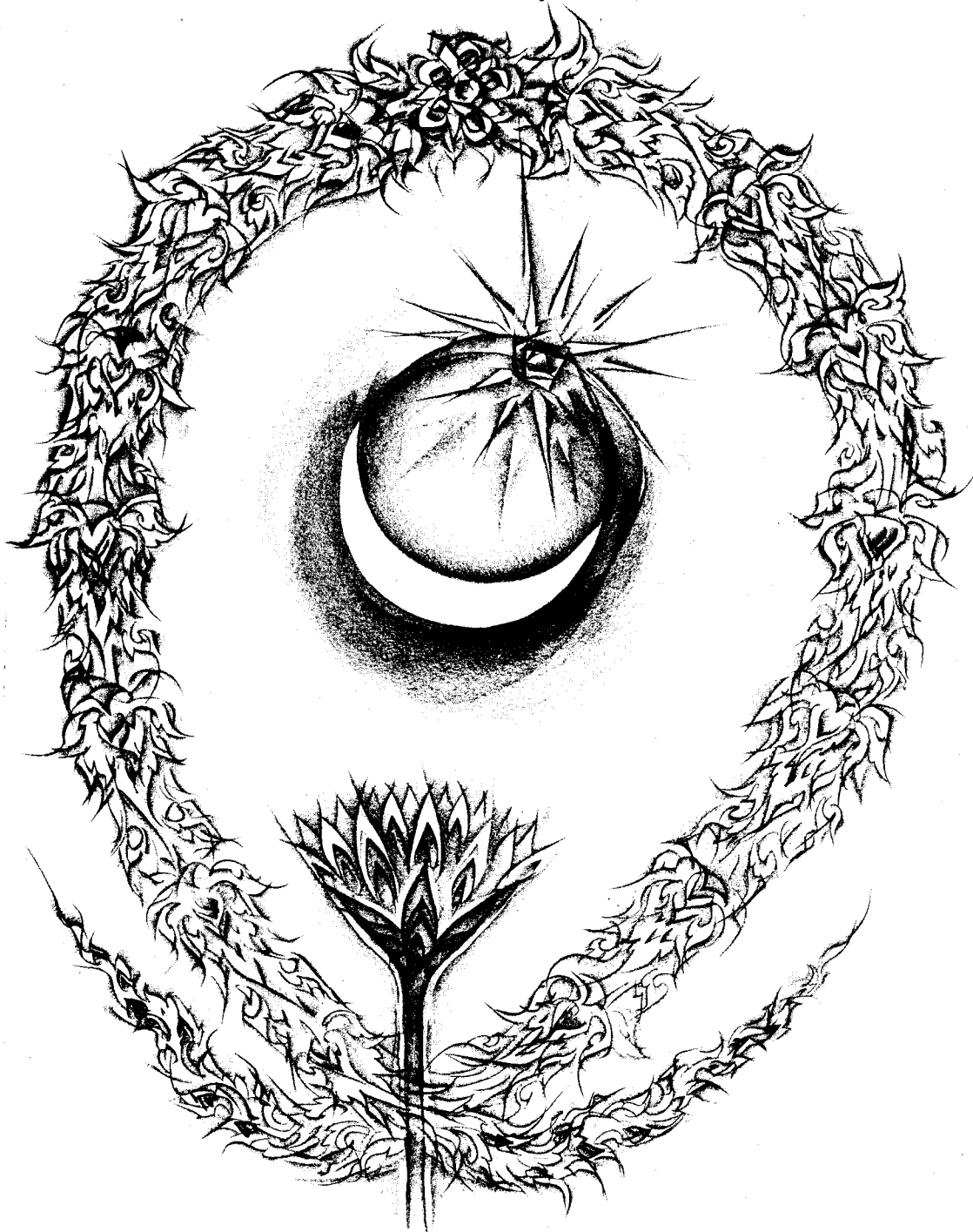


SEEDS OF PEACE

Vol. 6 No. 1 January 2533 (1990)



HAPPY NEW YEAR
Siamese Buddhist Era 2533

Contents

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

1. "Do you know about the genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts?" A lecture tour in Japan.....4
2. Human Rights Abuses in Burma.....5
3. Human Rights Violations in Tibet.....8
4. Statement of the Sri Lanka Group.....10
5. Violence in Contemporary Sri Lanka and Some Questions from a Nonviolent Perspective 12
6. Sri Lanka : Stop the Killing of People and Start Peace Negotiation.....16
7. Peace Brigades International Team in Sri Lanka—Volunteers are needed17

SOCIALLY ENGAGED BUDDHISM

1. Buddhism and Leadership for Peace...19
2. Reconciliation and Religion : A Buddhist Reflection on Religion's Claims and Reality 21
3. The Ashram For Life and Society Project.....27

INTER-RELIGIOUS INTERACTION

1. My Personal Spero.....28
2. Buddhist, Muslim find ways to walk together.....31

3. Towards A Spiritual Vision of The Human Being..... 32
4. Thai-Indochinese Dialogue on Sa-Kae-Krang River.....35

THE ENVIRONMENT

1. How Buddhism Can Help Protect Nature.....36

BOOK REVIEWS

1. Me and Mine.....39
2. Siam in Crisis.....39
3. Some Tradition of the Thai and Popular Buddhism in Siam.....40

FOR THE RECORDS

1. International Scholars Begin 'Breakthrough' Project in Religious Education.....41
2. The Dalai Lama and the Nobel Peace Prize.....42
3. Cultural and religious exhibits on tour.....44
4. Events Concerning Phya Anuman-Phra Saraprasert.....44

RECOMMENDED READING.....45

LETTERS.....46

SEEDS OF PEACE

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Objectives of TICD

1. To coordinate work among individuals, groups of individuals and various agencies dealing with religions and development in 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.

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Cover: Angkharn Kalayanaphong



THAI INTER-RELIGIOUS
COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT

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BANGKOK 10501

Phra Saraprasert's Centenary



Phra Saraprasert was the last title conferred on Mr. Tri Nagapradipa — an accomplished Pali and Sanskrit scholar whose contribution to Thai literature was considerable. He often wrote with Phya Anuman Rajadhon. He also taught Pali at Chulalongkorn University and was a member of the national

committee on compiling the Thai dictionary until he passed away on 4th June 1945.

On 25th November 1989 the Siamese government and people marked his hundredth birthday ceremony with gratitude.

Phra Saraprasert was a monk for many years and went to Ceylon as a bhikkhu. After leaving the holy order, he joined the Ministry of Public Instruction and the Royal Scribes Department. He was close to their Majesties Kings Rama VI and VII. He was chosen to read the royal proclamation when the first permanent Siamese Constitution was promogated on 10th December 1932.

Editorial Notes

Although there were much suffering in the world, we at Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development and Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute tried to do what we could, in our country as well as in other Buddhist lands. Some of these activities have been reported in this issue.

Internationally, we joined hands with many other organizations, which try to bring about world peace, e.g. the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace in Ulan Bator and the Life and Peace Institute in Upsala. Through *Karma*, the Scandinavian Journal for Buddhism in Norway, we had a chance to link meaningfully with the International Peace Research Institute of Oslo, which will hopefully collaborate with us in the near future.

Although the situation in Tibet is not better, we extend our symphathetic joy to H.H. the Dalai Lama who received the Nobel Peace Prize on 12 December. Hopefully things will be smother for our Tibetan friends in their homeland.

In the last few issues, we reported that Phya Anuman Rajadhon's work had been translated into quite a number of languages. We are happy to say that Swedish and Sinhalese translations have already been accomplished. It is hoped that the Russian and Polish editions will follow soon.

In Bangkok, we are glad to say that the Thai government recognized both Phya Anuman and Phra Saraprasert, whose twin pen names—Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa—became a philanthropic Foundation, providing legal umbrella for our two

organizations (TICD & SPDI) to operate for humankind as well as to support artists and writers.

The Toyota Foundation financed us to have exhibits of Phya Anuman's life and work, together with that of his co-author as well as aspects of Siamese culture on tour in many Asian cities.

This year they again support us to have a seminar on cultural exchange, so we will have a chance to invite many Asian friends to be in Siam to share our common and different cultural heritages.

Besides, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists will meet for the second time in the country in March, and so will the second Thai-Indochinese Dialogue. We shall report all these events in our next issue, which will be dedicated to our patron, the Ven. Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, who will complete his seven cycles of birth in May.

We are grateful that quite a number of individuals and organizations subscribed to *Seeds of Peace* and recommended it to wider circle. *Life & Peace Review* in Sweden and *Karma* in Norway in particular have been very helpful, so has *Buddhists for Peace* in Mongolia. As to the Buddhists Peace Fellowship in U.K., U.S.A. and Australia, they have been our firmed supporters all along.

We hope our other friends will help us further so that the seeds of peace will grow to be a big tree with shade for the happiness of all beings.

Lastly, we should like to remind those who are not so mindful to renew your subscription and do write to us. We need your criticism, advice and encouragement.

“Do you Know about the Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts?”

A lecture tour in Japan

Until recently, there has been no knowledge in Japan of the massacre of lay and ordained Buddhists in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh or of the existence of 100,000 refugees who have fled to India. Nor has there been any awareness in Japan of the destruction of Buddhist temples and statues and the genocidal policy against the Buddhists of the CHT. International Buddhist organizations in Asia have been slow to respond to this crisis and, to make matters worse, the mass media of Japan have shown no concern for the fate of the tribal peoples of the CHT. For these reasons, we in Japan have been late in perceiving the tragic circumstances of the CHT.

In preparation for the visit of Bimal Bhikkhu and Mr. Chakma, the members of INEB-JAPAN prepared a booklet in Japanese entitled *The History and Present Circumstances of the Genocidal Policy Against Buddhists by the Government of Bangladesh*.

This booklet describes how INEB was organized at the conference in February 1989, and how we heard about the circumstances of the oppression of the Buddhists in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. After the conference, the members of INEB-JAPAN firmly decided to take up this crisis as our first activity. When, at the request of INEB-JAPAN, Bimal Bhikkhu and Mr. Chakma gave their ready consent to participate in our activities, we resolved to invite them to Japan for a speaking tour on the plight of the peoples of the CHT.

The tour was entitled, *Do You Know About the Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts—A*

Lecture and Dialogue. The tour extended from September 28 through October 12 and a total of fifteen assemblies were held. The schedule was extremely busy with something planned for every day (typically Japanese!). Most of the lectures during the tour were held at temples throughout Japan; lectures were also held at Dobo University and Ryukoku University—both are Buddhist universities. In addition, an assembly was also held on October 12 in Tokyo at the Japan Branch of Amnesty International. This tour provided a broad-based forum for Bimal Bhikkhu and Mr. Chakma to speak to a wide Japanese audience about the situation in the CHT.

The tour was covered widely in the Japanese press, including a total of thirty-five articles printed in national, regional, and Buddhist newspapers. An interview will also be published in the monthly magazine, *Sekai (World)*.

A press interview with Bimal Bhikkhu and Mr. Chakma was held in Tokyo on October 12 and, on the same day, the two presented their demands at the official residence of the Prime Minister of Japan in the form of a document entitled *A Demand that Japan Temporarily Freeze Overseas Development Assistance to Bangladesh Until the Human Rights Repression of the Buddhists is Stopped*. The presentation at the Prime Minister's official residence was covered on TV and radio by the national broadcasting station NHK, which is also transmitted to other countries of Asia.

In conjunction with the tour, INEB-JAPAN also circulated a petition entitled *A Demand to Freeze Japanese Government Development Aid to Bangladesh to Guarantee the Basic Human Rights of the Minority Buddhists of Bangladesh*. About 6,000 signatures were collected and presented to

Prime Minister Kaifu on October. Bimal Bhikkhu and Mr. Chakma also visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on October 13 to make further appeals.

At each assembly during the tour, we were forced to consider how we should maintain solidarity with the Buddhists of Bangladesh who, even now, continue to be deprived of their lives. The tour also made us recognize the importance of international solidarity. Hearing directly the testaments of Bimal Bhikkhu and Mr. Chakma about the anguish and tragedy of their oppression made strong impressions on us all. Hearing of the usurpation of their native language, their religion and culture made us question our own Japanese history of numerous invasions as well as question how this relates deeply to the way we live today.

The tour has ended but we are continuing to take action on this issue. Concretely speaking, we are working on dispatching an international team made up of members from the Diet, journalists, religious leaders, and members of human rights organizations to investigate the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts; we are pursuing aid for the CHT refugees in the Indian state of Tripura; we are also conducting a postcard campaign directed at the Bangladesh government to demand an end to the oppression of the CHT minorities.

A meeting of INEB-JAPAN is planned for December where a general discussion and evaluation of the tour will be made. A discussion of how we should proceed is also scheduled. The tour has had the positive result of uniting a great number of Buddhist participants throughout Japan which give us hope that our future activities will be widely supported.

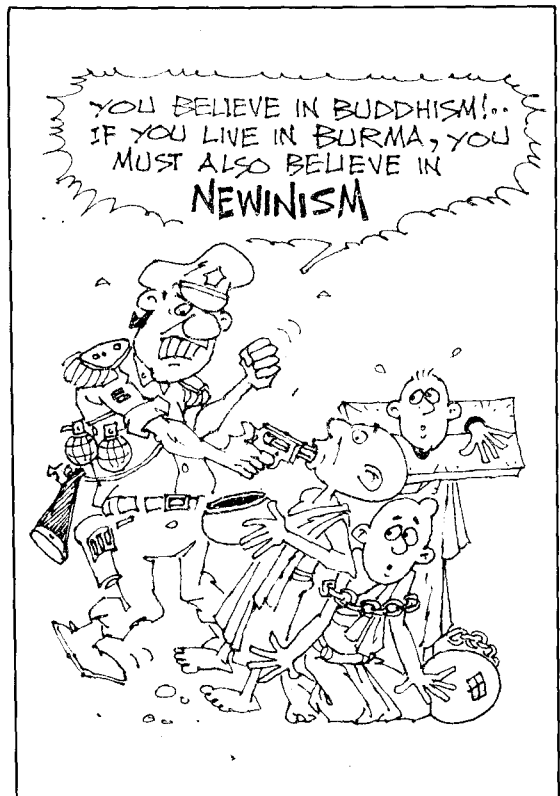
It is interesting to note that the Bangladesh Embassy repeatedly harassed members of INEB-JAPAN during the tour; this only provided further proof for us of the human rights repression of the minorities in the CHT. In conclusion, we wish to appeal to all countries which provide aid to Bangladesh to take up the problems of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration
Suzuki (INEB-JAPAN)

Reported by Ven Suzuki Ryowa,
 General secretary, INEB-JAPAN.
Translated into English by
Jill & Harold Abilock.

Human Rights Abuses in Burma

On July 20, 1989 two top opposition leaders, Daw Aung San Su Kyi and U Tin Oo were placed under house arrest by Saw Maung's regime for a period of one year. Both leaders have been charged with "sowing dissension in the military and nurturing hatred for the armed forces among the populace" On August 11, 1989, *Asia Watch* reported that, "since her arrest, Aung San Su Kyi has undergone a hunger strike and she was reportedly hospitalized on Aug 4".



On the 4th of August, the state-run *Working People's Daily* announced that "17,657 criminals from all over the country had been released as part of a "general amnesty". Diplomatic sources

suspect that the real purpose of the amnesty is to clear prisons to make room for the thousands of political activists who have been arrested over the past month, according to reports in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* on 7 Sept 1989.

The military arrested 7 central executive committee members of the National League for Democracy party. They are Daw Myint Myint Khin (Lawyer), Maung Moe Thu (Playwright & Poet); U Win Tin (Journalist), U Aung Lwin (Famous Actor), U Tun Tin (politician), and at least two others. They have been charged with having a connection with the communists. As many as 1500 members of the NLD have been detained following Aung San Su Kyi's arrest. Ma Thien Gyi and Myint Shwe, close associate with Aung San Su Kyi, were arrested on or after 20 July. Forty three



students who were staying at the home of Aung San Su Kyi (which had functioned as the headquarters of the NLD) have been arrested for failing to register their place of residence with the authorities,

according to the *Working People's Daily* on 8 Aug 1989. On July 27, the government sentenced to death three student leaders of the NLD from the Syriam division. Than Zaw, Nyi Nyi Oo, and Moe Kyaw Thu were accused of involvement in the July 7 bombing of the Syriam Oil Refinery near Rangoon. The military regime said the main culprit has not been caught yet. His name is Moe Thi Ha. During the 1st week of August, Moe Thi Ha told AP. "The government made the charge against him and the other organizers to use them as a scapegoat to attack the party". (The government has recently changed their story concerning this case. They now say that the KNU was behind the explosion.) *Dawn* briefly mentioned this case in issue number 15. *Dawn*, ABSDF, and the Burmese people call for action from the international community to apply pressure before the military government

kills these student leaders.

Many other opposition party members have been arrested such as U Aye Lwin, the chairman of the Revolutionary Party which is a legally registered political party, on July 20; U Zaw Win, the chairman of the National Politic Front and his CEC members; U Naing Myint, Dr Nay Win, U Tin Aye Kyu and Taw Phaye Lay U Aung Zay; Moe Hein and Kyaw Zay Ya, leaders of the New Society Party; Thakin Khin Aung, CEC member of the league for Democracy and Peace; and Khin Maung Myint, the chairman of the People's Progressive Party and his CEC members, Hla Shwe and U Nyo Win, who have been charged as communists or having connection with the communists. They are also a legally registered party, according to the *Working People's Daily* newspaper of 7 & 8 Aug.

On July 7, three students, Myan Thin Kyaw, Kyaw Htay Oo and Toe Kyaw Hlaing (3rd MB, IM 1, Rng), were arrested. On that day, the students and the people were commemorating those killed on the same day in 1962 when the Burmese Army killed scores of young people at the university and blew up the Rangoon University Studnet's Union building.

The military tribunal in Shwebo, 420 miles (700km) North of Rangoon, has sentenced 11 people to death. These 11 people have been charged with attacking a police station and beheading four policeman during last year's uprising, the official Rangoon radio reported on 2nd Sept. Fourteen others received sentences ranging from life imprisonment to five years of hard labor. They have been charged with the attack on the police station at Taze in northern Burma.

