, at Suan Mokkhabalaram are simple, almost ugly, in their design. The stress here is not on the works of man, but upon the beauty of the natural world. The temple's main place of worship, its ubosot, is a tree shaded hilltop open to the sky. The nearby ruins of ancient Chaiya serve as a constant reminder of the Buddha's teachings regarding the impermanence of all physical things.

While he has shunned the use of monumental architecture, so common in most Thai monasteries, Phra Buddhadasa has employed the smaller visual arts in his somewhat unorthodox attempt to make the teachings of the Buddha accessible to the common man. The principle structure on the grounds of Suan Mokkhabalaram, which Phra Buddhadasa fondly refers to as his "theater of the spirit", is essentially an art gallery; though an unusual and highly eclectic one. Every inch of its inner walls and pillars is covered with paintings copied from sources as diverse as the scrolls of the Zen patriarchs and Aesop's fables. Almost one entire wall has been given over to the surrealistic works of Emanuel Sherman, a wandering Zen Buddhist, whose search for enlightenment led him from America to Japan and eventually to Thailand, where he lived for years in a cave on the island of Koh Phangan. Following Sherman's death (from a case of malaria which might easily have been cured had he sought treatment), Phra Buddhadasa visited the cave and was so impressed by the paintings with which the ascetic artist had adorned its walls that he instructed them to be copied onto the walls of the Spiritual Theater.

The Theater's exterior is ringed with base

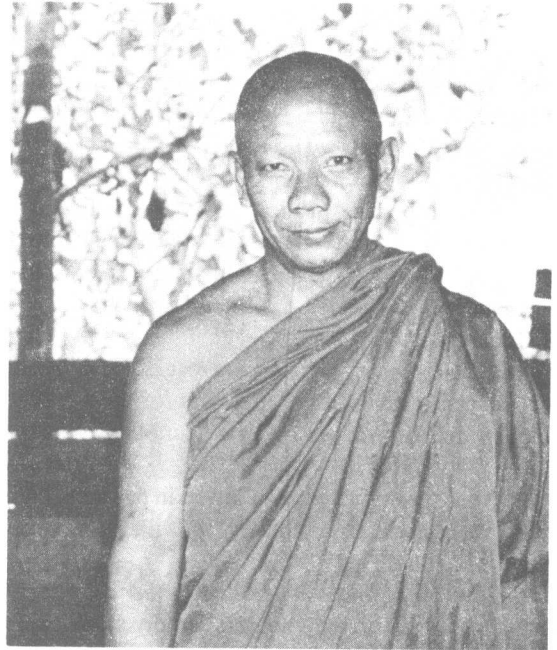
reliefs depicting events from the life of the Buddha. These sculptures, copies of ancient originals which Phra Buddhadasa had seen and photographed during a pilgrimage to the Buddha's homeland in northern India, date to within the first 500 years following the death of the Buddha. During this period artists, in compliance with the Buddha's wishes, did not depict him in physical form. Instead, his presence was suggested by symbols such as a wheel or an empty throne; objects which might bring to mind his doctrine, rather than the man himself. It is this emphasis on the Buddha's spiritual teachings, rather than his physical presence, which sets Suan Mokkhabalaram apart from the majority of Thailand's major religious centers.

Suan Mok, as Phra Buddhadasa's forest temple has come to be known, is rapidly gaining for itself an international reputation as a focus of Buddhist study and has begun to attract monks, meditators and scholars from throughout the world. The temple also welcomes, and is always open to, the casual visitor. From the 1st to the 10th of each month Suan Mok offers course in meditation which has been designed particularly for foreigners.

History has a wonderful way of reversing herself, and it seems a fitting irony that it is no longer the quest for material wealth, but the search for spiritual truth which is drawing foreign travelers to Chaiya.

A monk repays his debt to villagers

A senior district official once asked Luang Pho Nan: "Why are you so concerned about the villagers' activities? Why don't you live and behave like other Buddhists monks do?"



But the abbot of Wat Samakkhee in the northeastern province of Surin, just ignored the question and suggestion. He considered it beneath his dignity and a waste of time to explain to such people his personal philosophy: that Buddhist monks survive because of food and provisions from villagers. And because of this the monks should be deeply indebted to the people.

"Despite their hardship and hand-to-mouth existence, they are still generous and always offer us something from what little they have", Luang Pho Nan says.

And Luang Pho Nan is very determined to repay the debt. Helping the people is the *raison d'être* of the abbot's life.

Two of the main problems facing villagers of Baan Thaa Sawaang where the temple is located are drought and indebtedness. From experience and close observation, Luang Pho Nan has found out that some problems are not due to natural causes alone. Character faults and bad habits of many villagers are a major cause of some problems.

"At that time many villagers indulged in gambling, drinking and smoking tobacco. Their lives became much more difficult because they spent a lot of money for useless things and habits", Luang Pho Nan relates.

The "outside" factor may be hard to control, but the "inner" one created by the people themselves can be easily changed, Luang Pho Nan thinks. He then decided to make the villagers stop spending their money wastefully.

He invited 40 villagers to stay overnight and meditate in a serene area of the temple—the graveyard. His aim was to make their minds strong and peaceful. Luang Pho Nan also sermoned them on the error of their ways and urged them to get rid of their bad habits.

Soon after the programme was conducted, Luang Pho Nan received a positive feedback from family members of these 40 people. They said they had already noticed changes in the behaviour of the subjects.

“Children, especially, were glad that their parents are cursing less. And many of them have stopped drinking, smoking and gambling,” says Luang Pho Nan.

Many groups eagerly followed in participating in the programme and gradually, the village became vice-free.

However, meditation and good practices alone cannot fill up the villagers’ empty stomachs. Since the rice production is very low forcing many villagers to borrow rice and money from the rich in the village or from the Bank of Agriculture and Cooperatives, they had, for a long time, given up hope of ever seeing any light at the end of the tunnel.

Luang Pho Nan then allocated part of the temple’s income to set up a rice fund. Each villager was urged to send in five thangs (one thang equals 20 litres) in exchange for one share in the fund. Any villager borrowing rice from the fund is asked to return the rice together with the “interest”. If one borrows five thangs in a year, he must give back six thangs. This interest rate is many times cheaper than when borrowing from other people.

Indeed, Luang Pho Nan admits that the idea of setting up a rice fund is not his own original idea. He borrowed it from projects in Taiwan, South Korea and Sri Lanka where he visited after receiving advice from some Thai scholars such as Sulak Sivaraksa.

When Luang Pho Nan and other Buddhist monks from Thailand were in South Korea, he was so inspired by the lyrics of a farewell song sung by a Korean woman.

The song was very beautiful, he said. And an interpreter told him the meaning of the song.

