BUDDHIST ECONOMICS AND THAILAND’S SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

• THE SHADOW OF MAX WEBER
• BUDDHISM VS. BUDDHISMS
• NIRVANA & COPING WITH LIFE’S DILEMMAS
• APPLYING YESTERDAY’S TEACHINGS TO TODAY’S PROBLEMS
CHIANG MAI, THAILAND
TRADITIONAL LIVELIHOOD
CHIANGMAI VALLEY
RICE THRESHING
NONTABURI. TRANSPORTING COCONUTS
KLONG NET FISHING
RURAL MONASTERY NORTHERN THAILAND
RURAL MONASTERY NORTHERN THAILAND
CHALLENGES OF MODERNITY
Sathorn Garden Residential Condominium on South Sathorn Road
TRADITIONAL MARKET
Industrialisation, once seen as the answer to Thailand’s rural poverty, now poses an imminent threat to society, writes TARA BUKAKMORSIRI. Related reports on page 24.

FROM the central plains up to the mountains, upper the complex Khun Than mountain chain has been compared to the moonland leading to the Chiang Mai-Lamphun Basin. This has inspired some people to see the picture of a garden city with excellent views to help push the rapid growth in Chiang Mai Province. Few cities are blessed to be one of Chiang Mai’s satellite cities that Lamphun.

In fact, Lamphun, the centre of the ancient Haripunchai region, has always been agriculturally oriented. Anthropologists in the Chiang Mai-Lamphun area have described the perspective here as one of the most beautiful in the world.

Despite Lamphun’s long passage through historical and social changes, the city has always managed to retain its small-town atmosphere, with an intimate focus on agriculture, Buddhism, and culture.

In 1976, a survey was conducted by the City Planning Office and the Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand to assess the feasibility of establishing industrial estates in Lamphun under the garden city and satellite town concept.

It was anticipated that Lamphun would become Chiang Mai’s satellite city and developing nearby villages would help promote growth in Chiang Mai. Upon completion of the project, Lamphun would become economically its status would be maintained.

Thus Lamphun’s destiny has to be build on a foundation of agricultural fields and farms have been replaced by automated factories. The city has never been seen in this way.

The result has been the situation of the city, which has been a peaceful one. The city now has an industrial estate that houses a factory with a daily capacity of 8,000 rubber sheets and is the distribution hub for rubber products to the local and international markets.
Worshipping at the altar of hedonism

Three to four days before the moon reaches its monthly fullest, hordes of partygoers to Ko Pha-ngan, Surat Thani are unusually crowded. Boatloads of all ages gather to pick up throngs of tourists, most of them foreigners, and take them to a party — the infamous Full Moon Party held once a month on this lush island in the Gulf of Thailand.

"A private world of your own," the party's slogan promises. The Full Moon Party is a dream world for worshippers of the such drink andodyne binge. It is a coveted destination of foreign tourists staying in Thailand, whether at Samui, Phi Phi, Phuket, Patong, or Krabi. Even those travelling to neighbouring countries like Singapore or Malaysia make their way here, yearning to attend the belted events once in their lifetimes.

Those who come to the party for the first time, even during the low season when there are not so many foreigners, feel like they've lost in another world. During the high season, the beach gets so crowded that people are stepping on one another.