On July 28, Military Tribunal No.2 sentenced seven persons to five years at hard labor for their involvement in a peaceful protest organized by the monks at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon. They include San Maung, Zaw Win Aung, Kyaw Win Moe, Htay Lwin, Khin Maung Tin, That Naing and Kyaw Lwin Nyunt. They have been charged with "disturbing the peace, affecting restoration of law and order and undermining the well-being of the general public or a group of people" by demonstrating and shouting slogans, reported *Asia Watch* 11 Aug, 1989.

On 23 March, 1989, the prominent student leader Min Ko Naing and 15 other members of opposition parties were arrested for "organizing and inciting disturbances" in connection with demonstrations marking Armed Forces Day. The 2 student leaders from the Rangoon Students' Union, Nyo Tun and Zaw Zaw Aung, were arrested on June 27 and Aung Din in late April.

Now, Western diplomats estimate that up to 3,000 people have been arrested on political charges since 20 July.

Dawn, ABSDF, and the students believe that most of those arrested have been tortured and sent to the frontier area as porters. We call on the Saw Maung regime to release all of the political prisoners and students and to the international community to boycott the Saw Maung Regime politically and economically.

REFLECTIONS FROM A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

PROBLEMS OF BUDDHIST MONKS UNDER THE SINGLE- PARTY SYSTEM OF NE WIN

(summary of statement)

For 26 years, following the accession to power of Ne Win, the life of Buddhist monks has been stormy. Despite the fact that they sacrificed much in the struggle against the colonial power, the Burma Socialist Program Party carried out suppression against them. In fact, it often seemed that the BSPP was carrying out a policy to eliminate Buddhist monks who had social consciousness. Many were arrested, tortured, insulted and indirectly killed. Others were excommunicated by force for speaking out the truth.

Although the government has tried to tame Buddhist monks, and make them submissive, it has not been very successful. The monks have been directly involved in all of the people's movements.

For example, during the 1974 funeral of U Thant, former General Secretary of the United Nations, students and working people rose up against the government to protest its dictatorial rule. Many monks joined in these demonstrations. The BSPP, fearing the influence of the Buddhist monks, quickly took action against them. Tension between the Buddhist monks and the BSPP grew rapidly and steadily.

Finally, in March 1988, a general uprising broke out all over Burma because of the serious economic and political problems. People were also unhappy because at least 65% of all foreign aid was being used by the government in its civil war against the ethnic minorities.

As the demonstrations grew, the BSPP tried to force Buddhist monks to disassociate themselves from the protests and go back to their monasteries. However, they could not carry out their plan. More and more monks joined the people in the streets. At least 1000 monks marched in the streets calling for an end to one-party rule and the establishment of democracy.

The demonstrations continued through August 18, 1988, when finally the military staged a coup and brutally took power back into their own hands. Immediately the BSPP arrested the monks who were respected by the public and secretly killed them.

At that time, students and monks were called to a meeting to discuss stability in the country. Once again the tragic story was repeated. Many of these students and monks were executed near a warehouse by the Hlaing River. Their robes and clothing were removed, and their bodies tossed into the Hlaing River.

The life of monks under Ne Win and Saw Maung is very ugly and very tragic. Therefore, many of the monks have gone underground to join the students in the jungles. Some have given up their monks' robes in order to join in the armed struggle.

Saw Maung and Ne Win have no dignity, and they have no desire to save the country.

(translated by Aung Chin Win Aung)

Central Executive Committee

The Union of Young Monks in the Revolutionary Area.

November 30, 1988

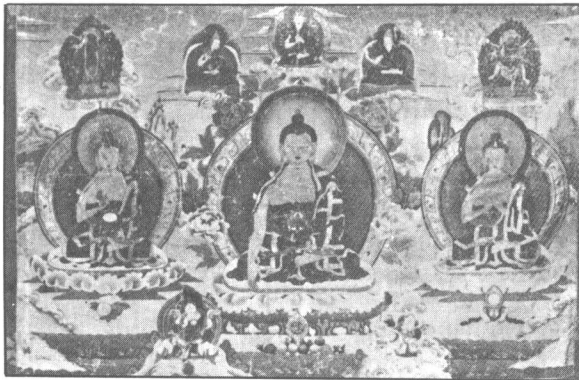
From Dawn-News Bulletin

All Students' Democratic Front

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN TIBET

I would like to present a brief outline of the gross and systematic violation of human rights in Tibet that have been going on ever since the invasion by the People's Republic of China in 1949.

It is my hope this presentation will help to bring about a better understanding of the real situation in Tibet and thus generate more concern and support for the aspiration of fundamental rights in Tibet. At the same time I fervently hope and pray, that with the world's concern and sympathy, the day will come soon when the Tibetan people, led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, can return to a free and independent Tibet.



FINDINGS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURIST

In 1960, after the flight of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and 85,000 of his followers into exile, the International Commission of Jurists found, after extensive investigations, that acts of genocide had been committed by the Chinese in an attempt to destroy the Tibetans as a religious group. The Commission also came to the conclusion that the Chinese authorities in Tibet had violated 16 out of 30 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. No other case of this sort had been recalled in which the ruthless suppression of man's essential dignity has been

more systematically and efficiently carried out.

UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION

In the same light, the United Nations General Assembly had in 1959, 1961 and 1965, passed resolutions expressing their *grave concern* over the violations of *fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people* and the suppression of the distinctive cultural and religious life and freedom that the Tibetans had traditionally enjoyed. The resolutions also stated **the Tibetans were deprived of their inalienable right to self-determination.**

POPULATION TRANSFER

At present the greatest threat to survival of the Tibetan national identity is the large influx of Chinese settlers into Tibet. Already the Tibetan people have been reduced to a minority in our own country.

It is important there to make a distinction between the Tibet that we Tibetans refer to and the so called "Tibetan Autonomous Region" that the Chinese refer to. We Tibetans regard Tibet as the total area of the three provinces of Tibet, U-tsang, Kham and Amdo, which are referred to as "Chol-Kha-sum" territory area of 2.5 million square kilometers. The Chinese refer to the "Tibetan Autonomous Region" which they themselves formed, as the total area of Tibet. Large parts of Kham and Amdo have been incorporated into neighboring Chinese provinces of Gansu, Yunan and Szechuan. A new province called Qinghai has been created out of the major part of Amdo. This means that a total population of approximately 3.2 million Tibetans, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, whose birthplace is in Amdo, are considered "Chinese"!

Up till now, the Chinese have killed more than 1.2 million Tibetans through imprisonment, torture, forced labour, suicide, execution and starvation. The Chinese have sent over 7.5

million Chinese civilians into Tibet, in addition to the half a million troops stationed in Tibet. This means that the Chinese population already outnumbers the Tibetan population of 6 million. With more Chinese settlers moving into Tibet every day the situation is most urgent. This policy of population transfer violates article 49 of the Geneva Convention which prohibits the "transfer of citizens to and from occupied territory" and also violates the fundamental human rights of Tibetan People, including our right to self-determination.

THREE GORGES PROJECT

At present, the Chinese are on the verge of building a huge hydroelectric dam on the Yantze river with the help of the World Bank and industrialized nations at a staggering cost of some 14 billion dollars. This project, known as the Three Gorges Project, will conveniently displace over a million Chinese people. According to various indications, these will be then transferred to various parts of Tibet for resettlement. The sad part of this project is that the foreign donors and the other organizations involved in this project have neglected the long term ecological effect of this project.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The Chinese Communist Party document introduced on March 31, 1982 with regard to religious freedom known as Chung Fa. No. 19 (commonly known as document No. 19) is the guiding factor for *freedom of religion* in China. It says, *religion was created by a system of exploitation, necessary for the exploiting classes in manipulating religions to anesthetize and control the masses*. It further urges the use of the Marxist stance leading towards *the destruction of religion and the preparation of the Marxist millennium*. As the document had not been revoked, officials see to it that effective restrictions are enforced on religious practices not only in Tibet but in whole of China.

It must be pointed out that the Chinese today permit the Tibetans some degree of worship. But these make up the ritual practices of our religion. People visiting Tibet can see Tibetans prostrating in temples and monasteries, circumambulating religious places and reciting prayers. This is only a propaganda to make visitors

think there is religious freedom. But Tibetans are not allowed to hold religious meetings or teachings, nor are they allowed to become monks without prior written permission of the Religious Affairs Committee which is state-controlled. From these few examples it will be clear that there is in fact no genuine freedom of religion.

Prior to the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1949, the monks and nuns of Tibet made up 10% of the Tibetan population. Over 6,000 of our monasteries and places of worship were destroyed by the Chinese. The Chinese claim that they are rebuilding monasteries today but the rebuilding is actually done by Tibetans themselves through financial and voluntary labour contributions. There is official contribution only to some monasteries which are frequently visited by tourists.

INDEPENDENCE: THE ULTIMATE HUMAN RIGHT

The recent demonstrations in Tibet are a constant reminder to the world that the Tibetan people in Tibet are fighting for their right to self-determination—their inalienable right to govern their own lives and to be free of foreign domination. It must be remembered here that these are not the first demonstrations of this type or magnitude. Unfortunately, the recent clampdown on Tibetans and the impositions of Martial Law in Tibet on March 8, 1989 leaves a media blackout on what is happening in Tibet. From our past experience we can definitely assert that the situation is very grave with thousands of Tibetans being imprisoned for their political activities and thoughts.

The People's Republic of China continuously asserts that the majority of the Tibetans people are happy under their rule and that it is only a handful of Tibetan *separatists* who are trying to create this trouble. It is at this point that we, the Tibetan youth, earnestly appeal to the United Nations to send an unbiased fact-finding delegation to Tibet to carry out a plebiscite to determine the true wishes of the Tibetan people.

We maintain that the repeated use of brute force and modern weapon to suppress unarmed political demonstrators is clear indication of the fact that China has no moral or legal authority over the Tibetan people. They only rule by the power of the gun. Can the people of the free

world stand as silent spectators to such tyrannical rule in this day and age?

Now specially after the recent pro-independence demonstrations in Tibet, the Chinese authorities are checking residential permits of people living in Lhasa. Those who belong to other parts of Tibet are being expelled from Lhasa. In course of this checking many sick people are arrested on the assumption that they participated in the demonstration. Of course, those who have not reported to the hospital for fear of being arrested are taken into custody. Apart from imposing Martial Law, the movement of Tibetans within Tibet have been restricted. Private vehicles cannot move beyond the perimeter of their registration area. The Chinese abuse of power has few parallels when they entered two private houses and killed all the family members of six and seven respectively.

We have clear proof that the Chinese were the first to use arms on an unarmed and peaceful demonstration of last March and on previous occasions. It is not because Chinese had used arms only after Tibetans have turned violent. The only government that can restore peace and happiness to Tibet is the government headed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and we call on freedom-loving people everywhere to call on China to hand over the reins of power to His Holiness the Dalai Lama without further delay and bloodshed. The Tibetan Youth Congress is for complete independence of a united Tibet consisting of the three traditional provinces of U-tsang, Kham and Amdo.

The facts and figures given here should by no means be taken to be an exhaustive account of the extent of human rights violations. This would never be possible. It is only meant to serve as an indicator to the overall pattern and system. For above all we must understand that the violation of human rights in Tibet is only a part of an overall system and policy of GENOCIDE. Therefore, in order to restore human rights in Tibet, in order to save the Tibetan people, we cannot just tackle individual cases — we must confront the system itself. Unless we can do this there is, sadly, no hope.

Mr. Tashi Namgyal
Secretary General
Tibetan Youth Congress

STATEMENT OF THE SRI LANKA GROUP

The armed conflicts in Sri Lanka today demonstrate that the State is in a crisis and that the country is experiencing a new process of state formation. The main issue is the devolution and sharing of power with the people of the North and East with arrangements to satisfy the interests of all the people. For the devolution of power to be meaningful, democratisation and participation of the people in the political and economic life of the country needs to be emphasised.

In the context of spreading violence it is possible to identify about six major conflicts:

1. The Sri Lankan State versus Tamil militiant groups
2. The Indian Peace Keeping Force versus the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.
3. The conflict between the Tamil militant groups
4. The Sri Lankan State versus the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna.
5. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna versus the other opposition groups.
6. The Vigilante groups versus the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna.

Areas for Research and Action

I. The concept of multi-ethnicity needs to be studied and implemented. The institutions and infrastructure for this purpose should be evolved to provide protection for all communities living in Sri Lanka. The production of educational material and the concept of multi-ethnicity would be a helpful tool for the people of Sri Lanka in the promotion of inter-cultural understanding.

II. The people of Indian origin working in the central highlands of Sri Lanka who have achieved citizenship recently after many years of struggle now enjoy a new capacity to intervene in the political processes as citizens. A suitable

framework should be created for their absorption into the mainstream of national life.

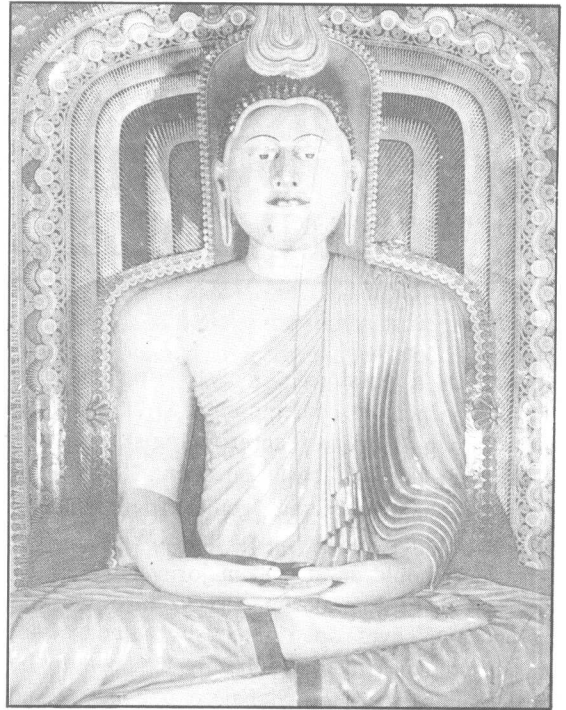
III. Social justice is a pre-condition for sustainable peace. All communities and classes should be able to participate and manage the resources of the country with equity and justice. Imbalances in the processes of modernisation and development at the various levels of society should be rectified.

IV. The people of Sri Lanka, especially the youth, require practical training in conflict resolution and peace education. Such education programmes should be promoted at grassroots level. However, at various other levels as well, such as the political party level, attempts should be made to develop comprehensive skills in this respect. The inspiration may be drawn from the core values of religion such as truth, justice, sanctity of life and by adopting non-violent means of setting any disputes.

V. The people of Sri Lanka should be exposed to comparative experiences of other countries, non-governmental organisations and ongoing human rights work. Such exposure and training should equip persons with the ability to become facilitators and participants in the processes involved in peace making and conflict resolution. In this instance, the role of the Buddhist monks and other clergy is a crucial one as they live and move closely with ordinary people. They should be provided with a superior education in history, religious ethics, comparative culture and language skills including foreign languages. Such an education can go a long way in exposing them to other discourses taking place both within and outside Sri Lanka and help to widen their intellectual and spiritual horizons.

VI. Exploration of spirituality to sustain the multi-religious and multi-ethnic society in Sri Lanka is an important component in the search for peace. The core values of religious and secular ideologies present in Sri Lanka can provide many ingredients that can reinforce a viable spirituality that is needed at the present time.

VII. International fellowship is required in two areas. Firstly, Sri Lanka is going through a period of unprecedented violence, hardship and militarisation. A new group of Sinhala refugees can be expected to join the Sri Lankan refugees



already present in many countries. International human rights and religious groups should be prepared to respond to their needs. Secondly, there are signs of an escalation of violence in the north and east after the expected withdrawal of the Indian Peace Keeping Forces by the end of this December. All efforts should be made by the international community to reinforce constructive steps to facilitate the genuine devolution of power.

VIII. Team visits by the World Conference on Religion and Peace, Peace Brigade International, World Council of Churches; etc. can be of considerable help in resolving the conflicts in Sri Lanka. In particular, team visits by Buddhist friends of Sri Lanka can be a very useful endeavour to sustain a high morale amongst the Buddhist monks and lay leaders. Such an intervention can bring a sense of morality to the decision-making processes. The authorities at the highest level in Sri Lanka are obliged to respond to international opinion of goodwill. Such international concern will also strengthen the on-going efforts of peacemaking within the country.

From Seminar on Reconciliation and the Role of Religion in Situations of Armed Conflict, organized by Life & Peace Institute, a Centre for International Christian Peace Research, Uppsala, Sweden, 16-21 November 1989

VIOLENCE IN CONTEMPORARY SRI LANKA AND SOME QUESTIONS FROM A NONVIOLENT PERSPECTIVE

In a passionate analysis of Sinhalese-Tamil conflicts in contemporary Sri Lanka, the well-known Harvard anthropologist, Stanley J. Tambiah poses a basic question: "how is it that Sri Lankans - literate, genial, friendly folk - can have come to this sorry pass. Why, on the one side, should an elected majority government committed to liberal democracy have become in its own eyes so righteously authoritarian, an attitude directly or indirectly assented to by large numbers of the Sinhalese populace? And on the other side, why should the Tamil minority, who have by and large considered themselves rightful citizens of Ceylon, have bred terrorist groups, hell-bent on achieving an independent Tamil state, and whose aspirations increasing numbers of Tamils support?" (**Tambiah 1986: 3**) The "sorry pass" Tambiah mentioned is only a portion of the atrocity that exists in contemporary Sri Lanka.

By focussing on post-independence Sri Lanka, Tambiah defines several factors that contribute to "this sorry pass". They are: economic problems of unemployment and uneven income distribution, demographic patterns, scholarship motivated by religious ideology, Sinhalese chauvinism as justified by the fifth-century Buddhist text, *The Mahavamsa* and the inclination toward an authoritarianism. (**Tambiah 1986.**) Though published in 1986, his work was completed in July 1984 and did not deal with events thereafter. (**Tambiah 1986: ix**)

This brief essay, however, is not an attempt to advance a comprehensive analysis of what has been happening in Sri Lanka. It is merely an attempt to reflect on recent violent events in that society from a nonviolent social scientist's perspective. I have been in Sri Lanka twice, once in 1980 and then again nine years later. On the second academic visit in August

1989 when curfew was in effect, I was stopped seven times, twice at gunpoint, on my way from the airport to my hotel in Colombo. Having so many kind Sri Lankan friends and being aware of the Buddhist context with its canon emphasizing abstention from taking the lives of living beings, I cannot help but join Tambiah in asking why a gentle land with a strong lotus scent is tainted with so much blood.