“Part of it says, ‘Why don’t you have a rice bank?, Why don’t you have it set up?’,” Luang Pho Nan recalls. “I was startled. It has inspired me to do many things since then.”

However, there is no antagonism or discrimi-

nation against villagers who are well-off. Luang Pho Nan does not instill a sense of anti-capitalism among the people. On the contrary, he tries to persuade the rich to participate in village activities and to be sympathetic to the poor. This is his wise strategy to prevent the rich from thinking that they are losing something because of the rice fund.

In fact, the obstacles Luang Pho Nan faced were not caused by the rich. “It is the government officials who always come and question me,” says Luang Pho Nan. “I just smile at them and say nothing. I know what I am doing.”

Once some villagers were apprehended by the police while they were working on the common rice field where they plant for the rice fund. “The police did not specify the actual charge. But said something like what the villagers were doing was the communist way”, Luang Pho Nan says. “The villagers were finally released because the police could not find any evidence to charge them with being communists. However, the district chief warned me not to interfere with lay people’s activities. He said he had just been transferred from Aranyaprathet (a district of Prachin Buri province) where communist insurgency had been defeated. He also added that he knew very well where what I was doing would lead to.

“I was not angry with him. Nor did I argue with him. What I did was just touch my saffron. But he did not understand what I tried to tell him, which indirectly meant that since I was a Buddhist monk, how could I be a communist?”

Naa Krachab Mit (Friendship Farming) is a project spurred by the fact that the villagers cannot send in enough rice for their shares in the rice fund because they are already poor. They do their farming on a common field which has been donated by the rich. With this cooperation, they have contributed more rice in the storage. Apart from storing up enough rice for villagers to borrow, they can sell excess stocks outside the village.

“The villagers are farming on their own land. Should they be disturbed by government officials or any others, I will fight for them,” Luang Pho Nan states.

Villagers used to traditionally offer new saffron robes for monks in the temple every year during the Thot Phaa Paa festival. However, Luang Pho Nan thinks the monks do not need many new robes. It has been proposed that villagers offer rice instead of robes to monks in Wat Samak-

khee. The rice will then be donated to the rice fund.

After the rice fund has been established for around six or seven years, the villagers are almost free from debt. They can now stand on their own two feet.

"With his (Luang Pho Nan) initiative, 200 families of our village have had a better life," says Soi Saengthabthim, head of the village. "We're now debt-free."

Soi says Luang Pho Nan also suggested that the villagers plant supplementary crops like corn, cucumber, tomato and other vegetables. A cooperative shop was set up to sell consumer products to villagers, with the profit divided among villagers who are shareholders.

The story of Luang Pho Nan has spread over several northeastern provinces. He has been invited to lecture about his schemes in those provinces. Furthermore, whenever people in other villages face drought and need help, Luang Pho Nan also raises funds from the Baan Thaa Sawaang villagers to help them.

"I used to spend the money donated for building the temple's new Upostha to help other villages," Luang Pho Nan reveals. "I'm not afraid that Baan Thaa Sawaang villagers will complain because I always consult with them before making a decision."

Even Muslims which constitute the majority population in the southern province of Pattani show appreciation and respect to Luang Pho Nan by inviting him to lecture on his development projects. "They told me they respect my benevolence even though I'm a Buddhist monk," he said.

Luang Pho Nan turns 60 this year. But he is still active in his work. He also set up the Saha Dharma group of 20 Buddhist monks to continue his legacy of development work and to promote the monks' role in the society. On the occasion of his birthday, a group of Buddhists led by Prof Prawase Wasi and the Baan Thaa Saalaa villagers will hold a religious ceremony at the temple from March 10-13.

In fact, Luang Pho Nan does not want any publicity nor any visitors from other provinces. "I'm old. During the day, I do not have enough time to rest," he says.

Nantiya Tangvisutijit
The Nation, Bangkok
February 28, 1989

Chaem Phromyong:



One of the last revolutionaries

It was late at night in the winter of 1947. A long-tail boat was swaying with the waves off a jetty on the bank of the Chao Phaya River at Phra Padaeng district.

On it were two men. Moonlight reflecting from the water showed one as a scholarly-looking man in his prime wearing a French-cut jacket, while the other was of about the same age but with a deeper-tan complexion. The second man's voice broke through the silence of the night: "I'll see you off at the ship."

Then the motor roared and the boat sped away from the jetty gathering speed as it headed for a ship dimly silhouetted in the middle of the river.

Before boarding the ship en route to China, the scholar said goodbye and the last thing he said was, "If we do not die, we'll fulfill our destiny."

And that was the last time Chaem Phromyong saw Luang Praditmanootham, better known as Pridi Banomyong, the renowned Thai statesman who spearheaded the 1932 Revolution. The statesman, who spent most of his life fighting for democracy during the most important chapters in Thai history, had to flee his motherland and eventually died in France.

As one of the active participants in the revolution, Chaem retained that memorable scene in his mind until the last moments of his own life. At the age of 88, the man who witnessed Pridi's departure on the voyage to exile, recently died peacefully at his home. The first wreath to

arrive paying respects to the departed was from Lady Phoonsuk Banomyong, the widow of the statesman.

Until now, not many people knew who Chaem was.

A Muslim, Chaem was born in Paklad village of Phra Padaeng district, in Samut Prakan. From the beginning, he was different from his contemporaries. He showed a special interest in politics. As one of his colleagues said, Chaem was concerned about social problems and matters other than his own.

At twenty, he left for the capital city of Egypt, Cairo, for his religious studies. Not long after returning to Thailand, he got a rare chance to continue his studies in France. And there, with the prevailing political atmosphere, he quickly absorbed the idea of democracy and patriotism. At the time, February 1927, a group of Thai students in France established the first Thai Students Association chaired by Pridi Banomyong. The association later came to be known as the Khana Ras or People's Party. Its members included Capt Plaek Khetasangha, Lt Thasanai Mitrpakdee, Tua Laphanukrom, Prayoon Phamornmontree, Luang Sirirajmaitree, Naep Phaholyothin and Chaem himself.

Upon returning to Thailand, the idea to change the absolute monarchy into a constitutional democracy was widely spread and supported, particularly by the progressive minded scholars and well-educated aristocrats.

For Chaem himself, what he did at the time was to induce the residents of Phra Padaeng to pay more attention to politics. An underground group formed then used to meet in the jungle nearby. But unfortunately, the more the group met, the fewer the participants who showed up. Finally, the group was scrapped since the members were afraid of being arrested.

In early June 1932, Phya Phahol Pholphayuhasena, the leader of the revolutionary group, visited Chaem at his residence in Phra Padaeng. The plan was then hatched for implementation on June 24. The rest is history. The revolution was smoothly successful, without any violent incident.

After that, Chaem was appointed an official at the Department of Propaganda (Public Relations) with the help of Pridi.

