

# SEEDS OF PEACE

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In memory of  
Lodi Gyari Rinpoche

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## Cover

The image on the cover is of Lodi  
Gyari Rinpoche's personal seal.

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## Editorial Note

### Hello INEB Friends,

All of us at SNE, INEB and SEM wish you a joyous, prosperous and peaceful 2019!

The first four articles of this edition are dedicated to Lodi Gyari, diplomat, statesman, humanitarian, writer and tireless champion of democratic principles and progressive ideas. He was especially close and dear to INEB as the friendship between him and Ajarn Sulak grew steadily over many decades. Our friend Greg Kruglak wrote in his article about how Lodi Gyari, as Special Envoy of His Holiness, “became an architect and proponent of the Middle Path,” for the Tibetan community. Greg went on to say that, “He sought to move beyond the great suffering experienced by Tibetans and create opportunities for Tibetans to transition to the 21st century on terms that would preserve their identity and Buddhist culture. More than this, he recognized that Tibetans and Chinese were bound together through complex connections . . . however long it would take for Buddhism to ripen in contemporary China, Tibetans and Han Chinese would find common ground and mutual respect through their shared Buddhist identities.” In his own words, Lodi “viewed Chinese people as his Buddhist brothers and sisters.”

Other close friends who have recently passed away include Bernie Glassman, Ugyen Sangharakshita, and Reinhard Shlagintweit. Reinhard embraced learning and living in other cultures as a diplomat and statesman. Bernie and Sangharakshita both contributed to Buddhist teaching and traditions on the continents of North America (in the USA), Europe and Asia.

The country reports include a stimulating exchange of letters, first Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche penned an open letter to Aung San Suu Kyi. Khyentse Rinpoche challenges the reader to be aware of the ongoing influence of western ‘colonialism’ in the modern era that continues to shape the world. He states that Aung San Suu Kyi ‘superbly’ represents the middle way without bowing “to the self-righteous western moralising

that now reveals itself in the removal of these awards.” Khyentse Rinpoche closed his letter by thanking Aung San Suu Kyi for what she had done and continues to do for the people of Myanmar and their proud ‘eastern heritage.’

This letter prompted another open letter to Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche from Burmese Buddhist activists written by Maung Zarni and Mathew Gindin. In Zarni and Gindin’s provocative letter they questioned what they viewed as the “faulty narratives, misinformation and questionable reasoning in Dzongsar Khyentse’s letter.” They go on to ask who the real Aung San Suu Kyi is, and state that many other people’s of Myanmar experience historic oppression and the wrath of the Tatmadaw in addition to the Rohingya. Their letter ends by asking Khyentse Rinpoche to join hands to “fight against injustice everywhere. Why not recognize greed, hatred, and delusion wherever they rear their ugly heads and create an international collation of generosity, love and charity?”

We invite you to read other stimulating articles on a range of topics. Ajarn Sulak reminds us that “Beauty is not nationalism... Beauty is universal. And is about humanism. Real humanism cannot be separated from Nature. Thus, Beauty is inseparable from Goodness and Truth,” as stated in his article on The Art of Beauty. Our close friend, Jonathan Watts, translated an article about working with homeless persons and those who are “spiritually disconnected from society,” which examines new ways of venerating and mourning them. Another longtime friend, Vidyananda asks us how we can embrace technology as a skillful means to transform conflict and build peaceful and inclusive societies in his article entitled - Buddhism, Conflict and Digital Transformation.

We are really energized after INEB’s joint Advisory and Executive Committee meeting held in Kathmandu, Nepal in late November 2018. One article tells about how the INEB members learned more about the Nepali context when representatives of Nepali Buddhist and Dalit groups presented their issues during a public forum. These issues were explored further in work sessions among the groups when they identified possible ways to address their issues, as well as strengthen their efforts by collaborating among the groups. During the AC/EC meeting, the partners gave reports and updates were given to the activities in INEB’s 10-year strategic roadmap, *The Way Forward*. Some scheduled activities include:

- February 9 - SEM annual lecture in Bangkok with Kyabgon Pakchok Rinpoche, of the Chokgyur Lingpa Foundation in Nepal, will speak about being *Radically Happy: Guide to the Mind and Society*

- February 10 – 100 Days Memorial Service for Lodi Gyari, in Bangkok

- March 13 – 15 - International Roundtable on Buddhist Psychology, Psycho-Spiritual Counseling and Chaplaincy Training, in Bangkok

- April 30 – May 13 – Young Bodhisattva Training for Spiritual Resurgence and Social Transformation, Tao Yuan, Taiwan

- October 21 - 25 – INEB’s bi-annual conference with the theme The Culture of Awakening, in Deer Park, Bir, India



Lodi Gyari

Photo courtesy of the International Campaign for Tibet

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## In Memory of Lodi Gyaltzen Gyari

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Followers of Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism, which may be seen as an offshoot of Mahayana Buddhism, believe in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. They have also developed a unique technique to recognize someone's reincarnation. For instance, Tibetan Buddhists believe that the present Dalai Lama is the 14th manifestation of the Bodhisattva of Compassion. We, Buddhists, hold a pretty pragmatic attitude toward beliefs. If a belief contributes to

wholesome thoughts and moral acts, then it should be up to a person to believe in it or not. As such, the Dalai Lama has often stated that he is merely an ordinary monk and that every religion is not unambiguously good. As for his beliefs, the Dalai Lama highlights loving-kindness. For him, loving-kindness is sufficient to make someone a good person.

Lodi Gyari too was recognized as a

reincarnated one. “Rinpoche” is an honorific title. In fact, a reincarnated one who is recognized as such is called “tulku.” As a tulku, Lodi was ordained at a young age and trained at the temple of his predecessor. Moreover, the Gyari is a privileged family, which had close ties with the Dalai Lama in Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet. When China invaded and occupied Tibet, Lodi fled to India along with the Dalai Lama.

In India, the Dalai Lama found good schools for the sons of his followers to be educated in both English and Hindi. This has also enabled them to develop close ties with the privileged families in India.

On his first visit to the Thai kingdom in 1967, the Dalai Lama took residence in Wat Benchamabopit. At that time, Lodi had already left the monkhood. He made sure that he was the first person in line to provide food to the Dalai Lama on the latter’s first alms-gathering in the country.

I had my first audience with the Dalai Lama in 1967 at Wat Benchamabopit. I had asked the Buddhist Association of Thailand to publish materials that would inform Thais about Tibet and Vajrayana Buddhism. John Blofeld and Bhikkhu Khantipalo, an English monk then residing in Wat Boworniwes, greatly supported this initiative.

On his second visit to the Thai kingdom, the Dalai Lama paid Buddhadasa Bhikkhu a visit at Suan Mokh. He also spent a night there. Khun Chamnan Lueprasert had asked me to serve as interpreter for this occasion. Unfortunately, I had to turn down the invitation because I was scheduled to meet Anwar Ibrahim, then a student leader, in Malaysia. We became one another’s kalyanamitta since that encounter.

As for Lodi, I met him in Washington when he was serving as the Dalai Lama’s special envoy in

the United States and acting as the executive chairman of the board of the International Campaign for Tibet, which “works to promote human rights and democratic freedoms for the people of Tibet.”

He was a skilled diplomat who had negotiated with China on many occasions on behalf of the Dalai Lama. In fact, he almost succeeded. Deng Xiaoping was willing to allow Tibet to be an autonomous state within China, a compromise that the Dalai Lama also found reasonable. In other words, the Tibetans would be able to practice self-rule, especially pertaining to religious freedom, education, and culture, while leaving foreign and security policies in the hands of the Chinese. However, the Tiananmen Square protests erupted in 1989. The protestors were brutally crushed. The Dalai Lama asked Lodi Gyari, then foreign minister of the Tibetan government in exile in India, to send a letter strongly condemning the crackdown to the Chinese government. Lodi reminded His Holiness that the letter would cause the Chinese to renege on the promise of granting autonomy to Tibet. The Dalai Lama responded that if even the Han Chinese were not allowed to have the freedom of expression, the autonomy of Tibet would likely be meaningless. He stressed that as a human being, he loves the Han Chinese as much as the Tibetans, and that every human being deserves to have the freedom of expression.

The Chinese reaction was as Lodi had expected. And since then, China has been, at best, lukewarm toward the Dalai Lama. Tibet still does not have autonomy. Han Chinese have been encouraged to resettle in Tibet, interfering with local religion, language, and culture. In any case, the Dalai Lama has remained steadfast to his Buddhist position: he loves the Chinese people, and forgives China.

My first encounter with Lodi was in 1992 at his Washington house. I was living in exile, fleeing the brutality of the Thai military junta—the National Peace Keeping Council. We maintained regular contact and grew increasingly close. I would often stay at his house whenever I was in Washington. Likewise, he would often stay at mine whenever he was in Bangkok. Once, I took Lodi with his wife and son, to have an audience with the Supreme Patriarch at Wat Boworniwes. The Supreme Patriarch even invited Lodi's son to be ordained as novice at his temple. Lodi's wife however cautioned that Bangkok might not be a suitable place for those wishing to pursue a celibate life. Eventually, Lodi's son was recognized to be a reincarnated one, and has been in the monkhood to this day. Tibetans place great value on ordination. The ordained must study the Scriptures as well as practice meditation. Lodi had even sent his son to practice meditation at a forest monastery for several months.

When I established the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Lodi graciously accepted to be on the board of advisers. And when I founded an alternative Buddhist university, he also became the deputy chairperson of the university council.

I once invited him to be President Wahid's guest in Indonesia. President Wahid had also served as an honest broker between China and Tibet.

Lodi and his wife have only one son. However, he is survived by many daughters. All of them except the youngest daughter are married: one to a husband in Bhutan; another to a husband in Nepal; and another to someone in Sikkim. I've visited all of his daughters and sons-in-law's houses.

After his retirement, Lodi and his wife settled down in Bangkok. He was quickly befriended by many local 'businessmen, especially those in the

Social Venture Network'. In particular, he was close to Khun Prawit Yiamsansuk. We celebrated his 69th birthday on 25 August 2018 at the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation office. We knew that his health was failing him so we invited monks to chant to lift his spirits. Khun Prawit found traditional Thai dancers to perform for him. Dr. Pichai Tangsin baked Lodi a birthday cake. A lot of friends were at his birthday party. The Indian Consul General in Chiang Mai even flew in to join the party. It was a very joyful occasion.

A few days later, Lodi flew to the United States with his family. He underwent an operation at a hospital in San Francisco to remove a malignant tumor. He passed away peacefully on 29 October 2018. My father also passed away on this day in 1946 at the age of 43 years old. He too succumbed to cancer, which had tormented him for years. At least Lodi Gyari didn't have to face the same ordeal.

To me, Lodi Gyari Rinpoche was a kalyanamitta and beloved teacher of both worldly and Dhammic matters. He was broad-minded, judicious, and good natured. Although he was younger than I am, I can whole-heartedly follow his footsteps. Definitely, in the near future, I will join him in the other world. Hopefully, we will meet again in every life until we reach Buddhahood.

**Sulak Sivaraksa**

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## Walking the Engaged Spiritual Path

### with Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari

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Since Lodi Gyari Rinpoche's *parinirvana* on 29 October in San Francisco, there has been much written regarding his extraordinary life. What follows is a personal remembrance of our spiritual friend and INEB brother. Elsewhere in this issue, we have republished a remembrance that appeared in *Tricycle*, a Western Buddhist publication, as well as recollections by Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa and Harsha Navaratne.

The eastern Tibetan province of Kham is known for producing many of Tibet's greatest spiritual masters as well as fierce Khampa warriors. Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari, known to the world as Gyari Rinpoche, Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, embodied the full spectrum of the indomitable Khampa spirit. He was recognized at the age of four as a reincarnation of the Nyingma master Khenchen Jampal Dewe Nyima, and was taken to Lumorap Monastery in Nyarong, eastern Kham, for monastic education. His training ended at the age of 10 when his family fled on a harrowing journey on foot over the Himalayas to India. Lodi's family had been clan leaders for generations in Nyarong, a district in eastern Kham, and his grandfather and father had served as regional chiefs. Following occupation of Tibet, Lodi's father and grandfather were placed under house arrest and his grandfather later died in detention. Lodi's mother, as indomitable as any male Khampa warrior, took to the mountains on horseback and led a group of Khampa resistance fighters. She and her no less indomitable younger sister survived and were able to escape to India, becoming the stuff of legends. Lodi's mother turned down requests to make a movie about her life, and instead she and her sister,

led quiet lives of Buddhist contemplation and prayer.

Lodi Gyari never ordained. His path lay elsewhere as a brilliant diplomat, consensus builder, negotiator, teacher and most of all, as a compassionate and visionary human being. It was only in the last few years that Lodi Gyari, more fondly known as "Lodi Rinpoche" to his INEB friends, took on a leadership role in INEB. He and Ajarn Sulak shared the deepest bonds and personal friendship for decades, as they both helped to encourage and sustain the development of contemporary Buddhism in Asia and the West.

Lodi Rinpoche and Ajarn Sulak began their activist careers at different points, with Lodi devoting much of his life to preserving Tibetan Buddhism and helping the Tibetan people, while Ajarn was redefining Buddhist engagement in social activism, especially for the poor and marginalized. Social and political activism, combined with an unwavering belief in Ahimsa, led Lodi to develop fond and respectful connections with many Theravada masters and Indian social activists, just as the identical path led Ajarn to deepen his connection with Tibetan Buddhist traditions and with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

As Special Envoy to His Holiness, Lodi mingled with the rich, famous and powerful, forming deep friendships and building respectful relationships with the most unlikely collection of opposing forces. At his core, he was singularly unimpressed with the trapping of wealth, fame and power. Like his root teacher, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he was non-judgmental and had the rare ability to form instant heart connections. People

loved Lodi because he loved them without judgment. It was, as Buddhist say, like a mother's love for her children.

Unlike many of Lodi's old friends, I was not directly involved in the Tibet political movement. I had been pursuing a growing interest in Buddhism for a couple of years when I met Lodi through a connection at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. In my earlier days I had been a collector of Asian art. I moved from Switzerland to Washington in the late 1980s, and became involved with various Smithsonian activities, including the Smithsonian's Asian art museum. I met Lodi at a Smithsonian event in the early 1990s. At that first meeting, I remember commenting to Lodi that he had built a very successful political lobby in support of Tibet, but I didn't see much work going into preserving Tibetan culture. Lodi invited me to reach out to him if I had any ideas about how to do this. With Lodi's help, we formed the Conservancy for Tibetan Art & Culture (later renamed Conservancy for Trans Himalayan Art & Culture).

With assistance from Dr. Milo Beach, the Director of the Smithsonian's Freer & Sackler Asian art galleries, Dr. Richard Kurin and Dr. Richard Kennedy at the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage, and a small team that included Matteo Pistono, Marni Kravitz and Jamphel Lhundrup, we drew up a plan to feature Tibetan culture as the theme for a future Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the Washington Mall. This turned into a multi-year project, and with two visits and teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, including a public talk on the National Mall in front of many thousands of visitors. Over the course of the entire program, more than one million visitors came to the exhibition.

After the conclusion of what was one of the most successful events in Smithsonian history, I asked Lodi what he wanted to do next. He surprised me by advising that we put the Conservancy in

hibernation and wait for opportunities to unfold, which they did on a regular basis. Over the years we would resurrect the Conservancy to take on special projects, and then put it back into dormancy until it was needed again.

I began working with Lodi at a time when his thinking about the future of Tibetan people, culture and religion was expanding. A great debate was raging in the Tibetan exile community between supporters of Rangzin (Independence) and the Middle Way (a modified form of autonomy) developed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The debate continues to stir much passion within the exile community. As a young man, Lodi Gyari was a fiery activist and would have been expected to support the Rangzin movement. Yet as Special Envoy of His Holiness, he became an architect and proponent of the Middle Path.

Lodi Gyari's thinking about autonomy continued to evolve as he searched for solutions that would prioritize the needs of the seven million Tibetans in Tibet and help sustain Tibet's unique cultural heritage. His views balanced his intense love of Tibet with the geopolitical reality of China's embrace of Tibet. He sought to move beyond the great suffering experienced by Tibetans and create opportunities for Tibetans to transition to the 21st century on terms that would preserve their identity and Buddhist culture. More than this, he recognized that Tibetans and Chinese were bound together through complex connections. He came to believe that however long it would take for Buddhism to ripen in contemporary China, Tibetans and Han Chinese eventually would find common ground and mutual respect through their shared Buddhist identities.

As the lead negotiator of nine rounds of negotiations with Chinese government and party officials, Lodi knew the Chinese strengths and weaknesses better than anybody in the exile community. He was an astute observer of China,



and came to believe that while there may have been opportunities for a negotiated agreement early on, as China strengthened as a nation and as a global economic force, the Chinese leaders saw little need to accommodate the Tibetans. Indeed, they found domestic political advantage in taking a hard line. Yet despite the failure of the negotiations, Lodi continued to pursue confidence-building opportunities with China. While Lodi could be critical of the Chinese government and Communist Party, he viewed Chinese people as his Buddhist brothers and sisters.

Lodi's personality and unique vision was forged by his Khampa roots as well as his refugee upbringing. He loved India, and was a proud son of India. He also loved his adopted American homeland, and knew more about the workings of the American government than just about any native-born American. In India, Lodi was a highly respected political figure with deep connections throughout the civil service and generations of political leaders. He was not only the emissary of the Dalai Lama, but also a trusted back channel to the highest levels in Western governments.

Lodi opposed all forms of extremism and was troubled by the nationalism sweeping much of the world today, including India, China and the United States. He was also deeply troubled by Buddhist extremism, which he considered to be an anathema to core Buddhist teachings and values. Lodi understood that the adaptability of Buddhism to many different political and social conditions was a great strength but also risked becoming a weakness when Buddhism was twisted to justify acts of extreme violence, discrimination and injustice.