Crowds gather on the beach during the daytime (above). At night, shouting out to break dampness in any dampness looking for the House watch one but I simply hold it," he said.
Prostitution as a family trade
CHALLENGE TO TRADITIONAL BUDDHIST PRACTICE?
IT AIN’T MCDONALDS!
CHETUPHON MONASTERY, CHIANG MAI
TRADITIONAL MONASTIC MORNING CHANTING
FOREST MONASTERY CHIANG DAO MOUNTAIN
LUANG PU SIM CAVE SANCTUARY CHIANG DAO
MONASTIC RESPONSES TO ECONOMIC CHALLENGES:
LUANG PU CHAN KUSALO, WAT PHRA DHAMMAKAYA, SANTI ASOK
MONK’S KUTI. PA DARAPHIROM MONASTERY. MAE RIM, THAILAND
FRUIT TREES ON THE MONASTIC COMPOUND
BUDDHA IMAGE HALL (VIHARA). PA DARAPHIROM
FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS FOUNDED IN 1974, BY 1996 FEDRA HAD SPONSORED PROJECTS IN 89 VILLAGES IN 3 PROVINCES THAT INCLUDED RICE, WATER BUFFALO, AND CATTLE BANKS, A CREDIT UNION, CO-OPS, AND EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS TO TRAIN VILLAGE YOUTH IN MODERN AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES, AND MARKETABLE VOCATIONAL SKILLS.
KRADAT SA (MULBERRY) PAPER PRODUCTS
BACKSTRAP LOOM
WAT DHAMMAKAYA. PATHUM THANI. (1978)
WAT DHAMMAKAYA BUDDHA IMAGE
THE ABBOT. DHAMMAJAYO
MASS COMMUNAL CEREMONIES
RELIGIOUS CONSUMERISM?
“URBAN THAI SOCIETY IS RULED BY CONSUMER CULTURE, AND THE DHAMMAKAYA MOVEMENT--BY INTEGRATING CAPITALISM INTO ITS STRUCTURE--HAS BECOME POPULAR WITH CONTEMPORARY URBAN THAIS WHO EQUATE EFFICIENCY, ORDERLINESS, CLEANLINESS, ELEGANCE, GRANDEUR, SPECTACLE…AND MATERIAL SUCCESS WITH GOODNESS. DHAMMAKAYA, THEN, COULD BE VIEWED AS A CAPITALIST VERSION OF BUDDHISM AIMED AT URBAN THAIS WHO ARE USED TO COMFORT, CONVENIENCE, AND THE INSTANT GRATIFICATION FOUND IN CONSUMER SOCIETY.” (SANITSUDA EKACHAI)
VEGETARIAN PRODUCTS
CRITIQUE OF VIOLENCE IN THAI SOCIETY
CRITIQUE OF CONSUMERISM
CRITIQUE OF “NIGHTCLUB” CULTURE
อาหาร "แมงสวิริติ"
งดเว้นเนื้อสัตว์
ตั้งบารุง ได้บูญ
“WHAT BODHIRAK HAS DONE IS OFFER DISSATISFIED BUDDHISTS AN ALTERNATIVE. IN CONTRAST TO MAIN-STREAM MONKS, SANTI ASOK DISCIPLES FOLLOW STRICT MORAL DISCIPLINE, EATING ONLY ONE VEGETARIAN MEAL A DAY AND LIVING A SPARTAN LIFE. THEY ALSO REJECT OBJECT WORSHIP AND BUDDHISM BY CLERGY. WHILE THE FEUDALISTIC CLERGY HAS LOST TOUCH WITH THE WORLD, SANTI ASOK EFFECTIVELY ATTRACTS THOSE DISILLUSIONED WITH MATERIALISM BY OFFERING THEM A SENSE OF MISSION AND BELONGING TO A CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY.” (SANITSUDA EKACHAI)
CONSTRUCTING A BUDDHIST ECONOMIC ETHIC

I. THE MIDDLE WAY AND THE VALUE OF MODERATION

• THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS & NOBLE 8-FOLD PATH

• THE STORY OF KING MANDHATU

• BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU & THE LAW OF NATURE

• A.T. ARIYARATNA. SARVODAYA SHRAMADANA AND THE ‘NO-POVERTY’ SOCIETY
II. CONSUMERISM, WEALTH, AND THE VALUE OF GENEROUS GIVING (DANA)

• THE SOCIA LLY ENGAGED BUDDHIST CRITIQUE SULAK SIVARAKSA. INEB

• PRINCE VESSANTARA: BALANCING GENEROUS GIVING, DUTY, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

• POVERTY AND THE DUTY OF THE KING (MAKING FUN OF POLITICIANS)

• DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE AND THE LAW OF NATURE
III. RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AND WELL-BEING

- E.F. SCHUMACHER (*SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL*) ON WORK
- BUDDHIST ECONOMICS AND THE ECONOMY OF SCALE
- P.A. PAYUTTO (*BUDDHIST ECONOMICS*) WORK & LEISURE
- METAECONOMICS
IV. SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY (THAILAND)

“RECENTLY SO MANY PROJECTS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED, SO MANY FactORIES BUILT, THAT IT WAS THOUGHT THAILAND WOULD BECOME A LITTLE TIGER AND THEN A BIG TIGER. PEOPLE WERE CRAZY ABOUT BECOMING A TIGER. BEING A TIGER IS NOT IMPORTANT. THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO HAVE A SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY. A SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY MEANS TO HAVE ENOUGH TO SUPPORT OURSELVES.”
KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ, DECEMBER 4, 1997