

THE JAMES BACKHOUSE LECTURE
1995

Emerging Currents in the Asia-Pacific

Donna Kyle Anderton & Barbara Baker Bird
Bangkok, Thailand

The James Backhouse Lectures

This is one of a series of lectures instituted by Australia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends on the occasion of the establishment of that Yearly Meeting in 1964.

This lecture was delivered in Adelaide during the Yearly Meeting.

James Backhouse was an English Friend who visited Australia from 1832 to 1838. He and his companion, George Washington Walker, travelled widely but spent most of their time in Tasmania. It was through their visit that Quaker Meetings were first established in Australia.

The two men had access to individual people with authority in the young colonies, and with influence in the British Parliament and social reform movement. In painstaking reports and personal letters to such people, they made practical suggestions and urged legislative action on penal reform; on land rights and the treatment of Aborigines, and on the rum trade. James Backhouse was a botanist and naturalist. He made careful observations and published full accounts of what he saw, in addition to encouraging Friends and following the deep concern for the convicts and the Aborigines that had brought him to Australia.

Australian Friends hope that this series of lectures will bring fresh insights into truth, often with reference to the needs and aspirations of Australian Quakerism.

David Purnell
Presiding Clerk
Australia Yearly Meeting

Copyright 1994 by
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
in Australia Incorporated

ISBN 0 909 885 37 0

Australia Yearly Meeting of
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
in Australia Incorporated

ABOUT THIS LECTURE

Australia and the United States, each on the edge of the Asia-Pacific Rim, are neighbors of the other countries in the region and active players in it.

Whether we are part of the action or not, what our governments do on our behalf in the Asia-Pacific region has tremendous effect on billions of people, their day-to-day lives and their hopes for the future. Two of these many effects are the phenomenon Brazilian Luis Ignacio Silva was the first to call Third World War, the war over debt, and the rapidly rising militarization of Asia, fueled mainly by the United States, Australia, and other Northern arms-sellers.

It's difficult to keep track of the myriad changes in Asia, the most rapidly growing area and the most rapidly changing set of peoples and cultures the world has ever seen. To try to bring into perspective the "blooming, buzzing confusion" (in William James' phrase) of this kaleidoscopic array, the lecture interprets what Donna Anderton and Barbara Bird have seen and heard in their years as Quaker International Affairs Representatives in Asia for the American Friends Service Committee.

Because so many Friends are involved in peace and development issues in the Asia Pacific and at home in Australia or the United States, they will not be surprised, that the lecture deals with such emerging issues in the region as Asian economic development; regional security issues; Asian cultures in transition; development issues; civil society in Asia; human rights in Asia; democracy, people's participation, and backlash; working for women and minorities; protecting the environment; and displaced people and peoples.

Friends may be surprised by some of what the authors have seen and heard as Asian perspectives on these matters. The lecture gives voice to Asians in order to present Asian viewpoints most accurately and compellingly. For each major topic, Queries, are presented for, consideration, and to guide our future thought.

The lecture closes with "Opportunities for Friends: What can we do?" a proposal of six simple steps we can take to be part of the solution in the Asia-Pacific rather than part of the problem. Peacemaking is something we can do with a focus on the Asia-Pacific. As Quaker International Affairs Representatives, Donna Anderton and Barbara Bird have been doing so since August 1989 in close concert with Australian Friends.

About the Authors

Since August 1989 Donna Kyle Anderton and Barbara Baker Bird have been Quaker International Affairs Representatives in Asia for the American Friends Service Committee. Based first in Hong Kong and in Bangkok since in August 1990, they have been travelling and working throughout much of Asia. While their primary focus has been southeast Asia, China, and Tibet, they have also travelled and worked in South Asia and East Asia.

Donna Anderton is an educator with broad and varied experience. As an instructor at the University of Rochester, New York, she had a particular interest in Asian philosophies and the interface of those values with the realities in Asia. Donna was first drawn to issues of peace and justice in Asia as she was drawn to the Religious Society of Friends, through her involvement in the various mobilizations against the American war in Vietnam. Donna has worked since 1970 with individuals of many cultures: native Americans of the Navajo nation, Mexican-Americans, Chinese-Americans and African-Americans in many parts of the United States. Much of her work, while in the broad area of education, has been in the business sector: she has been a bilingual curriculum designer, teacher trainer, educational project manager, national sales manager for a firm producing high-tech devices for blind and other physically challenged persons, and a consulting and training manager for a very large U.S. corporation. In her work in Asia she has been able to blend lifelong interests in peace, justice, and Asian values with her professional skills.

Barbara Bird is a social worker with some forty years of experience. More than twelve of these years have been working in Asia, several of them with the American Friends Service Committee. In the mid 1960's she co-directed AFSC's VISA Program in India. She has worked with almost every country in Asia. As Director of Pearl Buck's Welcome House Barbara spent much time in South Korea as well as other Asian countries working on child welfare issues. Barbara's work has had a strong focus on community development, on building intercultural understanding, and against violence. In the United States she has always been actively involved promoting peace and justice. Her professional social work was frequently directed toward alleviating violence against children and women and her efforts strongly contributed to the establishment in Philadelphia of one of the first shelters in the United States for abused women and their children. She created a special program for children who were the victims of violence.

Donna and Barbara are lively members of Germantown Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where they are quite active in their community.

No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are no more than starting-points, which if followed into actual existence for only a moment are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or black, or Western, or Oriental. Yet just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities. No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things. It is more rewarding-and more difficult-to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about 'us.' But this also means not trying to rule others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies, above all not instantly reiterating how 'our' culture or country is number one (or not number one, for that matter). For the intellectual there is quite enough of value to do without *that*.

Edward W. Said,
Culture and Imperialism

*"Travelers, there are no paths.
Paths are made by walking."*

Rabindranath Tagore

For those of us who are travelling through developed countries, what we can do is to urge humanists, intellectuals and religious leaders that when your countries are fortunate to be relatively free from slavery and poverty, and when you have the conditions and resources to transcend nationalism, work toward a family of man. Whereas we, who are in a situation of great hardship, still need to cling to some form of nationalism just in order to survive. You, however, must use your position to help us all progress. You must try to stop your government from sending arms to our part of the world. Stop your government and multinational firms located in your part of the world from exploiting us. Use your influence that we too may enjoy basic human rights. Only when we can build a united world in which every problem is perceived to be a collective responsibility, will we then be able to be liberated together.

Sulak Sivaraksa,
A Buddhist Vision For Renewing Society

Contents

Introduction	1
1995: A World of Change	4
Our Challenge	9
Asia: A Region in Transition	10
Emerging Issues in Asia Today	14
Some Emerging Issues in Asia Today	
1. Asian Economic Development	19
2. Regional Security Issues	26
3. Asian Cultures in Transition	34
4. Whose Development in Asia?	41
5. Civil Society in Asia	52
6. Human Rights in Asia	58
7. Democracy, People's Participation, and Backlash	65
8. Working for Women and Minorities	72
9. Protecting the Environment	87
10. Displaced People and Peoples	91
Opportunities for Friends: What Can We Do?	94
Appendix: Selected formal gatherings facilitated by Quaker International Affairs Program since September 1989	104
References	108

Introduction

*Anna Brinton, the well-known American Quaker and a founder of the Quaker study center Pendle Hill, had a lot to say about the kinds of things that draw Quakers to work on human needs. "Friends love to go about doing good," she once supposedly remarked, "especially when it involves a lot of going about!"*¹

We take considerable meaning from Anna Brinton's witticism. We have just completed five and one half years of service as Quaker International Affairs Representatives [QIARs] in Asia for the American Friends Service Committee. AFSe's programs of international affairs work have sought in Asia since 1951 to promote understanding among people and to help create bases for cooperation rather than conflict in the region. Humbled by the thought of the footsteps we walk in, we have inherited a rich legacy from our predecessors. Again and again, sometimes in the most unexpected places, Asian people have told us how much they have benefitted from the doing good of those before us. Way has opened for our work in an amazing manner, with unimagined opportunities made possible by the high regard in which so many Asians have held our predecessors and their work.

Motivated by a desire to see how we might "go about doing good," we have really done a lot of "going about" in this assignment. Based in Bangkok since we moved our office there from Hong Kong in mid-1990, we've traveled regularly in the six ASEAN countries of Southeast Asia (Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Brunei), the three socialist nations of former Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam), Hong Kong, and the People's Republic of China. We've also travelled and worked in South and East Asia, as well as the Middle East and with many from these areas-especially India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, the Middle East, the Koreas, and Japan. We've monitored developments in Burma carefully. All this has been to aid the causes of peace, justice, development, human rights, and reconciliation, to increase contact and understanding among people divided by ideology, politics, economics, culture, or conflict.

Singly and together, we've traveled hundreds of thousands of miles in five years - by airplane, railroad, bus, auto, bemo, tuk-tuk, jeep, and four-wheel drive

"white buffalo"; by bicycle, on horseback, by mule, by oxcart, even by elephant and camel back; by ferry, by boat, by canoe, by foot, and in flood conditions by wading. Wherever the travel, whatever the means, the purpose has always been to see, hear, learn, and understand more, to seek and act on opportunities for greater peace and understanding in a region of increasingly complex conflicts and tensions. We've been able to speak truth to those in positions of power as well as to those in conditions of extraordinary vulnerability, to support those trying to change unjust policies as well as those who suffer from them, to extend encouragement and support to diverse people concerned with issues of peace and justice in the region.

In our efforts to understand issues as Asians do, we have also viewed our work in the context of increasing inter-connections Northeast, South, and Southeast Asia, and in the context of developing countries in other regions of what was once called the "Third World" but now more usually referred to as the South. We've paid considerable attention to events and issues in Japan, the Korean peninsula, and South Asia (India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal particularly), as they mirror or have bearing on issues in the adjacent region of our assignment. Living as we do in a regional crossroads city, and travelling often more than fifty per cent of the time, we've found opportunity to meet with people from virtually all parts of Asia (as well as from the Middle East, from Africa, and from Central and South America) who have knowledge and interest in Asian people and share some of their hopes, dreams, and concerns. Where we have had opportunity to learn from others-throughout our work-we have been enriched; where we have been able to stand with others, to provide an appropriate personal or Quaker presence in situations of difficulty we have been touched; where we have been able to do something, however small, that people told us or showed us made a difference in their lives, we have felt blessed.

The work has not always been easy. It has been filled with ambiguity, and it has been curiously isolating even as our lives have been intertwined with those of so many others. But as our Chinese friends in Hong Kong and the People's Republic say, it has been a precious time for us. We have especially valued the knowledge that our service, to whatever effect, has been conceived - and, we hope, carried out in the greatest tradition of Friends. This has been especially true because of the support and consultation we've had with the American Friends Service Committee, Friends at Germantown Meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Quaker Peace and Service (London and New Zealand), British Friends, Friends World Committee For Consultation, Canadian Friends Service Committee, European Friends, Australian Friends, and Quaker Service Australia.

William Penn, whose three hundred and fiftieth birthday was just celebrated in our home city of Philadelphia, put it in a way that especially speaks to us: "Let us go and see what love can do." We have done so. We have learned in a new way that real love means quite a few things in international affairs work. It means listening, with the heart and the mind, to a diversity of people including those to whose views we are not inclined, as openly as possible. It means seeking and reaching out to that of God in everyone, no matter how hidden that divine spark might be. It means doing whatever we can to relinquish ego, control, attachment and a *priori* beliefs which may jar with current reality. It most assuredly means doing everything we reasonably can to support those whose initiatives for peace and justice in their region are the only true basis for sustainable peace and humanized development.

This lecture is an effort to share with others some highlights from the work and learning we two have been engaged in more than five years during our assignment in Asia. What we have learned and done has been very much a product of efforts of our colleagues and predecessors at the AFSC and Quakers more generally, as well as of the thousands of people we've been privileged to meet with in our work and travels. The lecture following draws heavily from ideas and perceptions of people of the Asia-Pacific and others in the developing world-whose voices we hear too seldom. What we are about to share with you we offer in gratitude to and on behalf of all these people. Any mistakes that follow are of course ours alone.

Our experiences and efforts have been further shaped, refined, and tested by our many interactions with each other as colleagues and partners. We want to share with you some aspects of the situation in Asia as we see it today, from our time with the Quaker International Affairs Program of the American Friends Service Committee. It is an honor to share with Friends what we have been privileged to learn and to bring you up to date on some of the experiences of American Friends in approaching these matters. In doing so, we hope especially to raise up for all of us, as Friends and as citizens of this planet, questions we may ponder together here and raise for ourselves again and again in the coming months.

1995: A World of Change

In 1976 Stewart and Charlotte Meacham delivered to Australia Yearly Meeting the Twelfth Backhouse Lecture: *IMPERIALISM WITHOUT INVADING ARMIES: - peace, justice, and the multinationals in Southeast Asia*. At that time Charlotte and Stewart had completed some four years of service as Quaker International Affairs Representatives in Asia, based in Singapore. Nineteen years later, a generation afterward, we two, a generation younger, are particularly pleased to be here with you as the Meachams were on 4 January 1976 at the Clevedon Conference Centre in Victoria.

We are living in a time of incredible change. Change is difficult, dynamic, hopeful, disturbing, probably all of these things for all of us at different times. "May you live in interesting times" has been a traditional Chinese curse. One sure thing about change is that it waits for no one. Change is in our face, and there is nothing we can do to make it not so. What we can do is to try our best to perceive change, to weigh it, to ask ourselves what roles we can play in it as members of the human family, to look frankly at what roles we are already playing by our action and our inaction. As always, we have the opportunity to look at the glass of human progress as half empty which we may credibly say it is-or half full-which we must surely believe if we are to sustain our efforts to contribute.

Let's look at a few examples of change. Beyond such real problems as future shock generated by our rapid acceleration of growth and change, our population growth is a challenge and worry to any who think of right sharing of the earth's resources for so many. The earth's population has now reached more than five and one half billion people-so rapidly that most people who were ever born on this planet are alive today. How bad is our population problem? Reasonable people differ on this, but we must look hard at our hope that at last we may find more equitable solutions to the human problems which beset us as a people. Here are two windows into appreciating the size of the populace. It's been estimated that in 1910, the population of the earth was 1.5 billion. It has nearly quadrupled in less than a century. This is a long way from one respected demographer's estimate that the population of the earth at the time of the birth of Christ was only 250,000 people.² Most dramatic of all, perhaps, is this: While it took one million years to produce the first billion people on earth, it will now take

only ten years to add the next billion to the 5-1/2 billion the planet holds.³ What this means, according to the Philippine Population Commission, is that "at least 3 babies are born every second worldwide for an average of 255,000 births daily."⁴

Perhaps we can cope with this rapid acceleration. But there are two essential problems. Nonrenewable resources - fossil fuels and the like - are finite; without some replacement, what just scheme can we imagine that would provide fuel to some and not to others? More pressing are the problems of food and the growing water supply crisis. 93% of the next billion of world population - i.e., the next ten years' growth - will be born in the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Population is expected to soar from 5.5 billion today to 9 billion in less than fifty years; 95% of that increase will be in the poorest regions of the world, "where governments now - just look at Africa - show little ability to function, let alone to implement even marginal improvements."⁵

Positive change means the planet today produces enough food for everyone to consume 2500 calories per day (200 more than the basic minimum). But poor distribution and lack of purchasing power make a mockery today of the notion that we produce enough food to go around. Even with an 18% increase on average in food production in the developing countries of the world in the 1980s, some 800 million people around the world go hungry daily.⁶ Yet the current supply may also be sharply at risk, due in part to the very rising prosperity many have worked to share with others on the planet. Lester Brown, environmentalist president of EarthWatch, has argued quite compellingly that China's prosperity is enabling increasingly many to move from a rice-based diet to one richer in chicken, poultry, even beef (which take four, four, and seven grams of grain, respectively, to produce one gram of meat). If this trend continues, with the present trend in China to reduce crop land, China by the year 2030 could have a grain shortfall of some 216 million tonnes, more than the 1993 world surplus of 200 million tonnes. How could the world feed such a need? Brown asks. In only thirty-five years, the world might need to choose between feeding increasingly prosperous China (by trade) or downward-spiralling African nations by bailout.⁷ In just fifteen years, Asian protein consumption could increase fivefold. Thomas Fraser Homer-Dixon, head of the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at the University of Toronto, warns that "future wars and civil violence will often arise from scarcities of resources such as water, cropland, forests, and fish. Just as there will be environmentally driven wars and refugee flows, there will be environmentally-induced hard [praetorian] regimes, especially in countries with declining resource bases and history of state [military] strength."⁸

Nor is the situation better for water. It's now well known that by the end of this century more than 25 nations will face serious water shortages. Developing countries - including many in Asia - are most threatened. 1.2 billion people, nearly one of three in the developing world, have no access to clean, drinkable water. 25,000 individuals now die daily from water-related sickness, and perhaps four million children die annually from the diarrhea resulting from water-borne infections. Urban poor may pay up to twenty per cent of their income for water delivery, and water for irrigation of crops is increasingly critical. Many Asian countries now know water shortages, especially among the poor, resulting from population growth and shifts, lack of work, desertification, and other unattractive concomitants of development.