In 1938, when the head of the government was changed from Phya Phahol Pholphayuhasena to General P. Pibulsonggram, Pridi was elected Minister of Finance. The country was, at the time,

in a state of confusion because World War II had broken out. The conflict between Pridi and General Pibul had intensified beyond the possibility of compromise because of Pibul's decision to ally with the Japanese, while the Thai civilians led by Pridi, disagreed.

These people, calling themselves Seri Thai (Free Thai Movement), went underground to work with the Allies against the Japanese. Chaem also did his bit, at one time sheltering Malaysian soldiers with the British army, who were being hunted by Japanese soldiers.

After the victory of the Allies, Pridi was given the honour of Elder Statesman and in 1946 became the prime minister. On June 9, in the same year, King Ananda (King Rama VIII) was found dead in bed at his palace. Pridi was later forced to resign in late August 1946 (just five months after he became prime minister) and the following year fled to China.

Then in November 1947, military leaders General Pin Choonhavan and his son-in-law Police General Pao Sriyanonda staged a successful coup.

For whatever reason, Chaem and his family were also forced to flee to Malaya where he fortunately came across the Malayan soldiers he once helped during the war. They called him "The man who gave them new lives". Chaem and his family were very well taken care of by these people. In 1957, after another coup which overthrew Pibul, Pin and Pao, the Thai government invited him to return home. Chaem then settled down in Phra Padaeng district.

Chaem was a devout Muslim. Once, after Pibul lost his political clout, he was asked to resolve the conflict in Muslim communities since during the rule of Pibul the Muslim people were widely discriminated against. Some Muslims were refused work in the government sector.

Later he was appointed the first Chula Rat-chamontree (Muslim spiritual leader) as well as becoming a Member of Parliament.

Those who were fortunate to meet him generally agree that Chaem was an intelligent and sincere man who had a good personality. However, he was a bit shaken after Pridi's death. He was easily irritated when hearing anybody talk about the statesman in negative terms.

On his dying bed, Chaem asked his relatives not to hold a big funeral ceremony. "Just make it simple," he said. ●

Kongchet Promnampol
The Nation 29 July 1989

The Great Turning: Personal Peace-Global Victory

by Craig Schindler and Gary Lapid. Bear & Company, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1989. \$9.95

"What is needed is both personal and political transformation—a change in both the ways we communicate and resolve conflicts in our personal lives and a change in the way we act politically and make policies" (p19). To this end the authors of this book have launched a movement called Project Victory, for the practice of conflict resolution at all levels. Thus they hope to bring about a Great Turning in the way individuals and nations manage conflicts; a "new era of human dignity, environmental restoration, and global security". They believe that this is possible by nurturing our growing sense of global interdependence and mutual dependence. Increasingly, either we will all go down together or else 'everybody wins'.

This book aims to encourage and empower its readers by offering principles and orientations, strategies and methods, for getting started now with mediation and conflict resolution. And conflict resolution is, for many reasons, surely one of the best starting points for inner/outer peacemaking. It is the sharp end of many of our problems, and involves us directly in both inward and outward exploration and endeavour.

There are, however, many possible approaches to the inner

work which can empower radical social change, depending upon individuals, circumstances and different cultures. I believe that these should be mutually supportive, and the reservations I have about this book are made in that spirit.

In the first place, the authors believe that the Great Turning can come about through the peculiarly American faith in 'the power of intention'—'I can and I will'. This does not export well to older cultures (unless already Americanised). The book is also heavy with a sense of America's 'global mission' which can be rather alarming even when it really is peaceable. It is significant that the two authors' activity seems to have been confined to the USA.

In fairness, the *Power of Positive Thinking* approach is relatively sophisticated in this book. They warn against a "utopian naivete" which fails to recognise that "greed and lust for power will continue to influence human events" (p103). And they offer valuable reminders like: "peace is not an end; it is a process of managing conflicts constructively—a dynamic and passionate process of sustainable balance." It is not possible to eliminate conflict, but it is possible to learn to use it creatively. There is much easily digestible advice about how to go about this, though this is not as original as I had hoped.

To be most successful, the "power of intention" approach does seem to require a narrow and exclusive focus. The reader of this book is therefore left quite unaware of the other tradition of inner/outer, personal/

social transformation—the way of despair and empowerment, popularised by Joanna Macy, John Seed and others, and implicit in the great traditions of spiritual practice. With this approach we seek to open to fear and negativity and the seemingly hopeless situation in which we find ourselves. Through meditative fellowship and ritual we experience a cathartic acceptance which empowers us to respond wholeheartedly to what the situation requires of us, beyond dreaming and hoping. On the contrary, the authors of this book believe that "although fear can awaken us to the critical importance of the danger, it is not possible to build a positive future from foundations of fear and images of ruin." (p16).

It is interesting to compare these two approaches. The "power of intention" has a more immediate and popular appeal and, at least in the short term, can demonstrate ready results. "Despair and empowerment" is an altogether more profound and subtle transformer of human endeavour. We probably need both approaches, but need to be aware of the distinction.

Some of the writing in this book does itself betray the superficiality of the "power of intention" approach. The authors believe that we can both advance the technology to solve the ecological crisis and advance the American Dream of material progress to ever higher levels. We can "maintain our standard of living" (p28) as well as achieving "mutually assured development" for the Third World (p31), as well as playing with "large space transports" to colonize the Moon and Mars

by the end of the next century. Pointing old values in more positive directions is always welcome, but this totally underestimates both the demands of the ecological crisis, and also the human potential to evolve quite beyond "more of the same"

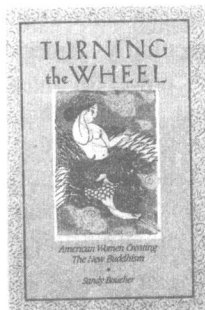
The book not only sells the reader short on the inner work but also, through making a panacea of conflict resolution, it offers a too narrow social change perspective. This also perhaps derives from the authors' experience being restricted to what is more of a consensus culture than most (though they do not report any significant policy changes arising from their numerous conflict resolution gatherings). They acknowledge that conflict resolution is only possible where both parties desire it. But there are many conflict situations where Gandhian nonviolent sanctions and pressures have been needed to even the strengths of the contenders so that conflict resolution becomes mutually acceptable. Conflict resolution is only one among many radical nonviolent social change strategies, each appropriate to specific stages and situations.

Not with standing my reservations, this is a welcome book and it should have a wide appeal. It is a pity, however, that so many of its strengths are its weaknesses. Its comparative narrowness and superficiality are precisely what give it an immediate and broad appeal. Are we best served by this fast food takeaway or by getting down to restaurant cuisine? I believe that both can be valuable and complementary but that they cannot be combined.