VIOLENCE IN SRI LANKA

Violence in contemporary Sri Lanka needs to be construed by taking into account two basic factors, geography and ethnicity. In the North and the East, covering the areas of Jaffna, Vavuniya, Batticaloa and Trincomalee, the Sri Lankan Tamils consider their traditional "homelands". This is where the Tamils constitute a majority of 69%. (**Tambiah 1986: 10**) It goes without saying that this area is closest to India, especially the Southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Elsewhere from Anuradhapura to Kandy to Amparai, Colombo, and Matara, the Sinhalese constitute a clear majority between 78 to 82%. (**Tambiah 1986: 10**) It is also important to point out that the ethnic blankets used here are less than precise. For example, there are Sri Lankan Tamils who consider themselves indigenous and the Indian Tamils who can trace their origins to South Indian laborers brought by the British from 1825. But the major identity components for the Sinhalese are Sinhalese language and Buddhism whereas for the Tamils; they are the Tamil language and Hinduism.

Violence is taking place in both parts of the country. In the North and the Northeast, the fighting has been between the armed Tamils who are trying to "liberate" the Tamil-dominated areas from the government forces. The picture became more complicated when in July 1987 Indian soldiers started to supervise a peace pact between the government and the Tamil fighters.

The number of Indian soldiers quickly swelled from 2,000 to around 100,000 when the largest fighting Tamil group, the Tamil Tigers, refused to surrender their arms and began attacking the foreign peacekeepers. (**Bangkok Post November 5, 1989**) At present there are some 35,000 remaining Indian troops in Sri Lanka. (**Bangkok Post November 6, 1989**) New Delhi promised that a total withdrawal will be completed by the end of December.

The presence of the foreign troops on Sri Lankan soil fans the fire of violence elsewhere in the country. The extremist Sinhalese group or the People's Liberation Front, popularly known by its Sinhalese initials as the JVP, have been creating a situation of violence all over the country. The JVP was launched in late 1967 as a clandestine youth movement dedicated to armed revolution. Although at its inception, its ideology was a mixture of Stalinist Marxism, Maoism and the romance of Cuban and Korean revolutions, currently patriotism is its mobilizing platform. "Indian imperialism" is the main enemy of the people. According to them, the liberation of Sri Lanka from the domination of Indian imperialism is posited to be the historic task of all Sri Lankan patriots. The world is either black or white; therefore one is either a patriot or a traitor. (**Presidential Election of Sri Lanka December 1988 Report 1989:63,69**)

When I was in Colombo during the first week of August this year, there were a number of events which captured the headlines of local Sri Lankan daily papers. First, a popular television announcer, Mr. Premakirithi de Alwis, was abducted by fifteen unidentified gunmen. His bullet riddled body was later found some 200 yards from his home. (**Daily News August 2, 1989**) Apart from the news that the Sri Lankan President, Premadasa, and the people paid respects to the slain announcer, people whom I spoke to in Colombo expressed their regrets that the announcer was shot by the Sinhalese extremists. Then on August 3, five unidentified gunmen shot dead a highly-placed 72-year-old monk by the name of Ven. Kotikawatte Saddhatissa Nayaka Thera. He was one of the first Buddhist clergy to have commended the token pull out of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) from Sri Lanka on July 29 and the action of President Premadasa to effect an early withdrawal of Indian forces

from Sri Lanka. (**Daily News August 5, 1989**)

On August 4, the government security forces defused 20 improvised explosive devices in and around Colombo. (**Daily News August 6, 1989**) On the same day, all activities of the public and private sectors came to a standstill when the entire transport service ground to a halt following a rebel call to the people to stay away from their works. (**Weekend August 6, 1989**) Less than 25% of the employees reported for work and most of the shops in the city suburbs and surrounding areas remained closed. Another issue that captured the headlines at the same time was the negotiation between the Sri Lankan and the Indian governments on the withdrawal of IPKF and cessation of hostilities between the two countries. As a result of the presence of the Indian troops, many Sri Lankans protested. On August 4, shops in various parts of the country remained closed. Consequently, most government and public sector institutions did not function. Government security forces then ordered these shops to open. (**Daily News August 5, 1989**)

At present, the situation of violence does not change much. Indian troops are supposed to leave but a sizable number of them remain. Their leaving the troubled areas in the North can be looked at both positively and negatively. Residents in the areas fear that more violence will erupt as young Tamils now try to fill the void left by the IPKF. (**Bangkok Post November 5, 1989**) Rival Tamil groups fought one another which resulted in 45 Tamils killed in Eastern Sri Lanka. (**Bangkok Post November 6, 1989**) On November 21, Indian helicopters flew in arms and munitions to a Tamil militia fighting Sri Lankan forces in Eastern Sri Lanka leaving at least 160 people dead. President Premadasa is reported to have said: "The violence unleashed by this illegal army was a deliberate attempt to provoke the Sri Lankan security forces into a confrontation, and then now (they) are persecuting the Tamil speaking people and justify the continuing presence of Indian troops here." (**Bangkok Post November 22, 1989**) Meanwhile, the government successfully killed Rohana Wijeweera, founder and leader of the JVP on November 13. (**Bangkok Post November 14, 1989**) Although some political observers point out that the JVP without its leadership, six of its politburo members were killed including Wijeweera, will

“just disintegrate” (**Bangkok Post November 14, 1989**), in Southern and Central Sri Lanka more than 40 people were killed in a fight between government forces and the Sinhalese People’s Liberation Front (JVP.) (**Bangkok Post November 21, 1989**)

All this shows that the cycle of violence has not come to an end. It is perhaps important to outline the connection among these violent events before questions from a nonviolent perspective can be raised.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

A crude recapitulation may yield the following portrait of a cycle of violence. Conflict exists between the Tamil minority and the Sinhalese majority. As a rule a minority problem is also a mirror of the majority. In time, conflict escalates and assumes the form of violence when the minority is pressured. In this case, the designation of Sinhalese as the official language of the country in 1956 and the elevation of Buddhism to constitutional status in 1972 were important. (**Hennayake 1989:404**) This kind of officiation serves as powerful indicators for the Tamils of their places in the now “official Sinhalese society”. It should not surprise anyone that the first Sinhala-Tamil ethnic riot took place in 1956. Then India intervened. Official language aside, it was necessary for India to engage in this “peacekeeping activity” because a separatist Tamil state is not conducive to healthy Indian politics when the relationship between New Delhi and the peripheral Tamil Nadu with its own separatist tendencies is taken into consideration. Moreover, it can be argued that India cannot tolerate when its Southern neighbor is shifting her foreign policy toward the West. As mentioned above, the presence of Indian troops on Sri Lankan soil strengthens the causes of hatred which the Sinhalese extremist group champions. They then employ violence to destroy those whom they consider as “traitors” to Sinhalese nationalism. Since the India-Sri Lanka Peace Accord in July 1987 when the IPKF entered Sri Lanka, the JVP insurrection has claimed some 10,000 lives and shatter that society’s social and economic fabric. (**Bangkok Post November 17, 1989**) A Sri Lankan newspaper’s editorial laments that “Education of the young (has been) held to ransom” because of this. The

nation’s educational institutions have been inoperative for the better part of the past two years. (**Daily News August 4, 1989**) The “democratic” government then resorted to coercion to maintain social order and violence to eliminate the leadership of the extremist group. It seems that in this predominantly Buddhist land, nonviolence is nowhere to be seen.

QUESTIONS FROM A NONVIOLENT PERSPECTIVE

One of the most important areas of examination from a nonviolent perspective in the Sri Lankan case has to do with the JVP. This extremist group champions the patriotic cause. They divide the world clearly into black and white. As a mass-based organization, albeit its clandestine nature, it mobilizes the public to exercise their power to disobey the authorities by mass protest, demonstrations, or economic non-cooperation. All the techniques they employed will be familiar to those interested in nonviolent actions. Their methods show that they fully understand the nature of power as Sharp has repeatedly stated in his many works. (**Sharp 1973; 1980**) They know that when people collectively disobey, power will disintegrate. In the past, people might take to the street because they share the cause that the JVP championed. But then the JVP backed these kinds of nonviolent techniques with coercion. I was told that they will simply put up a notice in a public place demanding all the shops in the neighborhood to close down for a specified period as a challenge to the authority. If any shop refuses to comply with the command to exercise such a *nonviolent action*, violence will be used on those who dare to defy them. If they want to stage a mass demonstration, each family in the area will be asked to send a *representative* to participate. Refusal will again be met with severe retribution. When the government feels that their power begins to disintegrate, they will be desperate. Despair oftentimes breeds violence.

How would a nonviolent group react to the use of seemingly nonviolent techniques backed by violence? There are two targets in this process of violent escalation. First, the public needs to be mobilized by nonviolent groups. I understand that the Sarvodaya Movement is trying hard to come between the two conflicting parties.

But it seems that sacrifice is not an adequate measure to put an end to violence. The psyche of the violent protagonists are set. Their ruthlessness in dealing with their foes is evident. The fact that the JVP as Sinhalese who are Buddhists did not seem to be reluctant to assassinate an old Buddhist monk lends credibility to Trevor Ling's thesis that inclination toward war has less to do with religious persuasion. (Ling 1979: 140) Nonviolent theorists and activists must try to woo the public to their side. What then will be the conditions for successful invitation to the people so that they will not yield their support to the violent groups?

Another side of the process of violent escalation has to do with the government. They have to be convinced that nonviolent alternatives exist. In fact they need to be shown that nonviolent alternatives are essential for the life or demise of democratic regime. By resorting to violence, the Sri Lankan government is allowing the political landscape to be governed by the rules of the sword and occupied by the sword-wielders themselves. Confidence in the democratic regime may erode whereas faith in the use of force will be enhanced. It is also important

that those interested in nonviolence should pay more attention to nonviolent alternatives to be used by the government. Doesn't this type of questions deserve some serious thinking if the politics of nonviolence is to be realized?

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The Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian Buddhist Era seems to be one year later than that of Burma, Sri Lanka and India. In fact, this is not so. The difference is that while the latter regards the year of the Maha Parinibbana as B.E.1, the former takes it to be the first anniversary after Lord Buddha's Passing away. For example, this year is B.E. 2533 according to the Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian calendar, but it is B.E. 2534 according to the Burmese, Sri Lankan and Indian Calendar.

TICD

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Sri Lanka: Stop the killing of People and start Peace Negotiation:

Request from leaders of the Buddhist Sangha to the President

The most Venerable Mahanayakas (Supreme Patriarchs) have requested President R Premadasa to stop the killing of people in Sri Lanka.

The request was signed by the most Ven. Palipane Chandananda Maha Thera of Asgiriya Chapter of Siam Maha Nikaya, Ven Madehe Pagnasecha Maha Thero of Amarapura Maha Nikaya, Ven. Poththe Wela Pagnasara Maha Thero of Ramaganna Nikaya and Ven. Rubukwelle Sobitha, Deputy Mahanayake.

The Mahanayakas have mentioned that it is needless to say that violence and youth unrest have increased in Sri Lanka. Some people say that people are killed by guerrillas and other people believe that people are killed by government forces and some secret forces backed by the government. However, it is evident that tens of thousands of people are being brutally killed in Sri Lanka today. We witnessed the killing of young and old, men and women, in various places. The corpses are burnt in graveyards or dumped into the rivers or in dense jungle.

Today the people of Sri Lanka live in fear and are facing great economical and emotional suffering. All the people who were brutally killed are Sri Lanka citizens and most of them are Buddhists. Now Buddhist monks are also facing the same problem. Many armed forces, sometimes without uniforms, and other militant groups enter the temples and take the monks away. Then the monks are forced to dress in trousers, shirts and sarongs. They have been tortured and detained in various secret places. Sometimes, Buddhist monks are killed beside the sacred Bodhi tree and burnt with tyres. Some of the arrested monks

have disappeared, Mr. President.

You are the minister of Buddhasasana in your new government. It has been accepted by many of the government leaders that the Buddhist monks are the protectors of the nation. Therefore we would like to ask you whether the present massacre of the people in this Dhamma land brings disgrace to the Buddhist people all over the world. There is already a legal procedure to punish persons who commit crime. We request you to take urgent steps to stop the killing of our own people brutally, like killing cats and dogs, which is mostly done under the Emergency law, curfew, Preventive Responsibility Act and other regulations. We urge you to stop all the violation of human rights

We condemn those who come or want to come to power by violence and those who put effort to stay in power by violence, a means which is not allowed by Buddhist principles. To come to power and to stay in power should be through democratic process.

You will have the support of all the people of Sri Lanka if you have the real intention to make this country a better place to live.

We would like to express our hope for peace on the occasion that you are going to hold an All Party Conference. We request you to declare that APC is a sign to stop violence and start peace dialogue. We also request other militant groups and all party leaders to support this proposal.

(From DIVAINA 20/09/89, a Sinhalese newspaper, translated into English by a Sinhalese student in exile in Bangkok.)

PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL TEAM IN SRI LANKA VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

Pace Brigades International will have a team of four to five volunteers in Sri Lanka for a period of six months, with the possibility of extension for another six months, depending on the situation in the field and the availability of the necessary resources. The volunteers will serve as nonviolent "escorts" for persons who are in danger because of their human rights work. The first volunteers arrived in Sri Lanka on October 20, 1989.

This new initiative responds to the rapid escalation of violence in the southern part of the island, once known as Ceylon. People in the west are most familiar with the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict in the north, which brought Indian troops into Sri Lanka. In the south, the Sinhalese majority has become bitterly divided and victimized by conflict between the government army and the People's Liberation Front (JVP), a guerrilla group trying to overthrow the government. Both sides have engaged in widespread killing of civilians. In the three months following the imposition of a state of emergency on June 20, 1989, hundreds — some say as many as 4,000 — people were killed or disappeared. Thousands are being held in indefinite detention.

Sri Lankan lawyers who represent detained and disappeared persons became targets themselves. By early October at least six had been murdered. It was this situation that led to a request for PBI volunteers from the Sri Lanka Bar Association.

The international protection the PBI team will offer to Sri Lankan human rights workers builds on almost five years of experience in Guatemala and two years in El Salvador where Peace Brigades volunteers have accompanied threatened activists working for human rights and social change. The teams are backed up by diplomatic support and by the Emergency Response Network, which mobilizes telegrams

from around the world in emergency situations involving PBI volunteers or those they accompany. Reluctance to have human rights violations come to the attention of the outside world makes the presence of these unarmed escorts a powerful deterrent to violence. So far, no one in Central America has been killed while being accompanied by a PBI volunteer.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

PBI is looking for people who can give at least one month's service in the Sri Lanka team between October 1989 and April 1990. Volunteers must be fluent in English, at least 25 years old, able to live with stress, and prepared to live in a cross-cultural group, working under a discipline of nonviolence and nonpartisanship. PBI will provide for training of volunteers before and after they reach Sri Lanka.

PBI covers room, board, and small personal necessities for volunteers in the field. Volunteers are asked to raise their own travel funds. PBI is prepared to advise and assist them in doing this.

10/20/89

Peace Brigades Concept and Background

PBI seeks to establish international and nonpartisan approaches to peacemaking and to the support of basic human rights. We challenge the belief that violent institutions and warfare inevitably must dominate human affairs. We seek to demonstrate that as international volunteers, citizens can act boldly as peacemakers when their governments cannot.

Peace Brigades sends unarmed peace teams invited into areas of violent repression or conflict. These teams can flexibly pursue avenues not open to government or political groups. Their work is to reduce the violence and support local

social justice initiatives through a) protective accompaniment of those whose lives are threatened; b) fostering reconciliation and peace dialogue among conflicting parties; and c) educating and training in nonviolence and human rights.

Peace Brigades International builds on the rich heritage of nonviolent social change movements throughout the world. Mohandas Gandhi's Shanti Sena ("nonviolent army") in India has often intervened and reconciled in Hindu/Moslem conflicts since 1922.

The World Peace Brigade aided in the Zambian independence movement in Africa and interceded during the Chinese-Indian border conflict. This predecessor to PBI was formed in 1962. In 1972-74, World Peace Brigade volunteers were instrumental in the Cyprus Resettlement Project which carried out reconstruction and reconciliation work among Greek and Turkish refugees.

Peace Brigades International was founded at Grindstone Island, Canada, in 1981 by veterans of these and other nonviolent social movements from three continents. PBI was conceived as an international network to support both local and international initiatives in nonviolent action and reconciliation.

An early PBI effort was a short-term non-partisan border team of ten volunteers from three countries, which went in 1983 to the border of Honduras and Nicaragua to deter military attacks.

PBI Program and Activities

In Central America:

★ PBI established international Peace Teams in *Guatemala* (1983) and *El Salvador* (1987), countries that have suffered thousands of kidnappings and murders. PBI volunteers provide protective accompaniment for threatened leaders of unions, human rights and peasant organizations, and a watchful presence at demonstrations and in workplaces. This nonpartisan presence provides "breathing space" for these groups to exercise their legal rights to organize and to be heard.

This accompaniment is supported by the PBI Emergency Response Network of concerned organizations and individuals who send telegrams when a kidnapping or other crisis occurs.

"Your presence really gave us more confidence and strength to continue our work; a great help."

—Leader, Guatemalan electrical workers' union.

★ *Peace and human rights education* is another facet of the Peace Teams work. The EI Salvador team is developing curriculum materials and conducting teacher training in conflict resolution and cooperative skills for use in Salvadoran schools. In Guatemala, the PBI team provides workshops and resource material on human rights upon request.

Over 200 PBI volunteers from four continents have undergone training in nonviolence and participated in the Peace Teams' work. They have returned home to share their first-hand experiences with nonviolent struggle and Central America. In this way, PBI contributes both to the theory and practice of nonviolence, and to the growing awareness of the Central American reality.

Elsewhere in the world:

★ In *Sri Lanka*, PBI representative Sulak Sivarakka, a Thai Buddhist intellectual and educator, has quietly fostered reconciliation through retreats and dialogue. Community development work by Thai Buddhists among both the Buddhist Sinhalese and among Tamil refugees is also intended to help heal the intense conflict between these two ethnic groups.

★ An exploratory mission to *South Africa* is taking shape. Resource persons with training experience in nonviolent struggles such as the US civil rights movement and India's independence movement will consult with interested organizations in South Africa.