For the past few years, I have been shuttling between my home in Europe and Bangkok, where Lodi and his family had moved following his retirement. We had planned to meet in October in Washington DC, where I was the board chair and

president of two organizations that Lodi helped to create: The Bridge Fund and The Conservancy for Trans Himalayan Arts & Culture. By summer, it was clear that Lodi was experiencing serious, but as yet undiagnosed health issues. Eventually, the doctors came back with a diagnosis: an aggressive liver cancer. Lodi's old friends stepped in with offers to organize the best medical treatment available. Divinations were performed and Lodi and his family selected UCSF Hospital in San Francisco as the best choice. I arrived in San Francisco a couple of days following Lodi's surgery by a world-class medical team. His wife Dawa la and four of his six children were with him and were working in shifts so that someone was always with Lodi in his room, day and night. I arrived on the first day Lodi was well enough to have an outside visitor. I waited in the cafeteria with three of Lodi's adult children, while Lodi was having medical tests. Norbu, who is married to Phakchok Rinpoche and mother to two of Lodi's grandchildren, told me that Pala, as everybody in the family called Lodi, hadn't known if he would survive the surgery, and when he woke up and discovered that he was still alive, he felt as though he had been reborn, and there was so much that he wanted to accomplish once he recovered. Everybody was very happy. A few moments later, I was ushered into Lodi's room. He was sitting up in a chair, connected to various tubes but very much alert, although speaking was difficult because of soreness from a breathing tube that had been recently removed. I sat facing Lodi, with my hands on his knees. We didn't say much, just a little small talk. At a non-verbal level, so much was happening. Everybody in the room was being flooded and enveloped by the most powerful love coming straight from Lodi's heart. I knew with every fiber in my being that I was in the presence of an authentic and great Tibetan spiritual master. Sadly, later that day, Lodi's condition began deteriorating.

Lodi's journey from a young Khampa boy

who narrowly missed a life as an ordained monk, to a cosmopolitan international diplomat was captured in his memoirs, completed just before his untimely death and soon to be published.

Lodi had the tremendous good fortune to be schooled as a diplomat by some of the finest minds in India and the West. He was a prolific reader and possessed not only almost total recall, but also an uncanny ability to cut through to the essence of any discussion, and spontaneously put forward balanced and often brilliant solutions and proposals. In the far too brief time that Lodi was able to be a part of INEB, we saw his leadership skills in action. He was a consensus builder, deeply impressed by INEB's success in training a new generation of community leaders. Lodi valued and respected INEB's roots in grass roots social activism, but believed that INEB and its network of partners were ready to become global agents of change. He identified themes such as environment, sustainable economics, empowering marginalized communities, peace and reconciliation, and Buddhist dialogue

and reform as areas where the INEB Network had much to contribute. Lodi was instrumental in helping to launch the INEB institute, and believed that the leadership and English language training programs would demonstrate the transformative value of INEB's social activism.

Although there is much grief and sadness in the loss of our spiritual friend, Lodi would be among the first to remind us that every moment is a transition. Lodi saw the INEB network as an important vehicle in each generation's quest to rekindle our innate human wisdom and compassion so that we can extend harmony and peace to the entire world. He was counting on a new generation of INEB leaders to carry on these activities.

**Greg Kruglak**

Geneva, Switzerland

December 4, 2018



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## Let's Keep Our Loving Lodi Rinponche's Legacy Alive

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On October 11 early morning, my daughter Thilini sent me a message and asked me to do a prayer and a Pooja at the Sri Maha Bodhi (the holy temple of the bodhi tree) for Lodi Rinponche's planned surgery.

The next day, I cancelled all my work and drove four hours to do the pooja. Same day in the evening, I got a voice message from Lodi Rinponche, "Hi Harsha Greetings from San Francisco! I am already in the hospital and tomorrow morning at 7.30 am my surgery will take place. Please remember me in your prayers. I value your friendship - more than that, we have become like family. Thank you."

That was the last time I heard his voice... I still keep this voice message, and I listen to it over and over again at times when I am in my room.

I first met Rinponche in Washington almost a decade ago. From that day onwards, he was more of a teacher to me than a friend. Being an internationally famed personality, he always carries his simplicity, humbleness and loving friendship with him. The first time that I worked with him was the planning and setting up of the IBC (International Buddhist Confederation). We met in Bangkok and he invited me to chair the planning meeting of the first IBC conclave in New Delhi. I was not willing to



take it up as I had so much other work and commitments- but his request was such that it was not possible for me to say no. As a founder of IBC, he had a great vision. He thought that the Buddhists too need to have an organization like the “United Nations.” Through such an initiative, he was convinced that all the Buddhists across the world can be united under one roof. He did bring all the Buddhist schools from the East and the West - representing almost the entire world. He then decided to shift his home to South East Asia and while being based in Bangkok, he started to work on his vision of uniting the Buddhists.

The time he shifted from Washington to Bangkok was a period of great importance in bringing Buddhist practices into action – taking stronger active roles by the engaged Buddhist community. It was a time when extremism also got linked to Buddhists in Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Southern Thailand. Many international media were talking on the on-going issues, especially the Rohingya crisis. Lodi Rinponche and Ajahn Sulak both decided to actively engage in finding best ways to bring communities together and to carry out programmes and activities on peace and co-existence.

They both intensified INEB programmes and developed long term answers for sustainable peace. With their efforts, INEB as an institute was born to build youth leaders, and developed into a university focusing on peace and prosperity in the world.

During the last two years, his time and efforts were to bring INEB as a mainstream Buddhist organization – to be a platform for every faith – based, and like-minded organization to partner and cooperate for building peace and prosperity. He never missed any of the planning meetings of our ten year strategic plan. Along with Moo, I spent several days with Rinponche in planning our future. He wanted us to develop our programmes in India and China. His last advice was that future of the Buddhist world will be in the hands of India and China - India with our heritage and China as the biggest Buddhist country, both countries will have a role to play. He was also concerned about Himalayan countries and protecting their culture and the future of its traditional communities. It is our responsibility to follow up and continue all the initiatives that he started.

Last time when I met him at his home, he discussed in length on one of his great initiatives of

the “Bridge Fund.” He invited me to take over and build that as a development oriented organization, which will complement Engaged Buddhist work. He worked out a distinguished name list representing the East and the West, then he named one of his family members to be an active member. Thereafter, he fixed a date for me to meet with Greg Kruglak, Somboon Chungprampree, and his daughter. That date was supposed to be during the last week of November, while I was on my way to Kathmandu.

It was a day with heavy rain, and I was not feeling well. Thinking of Rinponche, I called to Moo. But there was no answer. After my prayers, I saw a message from Rinponche’s daughter. “In the middle of the dark clouds surrounded by the sun, a beautiful rainbow was shining. Our father, your loving Rinponche, was shining on the sky.”

Sitting in my room with tears falling, first time I felt “the message that I heard on 11th of

October was his last.” Well, I kept that message recording as a valuable gift for me. I made a promise to myself that I will join with his family and INEB community - to carry forward his dreams to the future.

Last week in Bangkok on my way back from Manila, we had a detailed meeting with Ajahn Sulak. Accordingly, we will start with two activities. The first one is, setting up a scholarship fund for INEB institute students. Second is bringing the Bridge Fund to the status of one of the leading development organizations in Asia.

I invite all of you to join us in keeping alive Lodi Rinponche’s legacy for the future generations.

**Harsha Navaratne**



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## Remembering Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari, Envoy to the Dalai Lama

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The late activist, journalist, politician, humanitarian, and negotiator  
changed American-Tibetan relations.

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Even to many in the Buddhist world, the name Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari might not ring a bell. Though his half-century career as an activist, journalist, politician, humanitarian, negotiator, and emissary for His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was impressive by any standards, much of Gyari’s work went on out of public view. But since his death on October 29, after a lengthy battle with liver cancer, diplomats, legislators, and other global figures have joined Tibetans around the world in mourning the loss of one of Tibet’s most tireless champions. Gyari was 69 years old.

To the Tibetan community, he was Gyari Rinpoche. He was recognized at age four as a reincarnate lama, but never ordained; the honorific “Rinpoche” was a sign of the respect he engendered. Lobsang Sangay, president of the Central Tibetan Administration (the Tibetan government-in-exile), hailed Gyari as a “true Tibetan patriot [who] leaves behind a legacy of public service.” In its tribute, the International Campaign for Tibet, which Gyari served from 1991 to 2014 as president and then board chairman, described him as “an impassioned advocate for the Tibetan people, universal human

rights, and global democratic reform.”

In the world arena, Lodi Gyari is best remembered as a skilled diplomat, whose expertise on the Tibet question and relations with China, India, and the US was sought after by government leaders and policy makers. Appointed the Dalai Lama’s special envoy in Washington, DC, in 1991, Gyari led nine rounds of high-level negotiations with the Chinese government between 2002 and 2010, in an effort to resolve the status of the Tibetan Autonomous Region under Chinese rule. Despite Gyari’s back-channel efforts to keep the process on track, the talks broke down. The Chinese flatly rejected the Dalai Lama’s “Middle Way” proposal to grant Tibet “genuine autonomy” while remaining within China, claiming that it was not “mutually beneficial,” as His Holiness suggested, but a backhanded move to gain independence. Undeterred, Gyari continued to work for reopening the dialogue until it was clear further effort would be fruitless. (Midway through the process, he had commented, “For someone like me, engaged in the negotiations, I see it more as a spiritual practice than an exercise in diplomacy.”) When the Dalai Lama transferred political power to the elected Tibetan government-in-exile in 2012, Gyari resigned as special envoy.

Related:

## The International Year of Tibet

More successful were his efforts to rally the global community behind the Tibetan cause. The International Campaign for Tibet, which under Gyari’s leadership increased its membership from less than 1,000 to over 75,000, played a key role in helping put Tibet on the international agenda. The Chinese took a dim view of Gyari’s lobbying, but he persisted. A major coup was persuading the US government to “institutionalize” support for Tibet through legislation. For decades, the US had supplied aid fitfully and unofficially, wary of

antagonizing the Chinese. But the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 made the aid official: its stated purpose was “to support the aspirations of the Tibetan people to safeguard their distinct identity.” The act established a Special Coordinator on Tibetan Issues within the State Department, and laid out policies and allocated funds to benefit Tibetans in Tibet and in exile. The 2002 act also offered support for the Dalai Lama’s efforts to reach a negotiated solution with the Chinese.

Lodi Gyari is further credited with garnering bipartisan support in the US Congress for awarding His Holiness the legislative branch’s highest expression of national appreciation, the Congressional Gold Medal, “in recognition of his many enduring and outstanding contributions to peace, non-violence, human rights, and religious understanding.” George W. Bush, who presented the award, was the first US president to meet the Dalai Lama in public.

Gyari was frequently consulted by members of Congress. It was a big change from his early days in Washington, when Tibet wasn’t on anyone’s agenda. “Some junior officials would meet me in some coffee shop that was as far away as possible from Foggy Bottom,” he told the *Washington Post* in 2007. A Congressional aide interviewed for the *Post* described Gyari as “very humble, quiet, very persistent, but in a way that is never threatening.”

When Gyari retired as special envoy in 2012, the US Senate passed a resolution (S. Res. 557) commending his achievements “in building an international coalition of support for Tibet,” that recognizes the importance of Tibetan culture and the need for Tibetan autonomy in China. In a statement after Gyari’s death, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic leader of the House, recalled his legacy and said, “Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle benefited from Lodi’s insight and wisdom.”



## EARLY YEARS

Lodi Gyari's commitment to the Tibetan cause was instilled early on. He was born in 1949 to an influential family of activists in Nyarong, a region in Eastern Kham. After the Chinese occupied Tibet (1950–1951), Gyari's father, who was the regional administrator, was placed under house arrest, as was his grandfather, who later died in detention. After being recognized at age four as a reincarnation of the Nyingma master Khenchen Jampal Dewe Nyima, Gyari was taken to Lumorap Monastery in Nyarong for a traditional Tibetan Buddhist monastic education. His training was cut short in 1959, however, when his family fled to India to escape Chinese persecution. Gyari resumed study with Tibetan Buddhist masters in India, but early on he joined the struggle for Tibetan freedom and did not complete the training for ordination. The CIA tapped Gyari to be schooled as an interpreter for Tibetan freedom fighters being trained in the US, but he declined the offer and went into journalism instead. He edited *Sheja* (Tibetan Freedom), a Tibetan-language weekly, and in 1967 helped launch *The Voice of Tibet*, a monthly later renamed *Tibetan Review*, which was the first English-language publication for Tibetans.

Though Lodi Gyari continued to support armed resistance against the Chinese, in 1970, he and three friends established the Tibetan Youth Congress to motivate young people to join the political struggle for Tibet's future. Today, the Tibetan Youth Congress, which identifies itself as a “worldwide organization of Tibetans pledged to restore complete independence,” is the largest grassroots political organization for Tibetans in exile, with over 30,000 members.

As Gyari gained attention for his democratic principles and progressive ideas, his views on the future of Tibet evolved. Influenced by the Dalai Lama, he gradually rejected armed resistance in favor of a nonviolent negotiated settlement. In 1979,

Gyari was elected to the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile, becoming, at age 30, the youngest person to preside over that body. He also served as a member of the Kashag (Cabinet) and as Minister of the Department of Information and International Relations, and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Gyari made his first trips to China in 1982 and 1984 as part of a three-person delegation to explore the possibility of talks. Nothing came of those visits, and in 1991, he moved to Washington, DC, to take up his post as the Dalai Lama's special envoy.

## HUMANITARIAN WORK

Gyari's efforts on behalf of the Tibetan people went beyond his service to the Dalai Lama and his leadership of the International Campaign for Tibet. He chaired the board of the Conservancy for Tibetan Art and Culture, a US-based nonprofit dedicated to preserving Tibet's living heritage in partnership with institutions, scholars, and religious leaders. And both formally and informally, he supported a number of initiatives focused on such areas as cultural and environmental preservation, health and education, job development, and protecting sacred sites and Tibetan Buddhist texts. Gyari's humanitarian activities extended to the wider world as well. He was a founder of the Allied Committee, formed to address issues common to Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Mongolians under Chinese rule, and a founder of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, established before the dissolution of the Soviet Union to promote human rights through democracy and nonviolence.

The Institute for Asian Democracy, another US-based organization that Gyari co-founded, is said to be one of the “most enduring and effective organizations working for human rights and democratic reform in Burma [Myanmar].”

Gyari was a frequent lecturer at universities and other institutions in the US, Europe, and Asia.



A prolific writer, he published articles and editorials, and contributed book chapters on the challenges facing the Tibetans. At his death, he is said to have been putting the final touches on his memoir.

Joan Duncan Oliver

Nov 14, 2018

[www.tricycle.org](http://www.tricycle.org)



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Lodi Gyari lived with his wife, Dawa Chokyi, in McLean, Virginia, where they raised five daughters and a son. He is also survived by his mother, four brothers, three sisters, and a number of grandchildren.



## 100 Days Memorial Service For the Late Lodi Gyari Rinpoche

10 February 2019 from 10.00 a.m. onwards  
At the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation  
666 Charoen Nakhorn Road (between Soi 20 and 22)  
Banglamphu, Klongsan, Bangkok

Organized by:



### Schedule

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 10.00 - 10.10 | Opening Speech by Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa                               |
| 10.10 - 10.20 | Video of Lodi Gyari's Birthday Speech and Funeral Service at Dehradun |
| 10.20 - 10.40 | <b>Theravadin Chanting</b> By Monks from Wat Thong Noppakun           |
| 10.40 - 11.00 | <b>Mahayana Chanting</b> By Jee Jin Foundation                        |
| 11.00 - 11.20 | <b>Vajarayana Chanting</b> By Phakchok Rinpoche                       |
| 11.20 - 11.30 | Word of Thanks by Lodi Gyari's Family                                 |
| 11.30 - 13.00 | Lunch (Vegetarian)  |

**R.S.V.P.** > Mr. Thanakorn 089-806 4081 [mailto: coordinator@inebnetwork.org](mailto:coordinator@inebnetwork.org)

**P.S.** For those who wish to dedicate merit for late Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, "*The Lodi Gyari Fund*" is being created to support students attending *The INEB Institute* programs.

Donations can be made at <http://inebnetwork.org/donation/>, or contact us at [mailto: secretariat@inebnetwork.org](mailto:secretariat@inebnetwork.org)

# Letter to Aung San Suu Kyi

*Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse*

16 November, 2018

**Dear Honourable  
Aung San Suu Kyi,**

In these difficult times, I am moved to write to you to express my deep respect and appreciation for all you have done over so many years to fight for your people's freedom, and especially for your great courage and perseverance in upholding your principles through nearly 15 years of house arrest.

You remain in my mind a true heroine of this age, more than worthy of the Nobel Prize and other honours you have received. And so, I am also writing to tell you that I have been appalled in recent months at the removal of many of those awards – from the cities of Edinburgh, Oxford, Glasgow and Dublin to your honorary Canadian citizenship.

Those shocking actions against you reveal a blatant double standard. Without doing anything and just

eight months into office, President Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Yet no one demanded it be taken away after he killed thousands of civilians in Mideast drone strikes and bombings. In fact, de-nuclearizing North Korea will do more for world peace than anything Obama ever did, making Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un far worthier of a Nobel Prize.

More subtly, however, the hypocrisy of taking away awards is a sign of the insidious colonialism that continues to strangle Asia and the world. We Asians have been taught disparage our own noble traditions and instead to treasure western values, literature and music, to chew gum and wear faded jeans, to embrace Facebook and Amazon, and to ape western manners and institutions.

We're badgered to feel guilt for the European Holocaust of World War II, while our own holocausts are conveniently forgotten

and buried in the dustbin of history. How many westerners mourn the 15 million displaced and million killed in Britain's partition of India, or the five million civilians killed in Korea and Vietnam?

Who recalls that the U.S. dropped two million tons of bombs on Laos between 1964 and 1973, almost equal to all the bombs it dropped on Europe and Asia during all of World War II – making Laos the most heavily bombed country in history relative to population size.

And how quickly have we forgotten the genocidal holocausts of the 16th to 18th centuries that killed an estimated 130 million native Americans – more than 90% of indigenous people there. We non-westerners have considerable cause for grievance against those European invaders who now claim moral authority over our lives.

Today, we are so infatuated with the west and so immersed in the western mindset that such criticism is seen as almost sacrilegious. So, I must add that nothing I am writing to you here signifies any lack of appreciation for the west's great contributions to human civilisation. From superb music, art and literature to brilliant scientific and medical breakthroughs to phi-

losophies like anarchism, the creations of the west are astounding.

But watching the self-righteous western actions against you in recent months, I've become convinced it's finally time to tell the truth about the colonial structures and worldview they imposed on us and that persist to this day. Above all, it is time to restore the dignity of our own great eastern wisdom traditions and legacies.

Many mistakenly think the "colonial" era of western invasion and control is long past, since most Asian and African countries won apparent political independence more than half a century ago. But as "post-colonialists" rightly note, the economic and political structure of the colonial era continues to shape life around the world.

In fact, western ideologies, lifestyles and systems of morality are now more deeply, subtly and dangerously entrenched than ever. Alien to the profound wisdom traditions of the east, today's colonial legacy continues to eat away at and destroy our own heritage.

For instance, we once knew how to respect and live in harmony with nature. Today, we've been swallowed into the western capitalist system, together with its greedy materialism,

traffic jams, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and voracious resource consumption. If that system isn't even serving the west and is literally destroying the planet, why should it serve the east?