Reviewed by Ken Jones,

Turning the Wheel: American Women Creating the New Buddhism

by *Sandy Boucher, Harper
& Row, San Francisco,
1988*



Buddhism provided a way for many young Americans in the 1960s to experience for the first time in their lives a total involvement with a religious practice that demanded from them a complete change in their ways of seeing reality; a transformation of the usual secularized view of everyday life that characterized the nominal Judeo-Christian society in which they grew up. This was also the time of protest against war, injustice, and the status quo providing the backdrop out of which women's liberation groups organized, seeking to raise the consciousness of a complacent and sexist society; to challenge the misogynous social and intellectual structures which kept women undervalued and exploited.

In *Turning the Wheel*, Sandy Boucher presents the views of eighty-five women in the United States regarding their experiences of the coming together of Asian Buddhism and American Feminism since the 1960s. Since the advent of Buddhism in North America,

women have practiced side by side with men. Although the structures of practice and the attitudes of the first generation of teachers continued the patriarchal presumptions of historical Asian Buddhism and women were often viewed with suspicion if not outright disdain, women held on to the practice, proving themselves equals even to the point of becoming fully recognized Dharma heirs of Asian teachers.

There were also many casualties, prompting one woman to describe the coming together of Buddhism and feminism as more of a collision than a meeting. This confrontation between the patriarchy and feminist consciousness is the subject of the individual interviews in *Turning the Wheel*. Many of the women interviewed have now broken away from some of the destructive Buddhist teachers and institutions that have maintained abusive relationships involving sexual affairs with their students, alcoholism, and misuse of finances. Other women interviewed still defend this behaviour and have become co-dependent participants in their teacher's addictions.

Important issues involving the development of Buddhism in North America are raised in these interviews which were conducted over the past several years in practice centres and in private homes, but the material gathered is of uneven quality and depth. Some of the weaker interviews are bolstered by lionizing the qualities of the woman being interviewed. Flowery descriptive prose and personal comments by the author frequently interrupt the content of the articles. The

better choice would have been to edit more closely, use only the interviews with substance and to resist the impulse to create heroic images.

Even though it reads like a preliminary draft with much to be pruned away, *Turning the Wheel* is an important oral history of the experience of North American women practicing Buddhism. The issues raised in the book are yet to be resolved and the integration of Buddhist practice with North American wisdom is still to be accomplished. The lack of clarity and the unfinished quality of this book perhaps well reflects the present state of Buddhist practice in North America.

Reviewed by Michelle Mills
gratefully reprinted from the
Karuna Journal

RECOM MENDED READING

1. Outrage—Burma's struggle for Democracy by Bertil Lintner, Review Publishing Company Limited, Hong Kong, 1989, \$U.S. 18.95

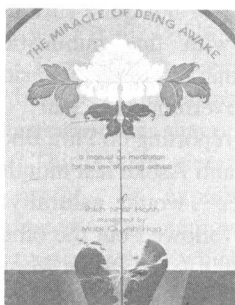
Lintner, a long-time correspondent with the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, specializes in Burmese affairs. His book not only gives historical and political background information, but enables the reader to look at the conflict through the eyes of various individuals as well. A well-researched look into the

continuing struggle for democracy in this country.

2. Keys to the Natural Truth by Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, The Dhamma Study and Practice Group, Bangkok, Thailand, 1988, \$U.S. 7

Achan Buddhadasa has worked painstakingly to establish and explain the correct and essential principles of original Buddhism. That work is based in extensive research of the Pali texts followed by personal practice with these teachings. Then he has taught whatever he can say truly quenches suffering. His goal has been to produce a complete set of references for present and future research and practice. His approach has always been scientific, straight-forward and practical. Thus, in his latest book, he attempts to open a clear and livable path through our confusion and weakness to a correct understanding of Dhamma so that the Dhamma in turn may illuminate life, reveal its secret and quench all suffering.

3. The Miracle of Being Awake—A Manual on Meditation for the Use of Young Activists by Thich Nhat Hanh, International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Bangkok, Thailand, 1989, \$U.S. 6



A delightfully readable series of essays on maintaining peace and mindfulness in our work and leisure by this popular and profound Vietnamese monk. Any money raised from the sale of this book will go to help maintain the International Network of Engaged Buddhists.

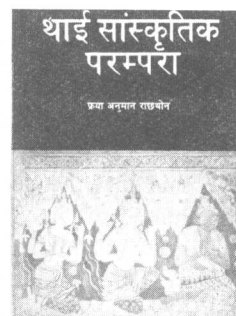
4. A Human Approach to World Peace by H.H. the Dalai Lama, Wisdom Publication, London, England, 1984

A short collection of essays by His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso on achieving global peace.

5. Solidarity published by Solidaridad Publishing House, Manila, Philippine. Annual subscription: \$U.S.18 for the Americas and Europe, \$U.S.16 for Asia.

A quarterly on current affairs, ideas and the arts.

Thai Folklore Essays Now Available in Nepali



Published by Cwasapasa

Essays on Thai Folklore by Phya Anuman Rajadon are now available in Nepali, Neware and Maithal.

Sulak urges Santi Asoke to change its name

WELL-KNOWN social critic Sulak Sivaraksa yesterday urged the Santi Asoke cult to break out of the Ecclesiastical (Sangha) Council and become an independent entity with a new name and change of uniform.

He said that the break-up would be one option to resolve the simmering controversy between the Santi Asoke and the Ecclesiastical Council.

Airing his views on the controversy at a panel discussion held yesterday at Thammasat University, Mr Sulak also condemned the order by Interior Minister Pramarn Adireksarn to ban any coverage critical of the Sangha Council and supportive of the Santi Asoke, saying that it would deprive the Press of its rightful freedom of expression.

He said that the decision by a committee of the Sangha Council to defrock Phra Bodhirak, leader of the Santi Asoke cult, for allegedly violating the Buddhist disciplines was correct.

"But that does not mean that I agree with the decision," he quickly added.

The social critic pointed out that the Sangha Act B.E. 2505 upon which the verdict

against Phra Bodhirak was based had its origins in a time when Thailand was under the dictatorial rule of the late Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat.

Although Santi Asoke has preached strict Buddhist fundamentalism, he said that the cult had to come under the law.

To end the conflict, he suggested that the Santi Asoke not be so obsessed with the yellow saffron robe, suggesting that it change its uniform and detach itself from the Ecclesiastical Council.

He blamed the problem on Santi Asoke's stubbornness and its refusal to accept the opinions of the other people.