Here's another worrying datum. According to one peace organization in 1991, more than 1/12 of the peoples of the world live under governments directly controlled by the military.⁹ That's nearly half a billion people. Depending on how you perceive certain countries in Asia, the figures there may be better or worse. As to whether the circumstances of militarism are improving or deteriorating further, both in Asia-Pacific and worldwide, Friends may differ. This will be a major topic of the Lecture.

One of the greatest changes of the twentieth century has been the end of the Cold War which dominated the world arena since 1949. The breakup of the old, rigid alliances gives scope for new international relationships, new opportunities for peace, and new hopes for peoples. Longstanding alliances in many parts of the world have become more fluid. With superpowers no longer polarized and polarizing as they once were, nations have found themselves freer to form new bilateral relationships, even partnerships, with nations they had not sought out previously.

We all applaud the end of an era so filled with suspicion, danger, and the deployment of funds needed for human beings to what was said to be needed for defense. Now, at last, we might have hope of a meaningful "peace dividend," resources saved and harnessed for human needs and development. But the benefits of this great change have yet to be fully realized. In fact, "the end of the Cold War delivered neither a peace dividend nor a more peaceful world order,"¹⁰ as a friend we respect put it in a letter recently. Some of the old inequities continue even while the reason for them has been laid to rest. The very end of the Cold War has given space for new hot conflicts, as in the former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, the world does not seem to have experienced a paradigm shift, a new mindset, from the confrontational stance that characterized the Cold War.

Our experience suggests that the holding on to behaviors suited to old, outdated beliefs, is the source of a lot of pain and suffering among us. The particular deadlock of the Cold War has passed, but the use of confrontation as a means of international relations appears to have become more deeply entrenched. Surgical strikes, the sanitized approach of the Gulf War, seem to have been embraced as a new safe way to carry out the same old politics of confrontation. The truism is that with 52 major conflicts in 42 countries and 37 more countries with political violence in 1993 [in 65 developing of 79 total countries),¹¹ we've exchanged the Cold War for a hot peace. It will take a long time to persuade us that we have done anything thereby to reduce human suffering.

Australian Senator Margaret Reynolds has put the problem succinctly: "Despite the end of the Cold War ... the rhetoric of aggression is first choice of most world leaders ahead of more creative forms of ... conflict resolution."¹²

The United States, Australia, and Canada, big nations ringing the Asia-Pacific, unfortunately make the point vividly, sometimes in their rhetoric but consistently in their behavior. They continue their military activity, indeed in close concert, apparently without cessation. In the United States, the Clinton Administration acted to maintain Cold War military expenditure levels when it budgeted \$236.7 billion for military expenditures in U.S. fiscal year 1995. Indeed, "Although U.S. military spending is falling over the long term, the rate of decline is not fast relative to the momentous changes that have taken place in security perceptions," according to The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. As the Center for Defense Information notes, "The military capability of the U.S. today and for the foreseeable future will exceed by a huge margin the capability of any other nation in the world."¹³ Australia has revised its strategic planning in the post-Cold War environment. The 1993 *Strategic Review*, stating that Asia rather than the United States will be central to Australia's defence and security into the next century, had also kept military expenditures high and military relationships like the ANZUS treaty alliance strong, even as it had pursued high profile regional and international diplomatic initiatives.¹⁴ As for Canada, it has been "plying Asia-Pacific waters with its newest high-tech frigate in efforts to attract new arms customers."¹⁵ All three countries have unprecedented levels of direct military contact, war games and the like, in and with Asia. Reluctantly we may conclude about the end of the Cold War what the French proverb teaches: *Plus ça change, plus la meme chose.*

Or take another area of concern. Nearly 80% of the constitutions by which people are governed have been devised since 1965,¹⁶ according to another

research reporting in 1991. This can mean there are new opportunities for people's control of their own governance, some form of democracy, if you will. One American report claimed more than 75% of the world's population now lives in a form of democracy; if China "goes democratic," the report cheered, it would be 95%. We'll talk more realistically below about some of the limits on people's control over their destinies we encounter in Asia

Our Challenge

We are changing in this world, sometimes for the better and sometimes not. Observable human development is accompanied by growing threats and experience of disease and famine. It has been estimated that as many as 20 million may starve in 10 countries of the Horn of Africa.¹⁷ The United Nations, committed for fifty years to poverty alleviation, now reports that one person in five around the globe lives in absolute poverty. Is there no hope? There is, we believe, one sure truth. Change for the better on the world scale is not a foregone conclusion. The very risks and dangers, not to mention new disasters, we see in the midst of other optimistic signs call us to join together in our efforts to be adequate citizens and stewards on this "spaceship earth." We need try to learn what we can of what is going wrong and what is not yet going right. We need to learn, most often from those who are the least advantaged and most affected, which ideas and practices we might think sensible, even wonderful, are actually failures or disasters. We need to find the right questions to ask, the right frame for human needs, before we can hope to contribute to the right solutions. Our task is an urgent one, for which we as a species may be somewhat ill-equipped from our histories. That will not give us any relief from the task. We humans often live our lives, writer Elizabeth Bowen once wrote, as if we're in a dress rehearsal for the time we'll be called to act. But this is not a rehearsal: "The curtain has been up all along."¹⁸

Asia: A Region in Transition

Without question Asia today is emerging as a new, stronger player on the world stage. Within Asia, the largest and fastest-growing region of the world, shifting alliances have opened new opportunities as in other regions. Relations between nations of the former socialist bloc and the nations of the ASEAN alliance, for example, are now flourishing in new ways.

The breakup of old alliances in the Asia-Pacific has both ended many longstanding divisions and opened the possibilities for new forms of progress and self-reliance. New relationships mean that the great powers and large near neighbors are reassessing their goals, their relationships, their ways of doing business in Asia. China, as one example, is clearly trying to reassure the ASEAN nations of peaceful, friendly intentions. Trade is booming openly across previous lines of division, relations have been normalized among nations, and there are many dimensions of growing bilateral relationships that may contribute positively to development within countries and to reductions of tensions among countries.

But shifting alliances in Asia have also raised new questions: How will the nations of the region balance their stunning overall economic growth with needs of the growing numbers of poor? How will nations harmonize their felt needs for security in the most traditional sense and continuing economic growth with growing calls for new social service safety nets, for human rights including civil rights, for the emergence of genuine civil society in traditionally military-dominant countries?

Our perspectives on the evolving Pacific Basin and the continent of Asia are shifting rapidly, undergoing great changes as we in the countries of the West or North re-evaluate our relationships with Asia. By now it is self evident to many that [a great deal of] economic power is shifting from Europe and North America westward to Asia. With the rise of the United States as an economic power after World War II, the center of the modern world seemed to shift from Europe (the center since the sixteenth century) to the North Atlantic area. As two scholars have put it,

... the Pacific Basin has assumed such an increased importance in the international political economy as to suggest that a further westward movement of the center of the world system may be in the offing.¹⁹

Indeed, we may already have entered the Pacific century.²⁰

In 1992, Singaporean professional diplomat Tommy Koh said in an interview with the Asian Wall Street Journal: "The Asia-Pacific is a region of booming economies that is at peace with itself."²¹

While there is truth in this remark, it depends very much on what we mean by "booming economies" and "at peace with itself."

Although we focus our QIAR work on southeast Asia and China much of the time, we keep close watch on all regions of Asia. We've also travelled and worked throughout Asia, both in this assignment and in our work before it, from Japan through the Middle East. Indeed many Asian economies are booming, at least in many aspects. It's well known that Asia from Japan through Southeast Asia is the fastest growing region economically in the world. Not only Japan but the so-called Little Tigers (Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong) as well as Thailand, Malaysia, and China are leaping ahead by macro indicators. Some of this growth has actually improved conditions and opportunities for many people in these countries. Vietnam and China, in parallel though distinctive programs of *duoi moi* [renovation] and *gaige kai feng* [reform and opening up], respectively, are doing their best to manage change from their former socialist systems to more open systems incorporating market economies tailored to their needs. The drama of change in the two countries includes spectacular moves forward even as some of the old protections to individuals and groups are being lost. Neither country has yet finished assessing this large problem, and neither has a complete program for nurturing growth of the economy while developing methods of safeguarding needed human services.

But it would be quite odd to describe the economies of Burma or Cambodia (surely in the Asia-Pacific by any definition) as booming.

Similarly, throughout Asia, there are no declared wars today. But peace is more-much more-than the absence of war. Military occupation in Tibet, Burma, and East Timor; fighting in the Philippines and Cambodia, military terrorism in Burma, and such hotly contended areas as the Spratlys illustrate some areas where sustainable peace does not seem at hand. There are bases in the region for

expanded peace initiatives, to be sure, and some of the more constructive have genuine prospects to lessen contention, minimize confrontation, and support people's needs. But tensions, particularly ethnic and class tensions domestically, are high in many parts of Asia and the result is not an indication of peace. A region at peace with itself does not need more and more armament, but that is exactly what the countries in Asia with strongest economies are acquiring now, with the urging of weapons-selling Australia, United States, Canada, and, we note with emphasis, Singapore.

Chatichai Choonhavan, former Prime Minister of Thailand (deposed by military coup in 1991) made famous around the world the hope he expressed for Indochina: to "turn the battlefield into the marketplace." In a strange twist on his original meaning, that's exactly what we see in Asia today: a marketplace with the heavy sales of weapons, and corresponding technical assistance and co-operative military exercises, where once we saw only battlefields.

The burning question is whether events make it likely that nations will turn the new weapons marketplace of Asia into battlefields again.

The past five and one half years in Asia have been a time of great change, rising expectations, and renewed challenges to development, peace, justice, and international conceptions of human rights. Marker events include, of course, events at Tiananmen in 1989, the buildup to the Gulf War and war itself, the killings of unarmed peaceful demonstrators in Bangkok and in Dili, East Timor, in 1991, the destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya in 1992, the elections in Cambodia in 1993, the lifting of the embargo against Vietnam and the death of Kim II Sung in 1994.

Living in Asia as we have, we've been privileged to be involved in the fact, the aftermath, or the consequences of these and many many other events. We've had the opportunity to meet, talk, and listen with people in all walks of life and on all sides of issues they perceive, as they weigh the events, trends, opportunities, and risks in their region. Our main finding is that there is an incredible window of opportunity today for a new era in the Asia-Pacific, both intraregionally and on the world level. Friends and others need to be informed about this opportunity and to be as active as they can in appropriate ways. We stakeholders in Asia are part of the problems of the region, and we are potentially part of the solution. As one Asian thinker has written, taking security as a single example of the challenges in Asia today,

. . . in order to be strategically effective, a multilateral security system must accommodate and institutionalize the participation of NGO's and other organized expressions of civil society. Parallel to the state-to-state diplomacy must unfold a people-to-people diplomacy, the purpose of which is to check the tendency of governments to sacrifice universal popular interests to the dynamic of realpolitik among states. Regional and global peace can no longer be left to governments alone to negotiate.²²

Emerging Issues in Asia Today

In his recent book *Looking at the Sun*, Westerner James Fallows makes a key points summarized here by a reviewer:

When the West looks at the rise of Asia, it usually thinks in terms of business fundamentals. However, Asia views its recent successes not purely in economic terms but also in political achievements that are best understood within a distinct historical context that Westerners usually ignore. That context is an acute awareness of vulnerability fostered by years of Western domination and a determination to become strong. If more Americans were aware of this, they might find many of the vexing issues with Asian countries, from trade to human rights, easier to understand, says Fallows. He traces the historical experiences behind Japan's rise and the explosive growth of Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and other Southeast Asian countries. He finds that Asia's power may be economic, but it is based on a political model at odds with the ideals that have been propounded in the West since the time of Locke and Rousseau.²³

The Asian model, of collective, consensual, face-saving approaches to problems, has on the surface nothing in common with the radical, confrontational individualism which frames so much of Northern/Western thought. (We often illustrate the with the slogan of the U.S. state of New Hampshire: "Live free or die !")

Here we'll summarize some important findings of issues emerging in Asia as we have come to understand them from our years of living and working in Asia, seeking an Asian perspective rather than our own outside, Northern bias. We want to say something more about how important we feel it is to try to see things from Asians' point of view. Let's begin with an analogy. This audience may be painfully accustomed to much of the world's referring to Australia as "down under." It must be something like what Asians feel when Westerners speak of "the Orient," or the "Far East." In both cases, the speaker defines a region not as independent and respectable or autonomous; instead, the region is defined as "down under" [the rest of us] or East [of our place], what we consider important. Like other remarks people make about groups they do not belong to, when they intend to be clever, this one is probably not meant to be insensitive. But a person

is put down when s/he says so, no matter what the intention of the speaker, and some Australians have confirmed that "down under" sometimes feels like a putdown to them, albeit careless or unintended.

Perhaps we can learn a good lesson from a partly whimsical map popular in New Zealand and Australia. Its smashing design reverses North and South Poles from their usual positions at the tops and bottoms of maps, thereby showing Australia and New Zealand visually at the top of the world.

Ethnocentrism-putting ourselves at the center (or top) of our mental world-is a difficult thing to overcome. For those of us in positions of privilege and power it is probably impossible. But thinking of ourselves, our country, or the North at the center of the world (even the world of commerce) makes no sense in an age of genuine globalism and growing interdependence among nations and peoples. It's as outmoded as the Roman belief that all but they were barbar-ians. The world does not revolve around us any more than the sun revolved around the pre-Copernicans who thought it did. We need therefore to be vigilant, to work always to root out our ethnocentric references and thought patterns if we are to have any hope of working cross-culturally in partnership with others. It's like racism, we believe. Because we're white, we use the term "We" in what I'm about to say. Without a lot of good modelling early or tremendous work and effort later, we privileged whites haven't even seen the ways we hold and express racist views. Whites have needed to have this called to our attention, and then we have needed to work on it very actively ourselves. Racism, as we all no doubt agree, is a white problem (failing, shortcoming) that can only be solved to the benefit of whites and nonwhites, by whites, the privileged race, working on ourselves. Similarly, Quaker peacemaker Elise Boulding has identified for us the corresponding problem of peoples of the countries of the West (or North, as we might say today) in relationship to peoples of developing countries of the South. Elise Boulding calls this ethnocentrism, our seeing things from our own point of view, Westism. Like racism, whether intended or not, it's a derogatory way of looking at one we consider "the other": a way of looking at a person instead of looking at something from that person's point of view. It's a natural human failing, we think, but one we've got to get over if we are to relate effectively and appropriately to people unlike ourselves and to nations of the developing South. We've got to stop thinking of Australia as "down under," of others as "them," of African Americans, Australian aboriginals, Asians, Africans, and others in less developed countries in terms of what we think best for them. If we're to have an "I-Thou" relationship, a real mutual appreciation, a friendship if you will, we've got to see matters affecting others from their point of view.

So we try enumerate ten separate but simultaneous and interrelated sets of concerns we find foremost on the minds of many Asians, from the point of view of Asians as they've shared them with us in person and as we've read them in writing of Asians. These will be put in linear, western education style points, but they are informed by reports from Asians at all levels and in all dimensions of society, work, and experience.

1. Economic growth in Asia is very well known. Losses to people resulting from the patterns of growth may not be so familiar.
2. Cessation of war in the region is well known. Threats to security from increased arms may be news to Friends. The end of the Cold War is well known. The breakup of old alliances follows in its wake. But the relationships among powers and with great powers including Australia and the United States is less clear.
3. Asian culture and cultures are in transition even in crisis. The very strengths that have brought Asians so far are now at risk with urbanization, the celebration of market economies, and so on. There is a strong movement in Asia to protect cultures, to avoid economic cultural and racial imperialism, and to assure as much as possible the independence of Asians to make decisions for Asian people. Religion and spirituality, threatened on the one hand by the ravages of modernity, is enjoying a resurgence now - particularly in Vietnam, China, and the Muslim countries of the region.
4. Efforts toward development are well known. But what kind of development? By whom? For what purposes?
5. Efforts for the emergence of civil society are well underway in a region dominated historically by feudalism militarism limited rights for individuals. But there is still an aura of suspicion around much work of indigenous nongovernment organizations [NGOs], for example. They and individual academics certainly need and deserve our support.
6. There is a new search in Asia for human rights principles with Asian characteristics. It is perhaps less obvious that there is a kind of moral colonialism felt in Asia which may be producing a backlash and a slowing of the very initiatives it has helped to advance.

7. There are strong indigenous movements to increase people's participation in their own governance etc. But the methods of promoting democracy by Northern countries and agencies have sometimes been clumsy, perceived as self-serving in ways that look jingoistic to some Asians. This gives unwitting support to such unfortunate actions as the Philippines' refusal, in the face of great pressure from Indonesia, to allow international concerned persons to attend a privately-organized meeting on East Timor in Manila.
8. Efforts to safeguard minorities and women are growing. What may not be obvious is how threatened and disempowered so many Asians in these categories are, or how difficult many find it to take their legitimate concerns into account.
9. Asian concerns about environment are strong and growing. Yet shared resources-oil, gems, etc. remain the basis for economic exploitation, both internally and by foreign powers.
10. Displacement of peoples is a real and growing problem in Asia as it is in other parts of the world.

When the Revolution was won and New China was formed in 1949, then Chairman Mao Tse-Tung proclaimed the fact by saying, "The Chinese people have stood up!" May we remind ourselves that Asian people collectively have now stood up. We need to recognize this, to afford Asians dignity in our understanding and in our dealings if we are ever to relate to Asians fully, fairly, and mutually beneficially.