And to prop up that system, the west is so proud of its supposed "human rights" and "democracy" that we're blindly supposed to imitate. But it's only its limited individual rights the west cares about – and those mostly for the rich and powerful. The U.S. and most other western constitutions give no protection to social rights, like the right to a job, housing, education, health care, and safe drinking water.

And when it suits, the west blatantly violates its vaunted individual rights. Writing this supposedly exercises my right to free speech. But, free speech is a hoax if listeners are intolerant, and if they label, stigmatise and demonise the writer. In fact, "the tyranny of the majority" these days includes so-called "liberals," who on U.S. campuses now regularly shut down views they don't agree with, especially if those views might offend some groups.

And that is so ironic, because western liberals' current obsession with identity politics plays right into the hands of their

professed enemies. In the words of ultra-rightist, Steve Bannon: "The longer they talk about identity politics, I got 'em. I want them to talk about racism every day. If the left is focused on race and identity, and we go with economic nationalism, we can crush [them]."

In fact, to rebel against the whole capitalist, liberal-democratic syndrome, China, Vietnam, Laos and North Korea swallowed another western import, communism, which is totally at odds with their own history and culture. No wonder that fake model is collapsing everywhere into the embrace of the very capitalism it sought to bypass.

Even the very word "development" is a western colonial imposition. The industrialised western countries are considered "developed," while we are supposed to "develop" towards their dysfunctional western ideal. For the west, there is only one acceptable direction for the whole world – to be capitalist, "democratic", individualist, and therefore "developed," and to recklessly consume more.

In the meantime, our own views and traditions that could literally save humankind are labelled "undeveloped" and "superstitious." While we are expected to kowtow to western morality, we ignore the

profound moral values arising from our eastern wisdom heritage that the colonisers severed, taught us to hate, and supplanted with their own.

And those parts of our tradition the west finds useful are now also colonised and co-opted. Entirely missing yoga's profound Indian wisdom heritage, Florida and California now "certify" yoga teachers. Some western "Buddhist teachers" write books that conveniently bend Buddhist teachings to fit their own rational, scientific proclivities. And, self-proclaimed "gurus" edit and plagiarise handy bits of those teachings as their own invention, missing the essence and never acknowledging the source.

In fact, Buddhism itself is being colonised and rendered unrecognisable, as its extraordinary insights and methods are altered, dismantled, and eviscerated to fit western science and self-help fads.

To maintain "objectivity" and be socially accepted, Buddhist academics in suits and ties hide their own affiliation, avoid Buddhist terminology, and reserve any display of eastern culture for fancy dress parties. Even eastern teachers now consciously shun Buddhist iconography and imagery, and custom-tailor their

vipassana and other meditations to suit western secular expectations.

More widely, Asian professionals are quick to bow down to western values, to dismiss their own traditions as archaic and superstitious, to wrongly equate modernisation with westernisation, and thereby to reap the rewards of being labelled "modern", "progressive" and "open-minded." Without western validation, they see their own accomplishments as worthless.

The irony is that when Japanese, Korean and Chinese musicians learn and play western classical music, they have utmost respect for the integrity of the music as it is and as it was composed. Even in daily life and popular culture, Asians faithfully try to copy the way westerners think, look, and act. In sharp contrast, too many western scholars manipulate, cherry pick and even alter what they take from the east and then impose their own modified version on us with obstinate moral authority.

This kind of psychological and moralising colonialism is subtle and dangerous, as you yourself have painfully experienced. For the west, the only qualified "victims" are those the west itself has oppressed, and the rest of us are expected to join their chorus of guilt

and penance. We dare not point out that their so-called victims have brutally victimised our people for centuries.

To me, the bestowal and removal of your awards typifies the culture of hypocrisy created by that pervasive colonial legacy. Those awards mean nothing beyond another means to colonise us and pull us into the western value system, while they congratulate themselves. In fact, I'll personally pay the postage for you to send your honorary Canadian citizenship back to Ottawa. You don't need it!

For me, you remain the heroine you truly are. And, for so many who dare not speak up, but who secretly agree, you personify our own #MeToo movement.

None of what I write

here justifies wrongs committed by the Burmese military. What I am saying is simply that the western actions against you and the whole historical and ongoing colonial legacy they reflect are wrong. The post-colonial impact of economic domination and ideological imposition is far more harmful to our peoples and to the planet than anything you have done. A guilty person cannot be a judge and has no credential either to give or remove an award.

As well, nothing I write here denies the suffering of the Rohingya people. But instead of blaming you, will the British at least acknowledge their colonial responsibility for bringing most Rohingyas from Bengal in the 19th and 20th centuries as cheap labour to work the Burmese rice paddies?

If the British really care and want to redress the harm they've done to Burma and the Rohingya, they will migrate the Rohingya to the U.K. and give them citizenship instead of letting them languish in refugee camps. And, instead of revoking your awards as they've done, Oxford, Sheffield, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Glasgow will resettle the Rohingya there.

Many will label what I am writing to you here as "partisan", "west-bashing" and more. But we've been so deeply twisted by western colonialism for so long that we now have no choice but to break the silence, speak up, and address what's long been taboo. We have long celebrated U.S. and British war victories, but do we dare to look at what that western global domination has meant for us?

If we avoid starting this conversation ourselves, and if India, China and others keep sucking up to western models, the only ones who speak up will be those who make no secret of their hatred for the west. Do we really want to leave the playing field open only to ISIS and the worst extremists to call a spade a spade in challenging western arrogance?

And, that's why I am writing this to you – because for many of us, you superbly

represent that middle way. You've stood strong, held to your principles, fought untiringly for your people, and refused to bow to the self-righteous western moralising that now reveals itself in the removal of these awards. In that, be assured you have our admiration and support.

It's more difficult to suggest an effective strategy for a genuine dialogue on the tough issues I'm raising here. It seems that the western colonisers will only listen if we have a lot of oil or other resources they need.

Alternatively, we have to seek out westerners' weak spot, which appears to be their pride and guilt. These days, they don't dare criticise Muslims or Jews for fear of being labelled Islamophobic or anti-Semitic. So, perhaps we need to start by coining new words for anti-Buddhist and anti-Asian bias to evoke their guilt and fear of those phobias.

Again, please accept my heartfelt thanks for all you have done and continue to do for your people and for our proud eastern heritage.

Yours sincerely,  
**Dzongsar Jamyang**  
**Khyentse**

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# An Open Letter to Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche from a Burmese Buddhist Activist

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*Maung Zarni and Matthew Gindin*

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A former ally of Aung San Suu Kyi responds to the Tibetan Buddhist teacher's support for Myanmar's controversial leader.

**Maung Zarni and  
Matthew Gindin**  
NOV 28, 2018

Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche, a well-known teacher of Vajrayana Buddhism, surprised some in the Buddhist world recently when he penned an open letter of support to Aung San Suu Kyi, the head of Myanmar's civil government, accused of complicity in the military's persecution of the Rohingya Muslim minority. The letter praises her sacrifice, courage, and principled political actions in pursuit of the rights of her people, while attacking her critics as hypocrites and arrogant colonialists pushing Western interests and values.

Dzongsar Khyentse is a major figure in contemporary Buddhism. A tulku (reincarnated master) in

the Khyentse lineage, he is the son of the revered Thinley Norbu Rinpoche and grandson of the influential Dudjom Rinpoche. An embodiment of the Rime (non-sectarian) movement, he is the guardian of the teachings of the Dzogchen master Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, as well as an accomplished filmmaker and author of popular English language expositions of Buddhism.

His support for Suu Kyi comes on the heels of a September report by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, that said the violent campaign against the Rohingya amounts to genocide, a claim supported by several human rights research and documentation bodies around the world. The report, released at a UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva, stated that Suu Kyi and her civilian government had "contributed to the commission of atrocity crimes" through their "acts and omissions." As a result

of mounting allegations of culpability, Suu Kyi, who was once lauded for her activism on behalf of democracy in Myanmar, has been stripped of multiple awards, including the US Holocaust Museum's Elie Wiesel Award, her honorary Canadian citizenship, and Amnesty International's human rights award.

In response to Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche's letter, Maung Zarni, a Burmese Buddhist, pro-democracy activist, and former ally of Suu Kyi, and I have co-authored an open letter challenging what we view as faulty narratives, misinformation, and questionable reasoning in Dzongsar Khyentse's letter.

**Matthew Gindin**

...

**Dear Rinpoche,**

In a November 16 letter, you expressed your "deep respect and appreciation" for all Suu Kyi has done "to fight for your people's freedoms." You call her a "true heroine of this age, more than worthy of the Nobel Prize and other honours," and say you are "appalled by the removal of awards" she received. You argue that this is a "blatant double standard," citing the reception of a Nobel Prize by former US President Barack Obama despite his use of drone warfare against Middle Eastern civilians.

You see this double standard as part of "insidious colonialism strangling Asia and the world," which you say teaches Asians to "disparage our own noble traditions and instead to treasure Western values and music, to chew gum and wear faded jeans, to embrace Facebook and Amazon, and to ape Western manners and institutions."

I (Zarni) am a child of a Burmese Buddhist family with close ties to the military. I grew up with intense pride and deep reverence for the Buddhist tradition and spiritual culture of Burma. After coming to the US to study, I founded the Free Burma Coalition to support the struggle for democracy in Burma, and became a hardworking supporter of Suu Kyi, inspired by her personal courage and the mixed discourse of Buddhist loving-kindness and human rights. But early on, I began to suspect that she was an ethnic nationalist and a Buddhist chauvinist, more concerned for her own legacy and the interests of the Bamar majority than she was for human rights and a true democracy for all the peoples of Myanmar. In April 2016, Suu Kyi assumed the position of State Counselor. She quickly morphed into a key actor in the longstanding oppression of Myanmar's Rohingya people. Since then, I have been a fierce critic of my fellow Buddhist dissident, who now acts in a joint partnership with our former common oppressor, Myanmar's murderous military, the Tatmadaw.

According to statistics from the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM), earlier this year, 898,000 Rohingya

refugees who have fled violence in Myanmar currently live in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. Of them, 686,000 have arrived since August 2017, when the government launched a coordinated military-led campaign of arson, murder, and sexual violence against their communities in Myanmar's Rakhine State. This assault, according to human rights organization Fortify Rights, was deliberately prepared for months in advance by the Tatmadaw. Many Rohingyas, faced with proposals over the last year to repatriate them to the country where for decades they faced systemic discrimination and the deliberate deprivation of basic human rights, have said that they would sooner die in Bangladesh.

Genocide is not simply incidents of mass killings; it is a long process of systematic, intentional destruction of a target group. Suu Kyi, as the leader of the ruling NLD party, controls several government ministries involved in such efforts against the Rohingyas, but she has done nothing to protest or attempt to stop her country's abuse of them. Meanwhile, she has repeatedly and publicly dismissed well-documented reports of the genocidal violence of the Tatmadaw—in one instance referring to systemic sexual violence

against Rohingya women and girls as “fake rape.”

### **Related: Who is the Real Aung San Suu Kyi?**

Rinpoche, you cite atrocities committed by Western governments past and present and accuse the modern West of hypocrisy for criticizing Suu Kyi. First, the criticisms of Suu Kyi do not only come from the West, but also from people all over the world who oppose the kind of brutal oppression the Myanmar state has subjected the Rohingyas to. Second, you erase the distinction between Western non-governmental bodies and activists on the one hand and Western governments on the other. By your logic, the Swedish Nobel committee, local bodies like the Oxford City Council, or Suu Kyi's own alma mater (St. Hugh's College, Oxford) cannot criticize human rights abuses if the governments of Britain or Sweden have ever committed atrocities (which of course they have). You lump together governments, private bodies, and activists under the simplistic rubric of “the West.” These kinds of generalizations can become fodder for muddled thinking and racism. After all, many of the Western activists and human rights organizations who have criticized Suu Kyi

have also spoken out against the violations of Western countries, and continue to do so. They have also confronted the Chinese state for its persecution of Buddhists and embraced efforts to preserve traditional Asian culture and values, such as the Gross National Happiness initiative in Bhutan.

A more sober assessment of global politics would recognize that all cultures have committed atrocities, and that many have fallen into the temptations of militarism, racism, and colonialism. You present the “noble tradition” of the East as opposed to the ignoble tradition of the West, despite the fact that “our East” has as many murderous and colonizing legacies as “their West.” This way of framing the Rohingya crisis and criticism of Suu Kyi does more to obscure the matters at stake than to clarify them. In setting off West against East, your letter focuses on a clash of civilizations instead of the real problem: a clash of values. The true battle is between those who embrace values of nonviolence, compassion, and justice—which the best traditions of both West and East argue for—and those who put first their race, the defense of their traditions, the accumulation of capital, or other



divisive values.

While we sympathize with your criticisms of the hypocrisy, arrogance, and colonial legacy of many Western countries and share your concern for the way that the “capitalist system” is swallowing diverse global cultures, we balk at your emphasis on the Western nature of what is destructive in the world today. The problems we face—growing fascism, violent racism, nationalism, tremendous gaps of wealth between the rich and the poor, the destruction of our shared ecosystem and the destruction of both ethnic and zoological diversity—are now global problems exacerbated by the worldwide embrace of misguided policies that are often championed by those who hold power and wish to cling to it. The current conflict in Myanmar embodies this adoption of destructive policies, in which the fires of ethnic disputes have been stoked in order to consolidate power for the military and business elite.

Toward the end of your letter, you say that “nothing I write here denies the suffering of the Rohingya people,” but you argue that instead of blaming Suu Kyi, the British “should be taking responsibility for bringing the Rohingyas from Bengal in the 19th and 20th

centuries as cheap labour,” and suggest that the UK should take in the Rohingya refugees themselves.

Here you are referencing a false narrative, popular in Myanmar, that claims that the Rohingyas are not a native ethnicity, but rather Muslim Bengali laborers who never went home and who now want to undermine the Burmese Buddhist state. This ahistorical propaganda is used to justify discrimination and violence against them. Suu Kyi has signaled that she accepts this narrative with her refusal to use the name “Rohingya,” a title by which they refer to themselves, and that reflects their centuries-old history in the country.

In fact, the Rohingyas’ presence in the region long predates both the arrival of British colonial rule in 1824 and the emergence of Myanmar as a nation-state in 1948; thousands of Rohingyas have been living in the western Arakan Kingdom, now Rakhine state, since the 15th century. Aside from the fact that there were no national boundaries as such in the 18th and 19th centuries, in the pre-colonial societies of the time, demographic and geographic fluidity was the norm. Arakan, or Rakhine, the fertile coastal region of the Bay of Bengal, was a multi-ethnic, multi-faith society, until

Bamar invaders arrived. Their forces destroyed the nearby kingdom in Mrauk-U and then expanded, annexing Arakan in 1785.

Although international attention has focused on the plight of the Rohingyas, their persecution is only the most egregious symptom of the interethnic conflict that afflicts Burma, a violence fueled by the Bamar supremacy of the ruling government and the oppression it directs at the Shan, Kachin, Karen, Mon, and other historic people of Myanmar. Arguably, the idea of an ethnically pure nation-state is a product of the very colonialism you claim to decry.

### **Related: The Rohingyas Are Not the Only Ones**

“For me,” you write to Suu Kyi toward the end of your letter, “you remain the heroine you truly are. And, for many who dare not speak up, but who secretly agree, you personify our own #MeToo movement.”

The #MeToo movement arose because powerful persons used their positions to sexually harass and assault women (as well as some men), and then manipulated or threatened them into keeping quiet about it. If anyone in Myanmar personifies the #MeToo movement, it is the Rohingyas

women and girls whom the Tatmadaw has gang-raped and murdered.

Suu Kyi has publicly stated that these rapes did not occur, making her an enabler of the kind of violence that the #MeToo movement arose to stop, not a victim of it. In this situation, it is Suu Kyi herself who is a powerful abuser aiding other powerful abusers. Moreover, we find your attempt to co-opt the #MeToo movement to be acutely disrespectful of both the Rohingyas victims of sexual violence and of all the courageous women who stood up to say “me too” to call sexual abusers to account around the world.

After this quick reference to #MeToo, you then suggest it may be time to seek out “the Westerner’s weak spot” in that “they don’t dare criticize Muslims or Jews for fear of being called Islamophobic or anti-Semitic,” so “perhaps we need to coin new words for anti-Buddhist or anti-Asian bias to evoke their guilt.” Western countries are particularly sensitive to the Holocaust, because so many of us were complicit in the deliberate, state-sponsored murder of six million Jews only 70-odd years ago. We are sensitive to Islamophobia both because of the recent warfare between Western governments and

historically Islamic ones, and also because of real problems with violent Islamophobia in western countries, such as the mosque shooting in Canada in 2017. There is a great irony in your writing this at a time when the United States government has tried to impose a ban on Muslims entering the country, and when heated anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish rhetoric has been normalized.

To close, we would like to call attention to one voice that is almost totally silent in your letter: the Rohingya themselves. Though your letter is really aimed at “Western” critics of Suu Kyi, the chief resistance to the genocide, and the primary critics of Suu Kyi and the Myanmar state, are not Westerners; they are Rohingya activists like Nural Islam, Razia Sultana, Tun Khin, and Nay San Lwin, to name a few, as well as groups like The Free Rohingya Coalition and Arakan Rohingya National Organization. Many of these Rohingya have been fighting for the last four decades against their impoverishment and oppression at the hands of the Myanmar state, and no one was more pleased by the revocation of Suu Kyi’s awards for human rights activism than they.

While there is always room for criticizing specific

policies of a specific Western country or institution, when you paint matters with as broad a brush as your letter does, opportunities for grappling with injustices in the real world are replaced by harmful meta-narratives that, to our mind, simply stoke the fires of conflict and division. It would be more fruitful for those opposed to colonialism, racism, violence, and injustice around the world to work together rather than to close ranks against each other. Your claim that Western institutions are guilty of colonial violence, both gross and subtle, is true. So is the claim that the Myanmar state and Aung San Suu Kyi are guilty of genocidal violence. Instead of putting these truths in opposition to each other, why not join hands to fight against injustice everywhere? Why not recognize greed, hatred, and delusion wherever they rear their ugly heads and create an international coalition of generosity, love, and clarity?

With goodwill,  
**Maung Zarni and  
Matthew Gindin**



Siam:

## Lese-Majeste is Dead. Long Live Lese-Majeste

Michael Ruffles, 22 November 2018



*Thai social critic Sulak Sivaraksa is escorted outside a military court earlier this year, when the latest lese-majeste charges against him were dropped.*  
CREDIT:AP

Palming a deck of cards in the courtyard of his teak house in Bangkok that doubles as a bookstore, Sulak Sivaraksa doesn’t look like a threat to the fabric of Thai society.