★ In *Costa Rica*, PBI has worked with the United Nations University for Peace to develop and implement models for training in nonviolent conflict resolution, effective group process, and negotiation skills.

★ *PBI / Europe*, a vital and growing regional organization of PBI, is providing training, volunteers and support for PBI Central America programs, and is also exploring new initiatives in the Middle East, the Basque region of Spain and elsewhere.

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BUDDHISM AND LEADERSHIP FOR PEACE

Seminar Report

Introduction

The 4th International Seminar on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace met in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, August 15-20, 1989, on the theme of "Buddhism and Global Problem-Solving" under the sponsorship of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace in cooperation with the Dae Won Sa Buddhist Temple of Hawaii and the Center for Global Nonviolence Planning Project of the Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii.

Participants included Buddhist dignitaries, peace leaders and scholars from the United Nations University, China, Japan, Korea (DPRK and ROX), Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the USA, the USSR and Vietnam.

Through its work the seminar sought to clarify positive contributions that Buddhism can make to the happiness and wellbeing of humankind in five critical problem areas: disarmament, economic justice, human rights, environmental protection and universal cooperation to solve global problems.

Principles

There was agreement on five global problem-solving principles: (1) since these problems are interconnected, solutions cannot be sought in isolation, (2) the principle of respect for life, non-killing, **ahimsa**, provides a fundamental basis from which to seek problem solutions, (3) the human capacity to develop mind, body and thought provides confidence that solutions to these and other problems can be found, (4) to discover and implement solutions, global reality must be understood as it is, without illusions, drawing upon all sources of scientific and humanist knowledge, and (5) by extending universal friendliness, compassion for suffering, sharing of joys, and steadfast commitment to improving the quality of life for all, Buddhism can contribute to liberation from suffering of all humankind.

Problems

1. Disarmament. The Buddhist approach to disarmament is based upon the principle that we should not kill or cause others to kill. Furthermore, according to the principle of right livelihood we should not engage in occupations that kill, make weapons that kill, or sell weapons that kill.

The effectiveness of Buddhist contributions to disarmament can be measured by such things as abolition of nuclear, biochemical, and other weapons; removal of foreign bases; reduction of armed forces; reduction of military budgets; and legal recognition of the right of conscientious objection to military service.

2. Economic justice. Since Buddhism is based upon the principle of equality, it regards great and increasing gaps between rich and poor to be unacceptable. Buddhist compassion for the suffering of all beings also makes economic deprivation intolerable. Therefore Buddhism urges restraint and cooperation to ensure the wellbeing of all. Buddhism must not be passive in the face of economic injustice. It must oppose the overindulgence of the rich and the deprivation of the poor.

Buddhist contributions to economic justice can be measured by conversion of military resources to serve civilian needs; provision of basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, and health care for all; elimination of such evils as malnutrition, prostitution, and child labour; and steady reduction of the gap between rich and poor within and between nations through both governmental and private sector action.

3. Human rights. Buddhism affirms both of the great human values of equality and freedom and is committed to realizing them by nonviolent means. Buddhism affirms human rights to life, material justice, and to freedom

from oppression based upon belief, biology, caste, nationality or any other distinction. It encourages and defends service to others by nonviolent means, including celebration of life through artistic expression. In seeking liberation from all forms of mental and material oppression, it stresses reason combined with respect for life. It does not impose its views on others by threat or use of force.

Buddhist contributions to human rights can be measured by the use of gentle and skillful means to achieve abolition of the death penalty, the elimination of torture, release of all political prisoners who have neither used nor advocated violence, fair and open trials for all, and affirmation of freedom of expression of artistic creativity and in other areas without harm to others in thought, word, or deed.

4. Environmental protection. Buddhism can make a strong contribution to global environmental protection because its concept of the oneness and interdependence of all life -- encompassing humans and nature -- is completely compatible with modern ecological science. Buddhism understands the poisoning of land, air, and sea, species loss, exhaustion of resources, and other threats to survival as the result of the greed, hatred, and ignorance of egoistic individuals, profit-seeking enterprises, and power-seeking governments. To preserve the environment to sustain present and future life, Buddhism urges restraint, renewal, recycling, and encouragement of protective creativity of the highest order.

The results of Buddhist environmental concern can be measured by patient efforts to persuade both leaders and public to replace destructive practices with life-enhancing ones, to educate oncoming generations in the interdependency of all things, and to create non-polluting cycles of production and renewal of resources needed for global wellbeing.

5. Universal human cooperation. Buddhism affirms and celebrates the great diversity of human beings within the common circle of humanity. It approaches all in a friendly spirit. It considers the suffering and joys of others to be its own. At the same time it maintains a calm and steady commitment to remove the causes of suffering and to join with

others to realize a happy life for all. In seeking to solve global problems such as those of disarmament, economic justice, human rights, and environmental protection, Buddhism encourages cooperative action among all the peoples of the earth.

Summary

Overall a Buddhist approach to global problem-solving combines patient dialogue, universal education, and compassionate nonviolent action. This means dialogue with leaders and others whose decisions critically affect the problems, mass education of all in understanding their causes and how to prevent them, and engagement in direct nonviolent problem-solving action, both alone and in cooperation with others. The effectiveness of these efforts can be measured by ever increasing respect for life and creativity in its expression by present and future global generations.

Conclusion

The seminar participants expressed profound gratitude for the hospitality extended to them by the ABCP, the Gangdan Monastery, and the people and government of Mongolia. Mongolian hospitality made it possible to bring together participants who had been unable to attend previous seminars. For this alone, although our seminar was small and much work remains to be done by us and our successors, we consider it to be significant.

As we leave to return to our distant homes, we express warmest wishes of friendship and peace to the Mongolian people. Also we express respect and cooperation for Mongolia's continuing contributions to nonviolent global problem-solving.



G. Paige
Seminar coordinator

4 th International Seminar
"Global Problem Solving"
15-20 August 1989, Ulan Bator, Mongolia

Reconciliation and Religion: A Buddhist Reflection on Religion's claims and Reality

I

I am greatly honoured to be invited to address such a distinguished audience. It is very generous indeed of a Center for International Christian Peace Research to have a Buddhist to speak at this very important and timely gathering. However a talk after a reception, like an after-dinner speech, should be light—certainly not academic, which is beyond my ability in any case. If possible, it should stimulate the listeners to think on the subject of our seminar which will be taken seriously from tomorrow onwards. From a Buddhist point of view, if a speaker can awaken his listeners, that would be a great achievement—literally and spiritually, especially after so much to eat and drink.

As for the topic of our discussion, no one needs to be reminded that every day people find themselves in conflict, ranging from minor discomfort to serious confrontations. It can flare up over back fences or national borders; over cleaning up the kitchen or cleaning up the environment. It can involve our most intimate relationships or the briefest interactions. When people cannot tolerate others' moral, religious or political differences, conflict is inevitable and often costly.

Conflict can open avenues of change and provide challenges. Conflict resolution skills do not guarantee a solution every time, but they can turn conflict into an open opportunity for learning more about oneself and others.

Conflict can be both positive and negative, constructive or destructive, depending on what we make of it. Certainly it is rarely static—it can change any time. The Buddhists would call this *anicca*. Nothing is permanent. Everything is

changing. Yet in many conflict situations, people are very much attached to their views, without letting them go and tending to blame the other side only.

In fact we can sometimes alter its course simply by viewing it differently. We can even turn our fights into fun. Transforming conflict this way is an art, requiring special skills. Indeed skilful means (*upāya*) is a keyword in Buddhist terminology.

No one needs to declare oneself a Buddhist, but it does no harm if one could develop skilful means to understand oneself and others as well as understanding the world situation i.e. the prevailing culture, meaning particularly religion and/or ideology, that legitimizes direct and/or structural violence.

Violence is a sure sign of crisis, as is heated argument where people hurl abuse and become overwhelmed by their feelings. During crisis normal behaviour goes out the window. Extreme gestures are contemplated and sometimes carried out. This is certainly an obvious clue to conflicts. I do not want to elaborate on this.

The first thing we must learn is that crisis, tension, misunderstanding, incident and discomfort, including our fights and personal differences, are part of life, and that it is a mistake to avoid conflict. Life can be less painful if we learn to anticipate potential conflict and manage it constructively.

Conflict resolution depends greatly on awareness, and there are clues which range from the obvious to the subtle.

The first step in the art of resolving conflict is to regard conflict as an opportunity and look for a skilful means to use it appropriately.

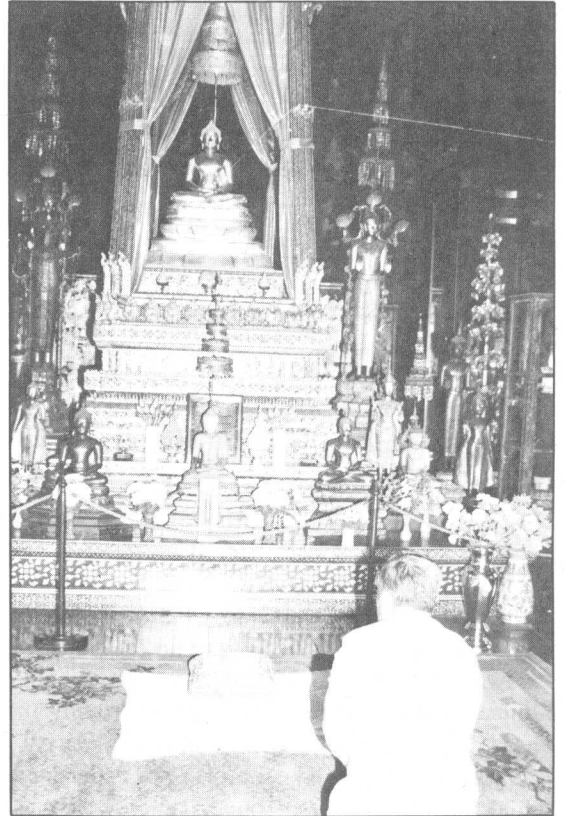
Generally, when people think about conflict, they believe that there are only three solutions: compromising, winning and losing. From the

Buddhist view point, the end result is not as relevant as the means, which should always be peaceful and nonviolent.

I will now tell three incidents from the Life of the Buddha, that illustrate how he dealt with conflict situations, two of which were directly dealing with armed conflicts. You may regard any of them as winning, losing or compromising — that is up to you. But for me skilful means were used compassionately, mindfully, with patience and a certain degree of detachment all along.

II

The first incident arose from a difference of opinion between two monks, on a minor issue about interpreting Buddhist discipline. But these two monks happened to be experts on different fields of studies with large numbers of followers. A small conflict became more serious and more people were involved, until the two groups accused each other violently, with words but not with actions. However, it clearly shows that their minds were polluted. Each group stuck to its own position of righteousness, which meant that the others were wrong. The Buddha went to their monastery and told them that each should ask for forgiveness from the other, letting go their past opinions, so that they could live harmoniously together in the future. He told them a story of the past as to how conflicts could become worse from a small misunderstanding to serious crisis — ranging from two birds fighting, which eventually involved the demise of the King Elephant, Lord Protector of the Jungle. He also told them another story that a king and queen had been killed by another ruler. Their small son who survived witnessed the killing of his parents, who had asked their son to be patient and to forgive the enemy. The son eventually joined the enemy's service and became his royal page. Once the two were alone in the jungle. The King was asleep and the page drew his dagger many times to take revenge for his parents, but their words of caution came to his mind, so he could not commit the act of regicide. The King awoke, saw the drawn dagger in the hand of his page and learnt the whole story. All were forgiven



and the page ended up as the royal son-in-law, who succeeded to the throne.

These two stories are often retold in Buddhist countries, to remind us of the nonviolent way of solving conflicts. Yet they made no impact on the quarelling monks, although the stories were preached to them by the Buddha, who saw no alternative but to get away from them, and spent the whole three months of the rains retreat in the forest. He was happily looked after by an elephant and a monkey, and his mind was calm, compassionate, and detached.

Soon after the Buddha's departure to the forest, people found out that the monks were misbehaving very badly, without even due respect to the Buddha, the founder of their own religion. So lay people refused to give alms to the monks, whose livelihood depended entirely on lay support. The monks then came to their senses, after being hungry for so many days. They then went to pay respect to the Buddha and asked for forgiveness. They also let go their views and opinions and were willing to accept others beings as good as they were. The incident taught them not to be so pious in form, nor to be so full of self-esteem, self-righteousness and self-importance.

Putting this in a modern setting, one may say that through deepening awareness comes acceptance and through acceptance comes seemingly miraculous generosity of the spirit and empowerment for the work that compassion requires of us. We can even take ourselves less seriously. With this critical self-awareness, we can genuinely understand and respect others of diverse views and ideologies. We can even join hands with them humbly and knowingly in trying to develop our spaceship earth to be peaceful and just.

At least this is the conclusion I drew from the first conflict resolution during the time of the Buddha. You may see it differently. However, let me tell you the second one which directly concerns armed conflict.

III

The king of Kosala wanted to be related to the Buddha, so he asked for a princess from the royal Sakya family to be his Queen. The Sakya, the clan from which the Buddha was born, was very caste conscious and refused to have marriage relationships outside their related clans. Although they regarded Kosala as a mightier kingdom, they still did not wish to regard that royal family, castewise, as good as theirs. However, a compromise was reached by sending a princess born of a slave girl to be the Queen of Kosala.

Vidhudhabha was the son of this Queen. Neither he nor father knew that the Queen was an outcaste.

When the young prince went to visit his maternal grandfather, and his maternal relatives among the Sakya clan, he accidentally found out that they all looked down upon him behind his back because his maternal grandmother was a slave girl, so the young prince vowed to kill all members of the Sakyan clan in revenge.

When Vidhudhabha succeeded his father to the throne of Kosala, he marched the army northward. The Buddha knew of the situation. He went to sit at the borders of the two kingdoms thrice and was able to stop the warlike king. Yet the Buddha could not convince the king to get rid of his own hatred and his revengefulness. Eventually the king managed to kill almost all

members of the Sakya family, and yet on his return home, Vidhudhabha and most of his troops were drowned in the river.

One could draw many conclusions from this incident. However, if we believe in the law of Karma, we should realize that each individual, each family, each nation will reap the benefits or otherwise from their own deeds and speeches. Although the Sakyan clan produced such a wonderful person who eventually became the Buddha who preached that people should get rid of caste and class barriers, they maintained their own views contrary to his his teaching. They also deceived the king of Kosala who was much mightier than they. Besides in the past, they even put poison in the river for their enemy.

As for Vidhudhabha, his bad thoughts drove him to bad action and his life thus ended tragically for himself and many others.

You may think that this incident does not give a solution in situations of armed conflicts. But for us Buddhists, the Law of Karma reminds us that whatever violent action is taken against us, if we want to be the Buddha's followers, we must not resolve it violently.

Those Sinhalese who want to solve armed conflicts in Sri Lanka by violent means may claim to be Buddhists. However, they are not different from Vidhudhabha and the Sakyas who honoured the Buddha, listened to his sermons, but thought, spoke and acted violently. Yet there are so many Sinhalese and Tamils who may not even declare themselves Buddhists, but who are compassionate and full of forgiveness towards others.

They are the ones who will in the long run resolve the conflicts in that island, although it will not be easy. We need Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Marxists etc. to face the situation mindfully and to understand the structural violence, by not merely blaming any ethnic or religious community. Then we can surely find skilful means nonviolently to solve the conflicts — with patience, which is regarded as the best of Buddhist virtues.

Take Tibet, as another example. However violent and ruthless the Chinese aggressors have been to them and their country, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all the spiritual leaders of that Buddhist tradition never said one harmful word against China. What they said was to ask

the Tibetans not to get involved in armed struggle and to examine themselves as to what they had done in the past that might be regarded as bad Karmas that may have led to many of their monks and lay people being killed, their monasteries and homes destroyed.

Indeed it was not long after the bloody incident in Lhasa last year that the Tienanmin massacre in Peking followed. This time the Chinese killed and harmed their own people as badly as they had done in Tibet. Yet no spiritual leaders among the Tibetans in exile ever said that it served the Chinese right and that the law of Karma has now punished China.

In fact the Tibetans who practise Buddhism are always full of compassion towards the Chinese and hope that one of these days a conflict resolution will be found to settle the issue of Tibet. One cannot help but admire their attitude. Although they have been in exile for almost 30 years now, they still very positive and hopeful, yet realistic. Their teaching on how to be aware of oneself and how to improve one's community meaningfully as well as their perception about nature and the environment have contributed much positive influence in the world at large.

Their most precious contribution is perhaps meditation practice, which is common to all schools of Buddhism. In a conflict situation, however, it is good to begin your contemplation on the person you hate or despise the most.

Contemplate the image of the person who has caused you the most suffering. Use this person's image as the subject of your contemplation. Contemplate on the bodily form, feelings, perceptions, the functioning of the mind and consciousness of this person. Contemplate on each aggregate separately. Begin with the bodily form. Contemplate the features you hate or despise the most or find the most repulsive. Continue with the person's feelings. Try to examine what makes the person happy and suffer in his daily life. When contemplating perception, try to see what patterns of thought and reason this person follows. As for the mind functionings, examine what motivates this person's hopes and aspirations and what motivates his actions. Finally consider his consciousness. See whether his views and insights are open and free or not, and whether or not he has been influenced by any prejudices, narrow mindedness, hatred or

anger. See whether or not he is master of himself. Contemplate like this until you feel compassion rise in your heart like a well filling with fresh water, and your anger and resentment disappear. Practise this exercise many times on the same person.

This is only one of the meditation exercises. You can of course meditate on yourself, on the suffering caused by the lack of wisdom, on the detached action, and on non-abandonment.

We should always remember the Buddhist saying:

*In the time of war
Rise in yourself the Mind of Compassion
Helping living beings
Abandon the will of fight,
Wherever there is furious battle
Use all your might
To keep both sides' strength equal,
And then step into the conflict to reconcile.*

Take another example from Vietnam. During the colonial period, the Buddhists were not only exploited by the French, but by their Catholic compatriots who looked down upon them. During the American period, some Buddhists tried to work on reconciliation between the North and the South, between the Left and the Right. The Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, a well known monk, founded the School of Youth for Social Service in Saigon so that young students could do useful work to help war victims. Yet the Vietcong regarded these youngsters as CIA agents and American employees took them to be communists, as they served all, without siding with any ideology. One night four out of five of these brave and compassionate students were killed treacherously.