Asia has become of increasing interest to the rest of the world; there are many reasons. Economic and security issues lead the list. Since colonialism, resources and cheap labor have been great draws for outsiders. Today, the rest of the world wants access to the vast markets of Asia. Since the early Chinese dynasties through World War II and the dreadful wars in Korea and Vietnam, outsiders have feared aggression in and from Asia. Today, those fears are centered around ethnic minorities, religious fundamentalists, and guerilla insurgencies.

Whether we individually are especially interested in Asia or not, it is a vast region of enormous significance to this planet, with particular importance to Australia and the United States. Most of the oldest and earliest developed civilizations were in Asia. Their progeny, the countries of Asia today, retain in

their modernization the legacy of the rich heritage of traditional peoples, cultures, and the world's major religions. Asian perspectives-holistic spirituality, the pervading sense of the overriding importance of community and the family, traditional medicine combining mind, body, and natural resources for health-offer the rest of us a way of viewing the wholeness of people that we have not known in the Cartesian dualistic, "sophisticated," and jaded Northern Western countries.

In size and diversity, Asia's significance can hardly be overstated. Southeast Asia and China comprise more than thirty per cent of the world's population; Japan and Korea put the total well above one third. South Asia, with its vast populations in cities and its broad geography brings the total mainland Asian population (excluding West Asia) above three billion people, more than fifty-five per cent of the population of the earth. Asia overall accounts for nearly two thirds of all our people. In an attempt to try to understand issues in this vast region as Asians see them, we turn now to the ten points enumerated above for a closer look. In doing so, we shall attempt to provide an overview of some relevant information in order to raise questions for us to consider as we ponder the right relationship we seek with Asia and Asians.

Canadian Patti Willis of the International Campaign for Peace and Disarmament opened a rich and important paper presented to the Bangkok Peace Seminar: People's Agenda For Asia-Pacific Security [a primarily South-South gathering the Quaker International Affairs Program helped host in July 1994] with an important *caveat*:

I want to begin with a cautionary note ...

The situation in the region is extremely fluid at the moment and I fear that even the most up-to-date information I may have could already be outpaced by events. Therefore, I want to apologize in advance for any inaccuracies in my talk and assure you that they are not intentional, but rather virtually unavoidable in the context of this rapid change.²⁴

Some Emerging Issues in Asia Today

1. ASIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BRIEF SUMMARY

Dynamic change is relieving some inequities while creating others in rapidly developing economies in Asia today. While overall development has contributed to rising economic conditions for many and continues to produce new or enlarged middle classes, there are widening gaps between the haves and have-nots in most emerging Asian economies today. New stresses on inadequate social service systems, rising crime rates, and accelerating loss of traditional cultural values continue in more fully socialist countries, in socialist countries at some stage of transition to market economies, and in more fully market economies.

SELECTED ILLUSTRATIONS

Economic growth in Asia is very well known. Losses to people resulting from the patterns of growth may not be so familiar.

In 1992, Asia had a 7% growth rate while the worldwide growth rate was only 0.5%. The industrialized countries collectively had 1.5 % economic growth, while Latin America managed 2% and Africa had 4%. Only the developing countries of Europe and Middle East came close to Asia: collectively they posted 6% growth in 1992.²⁵ This continued growth is fully dependent on continued stability of the worldwide economic system, and could go even higher if the US, Japan, and Germany move from economic doldrums to sustained growth.

There are some astonishing accomplishments in Asia within this overall growth pattern. Hong Kong, once primarily an island rock and within the last fifty years the fastest-growing refugee colony in the world, today has the tenth largest economy in the world. Nor is the accomplishment merely that of the UK influence. The 237 islands of the Territory, mostly rural but primarily known for

business, in 1992 achieved income per head in Hong Kong exceeding that of the income per head in the U K.²⁶

There is Japan's miracle, of course, and those of the so-called "Four Tigers." China now boasts credible double-digit growth that exceeds even that of Japan and Republic of Korea in their heydays. Indeed, for China the challenge is to keep the lid on growth, to manage a sustained economic development without the lurking danger of runaway inflation [24% in July 1994] to destroy for people what this growth may accomplish. Countries of the former Indochina, particularly Vietnam, seem to many to be the next area of phenomenal economic growth to watch. Outside investors are rushing to new manufacturing and marketing opportunities, which may lead precisely to such a result.

Friends would do well to consider for a moment what this kind of growth means for social concerns. It is important to note that economic growth at this macro level does not mean fair and equitable improved opportunity for everyone in the same way. Economic growth at the macro level does not entail by itself a solution to all the most vexing problems of individual economic plights. Travel with us, if you will, to rural areas of China where ethnic minority peoples become poorer as China becomes more prosperous. Or come to East Timor, the poorest place without exception either of us has ever visited. Join us in Tibet, where economic growth is used to excuse human rights abuses. Remember India, which with its enormous new middle class also sustains some of the most hopeless appearing areas of poverty in the region. It was India, above all, that turned one of us (Barbara) at the beginning of her career from religious studies to social work. Yet seemingly intractable difficulties in some areas of that vast nation when we travelled there a year ago were basically unchanged from what Barbara first encountered there in 1954.

Economic growth in Asia has not solved all Asia's economic problems. And yet, as two non-Asians have enthused:

Economic growth is not an abstract thing. It means jobs and better standards of living for millions of people. The transformation for example in South Korea or in Hong Kong over a 20 and 30 year period has been miraculous. One no longer sees on the streets of Hong Kong or Seoul the eyesores, the wretchedness and the poverty that are a common theme of any journey through Bombay or Dhaka or even the backstreets of Peking. However, there is still a long way to go Not everyone has made it yet,

but everyone seems to be trying, hustling, determined. You can't move without someone trying to sell you something.²⁷

The presence of economic growth can do a great deal for people in developing countries, as these authors note. But money isn't everything. Nor will everybody get more money or more of the good things in life, just because the country's economy grows. Economic growth in Asia is certainly not uniform, as we have noted.

The Asia Pacific region has much more variety than any other area in the world. There is often a tendency to concentrate on the successes of East and South East Asia and to forget that the area also includes the two giants China and India plus densely populated poor countries Bangladesh and Pakistan. The micro-states of the Pacific are the smallest countries in the world. They may look idyllic desert island paradises but they also have their own share of problems which don't fit easily into prescriptions offered by the multilateral agencies like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank simply because their markets are small and they are isolated from the rest of the world by the oceans.²⁸

Amen. The Asia-Pacific is not unique in this regard, of course. Asians we've talked to have told us how shocked they have been at the kind of poverty they've seen in the United States' major cities when they travelled there. Most importantly, the absence of good income distribution can bring tremendous harm to individuals and groups alike. *The Human Development Report 1994* published by United Nations Development Programme contains an excellent brief section on poverty reduction. Produced largely by Asians and others from the developing world, it sets quite a goal for UNDP and other work. For our consideration, we quote the piece in its entirety:

Poverty is the greatest threat to political stability, social cohesion, and the environmental health of the planet. Strategies for poverty reduction will certainly embrace all aspects of national policy. Some key lessons of country experience:

- * *Basic social services* - The state must help ensure a widespread distribution of basic social services to the poor, particularly basic education and primary health care.

- * *Agrarian reform* - Since a large part of poverty in developing countries is concentrated in the rural areas, poverty reduction strategies often require a more equitable distribution of land and agricultural resources.
- * *Credit for all* - One of the most powerful ways of opening markets to the poor is to ensure more equal access to credit. The criteria of creditworthiness must change, and credit institutions must be decentralized.
- * *Employment* - The best way to extend the benefits of growth to the poor and to involve them in the expansion of output is to rapidly expand productive employment opportunities and to create a framework for ensuring a sustainable livelihood for everyone.
- * *Participation* - Any viable strategy for poverty reduction must be decentralized and participatory. The poor cannot benefit from economic development if they do not even participate in its design.
- * *A social safety net* - Every country needs an adequate social safety net to catch those whom markets exclude.
- * *Economic growth* - The focus of development efforts, in addition to increasing overall productivity, must be to increase the productivity of the poor. This will help ensure that the poor not only benefit from, but also contribute to economic growth.
- * *Sustainability* - Poverty reduces people's capacity to use resources in a sustainable manner, intensifying pressures on the ecosystem. To ensure sustainability, the content of growth must change-becoming less material-intensive and energy-intensive and more equitable in its distribution.²⁹

There is a price to pay for economic miracles, in other words, if human benefit from economic development is to be fair. As one progressive publisher's book title in the United States proclaims, *Mink Coats Don't Trickle Down*. Nations have been learning this, and some have been acting on the learning. China, for example, has reduced the numbers of people in absolute poverty from more than 125 million in 1986 (when the State Council established the Leading Group on Poverty Alleviation, Fupinban,³⁰ to 80 million in 1994.³¹ Further, in the first five years of Fupinban some 70 million households in China rose from the

category of poor above the 200 Yuan (approximately \$40 U.S.) per capita income China used at that time to divide the poor from non-poor.³² It is important to note that this *dramatic change did not occur as a trickle down effect from China's phenomenal overall economic growth* in recent years. Rather, it was the result of carefully implemented steps of a strategic plan adopted precisely to provide landless and otherwise marginalized, geographically isolated members of ethnic minorities with some compensatory means to rise economically as others in China were.³³

Nineteen years ago Charlotte and Stewart Meacham reported to Australia Yearly Meeting from Harry Magdoff's seminal *Economic Aspects of U.S. Imperialism* that the tradition of U.S. economic imperialism in Asia is as old as its contact with Asia. John Quincy Adams, for example, "explained in a lecture on the Opium War how China's trade policy was contrary to the law of nature and Christian principles. He said:

The moral obligation of commercial intercourse between nations is founded entirely, exclusively upon the Christian precept to love your neighbor as yourself ... But China, not being a Christian nation, its inhabitants do not consider themselves bound by the Christian precept, to love their neighbor as themselves ... This is a churlish and unsocial system ... The fundamental principle of the Chinese Empire is anti-commercial . . . It admits no obligation to hold commercial intercourse with others. It is time that this enormous outrage upon the rights of human nature, and upon the first principles of the rights of nations should cease.³⁴

Stewart and Charlotte Meacham noted that "The linking of morality and international trade and investment, and of both to national security and national interest has been characteristic of the American foreign policy through the years."³⁵ They cited a 1922 U.S. Navy bulletin, "The U.S. Navy As An Industrial Asset," which detailed the Navy's role in protecting and opening up commercial and investment opportunities for American business.³⁶

In 40 countries of the world revenue from foreign aid counts for more than 25% of the budget, it has been reported.³⁷ Such aid is given in a variety of ways, but disbursement data alone show that official development aid is, for whatever reasons, not focussed on providing assistance to those most needing it. Canada, for example, gives only 29% of its ODA to some of the least developed countries. The United States figure is 23%, and that of Australia 20%.³⁸ Aid decisions are

based on strategic considerations, as we know, not on the need of countries or the ability of countries to put it to best use.

Australians have told us that political leaders in this country have boasted that 80% of all Australian overseas aid returns to Australia through purchase of Australian goods. This is not unusual in the world of official aid today: even the UNDP *Human Development Report* acknowledges that motives for aid are "sometimes driven by idealism, generosity and international solidarity," but often also by "political expediency, ideological confrontation, and commercial self-interest."³⁹

Stewart and Charlotte Meacham made a similar point to Australia Yearly Meeting in 1976. They quoted Eugene R. Black, formerly president and chairman of the World Bank, saying:

Our foreign aid programs constitute a distinct benefit to American business. The three major benefits are:

1. Foreign aid provides a substantial and immediate market for U.S. goods and services.
2. Foreign aid stimulates the development of new overseas markets for U.S. companies.
3. Foreign aid orients national economies toward a free enterprise system in which U.S. firms can prosper.⁴⁰

"Thus," the Meachams wrote, "[foreign aid] provides raw materials, it creates markets, and it maintains the system. What more could human benevolence ask for?"⁴¹

What many in the developing world in fact are asking for is, to some extent, captured in the United Nations call for a specifics at the World Summit for Social Development in March 1995. Briefly, the proposal is that all nations commit to a twenty-year plan, incorporating components including a 20:20 compact on human development, which proposes that all aid recipient countries apply 20% of aid received to human priority concerns (instead of the] 3% average in developing countries today), and that all donor countries give 20% of their aid for human priority concerns in recipient countries in place of the mere 7% given

for this purpose today on average. Other proposed features of the Social Summit will be a world social charter to give shape to a new global safety net agenda, with a designated portion of the existing aid (say, 0.1 % of the donor countries' GNP) channeled to the poorest nations.⁴² Other items called for at the World Summit are to include a request for each country to reduce its military expenditure 3% each year for twenty years. This could have considerable impact on donor aid patterns today, which on average now give five times as much aid to countries with high military spending as they do to countries with low military spending.⁴³

This Social Summit has the capacity to be at least as important as the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. While we cannot be sure that it will achieve or even begin many of the steps it aims at, it is really worthy of our closest attention - and support, if the opportunity arises.

QUERIES

How and to what extent can we who are not professional economists learn more about the impact of our own and our governments' actions on the economic situation of those in the developing world?

What can we do to influence our governments and international institutions toward policies and decisions with positive impact on the developing economies of the world?

What positive steps are we taking today to meet these needs?

2. REGIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

SUMMARY

Now that the Cold War has ended, one of the major challenges for Southeast Asia today is to find new mechanisms for security and confidence building as the ASEAN nations are trying to do. Methods in place so far rely heavily on a traditional view of security with heavy arms sales supporting an unprecedented military buildup in the region. While there are new, strong efforts underway to strengthen cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and find ground for agreement rather than disagreement, a great deal needs to be done. All such efforts are hampered by arms proliferation throughout the region in the face of continuing ethnic and religious unrest and by the uncertainty of relations among countries and with great powers both in and outside the region.

ASEAN interests shifting to greater regional security and broader membership make possible wider regional alliances at the same time that they afford the opportunity to institutionalize national injustices (in Burma and Indonesia, for example) in the name of regional cooperation.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Cessation of outright war in Asia and the end of the Cold War are well known. But the end of the Cold War and lessening of earlier regional hostilities have not ended the arms race in Asia. Indeed, prospering economies have given new scope for unprecedented arms purchase, particularly from countries like Australia, the United States, and Canada, who are only too eager to sell. Threats to security from increased arms may be news to Friends. The breakup of old alliances follows in its wake. But the relationships among powers and with great powers including Australia and the United States is less clear.

We shall treat this topic, therefore, in some detail.

At the outset it seems important to note that the end of declared, inter-country hostilities in Asia gives scope for easier and more forward-looking notions of regional security than have been used in the past. There are strong proposals from both official and nongovernmental (academic and activist) sources for new preventive and progress measures. Yet the very concept of security remains problematic. As one team has put it

The concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as -global security from the threat of nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation states than to people Forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives. For many of them, security symbolizes protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards.⁴⁴

A precedent-setting step toward regional security in the narrow interpretation was taken this past July when the six member Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] gathered 22 July 1994 in Bangkok for their regular annual meeting. Their agenda was the most forward-looking yet in light of changing realities of the 1990s. No longer an isolated body, ASEAN seeks to secure its position in the world community. Assuring the bases for economic security for the coming century was high on their list of priorities. To member nations this meant strengthening ASEAN's position within the Asia-Pacific Economic Alliance, finding channels for new connections with other trade groupings, and exploring ways to hasten the Asia Free Trade Area concept that ASEAN has previously endorsed.

ASEAN nations naturally place considerable emphasis on the issues of regional security, which has become more fluid along with other issues. For both economic and security reasons, ASEAN therefore is moving toward closer relationships with the "outside four" Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Burma. These four were observers at the ASEAN meetings, each assigned specific observer status according to its situation as perceived by ASEAN members. Vietnam, for example, came at the invitation of ASEAN itself and the more controversial Burma participated at the invitation of Thailand, the host country. These four nations look toward becoming full-fledged members of ASEAN as a way to move their economies and their countries forward more rapidly. The "ASEAN 10" as they have been dubbed (ASEAN plus the "outside four") convened a preparatory meeting of government officials, policy analysts, and academics in May, to think together about an emerging Southeast Asia Community to be a "major political, economic, cultural, and moral entity on the world stage in the twenty-first century." Assured mutual security was agreed by all to be an essential precursor to this larger vision.

The ASEAN Regional Forum [ARF] had been planned for more than a year as an ASEAN post-ministerium meeting adjoined to the regular gathering.

Officials of eighteen countries were invited to the precedent-setting event, representatives from the six ASEAN nations, their seven key trading partners (Australia, Canada, the European Community, Japan, New Zealand, United States) and six invited observers (the "outside four" of most-controversial Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, as well as Papua New Guinea and Russia).