But for nearly 50 years, a succession of military dictatorships has thought otherwise. Sulak, 85, was forced into exile twice and had his life threatened and bookstore burnt in decades of political upheaval. He has also faced five serious prosecutions for lese-majeste – royal defamation, each punishable by up to 15 years in jail – and escaped without a single conviction.

“I hope I am not prosecuted again,” Sulak says. “I cannot keep my mouth shut, that is my problem.”

Throughout it all, the devoted Buddhist, scholar, publisher, grassroots activist and occasional protester has remained a monarchist. He believes the lese-majeste law, Article 112, should be abolished for the sake of keeping the royal family strong. He also speaks highly of the new king, Maha Vajiralongkorn, who he says is not only responsible for his freedom, but for no new lese-majeste charges being laid against anyone in a year.



*Sulak Sivaraksa, who has been charged or arrested five times under Thailand's lese-majeste law, at home in Bangkok. To the left is a photo of Sulak with the late king, Bhumibol Adulyadej. CREDIT: NEW YORK TIMES*



*"He's the worst": Sulak Sivaraksa believes his prosecution was ordered by Thai junta leader and Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha. CREDIT: AP*

"The present king is impatient, he said 'no more,'" Sulak says.

Thailand has the world's harshest lese-majeste law, and record sentences have been handed down since the 2014 coup. Australian writer Harry Nicolaides was pardoned after receiving a three-year sentence in 2009 for 12 lines in a novel deemed to defame the then-crown prince, while more recently the ruling junta has tried to persuade New Zealand to extradite suspects to no avail.

Dr Patrick Jory, senior lecturer in South-east Asian history at the University of Queensland, says the frequency of its use and severity of the punishment set it apart from similar laws in Europe, which were rarely invoked, or Saudi Arabia. He suspects the coming election and Vajiralongkorn's coronation, on a

date yet to be set, have both played a part in the year-long moratorium on new charges.

"It spikes when there's a political crisis, particularly one in which the monarchy is involved," Jory says. "One of the arguments made, even by monarchists, is that the lese-majeste law is abused by people for ulterior purposes, or political purposes."

Human Rights Watch senior researcher Sunai Phasuk says despite the changes under the new king, there has been no improvement in freedom of expression. "While there has been a sharp drop in lese-majeste prosecutions, Thai authorities have switched to using other laws, such as the Computer-Related Crime Act and sedition law, to prosecute critics of the monarchy," Sunai says.

"All I said was Thai his-

tory is different from mythology," Sulak says.

He was the 93rd of 94 people to be charged under Article 112 since the junta seized power in 2014, according to the legal advocacy group iLaw. Existing cases continue to proceed; the next due for a hearing involves a factory worker who clicked "like" on a social media post about the late king's dog. One young activist was recently jailed for sharing a BBC Thai biography of Vajiralongkorn, while another wanted on the same charge was this month granted political asylum in South Korea.

### Secret Hearings

Like most others, Sulak's case had been bound for a secret military tribunal instead of open court. However, he caught widespread attention when rights groups such as Amnesty

and PEN International campaigned on his behalf. The initial complaint was lodged by junior officers, but Sulak is convinced it was prosecuted at the behest of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, who he calls "mediocre."

"He's the worst of the dictators we've had," Sulak says, before clarifying that he thinks Prayuth is the least competent.

"Sarit [Thanarat, who ruled from 1959-63] was the worst as a dictator, yet he knew how to run a country. He appointed a lot of technocrats.

"Prayuth's afraid of me. He's a hypocrite. He used this case to silence me. Every dictator hated me. Suchinda [Kraprayoon, whose brief tenure in 1992 was marked by a massacre] was very bright compared with Prayut. He tried to kill me."



*Sulak Sivaraksa on the day the charges were dropped. CREDIT: AP*



*Thai King Maha Vajiralongkorn during the funeral procession for his father, Bhumibol Adulyadej, in 2017. CREDIT: AP*

It's no exaggeration: Suchinda's troops blockaded a sympathetic embassy in 1991 where Sulak sought refuge. He escaped via a side alley, through a series of safe houses over the border to Laos and on to an Aeroflot jet bound for Europe. Among those who helped was Sombath Somphone and his wife Ng Shui Meng; Sombath disappeared at a police checkpoint in Vientiane on December 15, 2012, and has not been seen since. Born into wealth and a well-connected Chinese family and receiving higher education in England, Sulak's first prominent role in the maelstrom of Thai politics came in the late 1960s. He started *Social Science Review*, a landmark publication that was often critical of the government, although also featured work from princes and nobility. Intended to spark discussion, it is also said to have helped inspire the 1973 student rebellion

that briefly ended military rule.

Three years later when the military launched a massacre at Thammasat University, Sulak was overseas: friends were killed and his bookstore was razed. He stayed in exile for two years, making connections that would prove useful in his social activism and with figures who would come to his aid when charges were laid. The help would go both ways: one of Sulak's non-government organisations worked in Myanmar in the darkest days of military rule after the 1988 crackdown.

### **King Intervenes**

For all the help from lawyers and appeals from international agencies, it was a 90-minute audience with Vajiralongkorn that solved Sulak's latest legal woes.

Pouring tea while a team from the council prunes the giant trees that block out the nearby concrete pillars of

commerce, Sulak is circumspect about what the king is like in person.

"He has a bad public image," he acknowledges.

"He's shy, but he's very knowledgeable. He's very concerned with the survival of the monarchy, and very concerned about whether this country could be really democratic."

"I think the king is wise. He wants the monarchy to be more open and more transparent. He has gained a lot of confidence [since he assumed power]."

Opening the institution up for criticism would only strengthen it, in Sulak's view. It should be abolished "if they have the political will, but I don't think they have." A compromise would involve lowering the minimum and maximum sentences and raising the threshold for prosecution; now anyone can lodge a claim the police must take seriously.

Jory says the new king is very unpopular, particularly compared to his father, and with "too many skeletons" in the monarchy's closet, he does not expect the lese-majeste law to be reformed any time soon.

"They will hold on as long as they can," he said. "It would be hugely damaging to the reputation of the monarchy."

"Everyone's really gone underground ... [but] the monarchy has lots and lots of enemies. This issue in the medium term won't go away."

Early comments from the new army chief, the son of the armed forces commander who helped Suchinda stage the 1991 coup, gives little comfort to reformers. General Apirat Kongsompong suggested that anti-monarchists had mental disorders and had no place in Thailand: "I will protect the monarchy with everything I have, it's the

army's duty."

Sulak has little time for the men in uniform.

"Thai generals think this country is the centre of the universe, and they have a dim view of their neighbours. Because of this belief, Thailand was never colonised. They view their neighbours as inferior, and it's not so."

He is not expecting much to change with the

election expected in February.

"A lot of young people are dedicating themselves to politics. They want to stand for the election, and I am afraid they will be broken-hearted. The army will not lose its grip."

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## Six Years On, Wife Of Disappeared Laos Activist 'Can't Move On'

Channel Newsasia



*Six years of searching have brought no answers and little solace to Sombath's 72-year-old wife, Shui-Meng Ng. Credit AFP/CHRISTOPHE ARCHAMBAULT*

BANGKOK: The wife of a prominent Laos activist who vanished after being stopped at a checkpoint on

the streets of Vientiane said Wednesday (Dec 12) she "can't move on," as the mystery over his fate remains

unsolved almost six years later.

The disappearance of Sombath Somphone, an award-winning environmental campaigner, drew rare international attention to the poor rights record of Laos, an authoritarian one-party state where activists work under state scrutiny.

Sombath was last seen on the night of Dec 15, 2012, with CCTV cameras capturing the moment when police pulled him over at a checkpoint in the Laos capital. He was shown entering a separate truck with two other men and driven off.

His case cast a dark cloud over civil society in Laos and highlighted dangers faced by activists, journalists and human rights defenders in Southeast Asia who risk being targeted with impunity.

But six years of searching have brought no answers and little solace to Sombath's 72-year-old wife, Shui-Meng Ng.

"When the person who's so dear to you has gone missing, the only thing the family member can do ... is to continue to make the disappeared visible," she said Wednesday during a panel discussion in Bangkok about Sombath's disappearance.

"You can't move on because the person who is most important in your life

has been so unjustly taken from you."

Laos government officials have denied any connection to the case, which was raised during a review of the country's rights record at the UN Human Rights committee in Geneva in July.

Rights groups accuse local authorities of failing to carry out even the most cursory of investigations and withholding information.

Ng, a Singaporean citizen based in Laos, said she hoped to speak "for all those silenced victims" of forced disappearances.

"My favorite memory with him was to go home each day, and we would have dinner together and talk about the issues of our day," she said.

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# Paying for High School

*Malee Tangsin*

*Chairwoman, Ramada Plaza  
Bangkok Menam Riverside Hotel*



On a visit to a temple in central Thailand in the early 1980s, China-born Malee Tangsin and her late husband, Archin, were asked by the abbot if they could help several poor boys. The boys were living at the temple while attending junior high school, but had no means to continue on to senior high school. Having recently welcomed their 36th “class” of tenth graders, in total, Malee and the family foundation have spent about \$2 million in support of 450 boys while they attended high school in Bangkok. The boys stay in a family-owned building directly across the street

from the Menam Riverside Hotel, and take meals in a hotel staff canteen. Malee’s seven children help out with supervision and field trips. While the original students were ethnic Thai, today, nearly all come from Hmong and Akha hill tribe villages in the far north of Thailand. After high school graduation, most go on to university or technical college.

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*Forbes: Asia’s 2018 Heroes of Philanthropy: Putting Wealth To A Good Cause.* November 12, 2018.

USA:

## Conservative Christian Group Launches Campaign Against “Buddhist Meditation” In Public Schools

*Sam Littlefair*



A representative from the organization says mindfulness practices “are clearly antithetical to the Christian religion.”

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), a conservative Christian watchdog group, has launched a legal campaign to fight what it calls “Buddhist meditation” in American public schools. The group takes issue with the secular mindfulness programs that have been implemented in some schools, in which audio recordings

stress-reduction practices. The organization says that mindfulness practices “equate to Buddhism.”

The ACLJ is a Christian conservative watchdog group founded by televangelist Pat Robertson, who in the past has compared Buddhism to a disease. Jay Sekulow, the organization’s chief counsel, is on President Trump’s legal team. One of the ACLJ’s main activities is the promotion of Christian prayer in public schools.

“We’re launching a multifaceted legal campaign



including representing parents of these students, sending demand letters, state FOIA requests, and if necessary, litigation,” reads a petition on the organization’s website. “Indoctrinating young kids in public schools with Buddhist meditation is outright unconstitutional.”

In November, representatives from the ACLJ reportedly attended a school board meeting in Colorado to oppose mindfulness programs in schools.

According to the ACLJ, the practices are meant to help students handle stress, calm down, and concentrate on school work. Representatives from the ACLJ say students are asked to sit at their desk and find goodness inside of themselves or connect with nature.

On Sekulow’s radio show, Jay Sekulow Live, one commentator called the

programs “aggressive Buddhist teaching.” Abbey Southerland, the ACLJ’s senior counsel, said the programs tell students to “look inside yourself; ‘find the goodness within yourself’ — things that are clearly antithetical to the Christian religion.”

A blog post on the ACLJ website raises fears around the program, writing:

Imagine your elementary school child coming home one night and explaining the actions that their teacher asked them to do that day—to close their eyes and obey an audio recording that tells them to clear their minds, to watch their memories and emotions float away on clouds, and to feel the love and warmth from their connection to the universe. How would you react if this same audio recording is telling your child to look inside

themselves to reach inner-goodness and peace?

Said one caller on Sekulow’s radio program, “This is toxic ideology. This goes beyond just bad education. This could be corrupting our children’s eternal souls. I have two small children, and I don’t want them sitting around just thinking about creation and goodness and peace. I mean, if my two angels, who are innocent, are gonna be learning about explorers, they should be learning about Jesus or Trump.”

Sekulow called on listeners to help with a “multi-pronged attack,” starting with finding out if mindfulness programs are offered in their children’s schools. “We’ve got millions of people listening to this broadcast,” said Sekulow. “Find out what’s going on in your kids’ schools... We will contact the school board on

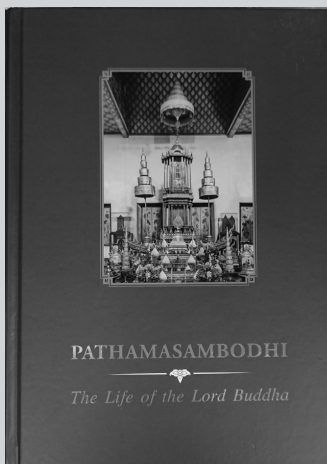
your behalf, dispatch lawyers as necessary.”

The ACLJ argues that the programs constitute Buddhist indoctrination because the mindfulness practices appear to be similar to Buddhist religious practices. Sekulow also argues that the programs are Buddhist because one of the programs offered in some schools, MindUP, was founded by Goldie Hawn, who is a Buddhist.

Proponents of secular mindfulness say mindfulness is not a Buddhist practice; it is a contemplative practice used in religious traditions around the world by many different names. Most programs in schools today are based on scientifically-validated programs developed by clinicians.

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## Recommended Reading

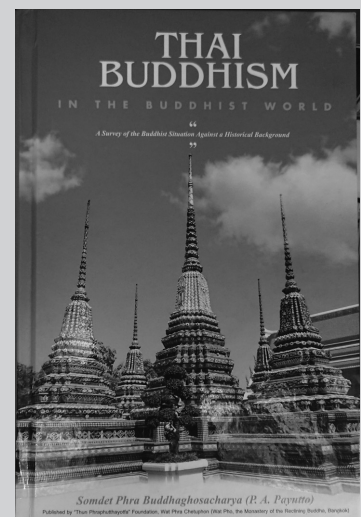


Pathamasambodhi:  
The life of Lord Buddha

Author: Phra Maha Samanachao Krom  
Phra Paramanujitjinoros  
Publisher: Wat Phrachetuphon (Wat Pho)

Thai Buddhism:  
In the Buddhist world

Author: P.A. Payutto  
Publisher: Thun Phraphutthayotfa  
Foundation, Wat Pho



## Understanding the Nepali Context As We Go Forward Together



The International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) held its annual joint Advisory and Executive (AC/EC) Committee meeting in Nepal, last November. The meeting was held in Boudha, Kathmandu, near the world celebrated Boudhanath Stupa.

Glimpses of the Himalayan mountain ranges could be seen high above the rooflines as the Advisory and Executive committee members met to discuss the Nepali context and the activities that comprise INEB's 10-year strategic roadmap. The meeting was coordinated with local partners, including Phakchok Rinpoche and the Chokgyur Lingpa Foundation, the Nepal Buddhist Federation, the Rastriya Dalit Network, and many other groups.

The activities in Nepal began with a public forum on 28 November, which was followed by the AC/EC meeting, and a work planning session coordinated by INEB with Nepali Buddhist minorities and Dalit groups, on 1 December.

The public forum explored the context and the social issues of the host country: Nepal. The presentations, given by representatives of Nepali Buddhist and Dalit groups, discussed the various issues the Buddhist minority and Dalit communities in Nepal face. During the first presentation, Phakchok Rinpoche, stated that Nepal needs to be known for more than being the birthplace of Gautama, the Buddha, in Lumbini more than 1,600 years ago. He stressed that the preservation of the Buddhist communities, the preservation of the Buddha Dharma, and conducting Buddhist activities were the most important objectives in Nepal.

The disparities and challenges that the Buddhist minorities and the Dalit communities experience shared repeated themes. In the predominantly Hindu country (81.3%), Buddhism (9%) represents the second largest religious group, with all remaining religious groups collectively representing less than 10% including Islam (4.4%),



Christians (1.4%), and animists (3.4%). Predictably, these religious groups mirror the social caste system with the majority Brahmins (80%) being Hindu and other religious having a lower status.

This social system can give rise to discrimination against minority religions and social groups, which, in Nepal, was expressed by their limited access to education, lack of employment opportunities, and laws, public policy, and legal system based on the dominant social class, all of which is reinforced by an unyielding status quo. Interestingly, it was noted that, within this religious and social context, Buddhist may be experiencing more tolerance than some of the other minority groups.

During the AC/EC meeting, which followed the public forum, members gave regional updates about activities throughout East, Southeast and South Asia, the USA, Europe, and Africa. Much of the agenda focused specifically on the progress of

activities in INEB's 10-year strategic roadmap, *The Way Forward*.\*

INEB members discussed how to expand beyond their commitment to grassroots activism by engaging with India and China at a cultural level and build a Dharmic civilization of mutual respect, social justice, and peace. Members also discussed holding a few key major INEB events in 2019 that support dialogue and strengthen relationships in these countries leading up to INEB's next general conference in Deer Park, Bir, India.

During the work planning session between Nepali Buddhist minorities and Dalit groups on 1 December, the issues and problems identified by Buddhist minorities in Nepal highlighted the inadequate representation of Buddhists in policy and decision-making levels of state mechanism. It was also noted that Buddhist heritage sites and a couple of institutes are controlled by non-Buddhists appointed politically, mainly by Hindu communities,



and that little engagement and interaction takes place between monasteries and lay communities.

The Dalit group, in turn, expressed that support from the Buddhist community could help to resolve issues, especially since Dalits who have become Buddhists experience increased discrimination.

In terms of economic issues, the traditional occupations of the Dalit community need to be protected, promoted, modernized, industrialized, and marketed. Another critical issue is related to land rights and food rights. The Dalit community wants to link these to the non-violent movement advocated by the Buddha.


The second crucial area identified by the Dalit representatives was education. Less than 50% of Dalit communities are literate, and are


economically, socially and politically backward due to this lack of education. They have very little access to higher education, and less than 1% have an opportunity to go to university. They cited specific ways to address this education gap including needing to have books by Dr. Ambedkar and other Buddhists translated, to incorporate pillars of Buddhism into education which is available to everyone and financial support for higher education.

Both groups defined specific solutions to address these conditions which depend on close collaboration and working in unity.

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\* For more information about INEB's 10-year strategic roadmap and their other activities please see the INEB [www.inebnetwork.org](http://www.inebnetwork.org).