Nhat Hanh sat in deep meditation all night and wrote a wonderful play called **The Returned Journey Continues**, full of forgiveness and loving kindness to those who had killed his best friends, reminding the living that even the departed ones will continue their work on social service.

After the war, many Buddhists were persecuted by the new regime, many boat people who had left their country were robbed and women were raped by the Thai pirates. Yet Nhat Hanh wrote a powerful well known poem "Please call me by my true names".

*I am a frog swimming happily in the clear water of a pond,
and I am the grass-snake, approaching in silence, feeding itself on the frog.
I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones, my legs as thin as bamboo sticks,
and I am the arms merchant, selling deadly weapons to Uganda.
I am the twelve year-old girl, refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate,
and I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving.
I am a member of the politburo, with plenty of power in my hands
and I am the man who has to pay his "debt of blood" to my people,
dying slowly in a forced labor camp.
Flowers bloom in all walks of life.
My pain is like a river of tears, so full it fills all four oceans.
Please call me by my true names, so I can hear all my cries and laughter at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.
Please call me by my true names, so I can wake up and so the door of my heart can be left open, the door of compassion.*

This piece of poetry influences his compatriots and others very positively for reconciliation, especially those who resettle themselves in new countries. It is essential that they free themselves from psychic turmoil and hatred, replacing these negative thoughts with wholesome ones, like love, joy and equanimity.

IV

The last episode from the Life of the Buddha took place about five years after the Buddha gained Enlightenment, when he went back to his hometown and found his mother's tribe, the Koliyans, and his father's tribe, the Sakayans, at war.

The dispute had been triggered when Sakayan and Koliyan farmers could not decide who should be first to divert the Rohini River into the fields. Both sides insisted that their crops would ripen with a single watering and then the other side could divert the river. The farmers began

to insult one another's tribes and the tribes' warriors rushed out enraged by the insult, preparing to avenge their honour.

At this point the Buddha intervened. The warriors dropped their weapons in embarrassment as their Enlightened kinsman questioned them about the cause of the quarrel. When he discovered that the cause of the dispute was water, he asked them whether water was worth as much as warriors. They answered that warriors were beyond price, and the Buddha said, "It is not fitting then that because of a little water, you should destroy warriors who are beyond price".

In this case the situation of armed conflict was resolved. The lesson drawn from the above is that creating peace no doubt has to do with eliminating, or at least reducing violence, and one has to go to the root cause of it.

The problem is that there are several kinds of violence. One is very clear — the direct violence as in the above episode, or as stated in the first Buddhist precept: to abstain from killing.

In Buddhism, killing involves five factors, not only life, but also the perception of life; not only the thought of murder but also carrying it out, and death as a result of it.

But then, there is structural violence; the violence that kills slowly, built into a structure. Of the five factors, only three apply i.e. there is life and perception of life, but then there is no thought of murder and hence no "carrying it out". Yet there is death as a result of — of what? not of "it" in the sense of "carrying it out"; "it" in the sense of desperately unjust social structures, giving very much to the few and extremely little to the many. Is this form of violence covered by the Buddhist five precepts, which on top of (1) abstention from taking life, go on to advise us, (2) to abstain from stealing, (3) to abstain from sensuous misconduct, (4) to abstain from false speech, and (5) to abstain from intoxicants as tending to cloud the mind.

Again five factors are involved in the second precept: someone else's belongings, awareness that they are someone else's, the thought of theft and carrying it out, and theft as a result of it.

But this is theft, not quite the same as structural violence. As in the above episode, could we regard the taking of water by force for one side's benefit as theft?

Let's put the incident in the modern context. Something is always taken, but there may be no awareness anywhere that this happens.

A landowner has land; the landless person has nothing. The landlord says: You may till my land, but you have to give me 70% of the harvest — as is now happening still in many parts of Asia. The landlord may feel he is generous; the alternative could have been to use a tractor. The peasant may feel grateful; the alternative could have been starvation.

Is there something wrong here, morally? In which way could any of the Buddhist five precepts come in to deal with this situation? Is this also a conflict situation, which could lead to armed struggles, unless religions teach people to be docile, or to reconcile themselves to the structure which is certainly violent?

To maintain a structure of this kind, something is needed, apart from teaching the people to be powerless and accepting their fate, or Karma as wrongly interpreted, i.e. the landlords and the political elites have to keep the peasants ignorant and apart, so that they cannot organize any revolt. Many social theories also maintain that nothing is wrong with the structure. Buddhism wrongly interpreted could also help maintain the unjust structure. Many Buddhists are aware of themselves and are compassionate. Many are even full of forgiveness to the others who could be their oppressors. Yet most are not aware of the unjust structure in societies which involves violence and conflicts.

The prevailing cultures in the world seem to be geared to greed, (consumerism) and anger, which could be termed *cultural violence*, meaning particularly in religion and/or ideology, that legitimizes direct and/or structural violence.

Of course there are Buddhists, past and present, and there will also be in the future, committing violence directly, and participating in structural violence. But they will not find any backing in Buddhist scriptures or tradition telling them that this is right.

Whoever says so will break the fourth precept, "to abstain from false speech". That precept, however, is more about lying in a conventional sense than in legitimizing violence — but if Buddhism is invoked in favour of violence, it can be argued that we have an act of lying

too. Unfortunately in so many Buddhist countries, this is also happening — and widely. Otherwise leading Buddhists just keep silence — not a word against an unjust structure.

If Buddhists are to play a meaningful role in the world for justice and peace, besides resolving armed conflicts, we need to be bold enough to question the present violent and unjust structures, not only the single acts of individuals and countries.

We need cooperation with Christians, Hindus, Muslims and those of other ideologies. Although our stand is clearly nonviolent, we must cooperate with others in certain basic questions like: why is it that people do so little for the basic needs of the common men and women everywhere, and why are people so good at producing far too much and so bad at helping where there is "too little".

Of course there is not much money to make on basic needs, but much to make on basic greed. As a consequence, precious resources are wasted, not only on arms, but also on luxury goods for the few — besides, the drug traffic is also related closely with the arms industry.

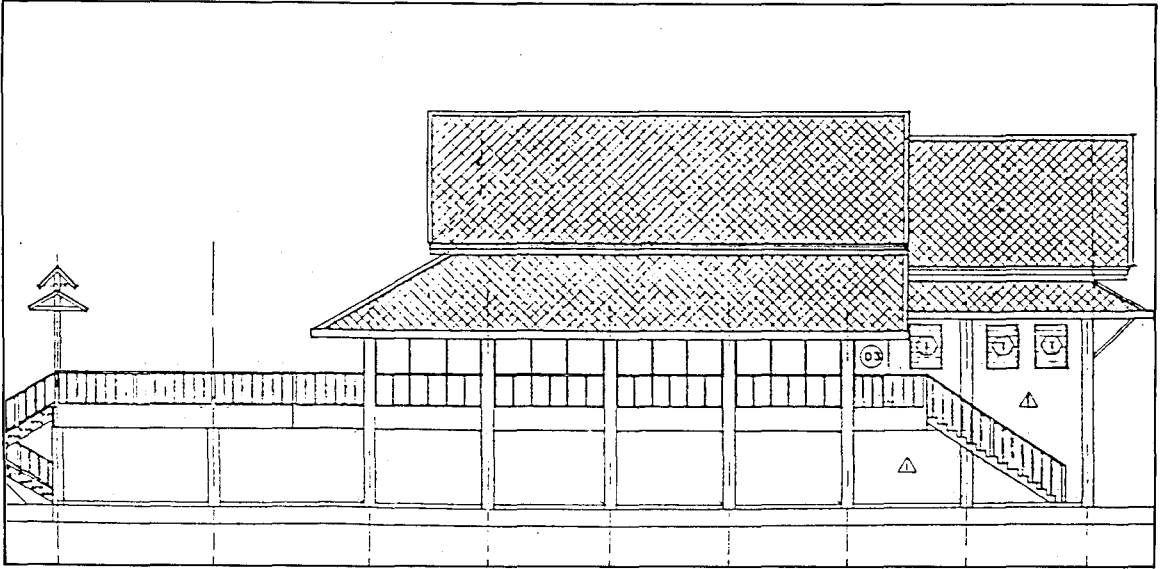
Buddhists should be able to see through this with the help of friends like those of you who come to this seminar — and together we should be able to bend these structures in other directions.

In this day and age, whether we have more Buddhists or not is not very relevant, but I do think the world needs Buddhist ethics, Buddhist meditation and Buddhist experiences, especially in critical self awareness. Buddhists also need good friends from other religious traditions and ideologies who care for social justice, in order that together we could help resolve personal up to international conflicts, that is to create peace, and not only among human beings, but also in nature.

Yet Buddhism has to confront the real world issues relevant for peace and enter the struggle, nonviolently. With a seminar of this nature, we Buddhists could learn a great deal from all of you, so that we could reflect and re-examine our claims to make Buddhism more appropriate in the contemporary world and beyond.

A keynote address by S. Sivaraksa at a seminar on Reconciliation and the Role of Religion in Situations of Armed Conflict. 16-21 November 1989, Life & Peace Institute, Upsala, Sweden.

The Ashram For Life and Society Project



The Basic Ideas

Despite the fact that great efforts have been made by both governmental and non-governmental organizations to promote "development" in Thai society in the past few decades, many old problems (e.g. poverty) are still unresolved. Some of these have even been augmented in scale and degree of seriousness such as social injustice. New problems are constantly created: ecological destruction, structural violence, individualist materialism and so on. These problems have in turn led to the degradation of human spiritual growth and the destruction of human creativity. All this is fairly well known to any conscious person in Thai society. To resolve these problems definitely requires wisdom, time and the conscious efforts of all concerned individuals.

The Sathirakoses - Nagapradipa Foundation, a very small non-governmental organization named after the pen-names of the late Thai scholars, Phya Anuman Rajadhon and Phra Saraprasert has, with full awareness of the above-mentioned problems, initiated the project called the Ashram For Life and Society with the

primary aim of providing a serene place for socially-concerned individuals to undertake their tasks which may not be done elsewhere. At the Ashram, necessary facilities will be prepared to help the guests in such a way that they are able to undertake the tasks they wish to accomplish. Small contributions may be asked from the guests to cover the maintenance costs.

Since Siam is a Buddhist society and Buddhism has much to contribute to the creation of peace, human enlightenment, social development and ecological balance, it is conceived that its ethics and approach (i.e. the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and so on) will be utilized in the activities carried out at the Ashram. Other ethics and approaches from Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and the like are also encouraged to incorporate in the activities. It is our sincere hope that with a tranquil atmosphere and well-planned activities, a genuine contribution to minimize, if not totally resolve, the global and local problems which are facing us today will be made at this Ashram.

Present Status of the Project

Approximately 13 acres of land in the

province of Nakorn Nayoke (about 70 kms north-east of Bangkok) was donated to the Foundation in 1984. This piece of land has been developed somewhat in the past few years, but the major part of land is not in use yet. The Foundation is now planning to construct the buildings for housing the guests and for organizing activities. However, the Foundation has thus far not been able to secure sufficient funding to cover the relatively high cost of the construction. It is expected that with the contributions from concerned and generous individuals and organizations, the buildings and necessary facilities will be completed in 1990. At this point approximately US\$100,000 is still needed to complete the construction and for landscape architecture.

Plan and Activities

It is envisaged that in the first three years the activities along the following lines will be encouraged and promoted at the Ashram.

1. Workshops and Seminars on issues related to both global and local problems.

2. Providing a retreat corner for writers, artists, thinkers and the like to spend time reflecting upon their lives and works as well as to create more creative works.

3. Providing a place for individuals to practise alternative life-styles.

4. Providing a place for organizing genuine Buddhist education and meditation.

5. A place for the promotion of community-organized Research for Development Alternatives.

In a way, we hope the Ashram will help people there to grow intellectually and spiritually, from selfishness to selflessness, and to understand Thai society clearly in order to use their potential to serve the society in a meaningful way towards justice and peace in a proper environmental atmosphere and with due regard to Siamese culture and tradition in a fast changing time. Estimated cost for these activities annually would be approximately US\$50,000.

For future information please contact:

Sulak Sivaraksa

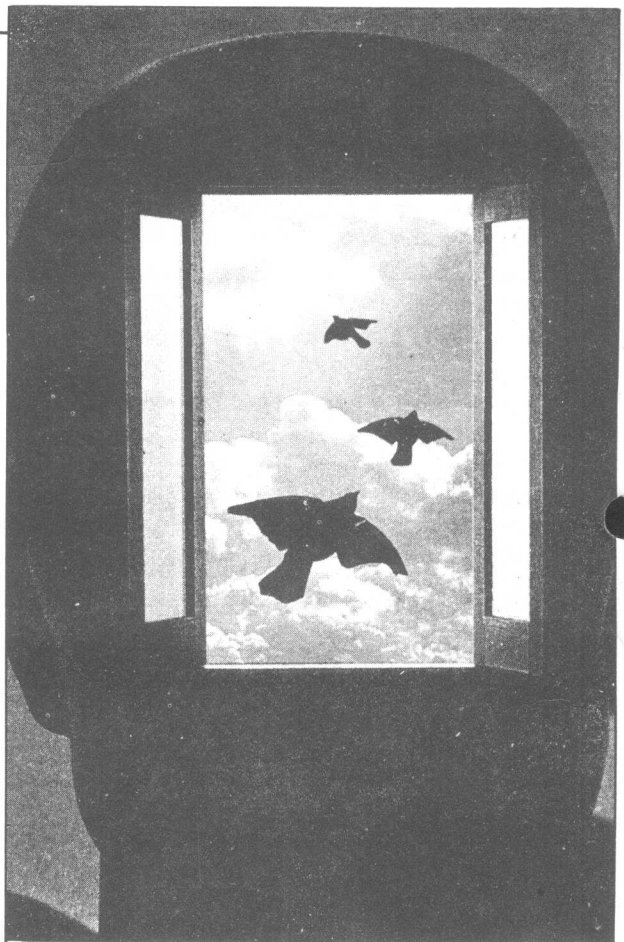
The Ashram For life and Society Project

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MY PERSONAL SPERO.

When a man has sixty years behind him his curiosity increases as he asks himself which of his expectations may still be fulfilled. And he is likewise more serious than before in his concern that the things for which he studied and battled, worked and suffered, outlive him. That is why I gladly use the opportunity offered me by this "testament" to speak of my vision of a better future, a vision which still sustains me today and can perhaps sustain others as well. Despite everything, despite the possibility of human self-destruction, whether slow or sudden, my personal **spero**, my personal hope, which is of course based in my **credo**, in my faith of Jewish-Christian origin, persists. It is a **spero** which has constantly expanded for me in the course of

the decades: from churches to religions and eventually to nations.

Ad primum: A whole theological life long I have been committed to the renewal of the Catholic Church and its theology and to an ecumenical understanding between the Christian churches. I have been able to see progress, especially under Pope John XXIII and during the Second Vatican Council. Much that had for centuries been considered impossible within the Catholic sphere was realized "overnight": a heightened appreciation of the Bible and its proclamation, of charisms and the laity, the vernacular in the liturgy and the chalice for the laity, an easing in questions of mixed marriages and religious instruction, the collaboration of Christian churches in many areas of society and culture, the formation of ecumenical commissions to iron out the questions which still separate the churches...

But I have also had to accept setbacks, especially under the popes of the 1970s and 1980s. The ecumenical euphoria petered out, initiatives bogged down, committed consensus documents disappeared into Vatican drawers. Instead of Aggiornamento, Restoration. Instead of ecumenical accomplishments, ecumenical phrases and unecumenical obstructions. Instead of collegiality, once again the old authoritarianism, and instead of dialogue, only too often the arrogance of power and the suppression of other views. Equal rights, especially for women, are denied now as before; once again theologians are increasingly excluded or removed from professorial chairs controlled by the Church; only representatives loyal to the Roman line are named bishops. An atmosphere of stagnation and resignation is spreading. From the beginning I was aware of how intensely those in power in Rome -- and not seldom in other Christian churches as well -- would resist any modification of church structure to fit the standard of the gospel itself and the demands of the time.

Yet **spero contra spem**, I hope against all hope! Despite everything I do not give up hope. An oikoumene among the Christian confessions is possible, indeed necessary! The dogmas of human origin separating the churches will fade before God's truth; the medieval-premodern structures which treat people, women especially,

as underprivileged will disintegrate; the overbearing ecclesiastical authorities who have arrogated rights to themselves over the centuries will be cut down to human scale:

--Some day all the medieval and early-modern privileges and pretensions of the **Catholic** Church vis-a-vis the other Christian churches, their offices and worship, will have been outgrown; infallibilist papalism and pseudo-Christian papal idolatry will have disappeared in favor of a Petrine office at the service of all Christianity, within the framework of synodal and conciliar structures. A John XXIV will come forth in the model of Pope John XXIII.

--But the regional provincialism and biblicistic fundamentalism of **Protestant** provenance will also give way to a church responsible to the world and to that enlightened "freedom of the Christian" which exhibits neither moralizing self-righteousness nor dogmatic intolerance.

--And an **Orthodox** traditionalism and ritualism will be transcended, changed in favor of a Christianity simultaneously closer to its origins and more contemporary. Not the least of the results will be a worship which can exercise a leavening function in the transformation of politics and society in the countries of Eastern Europe.

That is my hope. No, not a uniform single church; the confessional, regional, even national character of the Christian churches will not be melted down. Rather an ecumenical unity among the Christian churches: reconciled in diversity. An idiotically extravagant hope? No, a realistic vision, one whose realization has already begun at the grassroots of the churches.

Ad secundum: As a Christian theologian I have increasingly advocated changing the attitude of Christian churches toward the non-Christian religions of the world. I have been able to see progress -- in the Decrees of the Second Vatican Council on freedom of conscience and religion, in the Declarations on Judaism, Islam and the other world religions. And then after the Council all the many encounters between people of different religions; all the common efforts for peace and human rights across all religious boundaries; all the increased study of one another's traditions by theologians, religious scholars, philosophers throughout the

world; all the effort toward genuine encounter in meditation and action, in authentic dialogue.