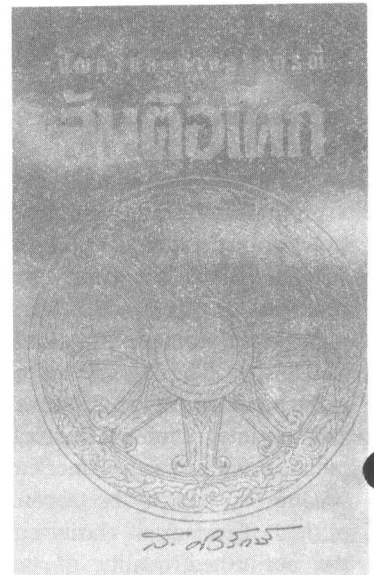
Another panellist, Mr Sunai Sethboonsang, who is a Santi Asoke follower, claimed that the reason behind the action against Phra Bodhirak was not the monks' violation of Buddhist disciplines, but because of envy over the Santi Asoke's appeal to a large number of followers.

He claimed that, according to the disciplines, a monk should speak out if he thinks he has something that is worth being discussed.

Mr Sunai, who is an assistant secretary to Bangkok Governor Chamlong Srimuang, suggested a debate on the controversy between Santi Asoke and the Sangha Council.

Bangkok Post, 3 June 89

I'M not quite sure how to deal with this publication in Bookmarker today, considering the government's "ban" on the Press reporting on Phra Bhodirak and Santi Asoke last month. The "order" would naturally have to be followed but the other day Minister to the Prime Minister's Office, Khunying Supatra Mas-



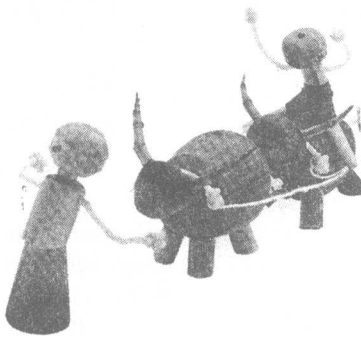
dit, told me there had never been an order to "ban" reporting on Phra Bhodirak's case, "only a policy not to treat it as a major incident", in other words, for the Press not to play it up, Minister Supatra said that in this case she thought the "order" came from somewhere else.

I'm not sure if mentioning Panha Lae Taang Awk Koranee Santi Asoke (Problems and Alternatives concerning Santi Asoke Case) by Sulak Sivaraksa, which came out only a few days ago, is considered treating it as a "major incident" or not. I personally don't think so. But to avoid magnifying the issue, here's a slim book which is guaranteed to enlighten you tremendously on the case in question. The book, by the way, is published by the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD) and is from now available for sale.

Suffice it to say that Sulak's treatment of the issues is thought provoking and necessary reading for all those who consider themselves Buddhists.

Gap

Bangkok Post, 3 June 89



A story in every picture



Back to your childhood—can you remember how happy you were when listening to your mom or dad reading bedtime stories?

As a child, you might smile and have a good dream all through the night. Before you go to sleep, you might also wonder how beautiful life is.

And when you wake up, you might take for granted what is outside the bedroom windows, such as the trees. At the time, had you ever dreamt of having a tree as your friend?

And now you are an adult—maybe a mother or a father. Have you ever spent time reading books or telling tales to your

children?

If not, pick up *Khong-len Dern-thaang* (Travels of Toys) and you will certainly feel that the world of children is not too far to reach and understand.

Indeed, among the many books for youth, *Khong-len Dern-thaang* written by Thepsiri Suksotha, is definitely worth mentioning.

Thepsiri, a veteran writer and beloved children's storyteller, this time depicts a family of toys: father, mother and two sons as the protagonists of his stories. The elder son is the main character of the story.

In the book, the elder son leaves home to search for two lost buffaloes and has several adventures along the way.

Written on the inside cover of the book are the introductory sentences: "Thanks to every tree that creates small branches so that we can make wooden toys for our children. The trees will be glad if they know that children love and respect them."

In a leaflet which accompanies every copy of the book, author Thepsiri says, "Beginning from a small branch, we shape its head, body, glueing on hands and legs. When this small piece of tree comes alive, its travelling adventures begin."

With only 43 words in all, the book is probably one of the shortest to be published. But each word is carefully chosen to evoke the readers' imaginations and vividly relate the story.

How can you explain to children such words as *phaai phae* (defeated) or *thaa thai* (challenging)? This is when pictures come in useful. To explain word "defeated", for example, Thepsiri uses a picture which shows the result of a fight between two

buffaloes. One buffalo is lying supine on the ground while the other animal stands over it.

The word *wang plaow* (empty) is illustrated with a picture of an empty enclosure from which two buffaloes belonging to the family have escaped. But the word and picture also evokes a feeling of emptiness and loss.

The pictures, which are made up of photos of the wooden toys, compliment the text perfectly to illustrate the meaning of each word.

Invented by Pratheep Nongpramor, these delicate little toys are used to represent people in our society. The pictures and text also help create an optimistic outlook on this world for children.

An adult could finish reading the book in two minutes. But after that may well feel like reading it again more carefully as the book is sure to spark their imagination and remind them of their childhood.

The book costs an affordable Bt89. Each book comes with a leaflet containing notes by the author plus a form which will allow you to donate additional copies of the book, at a discounted price of Bt60, to underprivileged children under the care of the Children's Foundation.

To donate a copy of the book, fill in the form and send it to the Children's Foundation, 1492/3, Charoen-Nakorn Road, Klongsarn, Bangkok 10600, or call tel: 437-4318, 437-7201 or 438-9331-2. ●

Suda Kanjanawanawan
The Nation 14 July 1989





BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP (UK)

6 July 1989

Pracha Hutanuvatra
General Secretary
International Network of Engaged Buddhists

Dear Pracha,

Thank you for your letter of 9 May regarding the possible affiliation of the UK Buddhist Peace Fellowship to the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. I apologise for the delay in responding to your enquiry, but it was necessary to hold over my letter until our national committee had held a meeting and could make a decision on the matter. This it has now done and we would like to affiliate and maintain close contact, please.

I am writing this on behalf of our General Secretary, Aleda Erskine. Please send any information which, from time to time, you would like to disseminate directly to our members, to The Editor, INDRA'S NET, 8 West Allington, BRIDPORT, Dorset, DT6 5BG, UK. I believe that Sulak regularly receives copies of INDRA'S NET, which is therefore the routine and regular means of reporting to you UK BPF activities.

I have studied the report of the Engaged Buddhist Conference and there is nothing there from which we would wish to dissent. However, the approach we would favour would be a number of small workshops for intensive meditation and sharing of feelings and ideas. For example, the UK BPF is currently offering to UK social action organisations workshops on stress, frustration, and burn out (led by Christopher Titmuss) and on mediation and conflict resolution (led by our President, Professor Adam Curle).