This official meeting, the first Asia-Pacific security gathering ever held, was planned for only three hours, as the opening event in a series of meetings over time which are hoped to lead to an ARF institution established in the region. The meeting was hailed before the fact as "a preventative mechanism of the first order" by one Thai academic⁴⁵, and as "an extraordinary achievement, unprecedented in the world," by another Singaporean.⁴⁶

ARF came in the context of an arms buildup in the Asia-Pacific of "unprecedented proportions," according to Janes Defence Weekly. One analyst notes that "Asia is the only part of the world in which military budgets are expanding."⁴⁷ Another points out that "In the aftermath of the Cold War, while defence budgets are declining in most of the third world and on both sides of what was the Iron Curtain, defence spending-and arms imports-are increasing throughout much of the Asia-Pacific."⁴⁸

While military spending has been declining by 20% or more in other areas, it has been increasing in the Asia Pacific-doubling in the past decade and now accounting for 34% of total world military spending. Five of the world's top ten military spending countries are found in the Asia Pacific, and 35% of all imports of military weapons were in this region. Japan has the largest military budget in the region, northeast Asia states have increased their defence expenditures by around 10% per year, and China has increased military spending by more than 50% in the last four years. ASEAN, which convened the ARF, is itself pursuing double-digit increases in military expenditures.⁴⁹

These increased defence budgets indicate the " ... the countries of East and Southeast Asia are shifting their military attention from internal threats to external threats, from counter insurgency to conventional warfare," according to *Aviation Week and Space Technology* 7 March 1994. Andrew Mack suggests, "The dramatically increased regional defence budgets -some double what they were a decade ago-are paying for imports of modern weapons systems capable of striking with ever increasing lethality over ever greater distances."⁵⁰

How is this possible? There are, we believe, two basic answers. One is the balance-of-power theory of military security prevalent in the region for some time, and encouraged by non Asian Pacific Rim partners. The other is, straightforwardly, the extreme emphasis governments have placed on the desirability of arms sales by their arms manufacturers and exporters to ready markets. Governments of the US, Australia, the U K and Canada are leaders outside Asia in lethal arms sales, while Thailand and China are two of the better-known Asian merchants of the means of destruction.

The prevailing theory of military security in the Asia Pacific today seems to be a balance of power approach quite reminiscent of the Cold War era. One Asian writer puts it this way:

China is pictured as striving for regional military hegemony, and Japan is portrayed as being sorely tempted to go nuclear itself and remilitarize on a massive scale in order to balance the Chinese threat. This defensive process would quickly translate into a hegemonic project that would pose a serious offensive threat to South Korea and Southeast Asia. The only secure guarantee against Chinese ambition and Japanese remilitarization is a U.S. Pacific command that is maintained at a force level sufficient for it to be perceived as a credible deterrent-that is, at Cold War force levels.⁵¹

While we may differ sharply with the balance-of-power strategy selected, it's important to note two things immediately:

1. The concerns leading to this strategy are felt keenly in Asia. While many Asians feel that any threat smaller Asian countries may perceive about China's expanded military expenditure may be exaggerated, there is widespread agreement among many in Asia that Japan's apparent remilitarization may be particularly worrisome. One writer says, "Of course it is easy to see why other countries in the region are afraid of Japan. They have experienced Japanese military might once before and, sadly, nothing that Japan has said or done recently suggest that it has any better understanding of the rest of the world or even knows how to take the first steps toward accommodating other people's fears."⁵²
2. The United States and other arms-selling countries including Australia and European countries, are in a particularly delicate position vis a vis this strategy. On the one hand, there is no doubt that these nations want stability

in the Asia-Pacific for reasons of their own self-interest (e.g., trade and security) - in addition to any feeling they may share with Asians who want for the region stability as a means to greater prosperity. But in an ethically more troublesome area, these countries also have stockpiles of sophisticated weapons to sell, and arms manufacturers who are eager to increase their inventories for sale to other countries.

Is the narrowly conceived self-interest of the United States, Australia, and arms-manufacturing countries of Europe the disguised reason these nations favor such a balance of power strategy for Asia-Pacific? Many progressive Asians and others think so, and make a persuasive case. They note, for example, Gen. Colin Powell's remark in *Stars and Stripes* after the Gulf War while he was still head of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of staff: "I'm running out of demons .. I'm down to Fidel Castro and Kim II-Sung." They may concur with Walden Bello's statement that "The recent controversy over North Korea's nuclear reactor at Yeongbyon may stem less from genuine concern over North Korea's ability to manufacture a nuclear bomb than from the search for a credible regional threat."⁵³ Surely this is a credible, disturbing view. It is reinforced by listening to some American allies. Lady Margaret Thatcher, as she now likes to be known, told Thais on 6 October 1993 that "We need to ensure that military superiority - particularly technological superiority remains with nations (above all, the United States) which can be trusted with its use. We must never leave the sanction of force to those who have no scruples about its use."⁵⁴

Those presumed by Margaret Thatcher to have scruples about the sanction of force include United States and Australia. She may be correct. [As citizens of the U.S. we would surely prefer to think so.] But the United States is the only country ever to have deployed nuclear weapons. And it is a fact that the United States and Australia have been particularly eager to spread the instruments of force. According to *Arms Control Today*, March 1994, the United States spent nearly one million dollars to support U.S. military contractors at Asian Aerospace '94 in Singapore alone. The "largest and most prominent" arms show in Asia received this extraordinary level of support, according to the Clinton Administration, to demonstrate U.S. "commitment to the Asia-Pacific region." Then Secretary of Defense Les Aspin noted that "With the reduction of U.S. forces worldwide and the closing of facilities in the Philippines, the U.S. needs to show that security of the Pacific region remains a top priority."⁵⁵ This comes in the context that "The military capability of the U.S. today and for the foreseeable future will exceed by a huge margin the capability of any other nation in the

world, according to the Center for Defense Information." The United States still maintains a higher military expenditure rate (5.1 % of GDP) than all other industrialized countries but Israel and Greece, higher than China's, as well as the top ratio of military to combined education and health expenditures, and the largest arms export rate in the world.⁵⁶ None of us expects that rate to drop quickly.

Although Australia has long been linked with the U.S. and New Zealand through the old ANZUS alliance, the 1993 Strategic Review revising a number of policies states that "Asia rather than the United States will be central to Australia's defence and security into the next century." It calls for heavier focus on building defence links with regional neighbors (defence ties with Asian nations incorporate the region into Australia's defence, rather than Australia defending itself from Asia).⁵⁷

There seem to be many parallels between the strategic interests of the U.S. and those of Australia as they are currently perceived. A remark from Australia's Strategic Review 1993 might as easily have come from a U.S. source: "The complex trade and investment interdependencies that prompt tensions also prompt growth, and therefore create a mutual interest in ensuring that tensions are contained."⁵⁸ Indeed the two countries seem today to be on a more parallel track than ever.

Australia's military ties with Asia, like those of the United States and Canada, have reached unprecedented levels in the last two years.⁵⁹ Military exercises have increased, between the United States and Asian countries, now between Australia and Indonesia at home in Australia.

In Australia a two-sided approach to issues of Asia Pacific security may parallel that of the U. S. Australian Nic Maclellan reports that a longstanding tradition of popular support in Australia for self-determination - such as the movements in support of Indonesian independence, ending the war in Vietnam, or the rights of the East Timorese - highlights deep links with popular and democratic struggles in the region. He notes that the Mabo decision granting the first legal recognition of indigenous Aboriginal control of the land, has contributed to recognition of the 40,000 year heritage of Australia, and its place in the Asia-Pacific region. "But attitudes to the region have also been governed by darker traditions," he writes, "For much of this century there was a traditional reliance on 'great and powerful friends' for security - first the United Kingdom, then the United States. Security and defence policies were influenced by

perceptions and cultural fear of the 'threat from the north' - Japan in the 1940s; China in the era of the Korea and Vietnam wars; Indonesia since the 1950s." ⁶⁰

There is something unsettling, if not truly Orwellian, about the emphasis on arms and military might from those countries meaning to have closer relationship to Asia-the U.S., Australia, Canada, and others. Australian analyst Graeme Cheeseman said it provocatively: "It's a fundamental contradiction: we are seeking to enhance this country's relationship with Asia on one hand, while on the other we seem to be arming ourselves against it." (Bulletin, 5 April 1994)

A Thai analyst says it's not surprising that "One reaction of the ASEAN countries to the changing and uncertain strategic environment is to seek military self-reliance though increased arms acquisition and modernization geared for conventional warfare and deterrence."⁶¹

Peace is more than the absence of war - much more. Jose Tigro remarked at the Asia-Pacific Roundtable on Confidence Building and Conflict Reduction in June 1993 that a redefined or alternative understanding of security is bringing about "the emergence (or reemergence) of previously unrecognized socio-economic, cultural, and gender issues, and concerns such as ethnicity, equitable growth, development, human rights ... " ⁶²

Some military planners seem to be seeking offensive weapons to increase deterrence, but two Australian researchers show how foolhardy this can be: "Since offensive arms can be used for aggression as well as defence, their very existence will inevitably raise suspicions about intentions in the minds of prudent adversaries who think in worst case terms. When rival states each start adding offensive weapons to their inventories, following the ancient precept, 'If you want peace, prepare for war,' they are laying the basis for an arms race." ⁶³

Walden Bello, Filipino scholar and social activist, adds to this with another reference to an earlier time: "ASEAN strategists would do well to listen to one noted thinker's comment that 'A balance of power is in fact a kind of managed anarchy. But it is a system in which anarchy overcomes the management in the end.'" ⁶⁴

Mahbub ul Haq of the United Nations Development Program says

Security is no longer just security of territory, but security of peoples; not just security through arms, but security through jobs, a decent standard of

living, and environmental sustainability; not just safeguards against an unpredictable nuclear holocaust, but a thoughtful response to the effects of poverty that transcend internal frontiers ...⁶⁵

QUERIES

How can we Friends become more informed about security issues, both in our own country and in the countries where our governments have impact in the developing world?

What can we do to influence our representatives and executives in government toward policies and decisions which promote rather than threaten regional and world peace?

What are we doing today to pursue these challenging, often technical opportunities for peacemaking?

3. ASIAN CULTURES IN TRANSITION

BRIEF SUMMARY

Asian culture and cultures are in transition. Asian cultures are strong, rooted in a long history, and particularly able by modern standards in specified areas - including spirituality, family systems, community, structuring of society, dialogue for consensus building, and conflict resolution. Yet the very strengths that have brought Asians so far are now at risk with urbanization, the celebration of market economies, and so on. There is a strong movement in Asia today to protect cultures, to avoid economic, cultural and racial imperialism, and to assure as much as possible the independence of Asians to make decisions for Asian people. Religion and spirituality, threatened on the one hand by the ravages of modernity, are enjoying a resurgence now - particularly in Vietnam, China, and the Muslim countries of the region.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Development in Asia, as in other parts of the world, brings social upheaval that threatens the very foundations of people's culture and way of life. It's a very real problem, that China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping noted in speaking of China's efforts to open up and reform:

When you open the window you get fresh air,
but you also get a lot of flies and mosquitos.⁶⁶

Dr. Phra Maha Somchai Kusollachitto, Vice Rector of Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University in Bangkok, is a Thai monk we've met several times, from whom one of us has even received a little instruction in Buddhist meditation and thought. At an NGO gathering in Bangkok recently he spoke to this point:

Asia has given birth to many religions, world religions. I think of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, all born here in this region. The people of this region very much live near to the thought and to the teaching of ancient religion. As you know, all religions were founded for solving the problems of welfare of many of mankind, for the benefit of all humanity. We can say that the whole of Asia was fully protected by their own religions.

But we can say that we are in the age of change. Now we are very much influenced by the Western ideology, by the system of Western thought, either the political system or the economic system, whatever system. We try to follow everything that the Western people have practiced or the way of life of the Western people. Even the political system what we say is democracy or socialism: I think this is not the wisdom of the Asian people. What I mean is, this is not originating in the Asian people.⁶⁷

Phra Maha Somchai spoke of the difficulty of facing problems when people abandon the traditional sources of strength and problem solving for the market economy:

Previously we lived in small villages, we knew each other very well . . . Then the system of the "free market" brought a kind of polarization. If I look into this, ... I find basically this free market is nothing but a system that allows you to do whatever you like, to overpower by your desire, your impurity of life, and your consuming. It says you can obtain the highest happiness if you consume as much as possible. That means you try to take advantage from nature, from the animals, from your neighbors.

If you allow your desire to consume like that, you cannot really obtain happiness, real happiness.⁶⁸

The problem is simply turning uncritically to what is new from the outside:

We can say now we are very much taken by either the economic system or the entire system of the West. We want everything the Western people have, the way of life of the West.⁶⁹

The solution is for Asians to return to their Asian roots:

We should look to our heritage, our religions. Religion is peace, compassion is there. Otherwise, we cannot expect any solution. We think we are living and we forget religion in the circle of trouble we face.⁷⁰

Asians of many religious outlooks and callings would agree with Phra Somchai's sentiments. Chandra Muzaffar is a Muslim political scientist, human rights advocate, and thinker we've known for more than five years now. Speaking to an off-the-record grouping we facilitated in Penang two years ago, he said

I think the abject failure of what are seen as secular states today to define the self and the other is the main reason to abandon that project. Not that secularism is not feasible, but that it has failed as seen by what is happening in Europe and America. I think the view of 'us' and 'them' that is most cancerous today is in secular societies. . . .I think *sharia* law offers us a better choice. Surah 13 "All of us are humans" is a notion transcending even religion.⁷¹

Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, nonbelievers including Communists have made the same point to us again and again. Belief in a core system of values, an intrinsic system of values Asians have held as their own for centuries, is the basis both for unity and cohesion in the various Asian cultures and for dialogue and interaction with other cultures, especially those of the unusually powerful countries of the North or West.

The great Palestinian scholar and activist Edward Said, in his powerful book *Culture and Imperialism* [with its key chapter, "Freedom From Domination in the Future"] speaks eloquently of much that we need to know. Edward Said describes a worldwide pattern of historical European imperialism, intended as such, and writes

Yet it was the case nearly everywhere in the non-European world that the coming of the white man brought forth some sort of resistance. What I left out in [my previous book] was that response to Western dominance which culminated in the great movement of decolonization all across the Third World. Along with armed resistance in places as diverse as nineteenth-century Algeria, Ireland, and Indonesia, there also went considerable efforts in cultural resistance almost everywhere, the assertions of nationalist identities, and, in the political realm, the creation of associations and parties whose common goal was self-determination and national independence. *Never was it the case that the imperial encounter pitted an active Western intruder against a supine or inert non-Western native; there was always some form of active resistance and, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the resistance finally won out.*⁷²

Given this history, we who want to appreciate and interact appropriately with other cultures, be they in our own countries or abroad, have a big task before us. The Danish writer Peter Hoeg, who demonstrates profound cross-cultural and

trans-gender understanding in his newest book *Miss Smilla's Feeling For Snow*, has written

There is one way to understand another culture. *Living* it. Move into it, ask to be tolerated as a guest, learn the language. At some point understanding may come. It will always be wordless. The moment you grasp what is foreign, you will lose the urge to explain it. To explain a phenomenon is to distance yourself from it. When I start talking about myself to Qaanaaq, to myself or to others, I again start to lose what has never been truly mine.

Like now, on his sofa, when I feel like telling him why I feel a connection to the Eskimos. That it's because of their ability to know, without a shadow of a doubt, that life is meaningful. Because of the way, in their consciousness, they can live with the tension between irreconcilable contradictions, without sinking into despair and without looking for a simplified solution. Because of their short, short path to ecstasy. Because they can meet a fellow human being and see him for what he is, without judging, their clarity not weakened by prejudice.⁷³

This, we believe, is part of what we must learn if we are to work with others. Any others, one might say, but surely all others of different cultures or subcultures from our own.

Changes are coming too rapidly in Asia today to afford time for appropriate assimilation. This creates destruction and a vacuum in values with no time to adapt values thought-fully to changing situations. People in villages and towns have gone in less than a generation from having no electricity, no radio, no telephone, no automobile or rapid transportation and therefore very little outside contact, to "Star culture": satellite television now brings the entire outside world, with its vastly differing lifestyles, values, and emphases on the individual and consumerism, to previously isolated areas.

Asian cultures have been transformed by revolution - in politics, in economics, in communication and in money. As rapidly as cultures have gone from no contact to satellite television, from non-literacy to computer interfaces internationally, some have moved from an ethos of no money to a world where money is God. Without time to adjust, to adapt, to select what they can use from principles of market economics and to leave the rest, cultures have embraced Northern/Western fostered development, structural adjustment, and consequent debt as the path to the future. The results offer the benefits of improved overall

economies, increased opportunities for many, and scope for greater international presence. They also convey to many the affirmation of greed. Sulak Sivaraksa, the distinguished Thai Buddhist scholar, social critic, and American Friends Service Committee nominee for Nobel Prize for Peace has written that for many Asians "development has become a euphemism for greed."⁷⁴

Stephen Yang, octogenarian Chinese Quaker in Chengdu, Sichuan, told us in 1991 that the changes in China really seemed to be opening up the possibilities people to advance themselves and for more self-expression, dialogue, and therefore thought. But the change is coming at a very high price indeed, Stephen says now, especially for young people: "They are getting rich," he says, "and that's good. But I'm afraid they may lose their souls."