But here too there were setbacks: wars on our globe still continue to be supported or legitimated by religions; there is still prejudice and rejection, indeed enmity and hate between believers of various religions; many Christians still self-righteously believe in the unconditional superiority and the absolute claims of their own religion; ecumenical understanding is still suspect as syncretism, relativism and diffusiveness. From the beginning I was aware that in all religions there are power structures which have no interest in ecumenical openness, in reciprocal information and human transformation, structures whose efforts are directed rather to drawing boundaries, to apologetics, to disparaging others.

Yet **spero contra spem**, I hope against all hope! Despite everything I do not give up hope: an oikoumene among the religions of this earth is possible, is necessary, for there can be no peace among nations without peace among religions. But there will be no peace among religions without dialogue among religions:

--More and more people will realize that the three great prophetic religions -- Judaism, Christianity and Islam -- form one connected religious river-system springing out of the semitic Near East, with members who all profess belief in the one God of Abraham as the Creator and Sustainer of this world, in a course of history pointing to the future, and in a fundamentally moral ethos of elementary humanity (the Ten Commandments).

--More and more, in the ecumenical spirit of reconciliation, we will learn that we must also let ourselves be enriched by a second great river-system, which originates in Indian mysticism (Hinduism and Buddhism especially), and by a third, which flows from Chinese wisdom (Confucianism, Taoism): by their spiritual values, by their mystical depth, by their views of world and humanity tested over the centuries.

--More and more the three great prophetic religions themselves will share their own limitless intellectual-spiritual heritage with others, moving far beyond any religious colonization, far beyond any triumphalistic grandeur, far beyond any intellectual disparagement or assimilation.

This is my hope. No, not a unity of religions, not a single religion, a religious stew or syncretic mishmash. But an ecumenical peace among world religions! And that means a peaceful coexistence, a growing convergence, and a creative proexistence of religions in the common search for the always greater truth and the mystery of the one and true God which will be fully revealed only in the eschaton. An empty utopia? No, a realistic vision, whose realization has already begun at the religious grassroots.

Ad tertium: From a good three decades of experience in international theology I have come to know the Church as a global community of faith, integrating all nations and races. Increasingly I have confronted the theological task from a global, international perspective. From numerous travels around the world and countless hours of quiet study day and night I have learned that theology must contribute its share to an understanding among nations. The consequences of such an understanding are visible: centuries-old "hereditary enemies" like Germany and France have overcome their hatreds; the process of forming a community of countries in Western Europe moves along despite all bottlenecks and barriers; the recent relaxing of tensions between East and West is obvious; and the development of trust and conversations on disarmament are finally leading to concrete results; the development of international understanding, of economic and cultural cooperation appears necessary for survival and therefore irreversible...

But setbacks have occurred as well: alongside the process of integration in Europe and the beginning of an understanding between East and West stands a process of growing division between North and South. The disparities between the rich and poor nations grow unceasingly: the people of this earth are more than ever divided socially and ecologically -- as well as economically by the debt crisis. The exploitation of air, water and earth with harmful substances and trash has reached shocking dimensions. From the beginning I was aware that there are power cartels in this world with an interest in the continuation of such exploitative processes, especially in the Third and Fourth Worlds -- cartels which seek to hinder the creation of a

just world economic order.

Yet **spero contra spem**, I hope against all hope! Despite everything I do not give up hope: an oikoumene among nations is possible, is necessary. And then, in a comprehensive ecumenical fashion, the religions of the world -- in North and South, West and East -- will be able to realize in a quite new way their moral responsibility

-- for peace and thus an end to international hostilities;

-- for justice and thus the elimination of unjust social and political structures; -- for the preservation of creation and thus the maintenance of an inhabitable and hospitable earth.

That is my hope: No, an all-powerful world regime or world bureaucracy; no domination in the name of religion; no old or new physical or spiritual coercion on behalf of religious juridicism, dogmatism or moralism; no authoritarian exercise of power by hierarchs or bonzes, ayatollahs or gurus. On the contrary! Freedom for and even solidarity with both believers and the many doubters hesitating between faith and disbelief! An ecumenical community among

the peoples, a true "united nations": and in their service a religion and spirituality whose deepest humane basic intentions -- the salvation of the entire person and all persons -- will be recognized and realized by the people themselves. All a desperate mirage? No, a realistic vision, whose realization has already begun at the grassroots of the nations.

In summa:

Spero unitatem ecclesiarum: I hope for the unity of the churches. Spero pacem religionem: I hope for peace among religions. Spero communitatem nationem: I hope for community among nations.

Where does the strength of my hope come from? For me personally, as for millions of religious people throughout the world, the basis of my hope is that utterly reasonable trust which is called faith:

"In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in aeternum."

"In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded in eternity."

Hans Kung

translated by Arlene Swidler

Buddhist, Muslim find ways to walk together

They've attempted to walk in each other's shoes, breaking down barriers that have historically separated their two religions.

Chaiwat Satha-Anand, a Muslim, and Uthai Dulyakasem, a Buddhist—both from Thailand—are here participating in a series of workshops aimed at promoting more understanding between their religious groups.

Both are drawing from their personal experiences, as well as their academic training, to relieve some of the friction in their country that has existed between the dominant Buddhists and minority Muslims.

Their "dialogue," if successful, may provide a useful model for conflict resolution between other religious groups at odds with each other, said



David Chappell, professor of religion at the University of Hawaii and organizer of the workshops.

"If we do have some positive models of working together, perhaps we can have some avenue of avoiding armed conflict," he said.

Both Satha-Anand and Dulyakasem teach

at universities within Bangkok. Both agree that neither religious group in Thailand really understands the other. Both say misconceptions abound.

“Buddhists tend to think that Muslims are narrow-minded... Some have gone as far as to say that they are much more violent,” Dulyakasem said.

On the other hand, Muslims can't understand why the Buddhists are so secular, Satha-Anand said. “They say that religion for them is relegated to marginal importance.”

Some have found a form of worship or ritual so repulsive that it kept them from learning the content of each other's faith, Satha-Anand said.

For example, he said, Muslims believe that Buddhists indulge in idol worship, but “they don't know that the teaching of Buddhism has nothing to do with idol worship.”

In some cases, the religious conflict is muddied by other dynamics. According to Satha-Anand, Muslims in Thailand make up 7 percent of that country's 55 million people.

Yet, as an indication of Islam's strength, Bangkok has some 187 mosques, more than what can be found in Kuala Lumpur, the capitol of Malaysia, a country where Islam is the national

religion, Satha-Anand said.

Despite their fewer numbers, Muslims have made gains through government-sponsored affirmative action programs, Dulyakasem said, leading some in the general public to complain of reverse discrimination.

Both men feel that religious differences are never the primary reason why groups break out in fighting and other reasons usually exist first, such as economic or social inequality.

They would like to use a two-way discussion to air differences and find commonalities, especially in dealing with problems that face all of them as members of Thai society.

Chappell agreed. “Both traditions are dedicated to truth, compassion, love, justice and peace. Religion can be used to escalate things to bad or good.”

Both Satha-Anand and Dulyakasem will participate in their last workshop tomorrow at 2 p.m. at Honpa Hongwanji. The event is free and open to the public.

Becky Ashizawa

Star-Bulletin

Honolulu, 21 October 1989

Towards A Spiritual Vision Of The Human Being

If we analysed in depth some of the great challenges facing humankind today, we will begin to realize the importance of developing a spiritual worldview on the malaise of our age. The ever-widening chasm between the very rich and the very poor within societies and between nations is one such challenge. Would such a chasm have developed if the natural resources of this earth were equitably shared by the whole of humankind and not monopolised by a few? Would there have been the very rich living off the sweat of the very poor if materialistic, consumerist affluence had not become the desired goal of an entire civilization? Would there have been the very poor if the prior aim of each society was to provide



for the basic needs of each and every human being? These are questions which embody a spiritual concern for humanity.

Similarly, would actual political power be in the hands of an elite, within nation-states and across the globe, if each human being was allowed to play his or her legitimate role as the vicegerent of God on earth? Would it have been possible for a handful of powerful states and multi-national corporations to control and manage science and technology if the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge was viewed as the divine duty of every human being and not the privilege of a minority? Would environmental degradation threaten the very survival of humankind if we had continued to regard nature as an indispensable aspect of our own existence, as an integral part of the larger unity of the universe—a unity founded upon the oneness of God? Isn't it true that one of the dimensions of the ethnic and religious conflicts that engulf so many societies is a 'we-they'

It is possible to develop spiritual perspectives on a variety of national and international concerns. A spiritual perspective on the arms race, for instance, would look at the fundamental issue of the use of violence in society and man's eternal yearning for peace. Corruption and drug abuse raise crucial questions about the spiritual worth and value of the human being. Likewise, the erosion of the solidarity of the family as the basic unit of society is a matter of grave concern to all the great religions.

If there is anything unique about how the spiritual perspective relates to contemporary issues, it is the way it upholds the dignity of the human being. Of course, the main secular intellectual traditions, liberalism and Marxism, also espouse the cause of man. In reality, however, they have failed to do justice to the human being because they lack a wholistic, comprehensive vision of the human condition.

The spiritual traditions, on the other hand, contain a very profound view of the human being. They attempt to answer, in different ways, the five fundamental questions about the human being, about you and I. Who am I? Where am I from? Why am I here on earth? How do I live here? Where do I go from here?

It is worth observing that mystics from

different traditions have given almost identical answers to these questions. I am a child of God, I am God's vicegerent, I am God's steward. Since I am from God, my origin is spiritual though I assume a physical form and become part of the material world for a brief period. It follows that I am here on earth to do God's Will. To do God's Will, is to live by all those eternal, universal, values, principles and laws which have been transmitted to humankind through the prophets, the sages and the saints the advent of man on earth. After our sojourn, we, who are just tenants on earth, will have to return to God and will have to account for our deeds in this mortal life.

Of course, this concept of the human being has deeper, wider political, economic and sociological implications which a mystical notion of man will not bring forth. The status of man as the vicegerent of God, for instance, elevates him to the loftiest height imaginable. The human being is the bearer of God's trust. He has been specially endowed with power and authority, with reason and conscience to carry out this sacred responsibility and yet he is not the centre of the Universe. For he serves God. He is both master and slave at the same time. He is great and yet he is small. He is unique (because of his responsibility to the rest of creation) and yet he is ordinary (because he has so much in common with the rest of creation). It is this paradoxical conception of the human being which explains his role on earth. It is this that makes the spiritual view of man so different from the secular vision of the human being, so vividly reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Because he is the servant of God, the human being must learn to tame his ego, to control his baser and desires. He must exercise restraint over himself because he has been given the tremendous responsibility of carrying out God's Will. More than self-control and restraint, man is faced with the challenge of developing his spiritual self through the assimilation of all the sublime values of love and compassion, of justice and freedom, of honesty and integrity, so that he will be adequately prepared for the perpetual struggle of transforming the world around him. And this, more than anything else, is man's real mission: using the divine gift of

freedom to fight against all the injustices and iniquities which seek to deny the realization of the oneness of God on earth. For the oneness of God is the unity of humankind, the unity of the universe which is a truth that remains latent until it is made manifest through the selfless struggle and sacrifice of the human being. To achieve this goal, all the dichotomies connected to gender, caste, class, community, culture, religion, state, nation and nature must be overcome.

That, at the end of his life, man, has to account for what he has done is a crucial dimension of the spiritual vision of the human being. It serves to emphasise the importance of adopting a responsible attitude towards one's relationships, rights and roles. It reminds the human being that there is a purpose to life, that there is meaning in existence and therefore our sojourn on earth should not be lost in trivial pleasures and frivolous pursuits. At the same time, the concept of accountability in the hereafter, may sometimes help to check human behaviour. It may ensure that the human being stays on - and not strays from— the straight path.

But this spiritual vision of the human being is something that is not easy to translate into reality. It faces all sorts of formidable obstacles. Conventional religion, for instance, even when it is universal in its philosophical orientation, tends to adopt an 'us versus them' approach, separating its own flock from others in the human family. Besides that, most religions over time lose their initial focus upon the transformation of the individual and society and often get lost in the thicket of time — bound rules and regulations. Nationalism too would regard this spiritual vision of the human being as a threat since the universalism of the latter can never jive with the ideology of the former. As far as capitalism is concerned, it will not be able to tolerate the strong emphasis upon egalitarianism and social justice in our spiritual vision. Likewise, socialism can never be expected to be comfortable with the transcendental, spiritual basis of this alternative philosophy. More important, the powerful vested interests that dominate the contemporary social order with its materialistic orientation, would resist any attempt to bring about a fundamental change founded upon a diametrically different concept of

the human being.

Be that as it may, there are signs to show that present-day civilization is crumbling. There are colossal problems ranging from arms proliferation and environmental degradation to mounting debts and drug abuse for which solutions do seem to be in sight. The old approach of trying to work out a solution within the framework of a particular nation-state has no meaning at all since most of these problems are, in fact, global in their character. Current ideologies, whether it is capitalism or socialism, or the infinite varieties within these two systems of thought, do not offer any real hope. It is doubtful that capitalist economies for instance will ever be able to find a permanent cure for their endemic diseases of inflation and unemployment. The socialist states are in an even worse situation. Economic sluggishness, coupled with the lack of civil liberties and political freedoms, have destroyed the moral legitimacy of these states.

What then is the alternative? The alternative seems to lie in some of those diverse citizens' movements which are rapidly emerging as subordinate trends in a number of countries. To start with, human rights groups, whatever their shortcomings, have, by focusing upon the human being opened up exciting intellectual vistas for the future. It may be possible, in the course of time, to transform what is essentially a secular notion of human rights into a broader, more comprehensive spiritual philosophy of the human being, his rights, responsibilities, relationships and roles. Indigenous groups, faced by all sorts of threats to their survival, are giving the world a glimpse of their deep spirituality. Some of the women's groups are eloquent articulators of alternative, spiritual values like love, compassion and a sense of community. At the same time, development is being re-defined by certain other groups in terms of human-scale economics and ethical principles. Consumer movements are very critical about the present obsession with affluence and are asking for a return to a simple lifestyle. Among some environmental groups, a more profound awareness has grown about the human being-nature link and is now expressing itself in the idea of eco-spirituality. Peace activists are also beginning to discover the spiritual roots

of their struggle. Most of all, within almost all the major religions, there are small groups which are determined to re-interpret certain aspects of their traditions in a more universal manner. They want to see spirituality, not religiosity, triumph.

In all these endeavours, are the seeds of the future which, hopefully, will blossom into a universally shared spiritual vision of the human being.

CHANDRA MUZAFFAR

Thai - Indochinese Dialogue on Sa-kae-Krang River

Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute, Sathirakoses - Nagapradipa Foundation organized the Dialogue during October 1-7 on the raft in Sa-Kae-Krung River, Udaidhani province. The participants were from Laos, Vietnam, Thailand and the Khmers from the refugee camp (site 2) in Prachinburi. Despite the fact that the participants from Phnom Penh could not make it because of certain difficulties in their country, and that the participants from Vietnam arrived a bit late due to visa problems, the Dialogue took place on the schedule and the discussion went quite well. After dinner of the day of arrival (October 1), Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa, Director of Santi Pracha Dhamma explained to the group about the idea of the Dialogue and what it was expected to achieve in the next few days of the Dialogue. "Our main concern," he said, "was to get to know each other better. It is one of the best ways to build trust among us. Only after having confidence that we are sincere and good friends, we then could discuss the matters which were truly fruitful to our societies." The participants agreed with him and the Dialogue ensued using such an approach. The Abbot of Wat Dhammasophit, Udaidhani, began by introducing himself and the work he has been doing in the areas of community development and the educational project for the Samaneras. It took about an hour or so to do self-introduction among the participants. After a few questions and answers the group retired to go back to

the hotel.

On the second day and the third day, the discussion centered around the activities in which the participants had been involved in their own societies. Each participant told the group of what he/she had been involved in with the reasons why she/he got involved, and what he/she expected to achieve in the future. The discussion after each presentation was very interesting. Since there are no local NGOs in Laos, Vietnam, not to mention in the refugee camp, the Thai participants had so many things to share with and to learn from the participants from Indochina. They mentioned both the positive contribution and the limitations of the local NGOs when discussing similar activities carried out by the state organizations in their societies. The participants from Indochina showed their keen interest in the roles of the NGOs in Thai society. The organizer therefore arranged an exposure trip for the group to visit some community development projects in Udaidhani. For example that of the Nong-Khayang Temple carried out by the Abbot concerning traditional Thai medical treatment.

At the Dialogue, the participants for the first time heard about the Khmers' lives in the refugee camps. It's quite impressive that some Khmer individuals in the camps have been trying to preserve, restore, and vitalize Khmer culture and crafts. Despite their limitation under such circumstances, they could, with some help of the outside NGO's initiate interesting projects which may have far-reaching effects.

The participants from Laos also spoke frankly about the strengths and weaknesses of their society since the Liberation. Especially after the open door policy, it seems that many negative aspects of Thai development have crept into their society, a matter with which our Lao participants are very concerned. They are hopeful that Laos can learn from the mistakes made by Thailand before it is too late.

It should be noted with great appreciation that each participant was quite sincere and honest in expressing his/her ideas during the discussion.

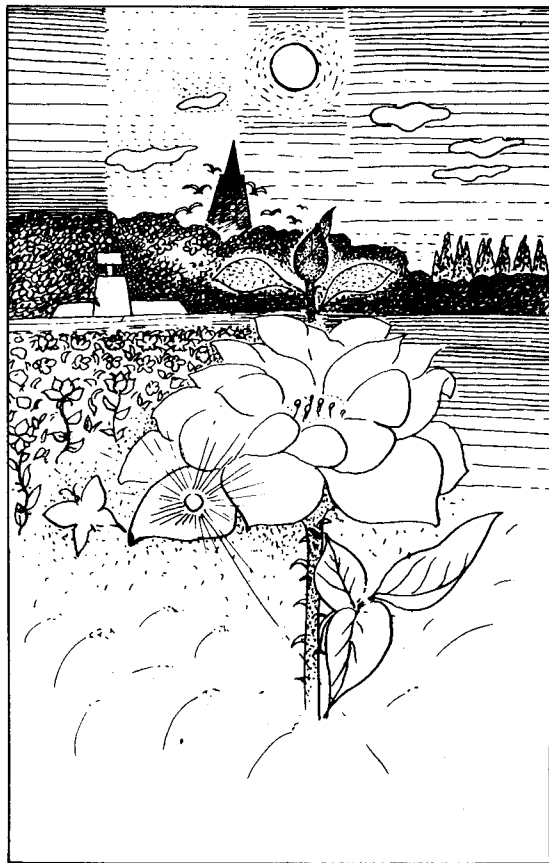
On the last day in Udaidhani, the participants were encouraged to propose some concrete plans that might be taken up cooperatively in the future. The Indochinese participants recommended projects such as the exchange of literature, information and other media (i.e. video/ slides); conferences of the same nature, either bilateral or multiparty; training; visitation of alternative development projects in Thailand. They also hoped that a similar type of NGO could be initiated in their societies in the future.