Looking forward to further contact, and with best wishes for your endeavours,

In peace and good heart,

Ken Jones
National Co-ordinator,
on behalf of British BPF

Japanese Engaged Buddhists Forum

July 19, 1989

Dear Pracha,

Here are the minutes for the Japanese Engaged Buddhist Forum (JEBF) meetings held here in Japan in April and July. Sorry to be so late. I hope something can be printed in *Seeds of Peace*.

MINUTES OF APRIL 1, 1989 JEBF MEETING

The first meeting of the Japan Engaged Buddhists Forum was held in Kyoto on April 1, 1989 to follow up on the various subjects from the February conference held in Uthai Thani, Thailand. The following summarizes the main points agreed to in the meeting.

1. To have JEBF recognized as the Japan Local Board of INEB.
2. For the time being, to have the JEBF office be located in Nagoya and run by the Nagoya members: Messrs. Yamada, Arata and Suzuki.
3. To have JEBF meet 4 times a year.
4. To hold an assembly in Japan around October 1989 on the problems of oppression of the Bangladesh Chittagong Hill Tribes; to make appeals to correct the problems.
5. To hold the next JEBF meeting on July 1, 1989.

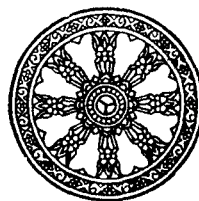
MINUTES OF JULY 1, 1989 JEBF MEETING

The second meeting of the Japan Engaged Buddhists Forum was held in Nagoya on July 1, 1989. Twelve people attended. The following summarizes the main points agreed to in the meeting.

1. On the subject of the Bangladesh Chittagong Hill Tribes, new information was presented at the meeting from an article in a Calcutta newspaper. It reported that from May 14th, the oppression was worsening and that although 5, 100 refugees had escaped to India, a village was massacred and 500 people were killed.
In addition, a May 19, 1989 report from the International Fellowship of Reconciliation was passed around at the meeting.
In response to these events, the following was decided.
 - To lodge a protest at the Bangladesh Consulate.

- As the circumstances of Chittagong are not well known in Japan, to write letters to the Japanese newspapers.
 - To lodge a protest to the government of Bangladesh.
2. Messrs. Bimal and Chakma have been invited to Japan to hold an assembly on the plight of the Chittagong Hill Tract Tribes and to make appeals in Japan. The following points were agreed to.
- To begin steps to have the two visitors come to Japan in October for 15-20 days.
 - To plan assemblies for the visitors throughout Japan for 10-15 days.
 - Until the visitors arrive, to translate into Japanese a report on the oppression of the Chittagong Hill Tract Tribes and publish it in the form of a leaflet. 5,000 copies will be printed and distributed to raise funds.
 - To also publish the translation in related magazines.
 - To further promote awareness of the oppression of the Chittagong Hill Tract Tribes through publishing articles in other mass communication journals.
 - To collect information on the presence of Japanese firms doing business in Bangladesh.
 - To try calling upon members (bipartisan) of the Japanese Diet involved in providing support to the government to Bangladesh, as well as Buddhist members of the Diet.
 - To call for the cessation of government support used in the oppression of the Buddhists of Bangladesh.
 - To collect data on how government support is currently being utilized.
 - These activities are to be coordinated in Nagoya.
3. We discussed the letter sent to Mr. Yamada on the subject of the INEB meeting to be held in March 1990. The question of how the Japanese group should deal with the subject of INEB finances was discussed. It was agreed to continue to examine this point in the next meeting.
4. It was agreed to hold the next JEBF meeting on August 26, 1989.
- I'll try to keep in touch more often. Take care of yourself and please give my regards and good wishes to Sulak.

Yours in the Dhamma
Harold Abiloke



TIBETAN YOUNG BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

(Registered under the societies act XXI of 1860)

Dear sir,

I have come across your magazine '*Seeds of Peace*' and found it very thought provoking and interesting.

The aims and objectives of TICD and our association has many common factors and I see lot of avenues for close co-operation. We believe in the need of human beings to co-exist and help each other when in need. Life is precious to everyone and it should be utilised to earn merit and be socially productive. Our present situation and action sow the seeds for future generations and what kind of future generations we have is dependent on our actions and deeds.

You have done a great job in bringing out the problems faced by people of different faiths. Religion should never be utilised for the achievement of self benefit, let alone discriminating against people of other faiths.

Our country, Tibet, once was a flourishing Buddhist country but today it has become a land of devils. The people are subjected to inhuman treatments and suppression with few parallels in the annals of human history. Tibetans are persecuted for their faith in Buddhism and being a Buddhist. I was wondering if it would be possible for your esteemed magazine to print materials about present state of religion in Tibet. A word would be highly appreciated.

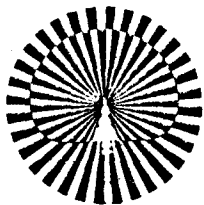
I also enclose a booklet *Human Approach for World Peace* by H.H. the Dalai Lama. If you could you may utilise it for publication in *Seeds of Peace*.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Tashi Namgyal
Executive Secretary



Dharmavedi Institute For Mass Communication

April, 1989.

Dear Mr. Pracha,

May I first convey my sincere thanks and appreciation for the cordial welcome given to me when I attended the Engaged Buddhist Conference in Thailand this February.

The discussions and various matters relating to Buddhism taken up at the conference was of immense value, inspiring and enlightning.

I personally feel that the most significant, decisive, and crucial step taken was the setting up of an International Buddhist Educational Network. Please give me the honour of serving you as the Sri Lankan Representative of this setup. A meeting was convened recently at our Institute to form the Sri Lankan Branch and the following were elected as Office Bearers.

1. President : Venerable Pangnandriya Thero.
2. Vice President : Dr. Chandima Wijebandara.
3. Secretary : Mr. Raja Dharmapala.
4. Treasurer : Mrs. Chitra Kumari Yapa Bandara.
5. General Committee :
 - I) Venerable Mahasomsiyan Thero (Thailand)
 - II) Venerable Gunananda Thero
 - III) Venerable Buddhuyagama Chandraratana Thero.
 - IV) Venerable Polgolle Dhammakusala Thero.
 - V) Venerable Jinasiri Thero.

The following was proposed:

1. To impart a training regarding mass media, education and social development to Buddhist monks and laymen who represent the Buddhist Network coming from foreign countries.
2. Expenses in connection with this training (Educational fees, hostel charges, etc.) are to be incurred jointly by the main office of the International Buddhist Network and the Local Branch.
3. We have decided to commence the educational activities of the Sri Lankan Branch under this International Buddhist Network in August this

year.

In view of this venture, it is now incumbent upon the main body of the International Buddhist Educational Network to make their selections of the participants who wish to come to Sri Lanka.

I believe that Venerable Maha Somsian Thero has informed you about all these matters.

We welcome your comments, suggestions and any other proposals that you might have. As well, we wish to know your activities and progress.