Achaan Sulak notes what is at risk in this onslaught:

Traditional Asian cultural values stress the spiritual side of a person as well as the group to which he or she belongs. Personal growth is always related to social well-being. A person is taught to respect other living things, including animals and plants. Personal achievement at the expense of others is frowned upon. Exploitation, confrontation, and competition are to be avoided, while unity communality, and harmony are encouraged. Those who have become rich or powerful are still expected to treat others kindly and with respect. Conspicuous consumption is scorned. In traditional societies, the rich exhibit their wealth only on certain festival days. In everyday life, they eat and dress the same as everyone else.⁷⁵

No wonder Asians want to preserve their cultural heritage. But it will be excruciatingly difficult for most Asian countries to find the way to do so. The rapid increase of rural migrants to cities illustrates one of the major obstacles. Between 70% and 80% of all Asians live in rural areas, with only 20% to 30% in major cities today. (In the United States, typical of industrialized countries of the North today, the reverse is true: nearly 80% live in major cities while 20% live in towns and smaller rural areas.)

As job mobility in Asia today allows people to seek new jobs elsewhere, families are disrupted and cultural values associated with families are ruptured. Whether for economic self-improvement (more money) as in China or because they do not have enough food, as in drought-plagued Isaan, a region of Northeast Thailand, Asian people are streaming from the countryside to cities. This threatens the fabric of traditional Asian culture as no fax machine or Benz can.

In China, where numbers are always staggering, there are today 160 million surplus workers in the countryside, and 60 million in cities. China has attempted to stem the tide through the development of township enterprises, but these, too, are threatened today and the problem goes on. *Gaige kai fung* [reform and opening up] has smashed the iron rice bowl, as the Chinese say and as many from the North urged. But in China as in other developing countries of Asia today, the cost of economic revolution is extraordinarily high. Countries of the North have experienced this tide of internal migration to cities, of course, as reflected in the figures cited. The difference in Asia, the critical difference, is the incredible speed of the change. It's one thing for the United States, filled with resources, to have experienced the population shift of the Industrial Revolution over many years. It's quite another thing for Asia to experience the same changes from a more traditional starting point at a speed something like the Concorde jet compared to the Wright Brothers' propeller plane.

Accelerated urban migration, with the loosening of the cultural glue of the family that has held Asian cultures together from the beginning, has transformed expectations for young Asians especially. Consumerism has replaced centuries old values for them, and we see now an increase in violent and nonviolent crime in Asia today, particularly among the young. Some join crime syndicates, others form their own. There is an increase in alcohol and drug use and abuse in Asia, among the affluent as well as the less fortunate. The emphasis on consumerism, and the emptiness of achieving it, in a culture where family and community had been the absolute center, provides the ingredients for cultural collapse in a way that is hard even to imagine.

No societies have ever had to face the scope and speed of change that is everywhere in Asia today. Cultural values can evolve, to be sure, but it takes time for change in national norms to shift if cultural values are to survive changes in mores. We have only to look at the Northern sexual revolution to have an idea of how long it takes society to internalize sharp changes in behavior patterns by groups in society. Time is the one thing Asia always had in abundance, but with the assault on traditional values from the rush to the marketplace today, time is the one precious commodity in shortest supply.

All this has a particularly strong impact on women, of course, on their traditionally accepted roles in society and on their opportunities and lack of them as the rules of the game change. Asian women and minority peoples, always at the

outer circle of distribution of society's options, are now even more vulnerable than in many years. (Cf. section 8 below.)

What is to be done? Achaan Sulak has an Asian reply:

Until we understand the roots of greed, hatred, and delusion within ourselves, we will not be free from the temptations of the religion of consumerism, and we will remain stuck in this illusory search.

I am not suggesting that we replace Western ways wholesale with cultural patterns that were suitable for a simple agrarian society. But I am suggesting that we look deeply into our own traditions to find solutions to the problems of a modern, industrialized world. Instead of just absorbing Western values, derived from the Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian traditions at the expense of our own indigenous models, we must find a "middle path," applying the best of both in an intelligent way. To date, "Westernization" has been largely uncontrolled in Asia (and throughout much of the so-called "Third World). Western material values have not merged with Asian culture; they have overwhelmed and diluted it.

We cannot turn back the clock to the "good old days," but, with an awareness of models our ancestors left us, we can evaluate and apply all development models and begin to build a society worth living in.⁷⁶

QUERIES

How can we better learn the understanding, respect, humility that is required to appreciate those of other cultures?

What can we do to influence our leaders, governments and other international institutions to be more culturally sensitive?

What are we doing now to understand and support other cultures?

4. WHOSE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA?

BRIEF SUMMARY

Development for those less fortunate than ourselves is a goal Friends and many other thoughtful people in the developed world espouse. Institutions from the United Nations Development Programme to the American Friends Service Committee and Quaker Service Australia, as well as many smaller groups and individuals, find development a well-ordered priority. Development is complex, and development studies comprise a highly specialized field. Until recently, it has been particularly for the development "haves" to think they alone could provide needed answers to the development "have-nots." Many still feel that way.

Efforts toward development are well known. But what kind of development? By whom? For what purposes?

Movements to increase understanding of people's participation in and direction of efforts for their own development are beginning to broaden minds and change understanding of what development is and can be. We all need to understand this as best we can. Just development requires maximum participation by those hoping to be developing, and must be sustainable to be worth undertaking at all.

SELECTED ILLUSTRATIONS

If development is to be possible at all, it is imperative that we who support it be as clear as we can what we are talking about, what we are doing, and why we are doing it. Academics, activists, government officials, agencies attempting to "do" or support development work, and individuals all seem to have opinions about development work these days. That's a good sign, we believe, of the good will that is to be found among the several reasons that development aid, official or otherwise, may be given, advocated, or sought.

The problems we want to note here about development are threefold. First, there are many definitions of development, which are not mutually compatible, and many problematic individual notions of development. Second, dialogue about development goals is hampered by this lack of clarity and by mixed motives of those who support development activities. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, it is by no means settled who should provide insight and make decisions about how development efforts are to be conceived and carried out.

Development, whatever else it is, is a process aimed at helping those who do not have as many of the important good things of life we wish they had get more of them. By this we mean things like a reasonable life expectancy, enough food for themselves and their families, scope in their community for education, good health, satisfying employment, physical security, appropriate opportunities for expression, and the like. Since we would all consider the absence of such basic goods unfortunate, we are naturally drawn to support development efforts.

The American Friends Service Committee has defined development in its work as a process of reducing the vulnerability of people in especially difficult circumstances.⁷⁷ This is, we believe, one good description. For the sake of this lecture, we will adopt the compatible view of human development used by the United Nations Development Programme in the Human Development Report 1994. As that report begins,

The world can never be at peace unless people have security in their daily lives. Future conflicts may often be within nations rather than between them - with their origins buried deep in growing socio-economic deprivation and disparities. The search for security in such a milieu lies in development, not in arms.

More generally, it will not be possible for the community of nations to achieve any of its major goals—not peace, not environmental protection, not human rights or democratization, not fertility reduction, not social integration—except in the context of sustainable development that leads to human security.⁷⁸

To this we say a hearty "Amen."

The United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] has received considerable criticism for its large projects, perceived insensitivity, and arguably poor development initiatives. While we may personally concur with some criticism of this agency, we note how difficult good development work is and how easy initiatives are to criticize. We shall be quoting at some length from the current *Human Development Report 1994* ideas we find succinctly and persuasively expressed which we think important for all of us to consider. Here is UNDP's specification of the term "sustainable development":

Sustainable human development is development that not only generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably; that regenerates the

environment rather than destroying it; that empowers people rather than marginalizing them. It is development that gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities and providing for their participation in decisions that affect their lives. It is development that is pro-people, pro-nature, pro-jobs, and pro-women.⁷⁹

Development, as measured in elevation of Gross National Products and other such global indicators, is leaving some of the most vulnerable by the wayside. Again, Achaan Sulak:

As long as development is measured in terms of material success, greed will create tension and conflict, and people will increasingly take advantage of and oppress one another for a materialistic payoff. If consumers would be more temperate in their desires - being more satisfied materially with the four basic requisites [food, clothing, shelter, and medicine to Buddhists-DKA] or a little more, with each wanting to help the other, destructive systems of development and capitalism would fail.⁸⁰

The very thing we had hoped would help is worsening all too many situations. Human opportunities as measured in life spans, health care, opportunity for self-expression and self-determination, cry out for support and development around the world. We must hear and respond as we can, even if we are not development specialists. Regional and global development is, like peace, too important to leave to governments alone. We must pay attention, and we must speak to our major institutions about our concerns.

How large is our involvement in overseas development, and how seriously should we attend to it? Australia disbursed \$59 U.S. per capita in fiscal 1991-92 in Official Development Aid, 1.3 % of the central government budget, for a total of 969 million dollars U.S. United States disbursement at 10,815 million dollars U.S. in the same year was of course larger, but that is based on larger population and amounts to only \$44 per capita and 0.8% of the national budget. Both nations spend enormous sums on development (especially as considered in the context of countries to which funds are offered) for good and strategic reasons both, and we believe we are called to consider these matters carefully.

Let us return to the current UNDP stated concept of development:

A new paradigm of development

To address the growing challenge of human security, a new development paradigm is needed that puts people at the centre of development, regards economic growth as a means and not an end, protects the life opportunities of future generations as well as the present generations and respects the natural systems on which all life depends.

Such a paradigm of development enables all individuals to enlarge their human capabilities to the full and to put those capabilities to their best use in all fields - economic, social, cultural and political. It also protects the options of unborn generations. It does not run down the natural resource base needed for sustaining development in the future. Nor does it destroy the richness of nature that adds so much to the richness of human life.

Sustainable human development addresses both intragenerational and intergenerational equity - enabling all generations, present and future, to make the best use of their potential capabilities. But it is not indifferent to how present opportunities are actually distributed. It would be odd if we were deeply concerned for the well-being of future - as yet unborn - generations while ignoring the plight of the poor today. Yet, in truth, neither objective today gets the priority it deserves. A major restructuring of the world's income distribution, production and consumption patterns may be a necessary precondition for any viable strategy for sustainable human development.⁸¹

None of these fine words mean development is hopeless. It may be a pipedream to think of restructuring the world's income, production and consumption patterns. But this paradigm does show us clearly how development issues [what we heard one aid supervisor in Asia call "simple development issues"!] go to the heart of so much our world has institutionalized. Development strategy by this analysis is radical, and requires us to look at myriad consequences and interconnections of seemingly simple steps. That, we suggest, is no bad thing.

Let us note here that the Human Development Index of the Human Development Report has been highly controversial since its introduction in 1990. It was conceived as "a new way of measuring human development - by combining indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment, and income into a composite human development index, the HDI,⁸² a tool for seeking development opportunity among other purposes. Still, many people of "the developing world were offended

by the idea of their culture being rated as somehow "better" or "worse" than another - especially "worse," in our impression. This is completely understandable. Peter Hoeg's character Smilla felt

Any race of people that allows itself to be measured on a grade scale designed by European science will appear to be a culture of higher primates.

Grading is meaningless. Every attempt to compare cultures with the intention of determining which is the most developed will never be anything other than one more b____s____ projection of Western culture's hatred of its own shadows.⁸³

Harsh? To us this remark seems a sympathetic Northern interpretation of complaints Asians voiced to us about the HDI's judgmental aspects when it first appeared. Many of those concerned joined with UNDP officials, influenced the considerable improvement of the HDI, and helped United Nations officials refocus their development perspective on its usefulness. Today it is, we feel, a viable if imperfect tool that is well accepted by many (though not all) from the developing world who follow development issues.

Asian people are concerned about the domination of their culture by Northern, Western countries and individuals, with good reason as we have seen above. Surely we would also agree that people's participation in development goals, priorities, decisions, and management is essential for development to be just. People's participation in their own development now seems to be an absolute necessary condition for any development to occur.

Why should this be so? After all, if we help a country establish schools, staff them, and open them, why does it matter whether people participate in the decision to put resources into the school rather than into paddy field development? Who cares how the curriculum is established if it's a good curriculum that in fact will benefit people? Isn't it more important that there be a school with able teachers that children can attend than all these other niceties?

These seem good questions to me, deserving of thoughtful answers. When we were based in Hong Kong in 1990, we participated in a remarkable Asian seminar at Puncak Pass in Java on "People's Participation in Sustainable Development." It was there that one of us (Donna) felt her education in development issues moved to a new level. We are both now convinced that a new

paradigm, a new way of thinking about development was essential if development efforts were to achieve the goals we hope they might. Leaving aside the spiritual, emotional, human desirability of people's full partnership in their own development we became convinced of a simple proposition: Nothing else works. Evidence is strong that no initiative is sustainable unless people to be affected by it have had a hand in selecting, designing, and implementing it, and feel that they've had such a hand. This is not surprising. Efforts for change are hard, and development change is harder than some others. Handing people what's good for their development will not give them a basis for sustaining their development efforts. Neocolonialism, even the benevolent variety, won't work.

As one Egyptian journalist and Islamic activist said at a private off-the-record conference We hosted with colleagues from the Middle East, economics is not the only measure of development:

___ has painted a very bleak picture about economics, and I agree. But from a sociological point of view, if I cannot feel safe as I walk in New York, this should be considered. If I am safer in Cairo, then I am more developed. This did not happen by accident. The underlying reason is Muslim education. That is why I am against calling us underdeveloped. Not that I do not understand the importance of economics, but it is not primary.

1. The number one priority is values.
2. It is time for us to advise our secular sisters and brothers to be critical, rational, open-minded.
3. We must be confident about globalization, just when globalization is under attack.

We hope for intellectual power and then, insh'alleh, [Allah (God) willing] for economic might.

I think this is very important, and we should use this meeting to raise it. So we should be serious in understanding each other: Secularism simplifies us too much. We are not that simple. In the 1990's we are not that stupid. We are not against technology, by sure. If you take a minority view and apply it to us, you are not fair, you are not objective, and you cannot solve our problem.

The point is: Do we really have values that are different from the ones prevailing in Western technology, or not? I think yes.⁸⁴

So do we.

An Asian coalition of groups made a similar point in their maiden effort to speak truth to power at the world level. During the annual international meeting of the World Bank in Bangkok in 1990, Asian activists, academics, and other progressives organized what we can now consider the first externally-organized (NGO)-cum academic-cum activist "people's meeting" held in parallel to an official meeting. This "People's Forum" was a week-long series of workshops, presentations, and exchanges on what Asia-Pacific people—farmers, NGO activists, and others - saw as their needs in development. Feeling that they had been excluded from the initiatives of the World Bank by design and not merely by accident, the People's Forum took as its motto the slogan in Thai, "*Kan pattana tong maajaak pracha-chon.*" Literally, this means "Development must come from the people." On Donna's Forum T-shirt it's translated more loosely as "Development as if people mattered."

Here is the point: Development of and for people (not just of economies in some macro sense), development as if people mattered, must come from the people. This does not mean we cannot help. Our help is very much needed by people working to develop themselves and their options. In fact, our help is urgently needed by people who have not even reached the opportunity to develop those options - in Rwanda and other parts of Africa, in parts of the former Yugoslavia, and so on. We just need to be clear in our partnerships that we are helping them accomplish their goals, not that we are somehow, *noblesse oblige*, giving them what we know is good for their needs.

Clearly, we are speaking of development in human terms, not merely as Gross National Products or some other bloodless measure nations and international organizations sometimes use. Human opportunities as measured in life spans, health care, opportunity for self-expression and self-determination, may be parallel to but they are not inimical to economical development.

Phra Maha Somchai, Thai monk and Vice Rector of Maha Chulalongkorn Buddhist University, makes a key point:

But we have to control, to *change* our mind, as many great leaders say. The natural order in this world can satisfy everybody, but cannot satisfy the desire of one person [with attachments to people or things].

The system of the Western economy is harmful . . . harmful to nature, to animals, to everyone. Everywhere we see the rush to it. . . .Because of that, after thirty years ago we are used to developing. We are in our sixth 5-year plan for economic development.

But this country has changed. You can see if you come out from this room you will face serious traffic jam. . . .Some said that Thailand has the most negative aspect of economic development. If we try fully to follow the Western thought and forget about our heritage, religions, our ancient wisdom our ancient thought, we will lose. . . .Because the way out I think we have done is to fully agree and follow this way of the West. We have very serious problems in this country now. There were 300,00 abortions for women here last year. We have child prostitutes, maybe 100,000 of them, there are 600,000 HIV positive or AIDS patients. . . .You can see the negative picture of this kind of development. . . when we follow the way of development completely of the Western thought.⁸⁵

There is hope, Phra Somchai feels, if people in developing countries of Asia draw on their own roots, rather than swallowing Northern/Western ideas wholesale:

Asia was the center of civilization. We have our heritage, our religions, the teachings of the great ones, even though they have some negative aspects.

For my idea I think we have to find our own way of development. Asia was the center of civilization, we have our heritage, our religions, the teaching of the great ones. We have to purify our thoughts and try to apply them. We have to apply to and work with people at the grass roots in the village. In this way they can survive and keep their way of life as they have kept their religion up until now.