Because working with NGOs in other countries was something very new for the participants from Indochina, they were asked to think further during the following exposure trip so that they could propose their ideas more systematically in the evening of the last day before coming back to Bangkok.

After the meeting at Udaidhani, an exposure tour was organized for participants to visit (1) exemplary temples and the chief medical officer of Suphanburi province, (2) the famous Children Village School, with its alternative educational activities in Kanchanaburi Province, where participants spent the night and had fruitful dialogues with teachers and students of the school. (3) They had a rest at Cha-Um seaside resort for one night and sight seeing tour of historical monuments in Petcharaburi Province and in Bangkok. In Bangkok, the foreign participants had chances to meet with quite a number of Thai NGOs of their interest. Besides, they had a chance to meet with those who worked for the advisory team to the Prime Minister.

At Cha-Um seaside resort all participants got together again to talk about the next step of the Thai - Indochinese Dialogue that they wanted to see.

How Buddhism Can Help Protect Nature



Thailand has suffered tremendous destruction of the natural environment in recent decades. Forests, for example, covered 80 percent of the land 50 years ago; today forestland has been reduced to just over 20 percent. Many bird, animal, and plant species are in danger of extinction, and some have already disappeared.

The most tragic consequences of a degraded and disappearing nature and natural resources are seen in various human rural communities where survival is a struggle. Changing ecological conditions have resulted in frequent flooding in Bangkok; it's an inconvenience. But in parts of the

country's northeast, a degraded natural environment means that annual rains do not arrive on schedule, crops fail, and many people experience a borderline existence.

While so much has been destroyed, it is worth observing that even more could have been lost, and more quickly, given the modern world's eagerness for exploitation and little regard for the consequences.

It is likely that much of what still survives of the natural world here is linked, in varying degrees, to the influence of Buddhism, with its focus on awareness, attitudes, and actions which should never harm, and ideally should actively help, all life on earth.

The very core of Buddhism is compassion, encouraging a better respect for and tolerance of every human being and living thing sharing the planet.

"Today more than ever before," His Holiness The Dalai Lama told a reporter, "life must be characterised by a sense of Universal Responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life."

Social critic and author Sulak Sivaraksa, described as "a Thai Buddhist voice on Asia and a World of Change," believes that however complex the world has become, the message of Buddhism is relevant, indeed even more relevant than earlier, and we need an important catalyst of social unity and progress.

Concerned about destruction of the natural environment, and convinced that Buddhism, in an active role, can bring about improved protection, Khun Sulak has added to his writings on the subject a special slide show and taped message illustrating proper Buddhist awareness, attitudes, and actions concerning Nature.

"Whether they are conscious of it or not," the narrative goes, "there is a kind of Buddhist revolt against the deterioration of Nature. It is a small revolt, because it has not yet affected the overall statistics.

But still, this peaceful commitment means something, and if it is taken seriously, it can help bring about a strong conservationist movement in our country."

Buddhism, moreover, brings a special dimension to any project involving education, such as the Buddhist Perception of Nature. It is

the duty of every practising Buddhist to seek to replace ignorance with knowledge and wisdom.

To provide teachers with the tools they need to lead their students to conservation practises, project scholars have the task of thoroughly researching the vast and rich Buddhist literature, involving several languages, reaching back in some cases more than 2,500 years.

Research is the first stage, followed by assembly of the materials. For the first time, Buddhist teaching about humankind's needs and responsibilities concerning the whole natural environment are being compiled by the Buddhist Perception of Nature project to produce comprehensive, educational instruments.

The wealth of material scholars are discovering is not surprising when one considers Buddhism's focuses on compassion, the forest-dwelling and meditation in natural surroundings are important to many in the Sangha — the order of monks — and the rich symbolism associated with many species of animals and plants.

Monks, for example, are forbidden to cut down trees, and know well the story of a monk long ago who cut a tree's main branch. The spirit of the tree complained to Buddha that by doing so, the monk had cut off his child's arm.

Another teaching relates that travellers, after having rested in the shade of a large banyan, on leaving began to cut down the tree. Their actions were condemned. The tree had given them shade, much like a friend, and to harm a friend is indeed an act of evil.

Such teachings remind Buddhists — monks and lay people alike — of the importance of showing respect for trees which provide food, shade and protection not only for people, but for all forest-dwellers.

The results of lack of respect for trees are clearly evident today. When large areas of forest are destroyed, erosion often follows, degrading watersheds, and ultimately making farming fruitless. Animal and plant species, losing their habitats, often disappear.

For Buddhism, all animals are within the field of human perception, with an opportunity some day to gain enlightenment. High beings though humans may be, Buddhism teaches that man is a part of nature, and that he disregards or abuses natural laws

or tries to conquer nature at his own peril.

Scholars with the Pali Text Society, London, provide this particularly lovely translation of a stanza from the Khuddakapatha:

“Come back, O Tigers!, to the wood again, and let it not be leveled with the plain. For without you, the axe will lay it low. You, without it, forever homeless go.”

Two and a half millennia ago, the Buddha taught disciples that the material world included the worlds of “formations,” “beings,” and “space”. That much in such ancient teaching is apparently found by many modern physicists to be compatible with the newest advances in their field of study is less important to Buddhists than the continuing, even growing, need for human attitudes of loving kindness in our modern world.

Centuries before contamination of the earth's water would be the widespread threat to health and life that it is today, the Buddha set down rules forbidding pollution of water resources. Even detailed descriptions of how a toilet should be built were provided, specifically to protect a healthy environment.

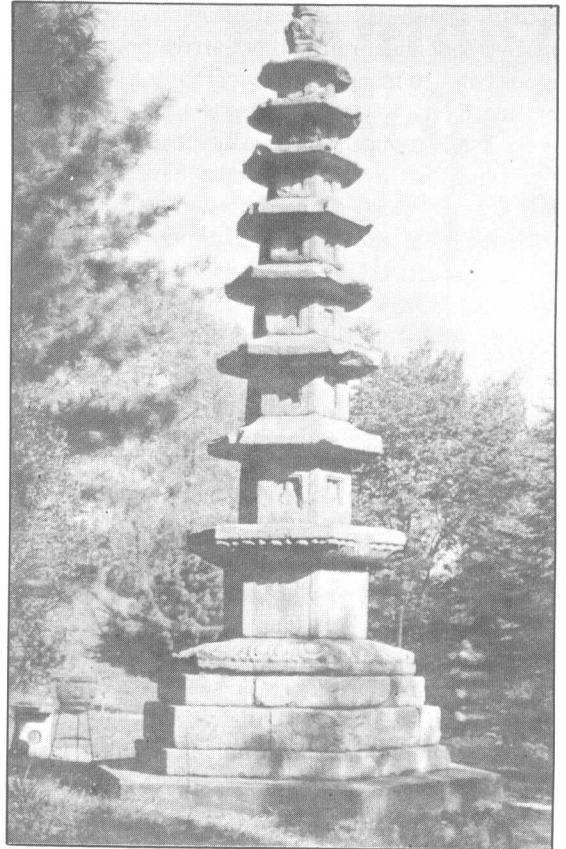
Last but not least, all Buddhist literature records that the Buddha was born in the forest, in a grove of Sal, lovely straight backed trees with large leaves. Meditation as a youth was in the shade of the “Jambo,” one of the myrtle of which there are around 650 species.

The Buddha's further study was in the company of the Banyan, and enlightenment and Buddhahood were achieved under the spreading branches of a tree known as the Bo, Bodhi or Peepul tree sacred in both Buddhism and Hinduism.

With all of these species we find example of the faith's role in protection. Because of the important symbolic value they have in the life of Buddha, they are respected, and no devout follower would deliberately harm them.

That so much of the earth has already been destroyed, and destruction is actually increasing, is insupportable for Buddhists of people of any persuasion or belief who seek knowledge and wisdom, and who feel a sense of responsibility for the condition of life on this planet now and for future generations.

In the Buddhist Perception of Nature research we are discovering and compiling teachings which



in many ways also provide shocking reminders of how much we have lost of the natural world, and in such a brief space of time. This is one of the many lessons being learned, and it adds to a feeling of urgency to complete our research, and and place good educational materials into the hands of teachers who will use them well.

By doing our part to bring to light the ancient Buddhist teachings which are as valid today as they have always been, in widening circles Buddhism can be an active element in proper conservation of the natural environment.

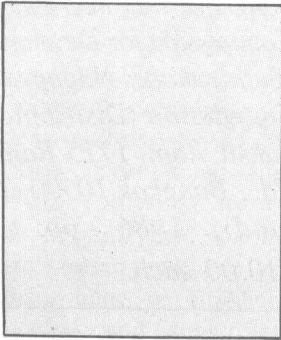
By sharing the fruits of our works with others, we look forward to a world acceptance of an environmental ethic that will replace ignorance with knowledge, greed with generosity, and lack of respect for the earth with attitudes of compassion and loving kindness — for all life.

Chatsumarn Kabilsingh

**From
KARMA :
Scandinavian Journal of Buddhism
NR 3/89**

Me and Mine

Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa



Donald K. Swearer (ed.)
Albany : State University
of New York Press, 1989.
235 pp.

Apart from **Toward the Truth and Dhammic Socialism**, **Me and Mine** is one of the most readable books and the latest volume of Buddhadasa series by Donald K. Swearer. With Swearer's persevering effort and brilliant scholarship of Buddhadasa's teachings, the book can represent Buddhadasa's work perfectly well and perhaps bring Western scholars much closer to Thai Buddhism.

Me and Mine is a collection of essays by Bhikkhu Buddhadasa which were translated from Thai into English by Swearer and friends. Since Western scholars tend to find Mahayana and Tantrayana more interesting than Theravada Buddhism because of their philosophical profundity, the book is intended to present a philosophical aspect of Theravada doctrine and to show that the value of Theravada Buddhism is more than its history and its meditative tradition.

Buddhadasa, one of the most famous Theravada monks in Thailand, can best glorify the value of Theravada doctrine in his teachings. And the essential philosophy of Theravada Buddhism, according to Buddhadasa, resides in the doctrine relating to Me-and-Mine which becomes the main theme of this volume as Swearer has put it as follows:

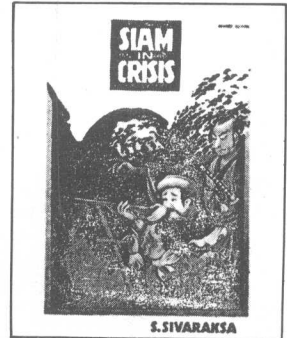
Although the essays are divided into three sections, the major ideas discussed above appear throughout. Consequently, the three parts of the book are to be seen not as sorting boxes representing sharp distinctions in Buddhadasa's interpretation of the Dhamma, but as prisms revealing a spectrum of implications springing from the basic unity of his thought. Non-attachment remains, in my estimation, the fundamental theme of Buddhadasa's thought; ontologically it points toward emptiness; ethically it leads in the direction of dhammic socialism. For this reason I have selected non-attachment (citta wang) not-self (anatta), emptiness (sunñata), and dhammic socialism (sangamaniyama) as the key indicators of the unity and variety in Buddhadasa's thought.

Me and Mine is not only an academic volume for scholars of Buddhist studies but also for supporters of world peace and love. It proves that the Buddhist doctrine is no longer "the dry scholasticism of the Abhidhamma" and an intellectual game for scholarly research. On the contrary, Buddhism can solve the world's problems. At least, in this volume, one can find that "Buddhadasa becomes a peace advocate in the broadest sense of that term, condemning

war and all forms of violence toward human beings and the environment."

Pataraporn Sirikanchana
Thammasat University
Bangkok.

Siam in Crisis



by S. Sivaraksa, Bangkok :
Santi Pracha Dhamma
Institute and Thai Inter—
Religious Commission for
Development, 1990.

\$15 paperback \$20 hard bound

In the decade after the first edition **Siam in Crisis** there has been a divergence between Thai society and Sulak Sivaraksa's position. And his pen has not been still: "...I do not agree with that form of development which aims at quantity, and not even that form of development which has as its objective the improvement of the quality of human life, yet still stresses material things. In reality, the latter, too, diminishes the quality of human life."

As a social critic thus concerned with real development in a Buddhist society, Sulak cannot leave recent changes alone. An interview and four new essays from 1987-89 consequently re-assert Sulak's Bud-

dhist and humanitarian position in response to the social changes of the late 1980s. The new essays include : On South-east Asian Modernization (1987) The Religion of Consumerism (1988), The Problem of Ethnic Minorities and State: Burman and Siam (1988), Buddhism and Social Values (1988) and Arguments for Real World Development : A Buddhist Perspective (1989). Sulak has lost none of his idealism, using allies from "small is beautiful" Schumacher to Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese monk to prove that his Buddhist alternative — the middle way — is socially viable.

On the "debit" side, nine essays — mostly short political observations from the 1960's have been omitted from the second edition. The six remaining essays of Part III — Background to Understanding Thai Politics — are the residual best of Sulak's responses to select events in Thailand during the 1960's and 70's.

Many of Sulak's readers, however, like him best when he is turning over the soil of Siam's recent past, introducing unlauded figures of minor royalty, enigmatic monks of wisdom, and lesser known literary personalities. Such readers will consequently find that Parts II and VI — Personalities, and Aspects of Thai Buddhism — remain virtually untouched although seven additions, including a few friends of the author, have been added to Part II. In these essays a strong sense of nobility is evident, Sulak writing with great warmth about what is in effect his heroes' lives. These essays are debts of honour to people whose work — mostly

unappreciated at the time — has had a formative influence on his own outlook.

By criticizing the sacred cow of modern Thai development and espousing often unfashionable opinions, Sulak is assuring his position on a lonely path, a path similar perhaps to that his heroes found themselves walking on. It is not an extreme course. It is merely the middle way made to look extreme by modern Thai society racing headlong into new crises on its own divergent highways.

Finally, Part VII, Thai-SE Asia-Japan, contains several new articles of regional interest, and the Appendices present the author and his views as others see him, from an assortment of angles : book reviews, interviews newspaper articles and even a house guest.

from *Introduction to the second edition*

by **Ken Scott**



Some Traditions of the Thai and

Popular Buddhism in Siam and Other Essays on Thai Studies. Both by *Phya Anuman Rajadhon.* Bangkok: *Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development /Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation (Distributed by Suksit Siam, 1715 Rama IV Rd., Bangkok 10500, Thailand), 1986. pp. 216. \$10.00 each.*

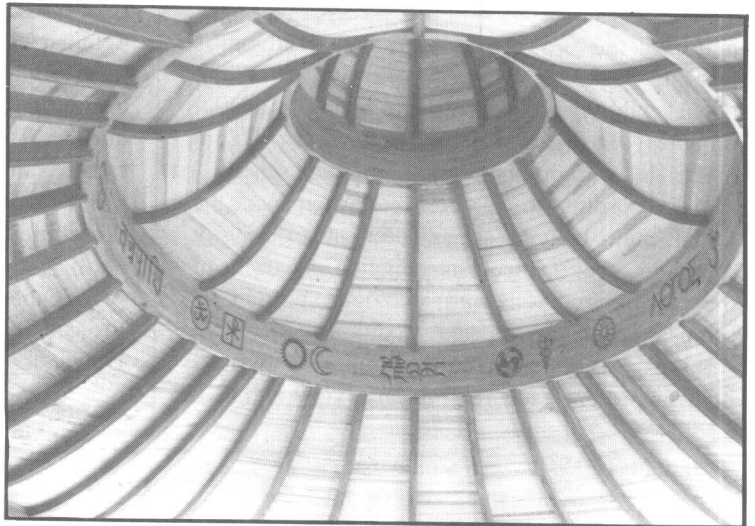
1988 marked the centenary of the birth of one of Thailand's most noted men of letters, Phya Anuman Rajadhon who also wrote under the pen name, Sathiarakoses. A commoner of Chinese ancestry with only four years of formal education, Anuman held several high official positions including the Director-General of the Department of Fine Arts, was befriended and admired by such scholarly aristocrats as Prince Naris and Prince Damrong, and entitled by the king ("Phya"). In the English-speaking world he is perhaps best known for his studies of Thai customs, but this publications range over Thai history, religion, language, and art as well. The first of these volumes brought out in conjunction with the Phya Anuman centennial birthday anniversary contains an invaluable collection of Anuman's studies of Thai culture, customs and religion. Several essays on the nature of popular Buddhism treat the ordination ceremony, the daily life on the monk, and ceremonies associated with the end of the rains retreat. Anuman's analysis of the royal crematorium or

Golden Meru provides an excellent example of Hindu-Buddhist syncretism in Thai culture. Articles on various aspects of non-Buddhist traditions and folk belief describe indigenous spirit cults (*phi, caw thi*), the protective goddess of rice of the "rice mother" (*me posop*), and an extensive discussion of the Thai New Year celebration (*songkran*). The essays are not critical or analytical in the modern, western sense, but they contain a mine of first-hand information and sensitively describe traditional Thai beliefs, ceremonies, and customs that have been largely eclipsed in the face of Thailand's rapid development in the past two decades.

Some Traditions of the Thai includes one of the most important collections of articles in English on the subject of traditional folk beliefs about conception and birth, and birth and early childhood rites, especially in regard to the *khwan* or belief in spirits. Other articles treat the Thai spirit medium (*khon song*), the ritual for the expulsion of evil spirits (*sia kabaan*), and the traditional ceremony for preparing the bridal bed. Included also is the Royal Institute's system for the transcription of Thai characters into Roman script which Phya Anuman helped devise. The student of Thai religion and culture feels a pang of nostalgic regret in reading Phya Anuman's description of Thai mores and customs, a regret for the passing of his generation of Thai savants and for the disappearing culture which they studied so appreciatively.