With the Blessings of the Triple Gem, may your Buddhist institution gain international recognition, acceptance and progress to be a guiding light to Buddhists all over the world.

Yours sincerely,

Raja Dharmapala
Secretary

Children's Welfare Society

16-6-1989

Dear Pracha,

Thank you very much for your letters and immediate action regarding the atrocities in the CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS (CHT). Again, I received news from Tripura today that another 51,000 refugees have crossed over the international border and arrived in south Tripura, India since 14th May 1989. Hundreds and thousands of people are shelterless and are waiting at the border to come to Tripura for fear of their lives, killings by the international new Muslim settlers backed by the Bangladesh Army continue. More than 500 people have been killed by the Muslim settlers and Army since 4th May 1989. They burnt village after village in the CHT. Longadu village which is 58 miles north east of Rangamati and Pujgang which is about 17 miles north of Khagrachari were affected seriously. There are no houses standing in these villages. Now the total number of Refugees in India is about 100,000. I got this information from reliable sources. But the government still does not recognise this number. I have enclosed some press cuttings for your information to take the necessary action.

You will be happy to know that we are

going to form a Committee called the NETWORK OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS in India. This will be a branch of the INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS. After forming the working committee, I will send you the names of the members. Is you have any suggestions please write me.

Please convey my heartiest thanks to our Kalyan Mitta Sulak. The people will not forget him what he has done for CHT. I would like to thank you, Parinya and Oi for your kind help while I was in Thailand

Wish you all the best.

Yours in the Dhamma
(Bimal Bhikkhu)

"Don't you notice how little energy most of the people around you have, including your parents and teachers? They are slowly dying, even when their bodies are not yet old. Why? Because they have been beaten into submission by society. You see, without understanding its fundamental purpose which is to free the extraordinary thing called the mind, with its capacity to create atomic submarines and jet planes, which can write the most amazing poetry and prose, which can make the world so beautiful and also destroy the world – without understanding the fundamental purpose, which is to find truth or God, this energy becomes destructive; and then society says, 'We must shape and control the energy of the individual.'"

"So, it seems to me that the function of education is to bring about a release of energy in the pursuit of goodness, truth, or God, which in turn makes the individual a true human being and therefore the right kind of citizen. But mere discipline, without full comprehension of all this, has no meaning, it is a most destructive thing. Unless each of you is so educated that... you are full of vitality and intelligence, full of abounding energy to find out what is true, you will merely be absorbed by society; you will be smothered, destroyed, miserably unhappy for the rest of your life. As a river creates the banks which hold it, so the energy which seeks truth creates its own discipline without any form of imposition; and as the river finds the sea, so that energy finds its own freedom."

(The Penguin Krishnamurti Reader)

The Cooperation between the National Institute of Social Sciences, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute



During 16-21 July 1989, Mr Sulak Sivaraksa, Director of Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute and three staff members were invited by the National Institute of Social Sciences (NISS), Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) to visit that country and to discuss the possibilities of having cooperation in the effort to promote social sciences activities in both countries. Mr Sixana Sisan, President of the National Institute of Social Sciences (NISS) and his staff were very enthusiastic in this move. While the staff of SPDI were in LPDR, they were treated exceptionally well by the staff of NISS. Generous arrangements were made for the SPDI staff to stay at the very fine hotels in Vientiane and Luang Phra Bang. In addition, whatever the staff of SPDI would like to visit or to do within that period, the staff of NISS enthusiastically facilitated until the arrangements were successfully made. The staff of SPDI therefore had a privilege to visit many Buddhist temples, to participate in religious activities, to have a courtesy visit to the President of the Sangha, to visit a village in Luang Phra Bang and to have an audience with one of the former princesses.

Before the departure date, the Director of

Santi Pracha Dhamma, Mr Sulak Sivaraksa, and the President of the National Institute of Social Sciences, Mr Sixana Sisan, signed the Memorandum of Understanding between SPDI and NISS. According to the Memorandum, the two institutes will work cooperatively in the effort to promote social sciences activities in both countries. For example, activities such as a joint research project, training of personnel, exchange of personnel, exchange of documents as well as visitation, will be carried out in an appropriate manner. It is hoped by the two parties that cooperation between SPDI and NISS will last forever and the written agreement will be successfully materialized.

U.D.

The Dalai Lama visits New York

The other day in New York sad words were spoken about our country, some of the saddest I have heard.

They came from a young foreigner who lives in Washington. He is assigned by his Government to try to speak to ours about the occupation and devastation of his country, the destruction of its religion, the slaughter of its people.

Somebody asked him, in the presence of his national leader, what contacts he had with the Administration.

"Well," he said, "We are not welcome at the State Department. Sometimes we can see them outside."

At the other end of the table sat the Dalai Lama, the exiled leader of Tibet, the very symbol of its nationhood. To his people he is also the leader and teacher of their Buddhism, a living, reincarnated vision of holiness.

The Dalai Lama was in New York as part of an international tour devoted largely to religious teaching. But wherever he goes he tries to remind the world of his Himalayan nation, brutalized by Chinese Communist invaders for almost half a century.

He does it almost gently, because that is his nature, because he preaches nonviolence,

because he is fearful of bringing down even more horror on his people.

Already more than a million of a population of about six million have died—shot down in the streets, murdered in jails, starved; 6,000 temples and monasteries have been razed.

Americans gave their hearts to Chinese students who died fighting the very regime that imprisons Tibet. But even now the Dalai Lama can visit the United States only privately. The Government will not receive him.

As for the American press and people, they have room in their minds and emotions for the struggles of other peoples who do not have power—Balts, Poles, Armenians, Africans, Palestinians, Jews, Irish. Why not Tibetans?

It is not simply that there are few Tibetans here. More important is that the Chinese Communists keep reporters and cameramen out. No journalistic witnesses means no stories, no film, no "news," and that means no attention, no caring.

And while nonviolence as the leader's national policy may get casual nods of admiration from time to time, it certainly takes the heat off the rest of the world.

It works only if the governing authority is moved, embarrassed or otherwise bothered. The British were bothered enough to give up in India. The then-Fascist Government of Portugal had to be driven out of its small colony in India later.

Decades before Tiananmen Square, the Chinese Communists showed in Tibet that their answer to nonviolence was slaughter.

But in all these years, only one part of the American Government has had the courage to speak up.

Congress has passed several resolutions supporting the people and exiled Government of Tibet. These resolutions have urged American Administrations to help the Dalai Lama get the Chinese to talk about fundamental political and religious freedoms for Tibet, even in association with Communist China.

When he was in New York, the Dalai Lama received an award from the Congressional Human Rights Caucus.

But the Bush Administration, like all Administrations since the occupation, has turned away from Tibet. No—there was a brief period in the 1960's when Washington thought it might be useful to train some Tibetan guerrillas in Colorado.