ขอเรียนเชิญสื่อมวลชนและกัลยาณมิตรที่เคารพทุกท่าน  
ร่วมพิธีเปิดนิทรรศการ  
ศิลปะลายพู่กันและหนังสือ หลวงปู่ติช นัท ฮันห์  
Thich Nhat Hanh's calligraphy and book exhibition

วันอาทิตย์ที่ 27 มกราคม 2562  
เวลา 13.00-16.30 น.  
ห้องอดิทัตพร้อม ชั้น 5  
ณ หอศิลปวัฒนธรรมแห่งกรุงเทพมหานคร

กำหนดการ

13.00 น.	ลงทะเบียน
13.30 น.	พิธีกรกล่าวต้อนรับ คณะนักบวชสาวดมนต์เริ่มพิธี
14.00 น.	ดัชนี เบิกบานกับการชมภาพยนตร์สั้น สารคดีหลวงปู่ติช นัท ฮันห์
14.30 น.	แนะนำการวางพานกับศิลปะลายพู่กัน
15.00 น.	ภาวนากับดนตรีแห่งสติ เดินสมาธิสู่ห้องนิทรรศการ
16.00 น.	ชมนิทรรศการ
16.30 น.	จบกิจกรรม

กรุณาแจ้งยืนยันการมาร่วมกิจกรรม  
ภายในวันที่ 25 มกราคม 2562  
โทร 084 387 9192  
อีเมล [calligraphy@thaiplumvillage.org](mailto:calligraphy@thaiplumvillage.org)

# Respecting Mother Earth and Caring for Ecological Systems, the Most Vulnerable Communities and All Future Generations.

Interfaith Submission to Talanoa Dialogue 2018



## 1) Where Are We?

As faith based organisations and faith communities, we have engaged with climate change policy and action for many years as a peace and justice concern, advocating for and mobilising towards just, rights-based approaches to transform our human activities feeding this crisis, while protecting those most vulnerable to the consequences. We support the Paris Agreement and its goals, particularly to pursue a global effort to limit temperature rises to 1.5C, while strengthening global resilience to its impacts. Millions of our members, constituencies, partners and communities are on the front line of the adverse

impacts of climate change to humans and the ecosystems on which our lives depend. Already we face unprecedented changes that have left communities extremely vulnerable, threatening loss of life, health, human mobility, cultural heritage, and livelihoods.

Many of our faith communities have made significant contributions to climate policy and action. In addition to our advocacy, mobilisation, capacity building and education, we are building more resilient and sustainable communities. We call for accountability in ourselves and our decision

makers, taking responsibility for the impact of our lifestyles on the climate system. We have divested and called for greater divestment from fossil fuels; we have contributed humanitarian aid to communities affected by extreme weather events; we have advocated for sustainable agriculture, production and consumption in our personal lives, our communities and countries; and we have raised ethical and moral arguments for climate justice. These we shall continue to do in good faith as a sign of our commitment to our religious teachings, and shared love and compassion. Love, rather than fear, can still lead humanity through this crisis.

To protect the most vulnerable communities now, and all our future generations, we must all act urgently to increase ambition of our collective action as a human society. Our economic and development models remain carbon and pollution intensive, seeking unlimited growth on a planet with limited natural resources. People in poorer countries experience greater threats to their lives and livelihoods, yet have few resources to support their resilience. We are concerned that the ambitious and positive spirit of the Paris Agreement is being lost in returned struggles over power and economic competition, while help for those most exposed and least responsible for current climate change is avoided. There are many unkept promises, shockingly low financial help, and little accountability for actions.

## 2) Where Do We Want To Go?

*Vision of the future for your organization and/or sector in terms of its possible role in achieving the 1.5/2 degrees' goal and a net-zero emission world by this mid-century.*

As faith communities, we seek a future where human activities driving rising temperatures are sufficiently transformed, and the consequences to the most vulnerable are addressed. The Paris Agreement offers Governments worldwide a framework for national and international action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including support to those in need. Its goal, to pursue efforts to limit temperature rises to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, is critical to avoid profound suffering. Yet our global Green House Gass (GHG) emissions remain on track to raise global temperatures above 4C, threatening human civilization as we know it. Faith communities, therefore call for urgent revisions to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) from the main emitting countries, to help place the world towards a 1.5 degree limit trajectory. In addition, we call for robust and comprehensive long term strategies for all countries to achieve complete decarbonisation by mid century, noting that decarbonization benefits the health of citizens in developed and developing countries. We also call for massive investment into renewable energy worldwide, for the protection of forests, and the restoration of degraded forests so they support biodiversity while also acting as carbon sinks. Land use in agriculture must also be transformed so that carbon emissions from food production will be significantly lower. Respecting the rights of indigenous people of the world must be a part of the transition to a net-zero emission world. We call for sufficient levels of climate finance, capacity and technology transfer to developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable, to enable their adaptation, resilience building, and in addressing loss and damage.

- Faith communities envisage a more just and equitable world, respecting the boundaries of Mother Earth and caring for ecological systems, the



most vulnerable communities and all future generations.

- Faith communities respect the wisdom of ancestors, and strive for a sustainable and just future promoting peaceful co-existence. Long-term perspectives must overcome the short term wants for maximised economic profit and political re-election.
- Faith communities seek a new way of living together on this earth that requires a new way of thinking and a new way of understanding. Humanity must live together as one; the economy must serve the planet and redistribute the resources of the Earth instead of accumulating unhealthy riches to the few.
- Faith communities practise compassion and reflection on what it means to live together on this planet. Fasting and taking care of the most vulnerable is a virtue in all world religions. To pursue a 1.5C temperature limit, the world needs to 'carbon fast,' and finance adaptation and mitigation, in our personal, community and national lives.

### 3) How Do We Get There?

*Ways in which the UN Climate Change process can help you achieve your vision and goals, and how your actions can help in expediting sustainable transitions to climate neutral societies*

- To pursue a 1.5C temperature rise limit, everyone needs to contribute.
- With 84% of the world's population identifying itself as belonging to a faith, and with houses of worship existing in nearly every settlement on the planet, we have great potential for leadership in transformation. It is inconceivable that faith communities would be left out of discussions on

how to transform our world to a sustainable and just future.

- The narratives on how we can achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement are more important than ever. Humanity's chance to avoid global catastrophic climate change is limited - the urgency of the situation needs to be told, beside hope and empowerment which lies in transformation to a sustainable and just future. Faith communities have the language of hope over fear, in seeking social, economic and political models to establish a carbon neutral world.
- To avoid global catastrophic climate change, Faith communities worldwide call for both lifestyle changes and political decisions - personal witness and national action. The most vulnerable must be in the centre of our attention, be they the poor of today, coming generations, or Mother Earth herself.
- Faith communities call for a spirit of solidarity, ethics and shared humanity, which will affirm the rights and dignity of all people and ecosystems, now and in the future.

*Submitted to the UNFCCC by World Council of Churches, ACT Alliance, Brahma Kumaris, Green Faith, Franciscan International, QUNO (Quaker United Nation Office) Islamic Relief Worldwide, Dominican for Justice and Peace, Aytzim Ecological Judaism, CIDSE, Bumi Project, CYNESA (Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa) Bishop Andrus The Episcopal Diocese of California, Inter-religious Climate and Ecology (ICE) Network, WSCF ( World Student Christian Federation)*

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# International Roundtable on Buddhist Psychology, Psycho-Spiritual Counseling, and Chaplaincy Training

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INEB Office, Bangkok, Thailand  
March 13-15, 2019

Hosted by  
The International Buddhist Exchange Center @ Kodosan (Japan)  
The International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)

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**Concept:** This meeting will be the first major follow-up to the 1st International Conference on Buddhism, Suicide Prevention, and Psycho-Spiritual Counseling held in Yokohama & Kyoto, Japan from November 6-10, 2017. That conference was the culmination of over a decade of activities by the International Buddhist Exchange Center (IBEC) @ Kodosan in Yokohama, to nurture a collaborative network of priests in Japan working on suicide prevention. By 2017, these networks had emerged into a movement with 4 major regional networks of priests engaged in collaborative efforts to prevent suicide, support families who had experienced the suicide of a loved one, and train priests in many of the basic skills of “chaplaincy” – that is, the art of religious professionals to provide intimacy and deep listening in helping psychologically and spiritually troubled persons to develop their own pathways to healing. The 2017 conference was co-sponsored by the Jodo Shin Hongan-ji Denomination Research Institute, the Ryukoku University Research Center for Buddhist Cultures in Asia (BARC), the

Association of Buddhist Priests Confronting Self-death and Suicide of Greater Tokyo, and the Soto Zen Denomination Research Center and included 25 international speakers and participants from around the world.

In an effort to deepen our understandings of key issues and develop further collaborative initiatives, a core group of participants from this conference along with a select number of new participants will meet in Bangkok for three days of more intimate and focused discussion on the following themes:

► The interface between Buddhist thought and modern psychology: Modern psychology is in the full bloom of a radical transformation from the classical modalities of 20th century Freudian psychology to a variety of new forms that integrate concepts from non-occidental sources, specifically Buddhist thought. Understanding the potentials and pitfalls of adapting Buddhism to modern therapeutic settings is a key interest to this group,

especially as many members are developing new training systems for psycho-spiritual counseling.

► Modalities for training Buddhist chaplains in psycho-spiritual care: Reforming and updating traditional education and training for Buddhist monks and nuns (as well as serious lay people) is a critical issue for the survival of Buddhism in contemporary Asia. Monastics and highly-trained lay persons must learn how to shift from being preachers to listener-guides, while shedding themselves of distorted teachings that stigmatize mental illness, suicidal tendencies, and marginalized identity. The core members of our group are seeking to learn more skillful ways to enact such a pedagogical shift in their activities and Buddhist communities.

► Cooperative Strategies & Team Building for medical and spiritual caregivers: The emergence of comprehensive holistic care as a right of patients is

transforming the modern medical paradigm. Collaborative “team care” systems made of medical practitioners, social workers, psycho-spiritual caregivers etc. are essential now not only for the well being of patients and their families, but also for the resiliency of caregivers and the transformation of dysfunctional caregiving environments and systems. Bridging the now outdated separation between the religious and scientific worlds is an ongoing challenge as well as essential for the full development of the Buddhist chaplain.

### Contact:

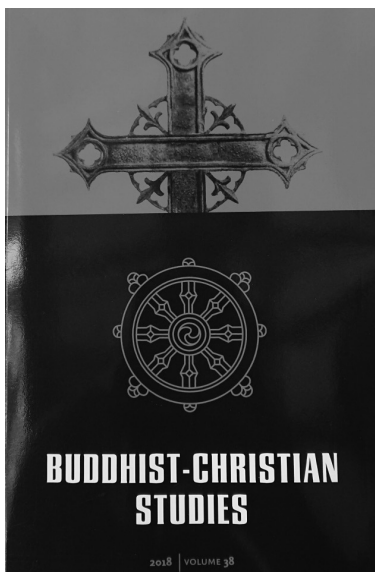
**Jonathan Watts**

Research Fellow at IBEC

E-mail: [ogigaya@gmail.com](mailto:ogigaya@gmail.com)



### Recommended Reading



Buddhist - Christian Studies

Editor: Carol S. Anderson and Thomas Cattoi

Publisher: University of Hawai'i Press



The Renaissance Princess Lecture:  
In Honour of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn on Her Fifth Cycle Anniversary

Editor: The Siam Society

Publisher: Amarin Printing and Publishing Public Company Limited



# Young Bodhisattva Training For Spiritual Resurgence and Social Transformation

30 April - 13 May 2019

Buddhist Hongshi College, Tao Yuan, Taiwan  
A collaboration of Buddhist Hongshi College  
and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)

A common phenomenon that can be observed in the countries where members of International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) bodhisattvas have been operating, especially in South and Southeast Asia, is that the people have not yet achieved enduring peace and social justice. Every country continues to be influenced by capitalism and authoritarianism from the colonial era until the recent era of globalization. The common experience shared by the third world countries is dominated by the business corporate sector (transnational corporate, national corporate, IMF, World Bank, ADB, WTO, etc.) and the non-democratic or pseudo-democratic governments. These two sectors' powerful influence adversely impacts everyone.

As humans, we have become increasingly aware that the predominant threat to the planet is the ecological price of human consumption and lifestyle. Former values such as simplicity, sufficiency and sharing within the community have gone by the wayside or minimized, as they are fueled by a capitalistic ideology that relies on mass production to maximize profit.

This change has increased greed-based values,

bringing about selfishness, competition, oppression, and exploitation among humans and against nature. These conditions make achieving real peace in any context difficult. Instead, structural violence and injustice have created conditions of poverty, ecological crisis, hunger, human rights violations, discrimination and conflicts at many levels.

When material development becomes the personal and national goal, it overshadows values such as compassion, simplicity, forming relationships, sharing, and forgiveness. The degradation of the human spirit is, in fact, due to many factors. Firstly, it becomes more difficult for people to resist the temptations of indulgence, wealth and fame that the modern world presents to them. In addition, people become victims and are forced to struggle and survive in violent, corrupt and unjust social structures. We can see those forces also eroding many societies' traditions.

The future of humankind relies on its young generation. However, growing up in divided society makes it very difficult for them to realize their potential and positively contribute to society. A great deal of youth's vitality is expended because of the impact of

structural violence, namely - poverty, ill health and many other social and economic inequalities in education, housing, employment, and so forth. These conditions create disparities and instability, particularly in communities where development is imbalanced.

Fortunately, some Buddhist thinkers and social activists have proposed alternative views and practices to create societies based on compassion and non-violence, which are key Buddhist values. These are intended to reverse the negative outcomes brought about by the development route that Third World countries have taken.

What the Buddha set forth more than 2,500 years ago was a means to discovering truth/dharma that has been passed down to us through the ages. These truths transcend time and remain relevant today.

In modern times, the Buddhas' teachings are being applied across Asia using many means to achieve social justice and equity. For example, the Dhammic socialism by Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, Meritism (vis-à-vis capitalism) by the Asoke Network, critical thinking as taught by Ajhan Sulak Sivaraksa, to discourses on Gross National Happiness. Other experiments include the Samdrup Jonghkar Initiative inspired by Buddhist teachers like Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, Buddhist models of leadership and Governance: His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Samdhong Rinpoche, as well as peace and ecological actions by many Buddhist movements of the Karmapa, and Thich Nhat Hanh. Therefore, the socially engaged Buddhist movements which have become internationally renowned are quite substantial and strong people's movements throughout South and Southeast Asia, and worldwide.

As the struggle for genuine peace and social justice continues with many movements contributing various alternative views and actions, the engaged Buddhist movements, too, join them. Among these movements, one of our most valuable resources is the youth.

In order for young Buddhists to realize their human potential to contribute to real change, INEB is taking the responsibility to develop the confidence, capacity, and commitment among the young Buddhists

for social and spiritual transformation.

We need to be able to distinguish between cultural practices of Buddhism that are bound by time and change, and the timeless teachings of the Buddha that are essential for this world, that become our road maps for a peaceful and sustainable world.

## Training Objectives for Youth Leaders

1. To understand theory and develop critical ability for using analytical Buddhist tools to apply to alternative methods of community development.
2. To bring theory into practice by being exposed to some of the finest thinkers and practitioners of socially engaged Buddhism.
3. To strengthen the network through supporting cooperation and relationships among young Buddhist activists in Asia.

Specific outcomes will be incorporated into action plans developed throughout the training. These will reflect worldview and attitudinal changes using Buddhist analysis. Outcomes will be at several levels including: personal, organisational, country, and regional.

## Training Activities

The training curriculum is based on a three-mode learning process involving intellectual, spiritual and physical practice. The sessions include lectures, discussions, community building, meditation and group processes, as well as exposure trips to understand the current situation in Taiwan and how socially engaged Buddhism is being used to address it.

## Participants:

- Young potential female and male leaders active in social change.
- Ordained or lay persons, Buddhist and from other religions.
- From Asia including the INEB network and beyond.





**Dr. Vinya S. Ariyaratne**

President, Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sri Lanka

December 19, 2018

**Dear Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne,**

On behalf of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) and its members, we extend our most sincere and heartfelt congratulations as you celebrate Sarvodaya Shramadana's 60th anniversary.

We deeply respect Sarvodaya's early pioneering development efforts and long-term commitment to the people of Sri Lanka, which continues today. When looking at Sarvodaya, we can see that it has become the single largest, most locally integrated engaged Buddhist institution. Normally, we think of engaged Buddhism in terms of people's actions, or movements, yet while Sarvodaya is a dynamic movement, it is also an institution. Your example is vital for engaged Buddhists to think about what a compassionate Buddhist institution built from the grassroots should look like, and how it helps civil society in different ways from small actors and the government.

**Yours in Kalyanamitta,**

**Sulak Sivaraksa**

INEB Co-Founder and  
Advisory Board Chairperson

**Somboon Chungprampee**

INEB Executive Secretary

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# The Art of Beauty

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I would like to thank Khun Neng (Paradee Kiatpinyochai, coordinator of CSR Korat) for welcoming us and giving us the opportunity to know a diverse group of Korat inhabitants. I am happy to know them.

Today, many of us are dreaming about the coming national elections. This is not necessarily a bad thing. But I am afraid that the elections will leave many idealistic people disillusioned. Why? Because the Thai military has long been in control of state power—at least since 1947. Therefore, the soldiers won't back down easily, won't maintain a distance from state power. More dangerous is the fact that these military figures have strong connections with transnational corporations, international organizations, and major powers that exert great influence on Thai society. It used to be England and the USA in the past. Now, China is added into the mix. As such, many young politicians with good intentions will be disappointed. Their idealism will face an uphill battle. It will not be easy for them to change society, even if they get to wield state power. Today, it seems that the imperative of economic growth has supplanted all other ideals.

As you are aware, MC Sithiporn Kridakara is known as the Farmer Prince. He once stated that if Thai farmers don't have dignity, the country won't

have a future. Echoing this insight, I contend that if we want our country to have a future, any political reform must enable farmers to live with dignity. To begin with, they need to have their own lands to till and cultivate. Likewise, Pridi Banomyong's economic plan sought to improve the farmer's quality of life. It was written 85 years ago after the 1932 Revolution. Today, this vital goal is still unrealized.

We must focus our attention on the hardships that farmers and the urban poor are facing in order for there to be a possibility for truly changing society. Those who are obsessed with wealth and power do not see the value of art at all. In other words, what they overlook is of great importance for the country. Ever since the kingdom's quest to be accepted as a 'civilized' member of the international society in the Fifth Reign, we have neglected the dimension of Beauty. On the contrary, in our traditional society, Beauty, Goodness, and Truth had formed an inseparable triad. For example, there would be a temple in almost every village. These temples were often a work of art in themselves. Also, artists would be invited to paint the murals or hold relevant activities on the temple ground. Temples today are no longer as beautiful as in the past. Schools have essentially taken over the roles

once performed by temples. In this sense, schools have become very destructive. I have an American friend named Ivan Illich. He was an important and well-known thinker. He said that modern medical sciences are like Kali, the Goddess of Destruction. The problem is that most people can't see this. In the past, people in a Catholic society were forced to attend Church at least once a week. Today, we force our children to go to the new kind of temple five days a week. This new temple is far worse than the old one.