Donald K. Swearer
Swarthmore College

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS BEGIN 'BREAKTHROUGH' PROJECT IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Thirty scholars representing the world's religions and ideologies convened in Minnesota in April 1989 to begin working on a major multivolume survey of the religious and ideological convictions people live by. "We see this project as a breakthrough in the teaching about religions and ideologies," Dr. Leonard Swidler of Temple University, an organizer of the project, said. "For the first time, these traditions will be presented in the context of real dialogue with each other."

A response to the United Nations 1981 Declaration on Religious Liberty, and under the auspices of the United Nations University in Tokyo, the **Journal of Ecumenical Studies**, and the Institute for Interreligious, Interideological Dialogue, at Temple University in Philadelphia, the publishing project "starts from the perception that on our shrinking globe all these religious

and ideological traditions are more and more rubbing shoulders and jostling against each other, and all have to learn to talk with each other openly in dialogue if there is to be real peace," Dr. Swidler added.

At the conclusion of their conference, the international body of scholars (from Africa, Asia, America and Europe) formally organized themselves into the Institute for Global Education on Dialogue and Peace among Religions and Ideologies (GEO-DAPRI). "We have realized that so much education is needed globally and on all levels," said Dr. Paul Mojzes, Co-editor of the **Journal of Ecumenical Studies** and another organizer of the conference, "that the multi-volume project we have embarked on is just the beginning of our work. We're talking about going from there to producing a single-volume college textbook as well as curriculum materials for high school and even grade school."

According to conference participants, the initial multi-volume series aims at offering a sympathetic but critical introduction to each of the world's religions and ideologies written by scholars from within the tradition with input from experts outside the tradition. The writers plan to present each religion and ideology so it

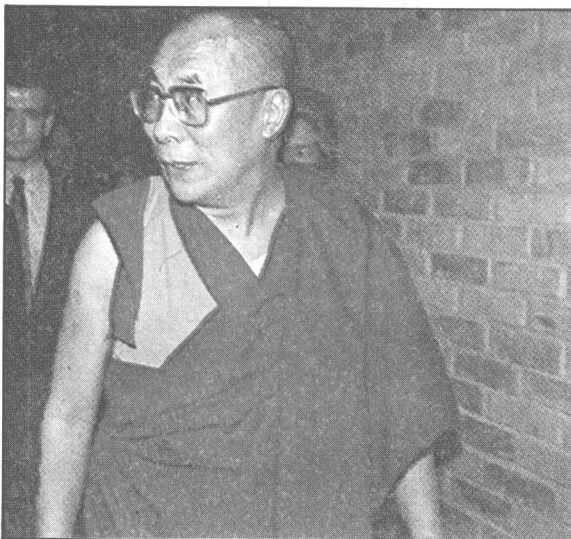
will be accessible to readers with little knowledge of that tradition.

In addition, the authors will highlight those elements in each tradition that lead to religious liberty, dialogue and peace. They also will be especially concerned with presenting the role of women in the various traditions; moreover the series authors include a substantial number of women scholars. From Thailand, Dr. Chatsumarn Kalsil Singh is one of the three co-authors in Buddhism.

The group held its five-day meeting at three sponsoring institutions--the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis), St. John's University (Collegeville, MN), and Luther Northwestern Seminary (St. Paul, MN)--where project scholars from within various traditions presented papers dealing with ways their own tradition view those outside. They also heard presentations from local faculty and students and discussed the issues raised with them. Major papers delivered at the conference will be published in a separate book.

Other sponsors of the conference were Project Tandem of Minneapolis and Temple University in Philadelphia.

The Dalai Lama and the Nobel Peace Prize



NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 1989. STATEMENT BY MR. THORVALD STOLTENBERG, FOREIGN MINISTER OF NORWAY.

The decision by the Norwegian Nobel Committee to award this year's Peace Prize to Dalai Lama represents support both to a message and a person.

Dalai Lama's efforts to save his people's historical and cultural identity and his message of understanding among men are built on his belief in non-violence. He has through his life and efforts inspired others to work for these ideals.

It is my hope that his year's Peace Prize will give added strength to these principles in our conflict-ridden world.



THE DALAI LAMA

REMARKS BY HIS HOLINESS THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA OF TIBET ON BEING AWARDED THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

I am deeply touched to be chosen as this year's recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. I believe my selection reaffirms the universal values of non-violence, peace and understanding between all members of our great human family. We all desire a happier, more humane and harmonious world, and I have always felt that the practice of love and compassion, tolerance and respect for others is the most effective manner in which to bring this about.

I hope this prize will provide courage to the six million people of Tibet. For some forty years now Tibetans have been undergoing the most painful period in our long history. During this time, over a million of our people perished and more than six thousand monasteries — the seat of our peaceful culture — were destroyed. There is not a single family, either in Tibet or among the refugees abroad, which has gone unscathed. Yet, our people's determination and commitment to spiritual values and the practice of non-violence remain unshaken. This prize is a profound recognition of their faith and perseverance.

The demonstrations which have rocked Tibet for the past two years continue to be non-violent despite brutal suppression. Since the imposition of martial law in Lhasa last March, Tibet has been sealed off, and while global attention has focused on the tragic events in China, a systematic effort to crush the spirit and national identity of the Tibetan people is being pursued by the Government of the People's Republic.

Tibetans today are facing the real possibility of elimination as a people and a nation. The Government of the People's Republic of China is

practising a form of genocide by relocating millions of Chinese settlers into Tibet. I ask that this massive population transfer be stopped. Unless the cruel and inhuman treatment of my people is brought to an end, and until they are given their due right to self-determination, there will always be obstacles in finding a solution to the Tibetan issue.

I accept the Nobel Peace Prize in a spirit of optimism despite the many grave problems which humanity faces today. We all know the immensity of the challenges facing our generation: the problem of overpopulation, the threat to our environment and the dangers of military confrontation. As this dramatic century draws to a close, it is clear that the renewed yearning for freedom and democracy sweeping the globe provides an unprecedented opportunity for building a better world. Freedom is the real source of human happiness and creativity. Only when it is allowed to flourish, can a genuinely stable international climate exist.

The suppression of the rights and freedoms of any people by totalitarian governments is against human nature and the recent movement for democracy in various parts of the world is a clear indication of this.

The Chinese students have given me great hope for the future of China and Tibet. I feel that their movement follows the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi's ahimsa in non-violence which has deeply inspired me ever since I was a small boy. The eventual success of all people seeking a more tolerant atmosphere, must derive from a commitment to counter hatred and violence with patience. We must seek change through dialogue and trust. It is my heartfelt prayer that Tibet's plight may be resolved in such a manner and that once again my country, the roof of the world, may serve as a sanctuary of peace and a resource of spiritual inspiration at the heart of Asia.

I hope and pray that the decision to give me the Nobel Peace Prize will encourage all those who pursue the path of peace to do so in a renewed spirit of optimism and strength.

October 5, 1989
Newport Beach, Ca

Cultural and religious exhibits on tour



Mr. Sulak giving a lecture through his Russian interpreter at Friendship House, Moscow, 25 August 1989.

A Photographic Exhibition on Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa, the well-known twin pen names of Phya Anuman and Phra Saraprasert, as well as on aspects of Siamese culture was on show at Gangden Monastery, the biggest Buddhist temple of Ulan Bator, the capital of Mongolia, from August 15 to August 20. This was in connection with the 4th International Seminar on Buddhism and Leadership for Peace, organized by Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace of which Sulak Sivaraksa was the keynote speaker. Participants came from China, Japan, North and South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA, Vietnam and USSR.

On August 22 and 23, the exhibits moved to Ivolginski Monastery, Buryat Republic, Headquarters of the Central Religious Board of Buddhism of USSR.

On August 25, the exhibition took place at Friendship House, Moscow. The Moscow Buddhist Community will display the exhibits

permanently in the city and they will collaborate with the Soviet-Thai Friendship Society in touring the exhibits to other cities too.

On September 8 and 9, similar exhibits was shown at Monash University, Melbourne, in connection with a symposium on "Thailand: Aspects of Identity, 1939-1989" to mark the 50th anniversary of the name of Thailand instead of Siam. From September 13 to September 17, the exhibits will be shown at Wat Buddharangsi, a Thai Buddhist temple in Sydney to raise funds from the Thai community in Australia to build a memorial hall and park in honour of Phya Anuman and Phra Saraprasert.

Those interested in contributing for this project, please contact the **Sathirakoses-Nagapratipa Foundation, 303/7 Soi Santipap, Nares Road, Bangkok 10500 or call 233-2382, 233-2792.**

The Nation
September 13, 1989

EVENTS CONCERNING PHYA ANUMAN-PHRA SARAPRASERT

From 3-10 October, there was a celebration of Phya Anuman Rajadhon's centenary in Vientienne, organized jointly by the National

Institute of Social Sciences, Laos, and the Thai UNESCO as well as the Thai National Commission on Culture. The exhibition on life and

work of Phya Anuman and Phra Saraprasert, his co-author, as well as various aspects of Siamese cultures were displayed.

On the last week of October, a similar exhibition was shown at Sun Yatsen University, Gungzhow, the People's Republic of China.

Dr. Uthai Dulyakasem also gave a lecture on Phya Anuman and Thai culture at the Chinese University in Hong Kong.

From 10 November - 14 December, one hundred Thai artists held contemporary painting, sculpture and photographic exhibition at the New Imperial Hotel, and the National Art Gallery in honor of the late two well known scholars.

25th November was the centenary of Phra Saraprasert, more known by his pen name of Nagapradipa. He was a revered Professor of Pali and Sanskrit at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. Earlier, he was Deputy Head of the Royal Scribes Department and worked closely with Their Majesties Kings Rama VI and Rama VII. He was the one who drafted and read the Royal Proclamation announcing the first constitution of Siam on 10 December 1932.

To mark his centenary, the Institute of Thai Studies and the Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University in collaboration with the National Commission on Culture held many academic and artistic events at the University and the Centre of National Culture.

On 12 December, there was a modern Thai concert with poetry and painting by well known Thai artists at the Big Auditorium, the Centre of National Culture, to raise funds for the memorial park and hall in commemoration of the two late authors

From 6 to 9 December, however, the National Institute of Social Sciences held an exhibition on the two well known Thai scholars in Hanoi.

From 13-16 May 1990 at the International Seminar on Thai Studies in Kunming, a similar exhibition will be held in China to conclude the event commemorating Phya Anuman and Phra Saraprasert abroad.

Recommended Reading

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order : An Introduction by *Dharmachari Vessantara*

This booklet provides a brief introduction to the many elements that make up the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order : Buddhism itself the Western Buddhist Order, meditation techniques, physical disciplines, study groups, retreats, communities, co-operative businesses, social welfare projects etc.

Published by the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, 51 Roman Road, London E2 OHU, U.K.

Life & Peace Review: *published by the Life and Peace Institute, Upsala, Sweden.*

Islam and the Quest of Social Science : Editor : Chaiwat Satha-Anand

This monograph attempts to analyze the problems facing Muslims in modern societies today, especially in the ASEAN countries. They also focus on important issues confronting Muslim societies such as the need for logical deduction on legal and theological questions by the learned (ijtihad) in order to cope in the fast-changing modern world.

Published by Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Phayathai Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand.

Jewel Heart Meditations Volume II : Basic Meditations Part I : The Indian Masters prepared by Gelong Thupten Chopel

Published by The Dharma House Society, 106/106A, Jalan Klang Lama, 3rd Mile Kaula Lumpur, Malaysia.

Buddhist-Christian Studies Volume 8, 1988

It is a scholarly journal published annually by the University of Hawaii Press. It presents articles, book, reviews, and news items on Buddhism and Christianity and on their interrelation based on historical materials and contemporary experience.

Contact address : The Editor, Buddhist-Christian Studies, University of Hawaii, 2530 Dole Street, Honolulu 96822, USA.

Echoes From Tiananmen Issue No. 2 - August 1989 : Published by :

Friends of Chinese Minzhu, c/o Hong Kong Trade Union Education Centre, 57 Peking Road, 3/F, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Golden Drum : A quarterly magazine for Western Buddhists.

Published by Windhorse Publications for the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, 51 Roman Road, London E2 OHU, U.K.

Bodhi Leaf. A quarterly newsletter published by Wat Buddha Dhamma, Ten Mile Hollow, Wisemans Ferry, NSW 2255, Australia. Editor : John Orme

Non-violence Today

It is published every two months to help increase the understanding and use of non-violence as well as to serve an educational role in promoting a theoretical understanding of non-violence as a political philosophy.

Published by Non-violence Today, P.O. Box 292, West End, Q. 4101, Australia.

Buddhist Peace Fellowship : A newsletter of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship Volume Eleven, Number Twenty Two, Summer 1989.

Contact address : Buddhist Peace Fellowship, P.O. Box 4650, Berkeley, CA. 94704, USA.

NIBWA : A Newsletter on International Buddhist Women's Activities, No. 21 October - December 1989. This issue covers interesting topics like Women and Ecocentric Conscience, Women and Buddhism in the West, and news about the Sakayadita meeting.

contact address : Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, BKK10200 Thailand

Talking Leaves : A Seasonal Journal of The Institute For Earth Education, Summer/Winter 1989. I.E.E. is a non - profit volunteer organizations made up of an international network of individuals and member organizations. Earth Education is the process of helping people build an understanding of, appreciation for, and harmony with the earth and its life.

contact address : Box 288, Warrenville, IL 60555. USA.

New Friends From Korea

I and some of my fellow Buddhists would like to organize a Korean branch of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists(INEB). Please advise me.

Philip Ho Hwang
Professor
Dept. of Philosophy
Dongguk University

Friends of Buddhism

My work in Malaysia is mainly aimed at the introduction of Buddhist values and principles into the lives of many so-called "Buddhists" through educational activities such as talks, courses, camps and retreats, meditation and counselling. I am also training fulltime lay Buddhist workers. Enclosed is a copy of our 10th anniversary magazine which will give you an idea of the work which I have been doing in Malaysia. I have also enclosed a copy of "Buddhist Culture" which summarizes my thought and work and the problems that the Buddhists face in Malaysia and Singapore.

Venerable Piyasilo
Malaysia

Birmingham Buddhist Vihara

At present I am preparing a talk on "Human Rights in Buddhism". The Swedish government plan to make a resolution on Burma about the violation of human rights at the United Nations assembly in the middle of next month. A number of Human Rights organisations have asked me to deliver a talk on "Human Rights in Buddhism" at the United Nations at about the same time, therefore I will go to New York around about the 15th of November.

Ven. Rewata Dhamma

A friendly Challenge to INEB

I don't know if you would be interested in this for *Seeds of Peace*, but for a Ph.D. directed reading course I'm doing for the Political Science Department at U. of Hawaii I'm writing a paper on Marx in which I discuss some points relative to Buddhism such as *anattā* and impermanence. My teacher says, and Marx's writings seem to concur, that Marx was much more libertarian, non-totalitarian than later manifestations of "Marxism" in China and the Soviet Union suggest. He could have learned from the Buddhists about compassion, non-ego and the illusionary nature of the apparent subject/object dichotomy, but maybe the Buddhists can learn from him about alienation under capitalism and his stresses on humans as a social beings influenced strongly by economic institutions. Especially the latter point needs to be brought onto the Buddhist agenda, I think. If I do attend the conference the theme that I would like to see brought more to the awareness of everyone, including myself, is: who has the power in Siam or Japan or the U.S., what is it based on and how does it affect the society and individuals. It seems to me that to talk about the prostitution problem in Siam or education without even considering these most basic questions can only lead to marginal solutions and confusion. I realize these are sensitive issues in the political climate of Siam and INEB wants to be non-political, but how can we avoid these questions?

Jim Mack
Kyoto

Burma Question

I am taking up the Burma Peace Foundation work again, and areas I would like to explore, which you may be able to help with are: what are the possibilities of **mediation** between the ethnic groups and the Burmese Govt? Have there been any recent attempts to open lines? and, secondly, are there any Thai companies doing

business with Burma which have Western or Japanese parent companies? (If there are, we could mobilise Westerners to campaign on these issues, and try and put pressure on the parent companies to pull out. I assume you are doing what you can vis-a-vis the Thai companies directly.) Another Burma question is, what books do the students need? The Burma Peace Foundation has taken as its special task to address the issue of the educational needs of the students on the borders. Are the "Jungle Universities" anything more than names? If you could send a list of the books needed which could best be obtained in the West, we might be able to get them.

David Arnott
London

French Buddhists

I read about the birth of INEB in the Buddhist Peace Fellowship Newsletter and I would like to join. My main teachers are Tibetan lamas, but I feel quite "oecumenical", as a Buddhist, and also in my acknowledgement of my Jewish roots and of my belonging to a Christian culture. I see working in the world as part of the fulfillment of my Bodhisattva vow. I don't belong to any organized group in terms of social action, but around me are many people who may not know about Thich Nhat Hahn's precepts, but are a de facto network of engaged Buddhists.

There is little collective social action among French Buddhists, compared to what is happening in the U.S.A., as far as I can see, with the information I get from the Newsletter and from *Vajradhatu Sun*, which are my main sources of information. The main exception seems to be the financial support of Tibetan monasteries and lay refugees in the East, but of course, this is still not an intimate involvement "close to home".

If there is anybody in France belonging to INEB, please let me know and I will get in touch. If not, **I will be happy to serve as a connection between you and people interested here**, to send you information and spread around the information

you could send me. This connexion might help catalyze a latent interest in social involvement and right livelihood. So please send me as much information on INEB as you can, and we will take it up from there.

Annie Bloch
Paris

A Voice from an Indian Buddhist

We Buddhists in India, whom Hindus prefer to call Neo-Buddhists, are in very much need of such movement. Our great leader, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who has shown us the path, had great belief that International Buddhists community will take care of us. He had a satisfaction that he has taken us to a larger community of the globe.

Unfortunately, the majority community in India which is also a ruling community, lives in contradictions. In respect of Buddhism, they praise the Buddha and Buddhism when it comes to propoganda but they condemn it when it comes to practice.

Most of the Indian Buddhists live in inhuman conditions and below the poverty line. Their human rights are often violated. Truly speaking, they have, in practice, hardly any human rights and consequently they are not in a position to practice their religion properly.

In these circumstances I believe the International Buddhist Community can play a decisive role for the emancipation of the Indian Buddhists. These Buddhists require guidance and a proper and planned development programme and little bit of support to achieve the target. When you visit India next, I will take an opportunity to take you for on the spot assessment of the whole situation in Delhi and other places.

Bapurao Pakhiddey
New Delhi



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