Then we dumped them.

China beckoned. All that money—the mirage of the China market still makes us drool. And you know global politics—the strange idea that China is some kind of passive poker card to be played by us.

So the Chinese get away literally with murder, demanding and receiving American acquiescence about the rape of Tibet.

It never seems to penetrate the American official mind that it is the Chinese who are playing our card.

How amused the rulers of China must be. They see the great United States, kowtowing for decades, so fearful of their toothless, politically staggering regime that it has in effect renounced its belief in freedom for one endangered people. How amused, and how contemptuous. How long can an American President ignore Congressional resolutions, even against international murder? As long as he sees fit.

The Dalai Lama preaches hope. The only hope for Tibet is that George Bush will see that the best answer to Tiananmen Square is at last to receive in the White House the leader of the people who for decades have died under the same guns.

All those fighting for their own dream of freedom will praise his name, among them those who fight for it in China. □

A.M. Rosenthal

Minors In Need Of ReSettlement

125 West Lewis, Mankato,
MN 56001 Annual
Report — Oct. 25, 1988

BACKGROUND HISTORY

Minors in Need of ReSettlement (MINORS) grew out of the impassioned pleas of several Hmong immigrants living in St. Paul, Minnesota, in early 1982. Their children, sisters, and brothers remained in refugee camps in Thailand despite being qualified for expedited resettlement as unaccompanied minors.

In November 1982, MINORS' current Field Coordinator, Doug Hulcher, travelled to Thailand—where he had previously been an American Refugee Committee volunteer—to locate the relatives in the refugee camps and to determine what obstacles were preventing their resettlement. He discovered these children did qualify for resettlement and the proper documents had been filed, yet resettlement was not completed.

Mr. Hulcher began to lobby officials at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, which eventually resulted in the reunification of the refugee children whom he had initially sought to assist with their families in St. Paul.

Word spread quickly that an American was in the refugee camp and had successfully helped several unaccompanied minors relocate to the United States. Lines of children soon began to form outside his hut. Within six months of Mr. Hulcher's arrival in Thailand, nearly one hundred unaccompanied minors had requested help in joining their families in the United States.

In November of 1984, Mr. Hulcher accompanied approximately thirty refugee children, some of whom were physically handicapped, on their journey to their families' homes in the U.S. It was at this time that a number of supporters decided to create the organization called Minors In Need Of Resettlement. MINORS was incorporated as a nonprofit Minnesota corporation on November 16, 1984. Tax-exempt status was granted on April 17, 1986.

Approximately 85 percent of MINORS' caseload are orphans who have family members living in the United States. While living in Thai refugee camps, these children often reside with unrelated families who happen to have the same last (clan) name as them. This arrangement commonly results in difficulty proving that the minor is indeed unaccompanied, although it often means that the children are not well looked after. Five percent of the caseload is comprised of children who become separated from their parents, who are in the U.S. The remaining 10 percent are handicapped or elderly refugees attempting on their own to resettle and join family members in the U.S. or other country of resettlement.

Records are compiled as refugees cross into Thailand and are relied upon by various government and camp officials. These records have often proved to be incomplete and inaccurate and because it is not a simple procedure to correct them, the

responsibility is solely assumed by MINORS.

There are also cases for whom no agency can provide any assistance because they are illegally hiding out in Thailand. These cases are brought to the attention of MINORS by family members in the U.S. For political reasons, neither Embassy officials nor the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is able to be directly involved. Therefore MINORS is the only avenue for support and assistance, namely housing, food, medical attention and resettlement counseling.

For "legal" refugees, those registered and living in camps, UNHCR in Bangkok makes referrals to the U.S. Embassy of those who are qualified for resettlement. Occasionally it is necessary to lobby U.N. officials on behalf of certain minors to assure they will recommend the interview. A referral from UNHCR to the U.S. Embassy usually means the minor will be approved for resettlement. The children must also process with the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) which makes arrangements for transportation and resettlement.

While adult refugees can interview with the U.S. Embassy at will, and receive cultural orientation and language instruction in preparation for resettlement, unaccompanied minors, handicapped, and elderly refugees often cannot schedule their own interviews and are not automatically scheduled for language and cultural orientation classes because they are supposed to be priority resettlement cases. In reality these "priority cases" spend months or even years in these camps with no progress toward resettlement.

PAST YEAR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS (1987)

We are now up to case number 803, which includes for the most part Hmong minors who have requested assistance to resettle in the U.S. and join family members there. It also includes more than 60 Lao, Khmer, Mien, and Vietnamese children, as well as nearly 50 elderly or handicapped refugees who are attempting to resettle on their own to join family members in the U.S. Occasionally we are involved with cases wishing to resettle in France or other countries, although this amounts to less than five percent of the total cases. This total (803) represents more than 380 minors and others who have now departed to the U.S., as well as approximately 100 cases who are no longer being assisted by MINORS for various

reasons—such as those minors who have reached age 18 and no longer require special assistance in obtaining permission to process and interview for resettlement, or those who have decided not to resettle at this time, or those whose next-of-kin have arrived from their home country and with whom the minor can reside. The total also includes three minors who died from illnesses contracted as they awaited permission to interview.

Therefore, the actual total of "active" cases, those still in Thailand, is approximately 310. Approximates are necessary because our caseload is in a constant state of flux, due to departures and a constant trickle of newly arriving cases.

We are now dealing with several "illegal" cases, those who are hiding out in Bangkok or the provinces—those who are not in the camps. These cases progress very slowly as they are not authorized to be in Thailand, let alone be registered as refugees, nor do they yet qualify to process for resettlement because they are recent arrivals from Laos or Cambodia.

More than 80 children who were assisted by MINORS have departed for the U.S. so far this year, and several more are due to leave Thailand before January 1, 1989.

We have made positive strides into the resettlement bureaucracy in Bangkok and the camps, and UNHCR referrals of minors are proceeding faster and more smoothly than in past years. Twenty eight minors in Chiang Kham Camp (Hmong and Mien) were recently approved by U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), a record for this camp, and they are soon to depart from Panat Nikhom Transit Center near Bangkok for the U.S. Further, 15 minors in Chaing Kham camp have recently been referred by the UNHCR to the U.S. Embassy for processing and it is hoped that most of them can be interviewed in the coming weeks.

In what is typical of our caseload, of three minors who were recently (September 1988) approved by INS for resettlement from Ban Vinai camp, one 9-year-old boy is on his way to join his mother in Minnesota, a 13-year-old will join his uncle in California, and a 14-year-old will join her brother in Panat Nikhom camp and will then resettle together with him.

Our current caseload ranges from a 3-year-old orphan to a 96-year-old blind woman. The boy will join his uncle in the U.S. and the woman will join her son, and many other relatives.