I want to stress to you how mediocre and depraved mainstream society is. If we are interested in Beauty, we must strive for excellence. We must try to accomplish everything that we do. Even after achieving Enlightenment, the Buddha stressed the importance of the Four Paths of Accomplishments. First is *chanda* (resolve or intention to do something). It then leads to *viriya* (effort, diligence, or vigor) in order to accomplish it. *Citta* (thoughtfulness) and *vimamsa* (reflection or examination) then help to make sure if we are still on the right path to accomplishment.

Most people fight over wealth and power, but not Beauty. When the government provides you with a large sum of money, it may easily stir up disagreement among you. Therefore, *chanda* should be given priority over money. And it should be directed toward Beauty. There are many facets of Beauty. Most people have overlooked the importance of our traditional beauty, which can be witnessed in temples. Although a westerner, Ajarn Silpa Bhirasri understood this, and had even encouraged us to recognize the importance of traditional beauty. He had also convinced Ajarn Fua Haripitak on this matter. In my view, Ajarn Fua is the best contemporary artist, comparable to Picasso in the West. Guided by Ajarn Silpa, he had dedicated his life to conserve traditional arts. Without him, many forms of traditional beauty throughout the country

would have been lost. He was greatly assisted by Angkarn Kalayanapong in this endeavor. If we understand these things and work together, traditional beauty will return to us.

The last time I was in Lamphun province, I went to the opening of Ajarn Inson Wongsam's art exhibition. The vice governor of Lamphun presided over the event. He stated that he wanted to modernize Lamphun and attract a lot of tourists. It seems that he could only think about making money. Hidden in plain sight is the fact that Lamphun is filled with traditional beauty. In some aspects, it is even more beautiful than Chiang Mai. Why don't we encourage people, especially the younger generation, to appreciate the traditional beauty that can be found in temples? Unfortunately, many monks don't seem to notice the beauty in their temples.

We can rely on our traditional beauty as a basis to foster creativity in the present. This will make us proud of our ancestors and past. In general, Thais are no longer proud of their past. They all want to be like westerners—without realizing the strengths and weaknesses of the Western tradition.

Lamphun is a small province, but is filled with many good artists. The Lamphun people have preserved old things as well as created new ones. It seems that they have struck the right balance. If Lamphun could do it, so too can Korat. In short, I want to see competition over beauty-making not money-making.

The Buddha states that a *sangha* (community or chapter) is comprised of not less than four Buddhist monks. We can likewise form a similar community. Most people talk about the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the monks without realizing what they mean. The Buddha is the Awakened One—awakened in terms of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. When we are fully awakened, our self-attachments may diminish. And we will begin to see other people, sentient beings, and even Nature as no less important

than ourselves. If we are able to form such a community—a community of the awakened ones—we will be able to make important changes in society. The Mekong River separates Korat from Laos. But the people on both sides of the river are like brothers and sisters. They use the same language and have the same culture. The Cambodians and Burmese are slightly different, but many of them are also Buddhist. The point is that we all can learn from one another. Beauty is not nationalism. No nation has a monopoly of Beauty. Beauty is universal. And it is about humanism. Real humanism cannot be separated from Nature. Thus, Beauty is inseparable from Goodness and Truth.

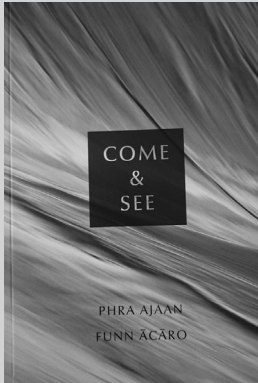
At the end of the day, we won't really remember the rich and the powerful. We have had numerous prime ministers. How many of their names do we actually recall? Good leaders like Pridi Banomyong and Puey Ungphakorn had to live the rest of their lives in exile. But we shouldn't be afraid of struggling for the common good. If we are devoted to the cause of Beauty and are not concerned about amassing wealth and social prestige, then the impossible can happen.

Sulak Sivaraksa



Spoken in Korat on 19 October 2018.

### Recommended Reading



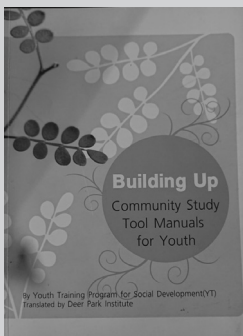
Come & See

Author: Phra Ajaan Funn Acaro  
Translated from the Thai version  
by Thanissaro Bhikkhu



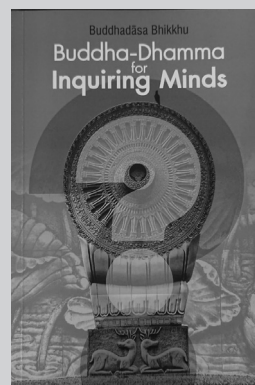
Home: A Cambodian Story

Author: Andy Gray  
Publisher: One Sky Foundation



Building Up:  
Community Study Tool  
Manuals for Youth

By Youth Training Program for  
Social Development (YT)  
Editor: Jessica Armour,  
Napawan Sittisak



Buddha-Dhamma  
for Inquiring Minds

Author: Buddhadasa Bhikkhu  
Published for Free Distribution  
by Phrarajsirimunee

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Tel: (425) 481-6640  
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## Working with the Homeless and Disconnected (mu-en)

Towards Reviving a Society with Connection (yu-en):  
Linking This Shore (shigan) to the Other Shore (higan)

*Jonathan Watts*



*The Sanyu Association  
grave stone at  
Kosho-in Temple*



*Rev. Yoshimizu  
creating connection  
outside of Kosho-in.*

It is estimated that in 2040, the number of deaths in Japan—due to the aging demographic—will peak at 1.69 million. As we approach this society of mass death, the scale of households is growing smaller, and the number of people living alone is increasing. As the problem of dying alone or “solitary death” (孤立死 koritsu-shi) increases, the Japanese Buddhist funeral system, as we have known it, will not provide a sufficient method of mourning. The funeral and memorial services that are handled by Buddhist temples and priests as well as by various specialized businesses have traditionally had the role of connecting “the shore of this world” (此岸 shigan) with “the other shore of the afterlife” (彼岸 higan).

Nowadays, this work has the wider meaning of creating karmic connections (有縁 yu-en) in a society that has lost such connections (無縁 mu-en). This “spiritually disconnected society” (無縁社会 mu-en shakai) is posing new challenges to the time honored traditions of Buddhist grief care in

Japan. In northeast Tokyo, we found a group that is responding to this challenge.

In the Taito and Arakawa wards of northeast Tokyo, a region better known as Sanya, the non-profit Sanyu Association (山友会 Sanyu-kai) is engaged in activities to support the numerous



people living in the streets, such as free medical care, lifestyle consulting, and hot meals. The Director of the Sanyu Association, Jean Le Beau, came from Canada as a Catholic missionary over 30 years ago, and has been working in Sanya for over 20 years. In 2015, he partnered with a nearby Buddhist temple called Kosho-in 光照院 (Jodo Pure Land Sect 浄土宗) to build a grave plot for these homeless people. Rev. Gakugen Yoshimizu 吉水岳彦 is the vice-abbot of Kosho-in as well as the Secretary of the Hitosaji ("One Spoonful") Association (ひとさじの会). Founded 8 years ago, Hitosaji gives out handmade rice balls (onigiri), basic medicines, and other simple necessities twice a month to these predominantly aging day laborers who live in the streets of Sanya.

The kinds of people who have ended up together in Sanya are those who have had their connections to family and also to society in general cut. Because of losing all connection with their families, when it comes time for them to die, they become "spirits with no karmic connection", or what is called in Japanese Buddhism as (無縁仏 mu-en hotoke). With no one to properly venerate them over the years through grave visits and memorial services, this is considered in Japanese culture the worst kind of post mortem fate. Jean Le Beau recounts the pain in his heart when one of his best friends who had lived as "homeless" passed away. While the relative of his dead friend accepted to take care of his remains, Jean felt their attitude was cold as they disliked being seen as someone related to a "homeless" person. In this manner, Rev. Yoshimizu asks, "What is the real meaning of wealth? There are many things we can learn from these aging day laborers."

Having witnessed many of their comrades become mu-en hotoke after dying, this community of disconnected people began to feel a need for their own grave plot. Rev. Yoshimizu responded to this

appeal by the Sanyu Association, and in 2015, took in the Buddha altars of those mu-en people that the Sanyu Association had collected at their office, interred them at Kosho-in, and affixed pictures of the dead comrades with their death dates. By creating such connections, Kojo-in temple has become a place which is easy to visit for praying in front of graves. Rev. Yoshimizu explains, "Although there are people who are important to us who are not blood relations, we divide and establish our burial plots according to blood relation. The Sanyu Association has brought together those who basically have no close relations, and provides a place for building relations from which one can speak from the heart. It is important to build connections even beyond our blood relations." The Sanyu Association grave plot at Kosho-in is an embodiment of this sense.

In order to communicate this message to society, they raised donations for building the grave plot by using crowd funding. They received a major response from the LGBT and sexual minority community to this appeal. Rev. Yoshimizu explains, "This is not just about the aging day laborers in Sanya. There are many people nowadays who are dying without anyone knowing. It seems that people are dying alone and that this dying without any connections or bonds is very lonely and sad. There's really no limit to who this can happen to." Indeed, Rev. Yoshimizu tells stories of LGBT individuals who were not allowed to be buried in their family grave plots at death and became mu-en hotoke. The plots at Kosho-in are providing a space for new "intentional communities" to "be together even in death." Jean Le Beau has also reported that for the first time, a medical doctor who gave free treatment at the Sanyu Association has requested to be interred in this grave plot. In 2008, Rev. Yoshimizu erected the first such grave plot at Kosho-in working with the Shinjuku Connecting Association (新宿連絡会

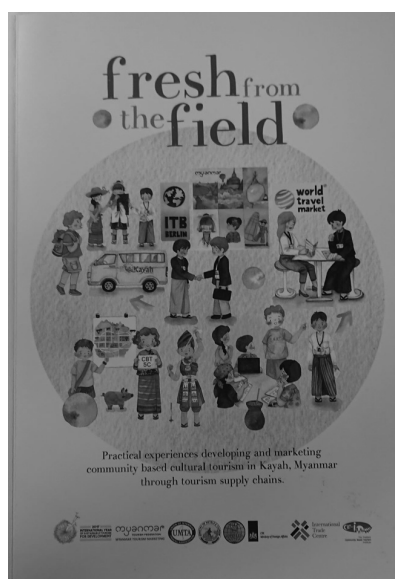
Shinjuku Renraku-kai), an NPO that works with the homeless in western Tokyo. Paying for half of the grave stone from his part-time job earnings, the tomb is engraved with the Chinese character for musubu 結, meaning “to bind or tie together.” As the numbers of homeless, people with no family connections, and abandoned grave plots have continued to increase, Kosho-in also constructed in 2015 a large stupa to hold their ashes—a place where Rev. Yoshimizu has also requested to be interred at death. This stupa has encased a large statue called the Sanya Kannon 山谷観音 (Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion), who is wearing a Christian cross around his neck—further symbolizing the ecumenical spirit of Kosho-in’s work. Finally, in September of 2018, Kosho-in has erected yet another tomb funded by a local nursing station. The medical workers there have seen too many of their elderly patients die alone. Having developed relationships of loving care, they have also wanted a place to venerate them and express their own grieving.

In Japanese Buddhism, it is understood that a new kind of relationship is born in the burying of the remains of the dying and the offering of regular memorial services. Rev. Yoshimizu explains, “It’s really terrible when someone who is important to you dies. But we can continue to grapple with different ways to create a world where we can mourn such important people, while gradually understanding the pain that comes with it. In Buddhist memorial services, we can find such a process.” Finally, reflecting on the grave plots they have erected, Rev. Yoshimizu leaves us with the question: “Can we create a place for us to consider our friends as dear friends?”

*This article is based on a Japanese article by the same name published in The Buddhist Bukkyo Times, February 9, 2017. Some of the information has been expanded and updated by the translator, Jonathan S. Watts, for publication on October 4, 2018. Rev. Chisa Yamashita also assisted with the translation.*

S

## Recommended Reading



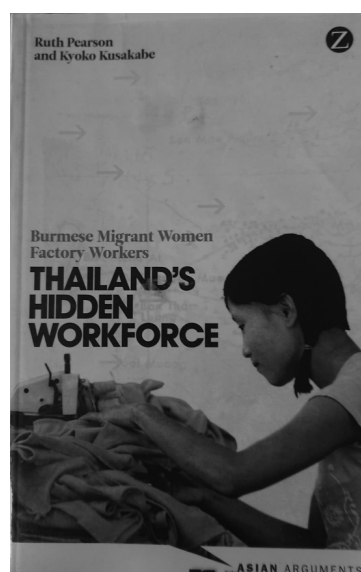
Fresh From The Field

Download for Free



Thailand's Hidden Workforce

Author: Ruth Pearson and  
Kyoko Kusakabe  
Publisher: Zed Books



## Buddhism, Conflict and Digital Transformation

*Vidyananda*

**I**n a very divided world, we are deeply concerned about our ethnicity, our religions, and our cultural spaces. These spaces are often exploited by political, community, and religious (so-called) leaders for their own gain, leading to divide.

In a very united world, we are extremely excited about technology, digital transformation and now, the industry revolution 4.0 (IR4.0), artificial intelligence, blockchain, big data and whatever buzzwords the IT industry throws at us.

Yet these two continents of human nature and awe for technology does not meet. Many communities live in denial of one another. Many nations are going “e” with e-government and digital transformation initiatives. The hope is that it will bring modernization and overall improvements to government services, and with this, drive economic growth and prosperity. Yet, they hope the social conflict dynamics in some communities will disappear with the implementation of digital technology and innovation.

Sadly, some of the same technological innovations have become tools to divide society. In Myanmar for example, Facebook has been identified as a tool that fanned hatred especially through hate speech. Facebook is a billion dollar company on Wall Street.

Grass-roots, community and state leaders, struggle with this. National and political leaders embrace it. Some are trying to use the same tool to address conflict in our societies. Sadly, with little

impact. Can we effectively use, say, Facebook to fight hate speech, where Facebook has been known to perpetuate such hatred?

Everyone is using technology to solve their view of community problems. My questions are: Do we understand technology enough to make a real difference? Are we blindly adopting some other's technology only to benefit them financially?

Do we understand enough of the individual and social dynamics to apply technology to radically alter things?

As spiritual activists, reformers and leaders, we want to change things for the better. We need to be able to understand the new tools we have before us. As technology evolves with big data, machine learning, artificial intelligence and quantum computing, how will we grasp them?

As spiritual practitioners, we want to make sense of all the data hitting us in the face, filter all the information we have before us and distill them to the wisdom we are searching for.

How do we embrace technology as a skilful means to transform conflict, and build peaceful and inclusive societies?



**Dear Mr. Abbagani Ramu,**

One can quote a number of wise words from the Mahatma, but I find the following most important for our contemporary generation to meditation and respond to carefully :

*"I condemn modern civilization, because I hold that the spirit of it is evil. Some of its incidents are good, but I have examined its tendency in the scale of ethics. I distinguish between the ideals of individuals who have risen superior to their environment, as also between Christianity and modern civilization. Competition and material and intellectual stimuli will not add a single inch to its moral stature. Liberation is undoubtedly the immediate aim of all humanity... If liberation is the best thing attainable by mankind, then, I submit, it is wrong to lower the ideal for anyone."*

In peace,  
**Sulak Sivaraksa**

**Dear Acharn Sulak,**

Hope you are in good health and spirit. It has been quite some time since we met.

The Government of India has decided to celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi starting from 2nd October 2018. As part of this celebration, we are organizing many events in India and Thailand. One of the events proposed is to request a renowned personality to write a collection of poems or other pieces of writing on what Gandhi means to them. This would form part of the compilation being brought out by the Government of India.

As you are closely associated with India and Gandhi, I thought I will consult you if you could consider writing an article on 'What Gandhi Means to you'. I would request you to give this by 25 November 2018.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,  
**Abbagani Ramu**  
Charge d'Affaires  
Embassy of India, Bangkok

**Dear Ajarn Sulak,**

We are in Texas now near my son and granddaughter. Not certain when I will visit California--really miss it. That is there is a different mindset there in California vis-à-vis Texas. That is to say, there are mostly Republicans here and Trump supporters. Not too many liberals like myself. We settled in our house. Hung Hongjorn's painting of you on the big wall in my living room along with the painting of myself overlooking the swimming pool and Noi's flowers.

Not sure when I will get to California. We plan to travel to Thailand in March and April 2019. We will join you on your Birthday in March if you are available. I will bring the books that you requested, coupled with the other title that I promised you for your birthday. We plan to stay in Bangkok a couple of weeks and at least a month in Phitsanulok. We enjoy the time there in Phitsanulok away from the fast-paced Bangkok life. Then, return to Bangkok for a week or two before returning to Texas.

I began to read a lot again, revisiting many of my books shelved for many years. Rethinking what I wrote and will begin to write and reassess. Glad that you still enjoy reading the New York Review of Books. I will keep it coming.

So glad to hear that you are taking care of yourself and slowing down. Give my best regards to your wife, daughters, and Hongjorn.

Best Regards and in Peace,  
**Noi and Tom**

Dear Moo,

After receiving this issue of SEEDS OF PEACE, I saw Ajarn Sulak's speech at the De Jiao Academy (Jee Jin Foundation should be the wrong translation, on page 35.) Ajarn mentioned Master Zheng Yan and me, I am very moved and very grateful for his encouragement and praise!

Please tell Ajarn that I have done very limited. On the contrary, his contribution to Thailand and the world has been a model for us to learn.

On this Thursday, Professor Liu Yui-guang from Fu-dan University in Shanghai will give a speech at Hsuan Chuang University. The topic is to introduce Ajarn Sulak. The attached document is the speech poster. Please also send it to Ajarn.

Professor Liu will give a series of lectures at Maha Chulalongkorn University in Thailand this December. He will also visit Ajarn. Please tell Ajarn, Professor Liu in the Buddhist academic circles of China, Taiwan and Hongkong, has the deepest understanding of Ajarn and Thai Buddhism. He is really a confidant of Ajarn.

**Chao Hwei Shih**

Department of Religious Studies  
Hsuan Chuang University

宗教與文化學系專題演講 - 「局內人與局外人之宗教研究」系列講座(1)

**素叻·司瓦拉差 (Sulak Sivaraksa) —**  
**當代入世/左翼佛教的泰國開路者**



講者：劉宇光教授  
上海復旦大學哲學學院宗教學系副教授

**107/10/18 (四)**  
上午10:20-12:10  
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**Dear Sulak,**

I am so delighted to receive your email. Thank you for writing and letting me know the good news that the new king has cleared all cases against you – this is wonderful!