As a monk, I want to present you that I think most of the government in this country or other countries. Not thinking about values, religion, spirit, they try to develop their countries in a secular, Western way. Religion must be maximized, must be fully applied to solve the problems we face.⁸⁶

Deliberate actions by Asians will be the only hope for retaining the values of Asian cultures and traditions that are rapidly being shattered in the rush of the market economy in name of development. Evidence of change and signs of danger are everywhere. The very fabric of Asian social structure is being rent,

sometimes quickly, sometimes more slowly, by the change underway today. The ever-accelerating pace of change means that the need for action is urgent now. That calls for individual, private sector, and voluntary action as never before. Phra Maha Somchai speaks to this:

. . . If we reach the peace within, then we can expect peace outside. Otherwise, peace in this region outside will not be possible if we do not understand ourselves, our culture, and how to keep something that is being taken out of it now. . . .

And the last thing I think NGOs that are here should have a network and stay close . . . to share our problems and our information. We can try to share among us and encourage us to work in this way and encourage Thailand and other countries to study each other and strengthen their ties. . . . Now ASEAN is not just the collection of the governments in Asia. ASEAN is here, and with the people at the grassroots, too.⁸⁷

Friends, our challenge is to find that balance in thinking of development that fully respects those in the countries we wish to help develop. Because there has been a real impasse often in such discussions, leading to what one Oxfam leader called a "crisis of alternatives, in both academic and development circles,"⁸⁸ we think that collectively we could have both much to learn from and much to offer to the international discussion. Surely we have an opportunity and a responsibility to consider whether we may like to speak to our own governments which are doing so much in our name said to be on our behalf in the development arena.

On this occasion Phra Maha Somchai was speaking to both Asian (indigenous) and international non-government organizations he collectively called NGOs. This may be a new term to many Friends. In many Asian countries - southeast Asia where we two have been living, but also South Asia and East Asia, where we've also travelled and worked so much, NGOs are a real factor in rural development, in human rights, and in other dimensions of people's improved access to political, economic, and social processes and opportunities they may have been denied in the past. Those who choose the NGO path in Asia, as in other developing countries, are generally idealistic, committed, poorly paid, and invaluable to their societies. The fact of Asian NGOs gives those of us outside Asia a way to support regional initiatives in addition to or instead of through government links. Much is being done this way by private voluntary agencies as some call them, Northern or international NGOs - in short, by foreigners

committed to helping however they best can. This would include the Oxfams, Australian NGOs working in partnership with in-country NGOs, and of course our own Friends' service organizations. With these, to whom we may have greater access and with whom we may (some of us, at least) feel greater kinship, we must also raise our concerns as we lend our support.

The International Council of Voluntary Agencies has a strong set of guidelines for relationships between Southern and Northern NGOs which we commend to all of us for consideration as we ponder our right roles with development in other cultures. The notions of partnership, as those guidelines suggest, include a commitment to institutional development and participation in the cultures where we endeavor to support development. As this rich document points out,

Participatory development takes a long time, it is unpredictable, and the long-term impact is difficult to measure. [Donor and intermediary NGOs must allow sufficient time, funds and flexibility to enable community groups to carry out their own needs assessment, programme formulation, implementation and evaluation.⁸⁹

There is much to be done, including trying to get our foreign assistance linked to developed objectives in the countries to which it is given. We can try to assure that development initiatives in our name have well thought-out poverty reduction strategies and overall goals of sustainable human development.

But sustainability makes little sense if it means sustaining life opportunities that are miserable and indigent: the goal cannot be to sustain human deprivation. Nor should we deny the less privileged today the attention that we are willing to bestow on future generations.⁹⁰

How we pursue and measure sustainable development makes all the difference:

It is essential that human values be taken into account in assessing development plans. The use of market values and technology as a social barometer has devalued the worth of individuals, rendered irrelevant the quality of their lives, and stunted their creativity. Plans that set aside these values fly in the face of the most fundamental problems. Such plans are anti-human and counterproductive and tend to produce an elite group whose interests are divorced from the mass of the people.⁹¹

Above all, perhaps, we must keep in mind that

The paradigm of sustainable human development values human life for itself. It does not value life merely because people can produce material goods - important though that might be. Nor does it value one person's life more than another's. No newborn child should be doomed to a short life or a miserable one merely because that child happens to be born in the "wrong class" or in the "wrong country" or to be of the "wrong sex."

The purpose of development is to create an environment in which all people can expand their capabilities, and opportunities can be enlarged for both present and future generations. The real foundation of human development is universalism in acknowledging the life claims of everyone.⁹²

QUERIES

How can we understand more adequately what is needed for development by people in other cultures, in the Asia-Pacific region and in other places where people have needs and we have official or voluntary agencies working on our behalf?

What can we do to influence and support our leaders, our governments, international institutions, and our voluntary agencies (PVAs/NGOs) to support development from the people and not just for them?

What are we doing now to encourage development plans in other countries initiated or supported by the people there?

5. CIVIL SOCIETY IN ASIA

BRIEF SUMMARY

Efforts for the emergence of civil society are well underway in a region dominated historically by feudalism, militarism, limited rights for individuals. But there is still an aura of suspicion around much work of indigenous non-government organizations [NGOs], for example. They and individual academics certainly need and deserve our support. We must, however, assure that we are giving support rather than direction, following the lead of those who work for greater openness in their own countries.

SELECTED ILLUSTRATIONS

On May 17, 1992, more than two hundred thousand people gathered in Bangkok opposite the Grand Palace, close to Government House and the Democracy Monument, and adjacent to Thammasat University. They came to continue protests against General Suchinda Kraprayoon's holding the office of Prime Minister, and to call again for peaceful, civilian elected leadership for their nation. They dreamed of fair representation for the Thai people to replace the too familiar control of the powerful elite. By the next morning their dream would turn to nightmare as the Army tried to end the extraordinary demonstration by firing their M -16 rifles abruptly, without warning, into the overwhelmingly peaceful crowd.

As QIARs we have been close to many of the leaders of that 1992 movement since 1989, as other Quakers before were. In 1992 we networked, followed events with our Thai friends, and exchanged information in Thailand and abroad, as we had in the *coup d'etat* a year earlier. Feeling strongly that the governance of a country is the business of the citizens of that country, we had taken seriously, too, our mandate to have no vested interest in the outcome of that struggle, whatever our personal hopes and feelings were.⁹³ Accordingly, we did not, for example, march with Thai people or participate in most of the events of that remarkable spring struggle, though we felt quite immersed in them.

Nevertheless, for most of the day and evening culminating in the bloody shooting of the early hours of the morning, one of us was there with Thai friends in Sanam Luang. It was a beautiful conclusion to days and weeks of protest by Thai people against what they viewed as the dishonesty, cynicism, cronyism, and

danger to Thailand of the Suchinda government. On that soon-to-be-bloody Sunday, women and men continued their vigil quietly, respectfully, persistently. Sitting with committed Thai NGO activists, domestic workers, a farmer and organizer from the poverty- and drought-stricken Isaan area Thailand's northeast, it was moving to be with so many demonstrators seated, orderly, and utterly committed to a cause never before realized in Thailand: orderly replacement of a government popularly perceived to be bad through civilian processes of election rather than military *coups d'etat*.

Achaan Seksan Prasertkul, now a well-known Thai political scientist, writer, and artist, had been a student leader in the strong and bloody drive for democracy in Thailand in the 1970's. Like many others, he was forced into exile in the jungle during a time of authoritarian, anti-Communist hysteria which cut short the earlier student-led citizen initiatives. In May 1992, he told us of his new hopes for Thailand. "We see before our eyes the struggle for the birth of civil society," he said softly. "People feel more political, more willing to speak out." ⁹⁴

Events of the spring of 1992 culminated in replacement of General Suchinda and his associates with an able caretaker government, and ultimately led to the most free, fair election ever held in Thailand, by all accounts. The fledgling democratic government of Chuan Leekpai, welcomed at the time, has proven a disappointment to most Thai people. With General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, now Minister of Interior, the odds-on favorite to be the next Prime Minister as he nearly was two years ago, many Thais feel there is little scope for improved government in the foreseeable future.

So what does it mean, this struggle for civil society? How should we Friends feel about it? What is our proper role in other people's struggles? In this section we'll make only a few remarks, then raise queries we believe we need to keep uppermost in our minds as we watch struggles for civil society around the globe.

This term "civil society" is a convenient label for us, a Northern-initiated international term now used worldwide. At the same time, it has struck some from developing countries as offensive: "What does this mean?" a Korean-born Korean American friend asks. "Who says we aren't civil now as a society?" The term may be hurtful because it sounds so much like "Civilized"; in that case, saying a country has limited civil society could be felt to be saying - unforgivably, we believe - that a country is not yet civilized. What an outrage to centuries-old civilizations! What an unfortunate Westist generalization by which to judge any

culture. What a shame that the etymology of our Latinate borrowings in English blurred the meanings of two rather different concepts. AFSC among other groups and individuals has been searching for a more sensitive term.

In the absence of a better term, we shall still speak of "civil society," using especially words of those from developing countries where civil society is not yet fully developed. George Giacaman, Palestinian professor of political philosophy at Birzeit University in Ramallah, West Bank [where we've done QIAR work], put it that

The phrase 'civil society' is often used to refer to the totality of institutions in society that are independent of the state and which enable the individual to actually participate in public life. These include societies, clubs, charitable institutions, unions, cooperatives, professional associations, parties, and the media. They are also sometimes referred to as "mediating structures," that is, structures that mediate between the individual and the state, thus helping to secure, as it were, a "protected area" relatively free from state encroachment. As such they are often seen to play a dual role: first, they limit the coercive power of the state over the lives of individuals, and second, they help increase the size of the arena in which the individual can exercise civil and political rights in relative freedom from state interference.⁹⁵

There are three quick points we would like to make about civil society and its emergence in countries of the developing world of the Asia-Pacific.

1. *There are few places one can point to in Asia as having achieved the development of civil society to a high degree, in the sense that George Giacaman described it or in which we in Australia and the United States understand it.*

Every country we might offer as an example in the region misses some component of independent action and capability of the individual as individual that we can take for granted. The Philippines and Thailand, for example, which consider themselves nations with civil societies and functional democracies, each forbid peaceful conferences on human rights (in May and July 1994, respectively) on grounds that they would harm international relations - with the powerful Indonesia and China, though that was not said explicitly). Singapore and Malaysia, for all their success, have Internal Security Acts permitting arrest and detention for indefinite periods of time with recourse by the arrestee.

2. *There are yearnings in the region for stronger civil society, increasingly expressed and acted on by the yearners.*

Everyone noted such efforts leading up to Tiananmen Square. Throughout most of Asia, on a necessarily smaller scale, there are a full range of activities aimed at giving more voice, more opportunity, more power to persons as persons. This is usually in some collective sense, of course, since the Northern/Western notions of individualism is culturally bound and basically non-Asian. But it is no less strong or earnest for its cultural difference. We have been privileged in our Quaker work to meet and know well many at all levels who are committed to these struggles. Sulak Sivaraksa puts it this way:

We must refrain from focussing on the limiting, egocentric elements of our tradition We should follow the original teachings ... in ways that promote tolerance and real wisdom ... The presence of virtuous people is the foundation for world peace. This belief is found not only in the Buddhist tradition but in almost all of Asian civilization. A Chinese sage said, Whenever an enlightened person appears, waters in the rivers turns clearer and the plants grow greener. Cultivators of Zen would say that we need "a person of no rank." ⁹⁶

Initiatives range from efforts to change government through calls for freer press to efforts to create new institutions that can be more responsive to people's felt needs in diplomacy, in representation, in voicing their concerns. We think it right to support these initiatives.

At the Bangkok Peace Seminar: *People's Agenda For Asia-Pacific Security*, one leader of Thailand's movement for strengthened civil society expressed the need for "second and a half track diplomacy," because he noted that second-track diplomacy is now so allied to official diplomacy that people as people are still not represented in these efforts. ⁹⁷

While Asia is coalescing as a region, more interdependent, and more united against Northern/Western influence and power, efforts for civil society are independent within each country. So, therefore, it is not surprising that people in one Asian country sometimes comment adversely on the parallel struggle in a neighboring country. One columnist in the Bangkok Post notes that he

starts to get nervous when phrases such as "ASEAN solidarity" start to be thrown around in connection with censorship.

Nervous, because there are those in Thailand who believe this kind of solidarity would be a good thing. We're pleased that others, such as Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, do not share the censors' zeal despite the pounding they take in the Thai news media.

We don't want to wade into the debate over "Asian values" versus Western ones, although it is a debate that deserves to be carried forward vigorously; each side has much to learn from the other.

But preventing people from reading, hearing or watching news is a perversion of everybody's values, Asian or Western.

Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia all have their virtues, but official tolerance of dissenting views is not one of them.

And frankly, we don't care how clean or prosperous Singapore is. The fact is, here in dirty, chaotic, frustrating Bangkok, we are still free to read, write, and think. That is a value to be cherished above all others

3. Newly emerging civil societies must come from the efforts of nationals in each country. We cannot do this for, or even with, people who are working to do it for themselves.

Neocolonialism still doesn't work. Nothing sustainable can be accomplished in a society by those outside it. And apart from compassion or self-interest narrowly conceived, it's none of our business.

We still have our role to play. We can learn about, share with others, even support the efforts of peoples to expand their capacities and develop new scope for civil society. We can try to ensure that we and our governments and helping organizations stay out of the way of these efforts. We can even help when our help is sought.

We must always work in partnership with nationals of countries, respecting by acts of commission and omission their paramount, overriding roles in their own destinies. Beyond the helping hand that is sought for appropriate assistance

we can give to others leading their own struggles, we can best stay out of the way. It is their business. We can mind our own business.

Perhaps we can best *Xiang qian kan* as the Chinese say: Look forward, not back, in partnership with those who rightly take the lead in their own countries. In so doing, we can support those working, even struggling for the kinds of opportunities and governments we value for ourselves and genuinely wish for them. By assuring that our own house is in order, we will strengthen institutions and expand opportunities in our own societies. Then can we accept the charge of George Fox to

be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.⁹⁹

In so doing, we will be able to make a far more appropriate, and ultimately greater, contribution to people in other countries than by rushing in willy-nilly to help others accomplish what we have not yet perfected ourselves. We might also open ourselves at last to the possibility of something new we have not yet even conceived, answering the needs of people in the Asia-Pacific and perhaps even ourselves.

QUERIES FOR US ALL

How well informed are we about the undertakings of our governments, international organizations, and voluntary efforts to have impact on the efforts of those in other countries to strengthen the institutions and broaden the scope of their civil societies?

What can we do to influence our leaders, our governments, and international institutions to support those working to strengthen civil society in their own countries, rather than foisting their own notions, however well or ill intended, onto others who may not want or need them?

What are we doing today to support the continuing emergence of civil society in other countries, under the leadership of the people in and of those countries?

6. HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA

BRIEF SUMMARY

There is a new search in Asia for human rights principles with Asian characteristics. It is perhaps less obvious that there is a kind of moral colonialism felt in Asia which may be producing a backlash and a slowing of the very initiatives it has helped to advance.

Dialogue on human rights issues in Asia has intensified and become both more sophisticated and more complex. As proponents of universal notions of human rights have growing numbers of adherents and measurably greater impact in this region, many regional officials and some NGO leaders are arguing that countries in earlier stages of development cannot and should not aim at human rights ideals more obviously suitable to more fully developed economies. While many Asians argue effectively for the primacy of economic and social rights-including the right to development-over political and civil rights, others insist that basic human rights know no boundaries and are no less appreciated by those in underdeveloped nations.

Lines were sharply drawn in 1993 at the Asian Regional Meeting for the World Human Rights Conference, as officials from China, Indonesia, and Singapore led the charge for unquestioned sovereignty and locally determined rights against the opposing views of Asian NGOs, international human rights groups and officials from developed Northern nations who attended as observers. Democratic Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai of Thailand continued to call for more open views on human rights in Asia-as he began during the visit of the Dalai Lama and other Nobel Laureates to Thailand-while seeking scope for compromise in the best Thai tradition.

Major human rights abuses, viewed by international norms, continue notoriously in East Timor, and among minority peoples and women, across the barriers of ideology, politics, economics, culture, and conflict in many countries and areas of the region. Governments struggling to raise conditions for those at the lower end of the scale look hopefully to international NGO assistance and relax some strictures against indigenous NGO activity as they attempt a delicate balance among rising economic conditions, stable governmental status, and interference as they perceive it in their sovereign internal affairs. China faced hard choices. China courted MFN status with the United States successfully, and continues to seek (re-) entry to the GATT, while Burma makes cosmetic changes which are proving unsuccessful in swaying major international opinion in its favor

but very helpful in encouraging ASEAN nations in a laissez-faire approach spoken of in code as "constructive engagement."

We must be particularly careful in examining our role on human rights with other nations. Our challenge is to support universal human rights in a rightly-ordered way, supporting those who work for expansion of these rights rather than forcing our own agenda, no matter how well-taken, on others.

SELECTED ILLUSTRATIONS

As individuals, many Friends outside Asia may find themselves more drawn to issues of human rights there than to problems in other spheres. While this seems quite natural, there is a tricky balance to be sought between friendly support and overbearing Westism whenever we venture to talk about human rights issues in developing countries.

We do not mean we have no right to speak out on human rights issues in our own countries and abroad. Quite the contrary. We believe with the Dalai Lama that human rights have no boundaries. As one Amnesty International official said during the visit of Nobel Laureates to Thailand on behalf of Burma, protections against torture, murder, and inhumanity should not apply in the West but somehow skip over Asia.¹⁰⁰ This is, as Archbishop Desmond Tutu says, "Baloney."¹⁰¹ Indeed, concern about human rights is strong in Asia among Asians. It's not merely a Western concept outsiders are trying to foster.