You should be honoured for the great service you have provided for the upliftment and enlightenment of humanity. Your contribution in the fields of ecology, spirituality, engaging Buddhism and holistic education has been outstanding and inspiring. You are a beacon of light for us in these dark times. It has been my honour and pleasure to know you as my friend.

And yes, I was so honoured to have been given an Honorary Doctorate from your alma mater, the University of Wales.

I will give Claire and Roger your best wishes, and I will share your gratitude to Maurice with them, I too received great support from Maurice, it is thanks to him that we were able to establish Schumacher College.

I am also pleased to know that the second edition of my book *No Destination* has been brought out in Thailand. Thank you for introducing me to Thailand, it was you who first invited me there. So I am grateful for your kindness to me.

I send you my very best wishes and love for your good health and long life.

With Much Love,

**Satish**

**My Dear Satish,**

I am happy to hear that you received an honorary doctorate from my alma mater, the University of Wales, Trinity St David at Lampeter, which made me an honorary Fellow.

I am glad to receive *Resurgence* regularly, and often think of you and June.

I am now a free man as our King cleared all cases against me on lèse majesté.

My wife joins me in sending our best wishes to both of you.

Yours,

**Sulak**

P.S. if you see Clare and Roger, please tell them that I still remember Maurice vividly for his kindness to me, and his contributions to our alternative education in Siam.

P.P.S. I trust you are aware of the second edition of *No Destination*, which came out beautifully.

**Dear Sulak**

I hope that this email finds you and friends in the best of health and well-being.

We have just completed the Jan Andolan campaign with 25,000 people mobilized for five days, and this successfully pressed the state into taking up measures related to land. Also, the opposition party gave a commitment to follow policies on land, provided they are elected into power next spring. It was quite a jamboree. People from the grassroots were happy to get a hearing at the highest level.

We are now moving to consolidate the planning on the Jai Jagat campaign. As a result of last June's first skype meeting, we set a second IAC meeting with members from different regions on the political advocacy work in November to see how to address the UN.

If you want to join, we are proposing to do that on the 7th of November by skype between 2-4pm CET. This will be good preparation for the meeting with Michael Moller, the Director General of the UN in Geneva, planned for the 8th of November (the next day). Rajaji and I will both be there.

Do let me know whether that works for you in terms of timing. In the meantime, I am preparing the agenda, sending the last meeting's minutes and other materials for your review.

Sending warm greetings from Rajaji and me to you.

**Jill Janusr**

## Letters

F. Sionil Jose  
SOLIDARIDAD  
531 Padre Faura, Ermita  
PO Box 3959, Manila

August 31, 2018

Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa  
666 Chareon-Nakorn Road  
Bang Lamphu Lang, Klongsarn  
Bangkok 10600

*My dear Sulak*

It has been sometime since I wrote to you. It occurred to me to write to you because I am not feeling well and I want to be sure that I got in touch with you before I write. 30.

First, I must tell you that I am 93 and my health is failing but thank God, my mind is still okay. Only the other day, I wrote about the best meal I had in Bangkok when you took me to that sidewalk eating place near the temple where you said the King used to go. It's been ages of course since I was in Bangkok and I am not sure that I can go there again, my health being what it is. I hope you are well and keeping fit. After all I am much older than you. I get your publication regularly because you send it to me and that is where I get to know that you are still writing and keeping faith.

My best to Nin, to the family. You must be a grandfather by now. I am a great grandfather now.

*Frankie*

Embassy of Canada  Ambassade du Canada

Embassy of Canada  
15<sup>th</sup> Floor, Abdulrahim Place  
990 Rama IV Road  
Bangkok 10500

14 September, 2018

Ajan Sulak Sivaraksa  
127 Soi Santiphap  
Nares Road  
Si Phraya, Bangrak  
Bangkok 10500

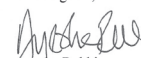
Dear Ajan Sulak,

It was a pleasure to meet you again earlier this week at the British Club. Thank you as well for welcoming us into your home.

As Ambassador Pottie mentioned, my husband Cameron recently published a book on Vegetarian Vietnamese food. I am pleased to enclose a copy for you. I hope you enjoy the book which includes some references to Vietnamese Buddhist traditions. I should also note that Cameron was deeply honoured when Sister Chan Khong (disciple of Thich Nhat Hanh) wrote an endorsement for the book (please see the back cover). Cameron previously worked as one of the chefs for the Honourable Adrienne Clarkson and may very well have cooked for you when you stayed at Rideau Hall.

I look forward to seeing you at the Siam Society in October.

Kind regards,

  
Ayesha Rekhi  
Counsellor (Political/Economic)

*Dear Sulak,*

*Dec. 9*

May the special joy of Christmas, a joy that does not depend on what is happening or what one expects to happen, fill you. In my case, in 2018 I find much that is happening disappointing, discouraging, and distressing, but I am so fortunate personally, that I cannot give up hope. Humanity has known for fifty years that our global behavior will cause catastrophe, and now, in small but painful ways, the catastrophes are happening. But even this is not enough to evoke the kind of response that alone might allow good prospects for our grandchildren. I have personally been given good health into my nineties, and although I feel largely helpless with respect to developments here, I continue to have a growing audience in China. Of course, China is still competing with the United States in heating the planet. But it is serious about turning a corner—maybe, just maybe, before it is too late. To be listened to by people of influence there is more than I ever dreamed of. I can't give up.

My good fortune is also that so many of my descendants live nearby. Four great grandchildren were with me for Thanksgiving dinner, and I expect all five for Christmas. They all have really great parents, and a wonderful start in life. May we parents, and grandparents leave them a healthy country in a healthy planet!

In other respects, uncertainty reigns. It seems likely that the School of Theology, where I taught for many years, will open its doors next fall at the University of Willamette in Salem, Oregon. I am sad that its departure from Claremont has proved necessary, sad about the decline of the church that underlies it, and sad that I see so little real attention to any of the changes that might enable the disciples of Jesus to share his message in a truly relevant way. Practically, the issue for me is what happens to the Center for Process Studies. It is possible that we will land on our feet. It is also possible that its days of effectiveness are ended.

Meanwhile, the ideas we learned from Whitehead are winning major battles in the natural sciences. The warfare between science and Christianity is ending. Opportunities to promote "ecological civilization" are multiplying. For example, it seems that we may influence the content of the new required course in ecological civilization in Chinese colleges; the mayor of Seoul wants to identify with our efforts; and the man who has finally been charged with implementing "Laudato Si" is willing to work with us. No time to despair.



Broomieknowe, Claygate, Canonbie,  
Dumfriesshire, UK

Dear Sulak,

I am afraid that I have scant news and nont, in particular, of S.D.C. It is undoubtedly a very different place from that of our day. Much larger and, inevitably, very much changed to meet the increased numbers. Still I think that we saw it at its best.

Like most people in Britain we followed the saga of the Thai boys caught in the underground caves. We thought it very apt, since Thailand is such a long standing ally of the UK, that the man who first located them was British. And we rejoiced at their deliverance.

I age, alas, and I do not quite keep up with world events. Many seem quite needless and complicated—and concentration should be focused on how to sustain the world's rapidly increasing population. The real problems will occur after my days.

But though of me and the world. We hope that you and your family flourish and have good health. And we send our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

As always,  
John Graham

## In Memory of Urgyen Sangharakshita

26 August 1925 - 30 October 2018



Sangharakshita was born Dennis Lingwood in London in 1925. When he was young, there were very few English books on Buddhism. However, he felt that he had always been a Buddhist, and began reading about the religion from the encyclopedia and other available sources. Because of a congenital heart problem, he did not enroll in formal education. Essentially, he was self-taught by reading numerous books. Conscripted in World War II, he was sent to India. Driven by the desire to discover Buddhism, he did not leave India when the war was over. Rather, he abandoned his nationality and became an “anagarika,” or a ‘homeless’ person who is fully committed to practising the Dhamma without joining the monkhood. Along with luminaries from various yogi sects, he travelled throughout the subcontinent on foot. When he reached the Maha Bodhi Society in Kolkata, the Sri Lankan monks there at first refused to ordain him as a

novice, mistaking him for a beggar. Eventually, he met a monk who ordained and gave him the name “Sangharakshita”. He eventually learned Pali and Sanskrit, and got to know various lamas (Buddhist teachers) from Sikkim, India. Later, a group of five Burmese monks performed the ordination ceremony for him to enter the monkhood. However, he suspected that the ordination ceremony might have been invalidated by the fact that one of the monks had committed a grave offence worthy of expulsion from the monkhood: he openly had a wife.

Subsequently, he used the Sanskrit spelling for his name, “Sangharakshita”, and opened a Buddhist center in Sikkim. Later, he accepted the invitation of the Sangha Trust to serve as abbot of a Buddhist temple in London. However, Sangharakshita soon felt that the community of Theravada monks was too restrictive and narrow-minded, making it difficult to spread the Dhamma. He disrobed and established the Western Buddhist Order, which operates in many European countries.

His autobiography is very candid. He openly wrote about his homosexuality and sexual affairs with young men.

Also, Sangharakshita had an opportunity to meet B.R. Ambedkar, the brilliant Dalit jurist who helped to draft the Indian constitution. Ambedkar opposed the oppressive Hindu caste system and converted to Buddhism in October 1956. (He inspired hundreds of thousands of Dalits to convert to Buddhism. Today, more than 10 million Dalits in India are Buddhist.) Sangharakshita promised Ambedkar that he would support the new Buddhist Movement he had initiated.

He would also visit the Dalit Buddhist community throughout India over the years. He would send his disciples to serve the Dalit Buddhists. A well-known case is that of Dhammachari Lokamitra, an Englishman who has spent more than four decades in India and is married to a Dalit wife.

Sangharakshita was a popular teacher and a prolific author. His writings are easy to read, yet instructive and profound. They are suitable for the ‘novice’ as well as

the 'specialist'. When I asked Dhammachari Lokamitra where he thought the Thai audience should begin reading in order to appreciate Sangharakshita, I got these three titles: 1) *What is the Sangha? The Nature of Spiritual Community* 2) *The Ten Pillars of Buddhism*, and 3) *The History of My Going for Refuge*. The Santi Asoke movement commissioned Saksit Srisundhorn to translate the first two titles. The third title was translated by Dakini for the Thai-Tibet Center under the auspices of the Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation.

On the invitation of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Sangharakshita accepted to be its honorary member. He had donated a set of all his writings to my alma mater, the University of Wales in Lampeter, and another set to Suansivamoksa, which is part of the Dhammadrops Foundation, in Chiang Mai.

In the final years of his life, Sangharakshita lived quietly in Herefordshire, England, and passed away peacefully on 30 October 2018. Buddhism has lost one of its finest teachers and practitioners.

Sulak Sivaruksa

## Sangharakshita: The Life and Mind of a Modern Buddhist

Sangharakshita died today, but he left an indelible mark in the history of Buddhism, and his ideas will continue to inspire many. Moving from the west to the east and back to the west, he was set to transform both. The dominant culture of the east is infused with Buddhism, but it is not one Buddhism, but many traditions of Buddhism. Sangharakshita engaged himself to learn from all the different traditions of Buddhism available to him. This engagement with diverse forms of Buddhism never led him to take a sectarian approach to Buddhism, and he saw

fundamental unity in diverse forms of Buddhism.

To understand is one thing, but to translate that understanding into an action is another, perhaps the most arduous, thing. That translation of essential understanding of Buddhism into practice in different context is what Sangharakshita did and achieved. He was the foremost voice of Buddhism in Western contemporary society. Intellectual engagement with Buddhism started with the encounter of the West with the east from the last 300 years; this is not to say that the ideas did not spread across prior to that, but this encounter was taking place when the west was increasingly redefining itself after Enlightenment.

The diverse traditions now known as Buddhism is new trope devoided of the cultures in which the teachings of the Buddha and his disciples were rooted. To cull what is Buddhism from the culture is a difficult task which Sangharakshita undertook, and planting this sublime seed in the west, the flowering of can be seen in the form of the community that he developed, known as Triratna.

Besides being a great communicator, he was a class poet, and encouraged creative impulse with in people to take a form communicable to others. The aesthetic quality that he brought alive in the study and practice of Buddhism is one of his noble qualities.

As Buddhism in the west started becoming cultural, he encouraged the experimental dimension of Buddhism, in which he encouraged application of Buddhist laws and principles in the particular context of the modern west. He founded a Sangha that did not involve dichotomy of monks and laypeople, he encouraged people to take Buddhism to their hearts and lives, irrespective of their vocations and life styles. This was the demonstration of the efficacy of Buddhism to be relevant in any given human situation.

His love for Buddhists in India was deep. In many ways inspired by the life and mission of Babasaheb Ambedkar, he contributed to whatever he could to strong then the Buddhist movement in India. One can say that



he was one of the first few people who saw the implications of the Buddhist movement in India. He became a bridge between two disparate societies of Britain and India. This bridge became a source of new ways to commune and transcend even the most unlikely boundaries of the social groups, so different, but united by the same aspirations.

Sangharakshita was anti-race and anti-caste. He was against injustice and discrimination in any form, and therefore the community he founded, he expected to embody humanity alone as a principle of association. He however set a stringent standard that the community thus constituted must strive for creating human values: the challenge that Buddhism faces all over the world.

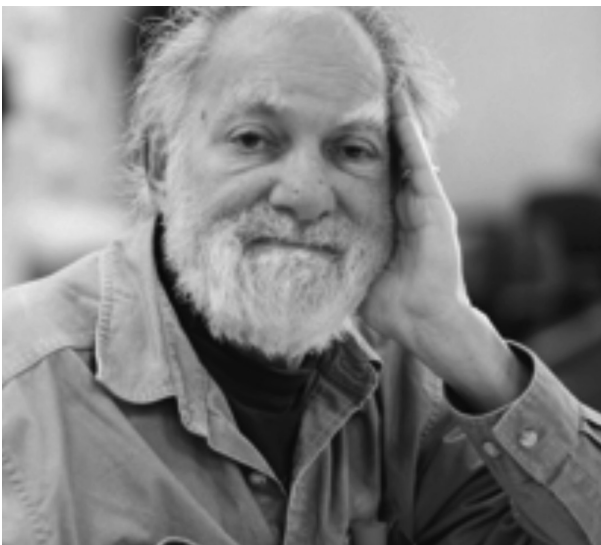
The life of Ugyen Sangharakshita is the evidence of transformational power of Buddhism through a dedicated life committed to the triple treasure: Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha.

May he rest in the peace of Nibbana!

**Mangesh Dahiwale**

## Bernie Glassman Passes Away

18 January 1939 - 4 November 2018



The Zen Peacemakers, a global organization integrating Zen practice and social action that he launched in 1980, sent out a message to their members announcing his passing and saying that more details would be available at a later time. The organization, which he founded with his late wife, Roshi Sandra Jishu Holmes, had been called the Zen Community of New York until 1996. The Zen Peacemakers is perhaps best known for leading “Bearing Witness” meditation retreats, which take practitioners to the sites of terrible tragedies such as Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Glassman, who was born in Brooklyn, started studying Zen in 1967 with Taizan Maezumi Roshi (1931–95), who named him as his successor upon his death. Glassman went on to transmit the dharma to a number of well-known teachers, including but not limited to Roshi Joan Halifax, Pat Enkyo O’Hara Roshi, and Peter Muryo Roshi Matthiessen.

Glassman was also a prolific author, writing books such as *Instructions to the Cook: A Zen Master’s Lessons in Living a Life That Matters*, *Infinite Circle: Teachings in Zen*, *Bearing Witness: A Zen Master’s Lessons in Making Peace*, as well as *The Dude and the Zen Master with Jeff Bridges*, and *On Zen Practice and The Hazy Moon of Enlightenment with Maezumi Roshi*.

In January 2016, Glassman suffered a stroke, from which he partially recovered. He later discussed his rehabilitation and shared his thoughts on life’s great unknowns.

Glassman was also known as a social worker, an engineer, and a clown. In 2009, at the age of 70, he started a new project called the Zen Houses, which created residential dharma centers in impoverished neighborhoods, where Zen practitioners could also offer social services.

*Tricycle* is honored to have been able to call Glassman a friend for many years and to have had the opportunity to share his wisdom.

**Matthew Abrahams**

*The influential Zen teacher and activist Roshi Tetsugen Bernie Glassman died Sunday morning in Massachusetts. He was 79.*



# In Memory of Reinhard Shlagintweit

12 March 1928 - 13 October 2018



Reinhard Shlagintweit was the oldest and the best German friend that I have ever had. He passed away recently. I first knew him in 1966 when he was the Minister of the Federal Republic of the German Embassy in Bangkok. He rented a big house near the Thewet Palace. Unlike other diplomats, he didn't enjoy playing golf and bridge. Nor did he like attending social events. Rather, he preferred the company of intellectuals, especially from the younger generation. This was how I got to know him. I was a frequent guest at his house. We would listen to music and discuss a myriad of topics over fine dining. His wife was constantly away, but his children were always around. His children spoke Thai fluently.

After completing his post in Bangkok, Reinhard returned to (West) Germany and lived in Bad Godesberg, Bonn. He didn't want his children to forget Thai. Therefore, he asked me to find Thai students (one per year) who would like to spend a year abroad with his family. He would take care of all the related expenses. Over the years, I found him several.

He began his life as diplomat in Turkey, and then

Afghanistan. He was a specialist on the Middle East. Later, he became Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. At that time, I had fled the Tanin Kraivixien dictatorship to England. Reinhard wanted me to live with him in Saudi Arabia. I had to decline the offer because London was the nerve center of communications. However, my family and I were guests at his wife's house in (West) Germany on several occasions. They always took good care of us.

His wife was from a prosperous family, which owned a well-known newspaper and a publishing house. She was trained as a psychotherapist. Later, she began to study and practice Buddhism seriously. Reinhard did not declare his religious affiliation. However, he was interested in Buddhist meditation and practiced yoga. He liked to bicycle to work at the Foreign Office in Bonn. It was quite a distance. He would take a ride home with the Foreign Office car—carrying the bicycle on a rack.

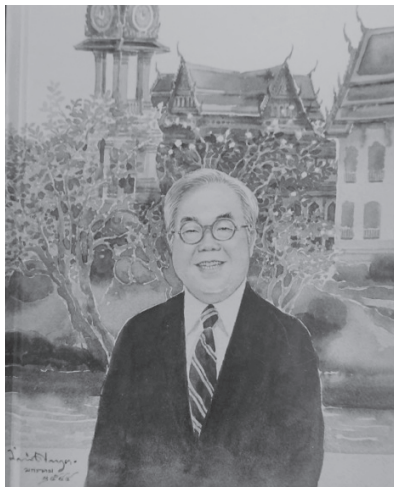
The Shlagintweits led a quiet and simple life. They were both very intelligent, yet humble. I had also introduced Michael Baumann, one of my kalyanamitta, to Reinhard. I told Reinhard that Michael was a principled and idealistic young man who wanted to see democracy in Burma. From then on, Reinhard had assisted Michael in various ways.