What's tricky, however, is once again finding the right role for involvement as Westerners in human rights issues in developing countries. Many Asian countries have argued that it is their business within their sovereign states to determine the level of human rights that is appropriate given their stage of development. We QIARs suggest that Quakers not take on this issue head on. Instead, we suggest, we can work with those who support human rights development in their own countries and labor with those who do not. There is plenty for us to do in support of others without directing their efforts. This Westist tendency, however well-intended, has been trounced even by some Asian human rights activists. There is no question that stability is a precondition for successful development in Asia. There is no question that some successful development is being accomplished at the expense of people, peoples, and cultures in Asia. Stability today has been won at the expense great hardship: in the past in such campaigns as those of the Red Guards in China's terrible Cultural Revolution, at

present in East Timor. Material development has been achieved at the expense of cultural and nationality development, in Burma and in Tibet among other places.

But we are convinced that in more cases than is generally known, there is human rights development at one level even when there are continuing human rights abuses at another. Tibet is one difficult area where we have seen this for ourselves. There, we were told by an official of the Chinese Central Government in October 1994, people can *Yi ku si tian* [enjoy their happiness by recalling the bitterness of the past], as Chinese people do in "other provinces.": This sounded hollow until a Tibetan writer, president of the 130-member group that publish in Tibetan language in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, told us in a moving meeting:

Now that we have a better policy, we look back, we see how terrible our conditions were, and we treasure what we have now.

Helping others pursue human rights development in their own countries challenges us mightily as Friends. We would encourage all of us to continue to wrestle with ourselves and each other as we work to find the Light in this shadowy arena.

The Charter of the United Nations makes reference to human rights and fundamental freedoms in a number of clauses. In the Preamble, the peoples of the United Nations express their determination "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small." The words "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" can be found in Article 1 on the principles and purposes of the United Nations, in Article 13 on the powers of the General Assembly, and in articles 62 and 78. In Article 56, Members of the United Nations pledge to take joint and separate action for purposes including "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the United Nations has adopted many additional declarations and conventions: on genocide, racial discrimination, apartheid, refugees, stateless persons, the rights of women, slavery, marriage, children, youth, aliens, asylum, disabled and mentally retarded persons, torture, development and social progress, among others. With the vast majority of member nations of the United Nations coming from the

developing world, human rights could hardly be said, on paper at least, to be the province of Northern elites.

But how do notions of human rights transfer from paper to countries of the world, including our own? Unevenly, to say the least. One well-known difference is between the general notion of human rights among activists of the North and Asian views of human rights perspectives as somewhat foreign. One article summarized the divide well in 1993:

Having watched exhilarated via live television broadcast as the Berlin Wall was dismantled and a Soviet military coup was overpowered by democratic forces, official and non-official human rights advocates in the West are more convinced than ever of the universal validity of their values. They want these values to be reiterated and enshrined in a Vienna declaration. But having achieved economic development under their own social and political systems, Asian governments are not ready to accept all Western notions of human rights.¹⁰²

When one of us attended the Preparatory Conference (PrepCom) of the Asia Pacific region prior to the Second World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna last year, we also saw the open rift between many nations, arguing that sovereignty takes precedence over the universality of human rights, and the NGOs of those very nations. Christine Loh, a political independent legislator from Hong Kong who attended the Vienna meetings, spoke of the "voices at Vienna that were braver and more robust than those of most governments," referring to the 1800 NGOs present, including 250 from the AsiaPacific:

It was here, among the NGOs and not among the official delegations, where could be found an authentic commitment to human rights. Here, among, the NGOs, were people willing to speak out for the citizen rather than the state. Here while diplomats used the Vienna conference to issue proclamations about their respective government's idealism and virtue, the NGOs spoke out for the victims of abuses committed by those same governments.¹⁰³

What exactly is the role of Asia-Pacific NGOs in human rights? Sidney Jones, executive director of Asia Watch, a vital division of U S-based Human Rights Watch, has answered:

Across Asia and the Pacific, non-governmental organizations (NGO) have been chipping away at entrenched power structures for more than two decades. How effective they have been is open to debate, but they have played a critical role in forcing governments to listen to the demands of the poor, the marginalised and the abused. In the absence of any real checks on executive power in much of the region, it is the NGOs that hold governments accountable for human rights violations.¹⁰⁴

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, Director of Just World Trust (JUST) and someone we know well, points us to the real need for thinking carefully about human rights in Asia:

A holistic, integrated approach to human rights within the Asian context would demand urgent and equal attention to the economic and social rights of the people of the continent. For Asia is where the majority of the world's poor live. In spite of the economic and social progress achieved in various countries, a significant segment of Asia's population does not enjoy some of the most basic economic and social rights - including the right to adequate food, clothing and housing, the right to work, to fair wages, to health, to education.¹⁰⁵

Chaiwat Satha-anand, Thai Muslim political scientist and Vice Rector of Thammasat University in Bangkok, points out that whenever there is a clash of ideals and interests, "compassion and understanding are needed. But ultimately the truth needs to be told."¹⁰⁶ We can take a hint from this, we believe, in finding one role for ourselves as we interact with Asian people struggling for human rights. We could say that in one sense most of our work as Quaker International Affairs Representatives in Asia is in support of human rights. Some have termed human rights a new battleground. As Quakers reluctant to battle, we would call it an urgent ground of concern for every person, who houses a bit of "that of God" in her/himself. One thing we can surely do is to support the work of Asians working in the arena of human rights. The need is somewhat urgent:

Many Asian activists express a deep sense of frustration. Indian NGOs lament that they have not been able to stop the killings and dispossession of low caste and tribal groups. Indonesian human rights lawyers have not been able to acquit a single person accused of subversion. No human rights NGOs at all exist in China, Vietnam, North Korea, Burma or Singapore.¹⁰⁶

How can we support NGOs? Christine Loh underlines the need and gives a clear suggestion:

At least in the near term, however, their work will remain difficult and not infrequently dangerous. Most Asian governments view human-rights NGOs with suspicion, disapproval, or even outright hostility. Many activists run great personal risks-even though they are seeking only to have their governments honour and enforce the declarations and covenants these same governments have signed. Although these NGOs can help one another by building on the solidarity experienced at Vienna, they also need the support of other governments and citizens around the world. They deserve to receive it, not because they are heroes or idealists, but because they are helping to secure for more of the world's population the individual freedom that experience shows to be the surest foundation of peace and prosperity.¹⁰⁷

It would be difficult to think of a more appropriate way to express our energies toward human rights in Asia than

- a) supporting Asian human rights NGOs and
- b) urging our governments to do the same.

Officials views of human rights in Asia are indeed very different from those of the NGO communities there. The Bangkok Declaration of Asian nations put much more forcefully than input from Africa and Latin America, an insistence on "non-interference in internal affairs and on such objectives as economic development," according to Japanese ambassador to the United Nations Shunji Maruyama.¹⁰⁸ The Bangkok Declaration said that while human rights are universal, "they must be considered in the context of a dynamic and evolving process of international norm-setting, bearing in mind the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds."¹⁰⁹

240 representatives of more than 110 Asian human rights and development organizations from 26 Asia-Pacific countries in their Declaration, by contrast, said their "landmark document leaves no doubt as to what is expected of governments and the determination of human rights and development NGOs to have those expectations met."¹¹⁰ This perspective will be much more comfortable to any of us outside Asia who feel strongly about the universality of human rights and the importance of civil and political rights in Asian countries even while economic,

social, cultural, and development rights are evolving. Asian NGOs are unable to demand economic aid as a condition of human-rights improvement, as some Asian countries are doing. "Indigenous Asian human rights movements by their mere existence refute the claim by many of their governments that such rights are a foreign or Western concept," as Christine Loh has written.¹¹⁰ As we consider our proper role vis a vis human rights in countries other than our own, support of indigenous NGOs working for human rights in our own countries merits our closest consideration. It may give us opportunity to speak truth to power more effectively and more appropriately even than lobbying our own leaders will do.

QUERIES FOR US ALL:

How can we better inform ourselves about the human rights issues Asians consider most pressing and about the steps. Asian NGOs, Asian governments, and our own governments and NGOs are taking or not taking on these issues?

What can we do to influence our leaders, our governments, and international institutions to bring the strength of their pressures on governments to support of Asian NGOs working within the countries governed to improve human rights?

How well are we already supporting Asians in their efforts to secure strengthened and expanded human rights in their own countries?

7. DEMOCRACY, PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION, AND BACKLASH

SUMMARY

There are strong indigenous movements to increase people's participation in their own governance, etc. But the methods of promoting democracy by Northern countries and agencies have sometimes been clumsy, perceived as self-serving in ways that look jingoistic to some Asians, and culturally bound. This gives unwitting support to such unfortunate actions as the Philippines' refusal, in the face of great pressure from Indonesia, to allow international concerned persons to attend a privately-organized meeting on East Timor in Manila.

Northern organizations and individuals can well support indigenous movements for democratic reform. Doing so rather than approaching those in other countries with agendas of our own can save us from a paradoxically undemocratic approach to seeking democratic opportunity for others. We need to avoid democratic imperialism as carefully as we avoid trade imperialism and other neocolonial efforts, no matter how well intended.

SELECTED ILLUSTRATIONS

Desiring democratic expression is one natural outgrowth of the development of civil society, the urge for peoples participation in their own governance, and the desire for human rights in civil and political realms as we in the North/West understand them. But democracy as we understand it cannot be the only way to achieve such participation. And for developing countries, the forms of Northern-Western style democracy may not be the optimum route for greater "people power."

Palestinian George Giacaman makes the point that "In the popular mind, and sometimes even among intellectuals, democracy is virtually synonymous with a specific political process involving periodic elections, some form of representation of the electorate, and governments chosen in competitive elections."¹¹¹ Like George Giacaman, we would not deny that this process is or can be an important part of democracy. But it is NOT democracy itself, and should not be confused with democracy.

Thai history professor Thongchai Winichakul notes that Western interests in protecting the rights of individuals against the powers of the state gave rise to

Western forms of checking systems. But the same forms have not been necessary in Asia, since "Asian societies look for ways for the state and the people to live in harmony, as one."¹¹² Furthermore, Achaan Thongchai says, the Asian state's traditional system "gives people the power to topple or replace the ruling party. But they don't call it 'human rights' or 'individualism,'" and don't need "foreign" ideals to relieve tensions between the people and the state.¹¹³

Thai political scientist and peace activist Chaiwat Satha-anand points out, however, that "The world has changed," and such systems as Thongchai describes no longer exist in their pure forms in Thailand or elsewhere in Asia. Therefore, there is little ground for the state's "[using] its traditional paternalistic role as an argument to justify its actions, saying it is looking after the best interests of the people. . . ." ¹¹⁴

Debates about the relationship between democracy and development have brought questions about democracy to the fore for officials and activists alike in Asia. The northern correlation between democracy and prosperity doesn't seem to hold in Asia. Indeed, as one Indonesian researcher has written, ". . . in Asia at least the countries whose economies developed most rapidly over the past three decades have almost all owed their starts to strongman rule."¹¹⁵ umar Juoro identifies three paths toward democratization in Asia:

1. that of countries with colonial pasts (the Philippines, Malaysia, India, and Pakistan),
2. that fueling movements within communist countries like China and Vietnam, and
3. that of countries like Thailand, Korea, and Taiwan.

Countries where some are trying to choose the second path are those, according to Juoro, where the "failure of communism" as he perceives it drives the movement. But countries of the third category, are those he finds most interesting [as we do]:

Essentially these newly industrialized countries have realized that an authoritarian regime is no longer compatible with their further economic development. The voices for democracy here come from a rising business and middle class that has achieved a level of affluence. Just as they had

earlier adapted to the new economic imperatives of competition, they are now willing to adopt the new political conditions of democratic government.¹¹⁶

We believe this analysis is exactly right, and important for us to note. What it suggests about the importance of the connection between democratic approaches and the economy in prosperous countries also applies to poor countries like India as they seek to advance their economies, for democracy itself is imperilled without comparable economic achievements. It may be true, as some have argued, that countries need to build up their economies before opening up their political systems. We certainly know many have felt more comfortable that way; perhaps they've been quite wise.

Among the human rights NGOs, among academics and activists, among many people in Asia, there are also strong urges for democratic forms as the means to greater citizen participation in governance and greater personal power for people. It may well be that our most natural affiliation in Asia are and will be to groups like these rather than to the more pragmatically-minded officials our own governments encourage in their efforts to increase markets in the Asia-Pacific and redress trade imbalances.

What has already been said in this lecture about the need to avoid neocolonialism, no matter how well intended, applies even more strongly, we believe, to our Northern and Western urges to promote democracy in the Asia-Pacific. We can, and perhaps Friends will feel we should, partner with those in the region who seek to advance democratic processes within their own countries. Whatever position we take, we'd like to remind us all that it is only partly our business what forms of government other countries take. As members of the human family, we naturally feel keen interest in seeing justice extended to others no matter what their country. Nationalism has no proper role in repelling such benevolent interest. As Achaan Chaiwat says compellingly from Asia:

When looking at the issue of child labour or child prostitution, we should ask what the victims' rights are as human beings.

Should our concern for them be labelled a "Western ideal"? Isn't it simply concern for our fellow human beings? Western or not, can a way be found to ease suffering?

We should point the finger at human rights atrocities ourselves. We shouldn't wait for outsiders to tell us what to do.¹¹⁷

Asians should not wait, either, for outsiders to tell them what to do about their forms of governance. Nor should we as outsiders tell Asians how to shape their governing tools and policies-for good, compassionate reason or for trade.

There is a delicate balance to be sought here, between our role as sympathetic supporters of change and progress, our responsibilities as we see them toward those who cannot speak for themselves, and our responsibility to butt out of other people's business. The issues are complex and important, and we need to address them thoughtfully over time with the care they deserve.

Kishore Mahbubani, permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs in Singapore and a long-time Quaker contact, has argued most elegantly among any Asians we know for a hands-off policy of mutual respect in discussion between Asians and outsiders. Kishore rightly notes that "a key feature of democratic societies, the inhibition of politicians against advocating sacrifices, may well be one of the biggest obstacles to spreading democracy in the Third World." Kishore calls on America (and by extension Australia and others) to "take the long view" in dealing with Asian societies: "While sporadic instances of political crackdowns should be criticised, these governments should not be penalised as long as their people's lives are improving. Only societies like North Korea and Burma, which have let their people stagnate for decades, deserve such disapproval."¹¹⁸

Whether we agree with Kishore's conclusion or not-and we personally are uncomfortable with it-it is an important one that merits our urgent consideration:

Over time, a Darwinian process will establish whether societies with a free press will out-perform those without one. So far, the record of the 20th century favors the former. This winning streak may well continue. And if it does, other societies will naturally gravitate to social and political systems which can handle a totally free press. But let these decisions be made autonomously by Asian societies.¹¹⁹

We need to think through clearly our values and actions in this arena. Michael Vlahos, a long-range thinker for the U.S. Navy (!) warns, "We are not in charge of the environment and the world is not following us. It is going in many directions. Do not assume that democratic capitalism is the last word in human social evolution."¹²⁰ We QIARs, with the unusual privilege to hear from Asians

across the full spectrum of opinion on this subject, have come to feel that the questions here are far more complex than we often take for granted. The stakes are high, the opposing views are persuasively and sometimes brilliantly advanced, and changes in succession of government - already in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and soon in China, among others - make our views more critical than ever.

To complicate our thoughts even further, here is the view of Phra Maha Somchai, a thoughtful Thai monk active in NGO political and human rights movements:

What I observe of the Western system, political system or economic system, does not so much match with the way of life of the Asian people. For the last 62 years we have tried to apply democracy in this country. Until now, we can not fully obtain that.

Many MPs of this country take their seat by buying votes. They are becoming wealthy, they have many many things to control, and then they come to power. They used to claim that they are the representatives of the mass of this country. They have enough right to be appointed as Ministers and many things to offer to the public. We very very much worry about this. We think that the real democracy is not yet accepted in this country and that we are not very much satisfied with our government.

Actually, in our custom, if you like to be this or that and you offer yourself to be selected to any post, our custom would be violated. We would not very much trust you.

People will think you need something - fame or money if you meant to be named to so and so position.¹²¹

Sulak Sivaraksa, also a Thai Buddhist scholar and social critic, has an additional, somewhat different interpretation of the limits on democratic practice in Thailand. Citing Confucian notions of the pre-eminence of rulers and lawmakers, and the Indian concept of Dhammaraja, "righteous ruler," he speaks of the notion of obedience from citizens to the state:

The negative side of this obedience in most Asian political systems is that there is not enough public participation. At the local village levels, people may participate in a more democratic way, but at the higher levels of

government, the Asian model is too hierarchical. Kings were often regarded as divine, and they began to look down upon the people from whence they came. The concept of divine and sacred rulers promoted superstition and ignorance. The historical residue of this can be seen in Asian countries' tolerance of authoritarian leaders.¹²²

Mahathir Mohamad, prime minister of Malaysia, may be regarded as an authoritarian leader, even a maverick. Western democracies, he says "practice a distorted form of democracy that stresses form rather than substance. Democracy has become an article of faith wherein its worship is far more important than the results obtained from it." Furthermore,

I am a democrat and Malaysia is a democratic country, but our view is that democracy is not a religion but merely an imperfect political system.