Subsequently, Reinhard headed the Political Department for Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East at the Foreign Office. The German foreign minister once informed him that Reinhard's position actually wielded more power than the French foreign minister at the time. At this point in time, my life was in danger again. I had to flee the Suchinda Kraprayoon dictatorship. Reinhard convinced the German Ambassador in Bangkok to allow me to seek refuge in his official residence for one week. From then on, I escaped to Laos and ultimately Sweden.

Reinhard and I were life-long kalyanamitta. He had benefitted innumerable people. I am simply one of them. When his wife passed away a few years earlier, he went to live with his daughter in Bavaria, his birthplace. He would spend his last days there too.

I will remember the goodness and support of this kalyanamitta for the rest of my life.

**Sulak Sivaraksa**



### Life with a Choice

Sulak Sivaraksa

Princess Sirindhorn presided over the cremation ceremony of Chai-Anan Samudavanija, which was held at the royal crematorium of Wat Debsirindra on 3 November 2018. The funeral host distributed copies of Chai-Anan's autobiography *Life with a Choice*, a 500-page hardcover book with an exquisite painting by national artist Chakrabhand Posayakrit on the front cover, to the attending guests. Hopefully, the funeral host would also allow this book to be reprinted and sold in the market in order to reach a wider audience.

Chai-Anan probably intended his *Life with a Choice* as a contrast to Karuna Kusalasaya's autobiography *Life without a Choice*. Karuna was born into poverty. As a young Buddhist novice, he travelled on a pilgrimage to India with the Venerable Lokanatha. He then won first

place in the Hindi language national competition in India. After World War Two broke out, he was disrobed and incarcerated as prisoner of war, since India was a British colony, and Thailand had declared war on England. Karuna's autobiography was written from the perspective of someone from the bottom-rung of society who had a rare opportunity to serve his country: he was a secret envoy to the People's Republic of China. Of course, the Thai government would subsequently betray and imprison him for many years.

As for Chai-Anan, he was born into a middle-class family, and eventually experienced upward social mobility. He was educated at Vajiravudh College, a private all-boys boarding school. Also, he went to study abroad in India, New Zealand, and the United States. After completing his PhD in the US, he came back to Thailand to work as university professor. He got to rub shoulders with the middle and upper classes through his academic and political roles. With the necessary social and cultural capital, he became Headmaster of Vajiravudh College and President of the Royal Society of Thailand. Unfortunately, he did not rise to become a Privy Councillor, or an adviser to the monarch. In any case, it seems that he had rejected any ministerial position in every government.

In *Life with a Choice*, Chai-Anan was quite frank. The reader could sense his feebleness or indecisiveness on various matters. He openly admitted that works by Luang Wichitwathakan and Mr. Kukrit Pramoj had influenced him. He also noted that Kukrit and Sulak Sivaraksa were intellectual foes who had sparred over many issues. However, he did not make it clear on which side he stood in the Kukrit-Sulak feud. His appreciation of Luang Wichit was also uncritical.

It was nice to read about his personal and family life. I had an opportunity to know both of his parents. I can confirm that they were decent and honorable people. His father, Chana Samudavanija, was the Thai ambassador to Cambodia. Both the Queen consort and King Sihanouk held him in high regard. Khun Chana had even recorded an interview with King Sihanouk in Beijing. It was a great interview in which the king openly discussed every issue. I had listened to it once. Unfortunately, the Samudavanija family did not keep a copy of this interview.

With David Morrell, Chai-Anan co-authored *Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction, Revolution*. In a section, they discussed the role of the *Social Science Review* and other intellectual outlets on the event of 14 October 1973. Interestingly, they linked the origins of the democratic protests and movements to these in-

tellectual outlets.

Giving an account of oneself is never easy. Unconsciously or otherwise, Chai-Anan at times failed to speak the whole truth in the autobiography. For example, he mentioned that before the 14 October event, he was in Singapore with me. We then travelled back to Siam together. What Chai-Anan did not mention is that when Sanya Dharmasakti became prime minister, he came to my house and asked me to take him to meet the new premier. He stated, “Khun Sulak, we have fought along with the students and have won. We should not abandon them and should play a role in the new government.” I disagreed with him. For me, the actual winner was General Kris Sivara, who had used the students as pawns to topple the “three tyrants”—Narong, Praphas, and Thanom. Chai-Anan was unfazed. He implored me to take him to see Ajarn Sanya. I had known Ajarn Sanya quite well. We worked together at the Buddhist Association of Thailand and the Komol Keemthong Foundation (KKF). More precisely, he was president of KKF, which I founded. In fact, before I went to Singapore, we held a KKF board meeting at the Buddhist Association. After the meeting, Ajarn Sanya gave me a lift home and asked me to help look after the student protestors and the younger generation. He said that they would listen to me

more than him. Anyway, I did not take Chai-Anan to meet Ajarn Sanya. He then successfully approached Ajarn Sanya via Khun Sumalee Viravaidya—then a columnist of the *Bangkok Post* and an influential voice. As it turned out, both became members of the constitution drafting committee.

If I am correct, Chai-Anan’s *Life with a Choice* began as a *Manager* magazine serial. With a competent editor to cut out the repetitive parts, double-check the facts, and smoothen the prose, it would have been an

even better book. An example will suffice: Somsak Xuto received his PhD from Manchester not the London School of Economics (LSE).

In any case, Chai-Anan’s *Life with a Choice* is an important book. It should be revised, edited, and made available to the public at large.

S

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Morrell’s wife later divorced him and remarried. She taught Thai at UC, Berkeley, and wrote an important book: *A Civilized Woman: M.L. Boonlua Debyasuvarn, and the Thai Twentieth Century* by Susan Kepner.



## INVITATION 2019

### *10 Years of Social Innovation School for Wellbeing Studies and Research*

*South East Asia campus of  
the Right Livelihood College*

#### **7 - 21 July**

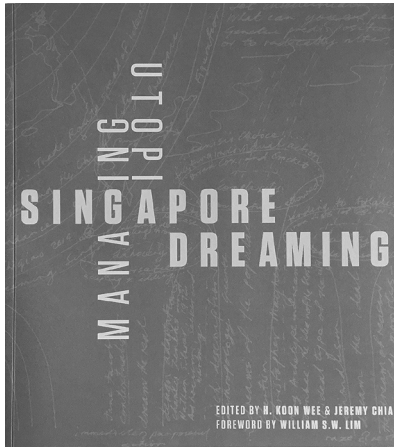
Annual Chulalongkorn University Right Livelihood Summerschool (CURLS) including Wongsanit Ashram retreat, academic exchanges at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, action research in rural Chiang Mai province and Earth Trusteeship Forum

#### **19 - 21 July**

### *Nature Rights, Global Citizenship and Reclaiming 'The Commons': The Rise of Earth Trusteeship*

The Earth Trusteeship Forum will highlight the 2019 Right Livelihood public lecture with **Raúl Montenegro**, Prof. of Evolutionary Biology, University of Cordoba, Argentina, Right Livelihood Award laureate (The ‘Alternative Nobel Prize’) 2004. With intercultural and multi-stakeholder dialogue, public CURLS presentations, theatre improvisation and partnership co-creation World Café.

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY, BANGKOK, THAILAND



## Singapore Dreaming: Managing Utopia - Reflections from a Designer in the Making

*Chian Ying Xuan*

I

As I write this review (which I prefer to call a reflection, as my writing is really more reflective than evaluative), I feel deeply grateful. I happen to be at an interesting point in my life as an aspiring architect, which makes this undertaking seem particularly momentous and edifying.

I'll explain.

I consider myself to be in transition. In the past few months, a good many things have changed in my life; my years as a frisky, hot-headed adolescent are coming to a close as I gradually assume not only the responsibilities of an adult, but also the perspective of one.

Upon graduation from junior college, I began working part-time. This opened my eyes to what I till then only understood vicariously. The 'real world' was, hitherto, an abstruse concept that only grown-ups discoursed on, often quite despondently.

Tears shed and lessons learnt, I realized school was, in fact, decidedly utopian.

Reading *Dreaming* was therefore a poignant experience. The concept of utopia is an enduring theme, and, relating to my own experience of transition shock, left me pondering upon the implications of striving for a utopian Singapore.

The book's title is rather intriguing. The word 'dreaming' brings to mind notions of intellectual and spiritual freedom, intensity, experimentation, fearlessness. 'Utopia', on the other hand, describes an idyllic, intricately engineered ecosystem with a painstakingly maintained, fine-tuned balance of all elements. Coincidentally, I was also interning while poring over this book, and confronted this paradox when I had to "tame" my wild, idealistic ideas of megastructures, intelligent systems and pop-up microcosms (perhaps cliché for many a young designer) in favour

of grids, boxes and blocks. Thankfully, this is slowly changing in Singapore, as we begin to embrace architectural experimentation and innovation, albeit prudently.

The seemingly paradoxical concepts of dreaming and utopia intertwine with each other in unexpected ways throughout the book. Utopia, as a concept, is a lot more subjective than I had earlier thought. The architect's utopia would differ from that of the artist's, as it would from the historian's, the geographer's, the politician's, the economist's, the playwright's. And regardless, we dream. We all dream, together.

Dreaming is authoritative and ambitious, yet remarkably relatable. Reading it was like trawling through Pandora's box; the tone is often sombre, and the writing is served raw and straight-up, free from the overt political correctness which often hinders wholesome discussions. Make no mistake the material is dense. Some sections even seemed, if I may,



sesquipedalian; I perused them with care, nonetheless. Opinions are honest, critical, sometimes acrimonious, but never sanctimonious or idealistic. Yet, just like Pandora's box, the book offers hope... even if conditionally.

*Dreaming* has also reframed the way I understand the built environment's place in our world, by traversing historical, geographical, political, social and cultural perspectives to examine our island state not solely as a physical system of infrastructures, but also as a tapestry of people, stories, and aspirations. Further supporting this interdisciplinary approach were some powerfully written prologues, which were for me as much tone-setters as exercises in metacognition. Of special note was Professor van Schaik's proposition for intellectual discourse, which, as I understand it, encompasses three modes of thinking; the first being absolutism, the second, progressivism, and the third, individualism. The latter approach, that of the power of the individual, is a concept I have chosen to explore further in my architectural education.

For the admittedly opinionated individual that I am, *Dreaming* struck home; I was left empowered and repentant all at once. My life, barring teenage angst and the occasional less-

than-ideals, has been one of privilege. I was then made to question: had I unknowingly become a beneficiary and participant of what the book fundamentally stood against: misguided discourse in ivory towers, materialism, purification and segregation? At the same time, I saw myself facing an immense moral obligation towards society, and hopefully, I have some credibility (it's always nice to know that one's values, if formed almost entirely from day-to-day interactions and social media feeds, do not deviate too far from those of the experts and veterans one respects). I wonder, as a next-generation designer, is this not then my calling?

Speaking of this new-found responsibility and the interdisciplinarity of my chosen field, I am at present facing somewhat of an identity crisis. Once I was a passive spectator of this convolution of political debates, equality activism, environmental campaigns and so forth, but of late I constantly find myself having to pick a side, to find a voice, to make a stand. And believe me I am apprehensive. Who am I as a designer? I often ask myself. What do I stand for? Which movements do I admire and equivalently, which ones do I abhor? How can I keep from living in another's shadow? Is

there a sweet spot between political correctness and blind rebellion? And how can I achieve it while relentlessly pushing boundaries?

For me at least, *Dreaming* provides assurance. It pulled my focus from self-interest towards public interest, from the intellectual towards the visceral, from the objective towards the subjective. That was illuminating, as the narcissistic attitudes and consumerist values sometimes unwittingly promulgated by the design industry made me uncomfortable. Reading *Dreaming* helped me eliminate many variables by asking fundamentally what I could do in my capacity (and ties in quite nicely with Professor Von Schaik's position on the power of the individual). It then didn't take me long to figure out what kind of a designer I wanted to be.

Further, as the book clearly shows, world issues are not uncharted waters in architectural discourse, so no longer did I feel as though it was solely my undertaking to change things, or that I had to start from ground zero. This perception is difficult to change, and could be why we as a nation, in all our modernized and meticulously purified state, are struggling to come to terms with reform. *Dreaming* wants us to dream, and for now we must accept that this dreaming may



take place in uncertainty and fear. But fear and adversity are powerful motivators.

*Dreaming* also suggests the possibility of finding a middle ground between ‘hardware’ and ‘heartware’. While we should not be complacent with status quo, rather than pushing for radicalism and paradigm shifts, *Dreaming* takes the sensible stance of recollection, reflection, and recalibration.

## II

Superficial ‘paper talk’ is frequently mentioned in *Dreaming*. This observation brought back two memories for me.

The first would be my experience at the Shine Youth Festival in 2011. The theme for that year was ‘Enough Talk, Just Do!’, which was well delivered in the festival’s activities; the image of people frenetically shoving ice cream down their throats in an eating contest, or engaging in a public pillow fight, was memorable, if not slightly appalling. Just a few years later, I delved into the world of urban design and policy in preparation for architecture school. Looking back at what seemed like no more than a fun-filled public event, I realized this ‘just-do’ spirit is becoming increasingly scarce, not only in

architectural discourse, but across the board, and perhaps just what we need to keep going.

Another, more recent memory is an overseas lecture held by my university last year. A similar sentiment of ‘much talk without action’ was shared. I became mindful of this during my involvement in design projects in university, which had me realizing that scaling down often made it easier to transform dreams to reality. Singapore is complex, but we are compact and adaptable. There is reason to be hopeful.

The notion of discourse without effective action extends to our environmental sustainability efforts, which was also discussed at length in *Dreaming*. As architects, we cannot evade discussions about the environment and the impact buildings have on it. This is ironic as the profession is centred around intercepting the natural environment.

I concur that Singapore’s greening efforts is sometimes misguided. Since moving to the UK and beholding the vast landscapes of the Peak District, I have openly lamented how we have mostly manmade versions back home. At the same time, I was mindful not to be deluded by greener pastures (literally). We are scarce in hinterlands. No amount of dreaming will change

that, but we can make whatever little we have work for us.

Professor H Koon Wee mentions the foremost need to concede the superiority of nature. I was reminded of a quote by renowned chef Marco Pierre White, whom I admire greatly, on how “Mother Nature is the true artist”, and that cooks ought to “allow her to shine.” I like to think that the same philosophy can be espoused by architects; like cooks, we negotiate with nature. We should design not only to preserve and sustain the natural environment, but also to shape positive human behaviours especially in the young. With that in mind, I find it difficult to be too critical of Singapore’s greening endeavours. I had an inspiring biology teacher, who nurtured a love for nature in his students, and to have benefited from the educational programmes that took me on adventures into our natural heritage. These would not have been possible without ‘techno-greening’. The Botanic Gardens also never fails to mesmerize me. And so, looking at sustainability as a long-term, ongoing project, as Dr. Kagan suggests, embracing technological intervention could be a positive first step, but we need to go further (in this case, by supporting symbiosis, rather than a one-sided reliance, between nature and technology). This ap-

plies to all aspects of sustainability.

The other idea broadly discussed in *Dreaming* in relation to environmental sustainability is the futility of arbitrary rating systems, which was posited to propagate superficially 'eco' designs. By extension, the effect of excessive benchmarking and streamlining in education was predicated to stifle growth in the creative arts and the humanities.

This resonated with me deeply. Artistic expression is my lifeblood; it's what helps me is anticipating, not fearing, life's mysteries. Most fail not in recognizing the importance of the visceral, but the necessity of it. This is something I set out to change in as a designer as well.

Before reading *Dreaming*, I felt alienated from the local arts and culture scene. I had always felt that, given our comparatively brief history as a nation, we were desperately in search for compelling narratives.

Come junior college, I took art seriously as a medium of self-expression. I then began to relate better with local artists, seeing myself as one of them. *Dreaming* cemented this vicarious sense of camaraderie; through the analyses of local works, I uncovered a world of soul-stirring stories I never knew. Perhaps, it is due time to re-examine the influence

globalization has had on my views on local art.

*Dreaming* also discusses a compromise between control and autonomy through writings on censorship on the arts, which, it is acknowledged, we can never be completely free from.

While art can be liberating, I personally am not a proponent of soulless shock art. We need to distinguish and embrace the diverse ways in which art manifests and functions in Singapore, and to trust that we have the sensibilities to contemplate and grow from them, not have them own our sensibilities. Whether it's the soaps on television or abstract installations at the National Gallery, ought we not to celebrate the ubiquity of the arts? The Singaporean artist himself also needs to constantly question his motivations. What does his

art communicate? For whom is his art intended? Only when these questions are truthfully answered can authenticity shine through amidst this tug-of-war with the Establishment.

Reflecting upon *Dreaming* as a whole, the biggest question I had in my mind was how I would reconcile the views I held in my adolescence, which have been, to a certain extent, affirmed by this book -with my vision and responsibility as a designer. While I have not found an answer yet, for now, I do have a renewed perspective and the ambition to seek creative solutions for the challenges to come.



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*Singapore Dreaming: Managing Utopia*  
Edited by H. Koon Wee & Jeremy Chia.

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# The 25<sup>th</sup> Sem Pringpuangkeo Public Lecture

## Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2019,

### 15.00 – 18.00 hrs.

At Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation (Suan Ngern Mee Ma),  
Charoennakoran Road (Between Soi 20-22), Klongsan, Bangkok

#### Public Lecture

## *RADICALLY HAPPY: guide to the mind and society*



#### Programme Schedule

15.00-16.00 Registration

16.00-16.10 Welcome Remarks by **Mr. Surasee Kosolnawin**  
(President, Sathirakoses-Nagapradeepa Foundation)

16.10-16.20 Opening Remarks by **Mr. Chutchawal Pringpuangkeo**  
(Director, SEM Pringpuangkeo Foundation)

16.20-16.30 Thai Flute music by **Norapattara Phabanjongjit**

16.30-16.40 Introduction of Kyabgön Phakchok Rinpoche

16.40-17.30 PUBLIC LECTURE

**RADICALLY HAPPY: guide to the mind and society**  
by **Kyabgön Phakchok Rinpoche**, Chokgyur Lingpa Foundation, Nepal

17.30-17.50 Q&A and exchanges of ideas

17.50-18.00 Closing Remarks by **Sulak Sivaraksa**

With translation from English to Thai & Thai to English by **Kuhn Sucharitakul**

For the full programme, visit <http://www.semsikkha.org> and [www.snf.or.th](http://www.snf.or.th)

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