It is not a cure-all for social, political and economic maladies. Indeed, democratic fanaticism is more likely to create social, political and economic problems than to cure them.

Free-market democracy is not a God-given system and certainly not a religion. It is a device employed to address the problems of human society. Therefore we should not be afraid to question all that we do in the name of democracy.¹²³

It all depends on which Asian you listen to, doesn't it? That's why we as QIARs take such pain to meet with and hear from Asians of all viewpoints. Now we're not usually in strong agreement with many of Dr. Mahathir's remarks. But we believe he's absolutely right in saying that we of the West - especially those of us who promote "big-D Democracy" most aggressively - are so taken by the processes of democracy that we mistake the means for the end, and close our minds to other variants for human governance. We haven't done so well in our Western democracies, especially lately, and we cannot afford to be smug and think that we've found the only answer.

What may look simple on the surface-sharing the benefits of democratization with people in Asia-is proving to be one of the most complex subjects of all, deserving our utmost attention.

QUERIES FOR US ALL

How can we better inform ourselves about the scope for democratic development in Asia as Asians see it?

What can we do to influence our leaders, our governments, international institutions, and domestic NGOs to tailor their initiatives for greater democratization in the Asia-Pacific to the felt needs and desires of Asians and South Pacific peoples?

How well are we pursuing democratic development in Asia as an Asian prerogative deserving of our support?

8. WORKING FOR WOMEN & MINORITIES

BRIEF SUMMARY

Efforts to safeguard minorities and women are growing. What may not be obvious is how threatened and disempowered so many Asians in these categories are, or how difficult many find it to take their legitimate concerns into account.

Changes in Asia today limit women in the home, the workplace, the political arena-everywhere. Violence against women is growing at an alarming rate throughout Asia as some in governments, many in NGOs, and especially many among women struggle to reverse this trend. Women are losing ground as many hard-fought struggles for equity are overturned in emerging new market economies.

In the Decade of Indigenous People the harsh reality is that indigenous people throughout Asia are further marginalized in rural areas by population growth, strategic population relocation, macro development of national economies, and neglect in the rush of many nations to "get rich." As their plight becomes clearer their situation is becoming institutionalized.

SELECTED ILLUSTRATIONS

Work with women and women's groups, especially with women in development, has been a major focus of the Quaker International Affairs Program in Asia for years now, as it has been a major concern of Quaker Service Australia. The reason for this focus is quite simple: women in the Asia-Pacific region, in some ways like women in other parts of the world and in some ways uniquely, have been excluded from full participation in the planning, decisions, policies, and implementation that most affect their lives and their lives of their families. Exclusion, itself a form of violence, is well illustrated in the more obvious violence women are experiencing.

Ironically, as with the rising economy in Asia, situations for many women are worsening even as we could say that, at the national or macro-level there are more opportunities today than ever before. Many hard-fought gains for women are being lost in the Asia-Pacific region, both in countries like India where women's rights have not been recognized at a practical, day-to-day level, and in countries like China, where rapid economic development has eroded, even wiped out, many of the rights assured by the Revolution to women of New China.

During the exchange we facilitated in Hong Kong and Beijing in 1993 and 1994, a catalog of problems common to women in Hong Kong, Malaysia, China, [and indeed most of Asia] was compiled. Chief among concerns were these:

- Women are under-educated as compared to men.
- Women are regularly discriminated against in the labor sector because of their child-bearing capacity and by forced early retirement.
- Most women are employed in labor which does not use their full intellectual capacity.
- Men are the primary employers and therefore wield the greatest power in the employment sector.
- Jobs are becoming more and more difficult for women to find and keep in many countries in Asia; especially but not only in China and Vietnam under renovation and reform and opening up from stricter socialism, recent gains are rapidly being lost.
- Professional positions are particularly difficult for women to find and the "glass ceiling" on rising in any business or agency is very evident.
- Women are grossly under-represented in government.
- Women largely continue to be treated as the property of men and as such are widely abused physically and emotionally. This situation is bad and growing worse.
- Women are expected to do at least two jobs, one for pay and the other the free labor of taking care of the home, children, and parents. Cooperation from husbands for these tasks is not yet the norm anywhere in Asia.
- Divorces are increasing in every country in Asia. Women and children suffer most in these divorces.
- Single parent families, whether the result of divorce, death of the spouse, or the conscious choice of the mother, are usually headed by a woman with the direct result that these families are discriminated against socially and economically.
- Women are uniformly unaware of their rights under the law and frequently lack access to justice because of social, economic, or political discrimination.
- Trafficking in women-the unconscionable purchasing, kidnapping, and outright sale of women, both within countries of Asia and across international Asian boundaries, has never been higher. Supported,

not merely tolerated by policemen, army officers, and other individual government officials to the highest levels, trafficking in women-like domestic abuse and other violent crimes against women including murder in brutal forms-is increasing in East Asia, Southeast Asia, the sub-Continent, and West Asia, the Middle East.

This is hardly a rosy picture.

Women are caught in a web of degradation as they live and work in a violent society. The terrible corollary is that society is degraded as it degrades its women:

We recognize that humankind has not woven the web of life; we are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. Whatever belief befalls the earth befalls also the family of the earth Until all societies truly value women and the environment, their joint degradation will continue.¹²⁴

Once upon a time humankind held the belief that people were part of nature and that all creatures should live together in harmony. In those days it was believed that the earth, as the sustainer of life, should be cared for and nurtured. Subsistence was enough. then came the notion that humankind was above nature, that men should dominate, control, and manage nature. Subsistence was no longer enough, the accumulation of wealth became the paramount goal, and so the web of degradation began to be woven, a web of violence in which women and nature in particular have been caught. A hierarchy of power developed. In this world women became closely equated with nature, Mother Earth, that part of the earth man and mankind set out to subjugate.

Following the Industrial Revolution in the West colonialism continued its spread around the world to secure the supply of raw materials to feed the machines of industry. Foreign powers laid claim to land which had often belonged to the people. Customary land use arrangements centuries old were disrupted, as they are today in the Philippines, Burma, even Thailand among Asian countries. Armies and police were needed to guard the new borders and assure the safe transport of materials to the factories in the west, intensifying the possibilities for violence. Subsistence economies gave way to profit-making economies, forests gave way to cash crops. This colonial exploitation was to be followed years later by the neocolonialism of the multinational corporations.

Women have suffered most under these systems. Gradually women themselves, especially poor women, also became the property of men in this hierarchical power structure. They became commodities to be exploited along with nature for the sake of profit. The effort to protect property and control the resources of production seem to lead inevitably to violence and inequality. While the whole world is affected, areas that have come under colonial and neocolonial exploitation suffer disproportionately. In these as in other parts of the world those most vulnerable are usually women and children.

A look at some aspects of violence against women today

Reports indicate that violence against women is increasing worldwide. While the forms of violence vary somewhat according to regions of the world where they are influenced by religions, cultures, and the impact of prior colonialism and present multinational corporations, there are commonalities familiar to everyone. The United Nations in its recent draft declaration on the elimination of violence against women defines violence

as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Working in Asia, we QIARs have acquired an intimate knowledge of violence against women in the region. Some of the most common forms of violence in Asia are:

- rape
- sexual abuse and trafficking in women and children (particularly girl children)
- selling of women and girls as brides
- child labor and bonded labor of women and girls in sweat shops
- confinement of women in some areas during their menses and following the birth of their child
- female infanticide
- domestic abuse of wives, who are considered the property of their husbands
- gender-based inequality in education, community life, and civil society
- economic exploitation in poorly paid and unsafe work places.

While this is a long and depressing list, 1993 and 1994 have seen considerable attention, both in Asia and in the world in general, on the many-faceted issue of women and violence. It has been a period of many important conferences and declarations on the subject. At Asia International Affairs we've taken the opportunity to be involved in a number of these activities.

In January 1993, Asia and Middle East QIARs jointly facilitated a gathering of Muslim thinkers from these two regions to discuss, in an agenda developed by the participants, the topic *Islam in Changing Circumstances*. In their examination of women in Muslim societies, participants discussed women under Muslim law and the effect of sharia law on women. They debated whether sharia serves to protect women or is in itself an agent of violence or a functional apologist for violence against women. Comments in this meeting, like comments from other sources, linked the level of a country's development with the degree of education and freedom accorded its women. Participants felt they were able to have at this meeting an unusually frank discussion, they told, us, on this difficult culturally-sensitive topic. There was, while more understanding was achieved among many participants of diverse viewpoints, still no agreement at the end on how best to protect women from violence in Muslim societies or on what constitutes equality or gender equity.

The brutal (and some believe illegal) State Law and Order Restoration Council in Burma became the focus of attention in Asia in February 1993 when a group of Nobel Peace Laureates (including AFSC representative Donna Anderton) gathered in Bangkok to protest in general the violence of the SLORC regime and in particular, the continuing illegal imprisonment, now in its sixth year, of Aung San Suu Kyi, elected as many Friends will know in 1988 to head the government of Burma. The Nobel Laureates visited refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border and called attention to the numerous human rights violations, including the rapes and abductions of women from Burma to be porters in SLORC's continuing military actions against non-Burma ethnic minorities especially.

On a Burma-related issue, we Asia QIARs were able to provide consultation on research conducted by Asia Watch for a book released in January 1994: *A Modern Form of Slavery: Trafficking of Burmese Women and Girls Into Brothels in Thailand*.¹²⁵

In March 1993 we QIARs attended two key meetings, the Asia Regional Meeting in preparation for the World Conference On Human Rights held in Vienna in June 1993 [PrepCom] and the parallel NGO Forum on Human Rights which immediately preceded the regional World conference meeting. The statement by Asians on women in the NGO Bangkok Declaration from that Forum were very strong and appeared as item number 3 in a detailed, lengthy document. Some excerpts:

Patriarchy which operates through gender, class, caste, and ethnicity is integral to the problems facing women. Patriarchy is a form of slavery and must be eradicated. Women's rights must be addressed in both public and private spheres of society, in particular in the family.

Crimes against women ... are rampant. Crimes against women are crimes against humanity, and the failure of governments to prosecute those responsible for such crimes implies complicity.

In the Asia-Pacific Region, women's rights are violated by increasingly militant assertions of religious and ethnic identity ... ethnic violence, communal riots, armed conflicts, military occupations, and displacement all do violence to women.

In the declaration from the official preparatory meeting, the PrepCom itself, violence against women and women's human rights are also a concern - in item 22 of a 30-item document. In this item the gathering reaffirmed:

their strong commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of women through the guarantee of equal participation in other political, social, economic and cultural concerns of society and the eradication of all forms of discrimination and of gender-based violence against women.

Bangkok was also the venue of the 4th War Resisters International Conference with the theme *Women Overcoming Violence*. We QIARs were involved as consultants and participants in this conference attended by 170 women from 63 countries, over half from the Asia Pacific area. Workshops that formed a part of the conference were on such topics as: *Overcoming Violence, Lesbian Struggles Against Oppression, Neocolonialism and Militarism, Militarism and Prostitution, Divided Countries and Communities, and Destruction of Indigenous Land and Culture*. The scope of the workshop titles give considerable insight into the concerns of the women deliberating at this

important gathering, for which we were able to provide some modest funding support.

While our work centers most often on Southeast Asia and China, we have also been led to work involving south Asia. In July 1993 Barbara Bird was part of the planning and implementation of a South Asian gathering initiated by Quaker Peace and Service (London and Sri Lanka). The theme was *Cooperation and Confidence-Building*. One of four major areas of exploration by participants was the growth of violence in South Asia with particular emphasis on violence toward women. Specific note was made of cultural practices resulting in violence such as female foeticide and infanticide, child betrothal and child marriage, female circumcision, suthi (the custom of a widow's throwing herself on her husband's funeral pyre), dowry abuses, gender inequities in the law and law enforcement and finally, labor and employment inequalities and abuses directed toward women. Participants attempted to formulate an action plan which could begin to be implemented to counteract this growth of violence. This coincided with the Year of the Girl Child in India, though the plan was directed throughout South Asia. Much of the plan focussed on educational activities.

Also in July of 1993 the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations completed a Draft Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women which it recommended to the General Assembly. Our colleague Berit Collett in the Quaker UN Office was an active member of the committee which worked on this important draft. The document is aimed at strengthening already existing international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW], and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Among some of the significant statements mentioned in support of the Declaration are the following, excerpted from the draft itself:

Concerned that violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development, and peace ...

Affirming that violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental

freedoms, and concerned about the long-standing failure to protect and promote these rights and freedoms in relation to violence against women,

Recognizing that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of their full advancement, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into subordinate positions compared with men,

Concerned that some groups of women, such as women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, refugee women, migrant women, women living in rural or remote communities, destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women and women in situations of armed conflict, are especially vulnerable to violence,

the document goes on to:

Solemnly proclaim the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and urges that every effort be made so that it becomes generally known and respected.

There is considerable hope that this very important document will in time add to the growing weight of world opinion against those elements in society which, whether by omission or commission, contribute to acts of violence against women.

Movements on the world stage for women's equity are mirrored now by significant steps in major countries like the United States and Australia. In September 1993, Donna Anderton met in Washington, D.C. with John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs to discuss various topics regarding human rights in Asia including abuses against women. She was also able to attend a House Foreign Affairs Committee on human rights abuses against women. During this hearing John Shattuck reported on the substantial victory for women's rights achieved at the World conference On Human Rights in Vienna. Shattuck attributed much of that success to the effective work of the women's nongovernmental organizations [NGOs] participating in the conference. He referred to the final declaration asserting that "Women's Rights

Are Human Rights" and supported the call for a systematic integration of women's issues into UN human rights programs.

John Shattuck also reported that for the first time mass rape by rampaging armies, historically unpunished, will be coming before the UN War Crimes Tribunal as they investigate Bosnian Serb military attacks on Muslim women. This ongoing effort, its success or failure, will of course have extraordinary consequences, for such issues as the systematic rape of women that takes place in Burma when some of them, especially Karen nationality women, are forced into multiple services for the army of SLORC.

Richard McCall, new Director of the United States Agency for International Development (US AID) said at that same hearing:

A vicious cycle persists through which women's low social, economic, and political status renders them more vulnerable to abuses of their human rights and their unequal rights reinforce their low status.

Richard McCall went on to demonstrate through reports from world statistics that may be familiar to some Friends that most of the poor, malnourished and illiterate people of the world are women and children. He spoke of the sometimes overlooked very active participation of women in movements for democracy:

Women have risked violence and death and many have been beaten, raped, shot and killed as a result of their democratic activities women are committed to democracy because they see it as the most viable political framework through which their pragmatic concerns and well-being of their families can be addressed However, women's issues go largely unheard and unaddressed even within the framework of democratic systems. In most former communist countries, women actually have lost political representation and income possibilities under the new democracies.

Loss of political and economic power by women in former communist/socialist countries as they move toward more democratic systems is a tragic fact which frequently engages us in thoughtful discussion with women and men in Asia. Many express considerable concern about how to preserve former gains made by women.

This is not a new thought to us as QIARs and feminists, as it will not be new to other women and men concerned about women's issues and able to follow them. What is new and exciting to us is the platform from which this kind of important and controversial leadership is being offered. While it is encouraging that the present administration in Washington, D.C. appears to support ending discrimination and violence against women, it is interesting to note that while China has signed the CEDAW convention the United States had not yet as of the writing of this document.

This has clearly been a very active period on issues of violence against women. There is, however, a very long and difficult struggle ahead. While we can take heart in the progress, organizations like the American Friends Service Committee and Australia Yearly Meeting of Friends must join women's organizations, NGOs, and governments throughout the world to continue to put the good words of declarations into laws which are enforced fairly, and into education which changes the attitudes of many in the world toward women.

As some nations in Asia shift from centrally controlled to profit-motivated market economies and others respond to overly rapid development, women frequently find themselves in very vulnerable positions. People often refer to the breakdown of the "social service safety net" in the former socialist countries of Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and China as they increasingly privatize social services in their shifts to market economies. This year we addressed that issue squarely in China when we facilitated an unusual series of events there in May 1994, following up on our work of the previous years.

Two recent QIAP-facilitated events for women and men

Acting under the weight of a concern that changes in the economic system being made in China today are decreasing the social services available, we facilitated Part II of an exchange in Beijing this year between women from Malaysia, Hong Kong and China. Six ethnic Chinese women from outside China attended joined by approximately 35 mainland Chinese women. Part I had been held in Hong Kong in 1993. Networking On Issues of Violence Against Women in Rapidly Changing Economies had been held to increase understanding and strengthen efforts of women to provide a kind of social service safety net for women caught in a downward spiral of crisis due to rapidly changing economies. Our intent was also to help build a bridge among women and leaders from the three countries working on issues of violence against women. The exchange examined grassroots responses by women to problems resulting from these rapid

changes. Women from China were surprised, having been accustomed to top down solutions initiated by government, to learn how much could be done independently and to see sophisticated use of public relations on behalf of such efforts. All the participants were involved in providing hotline and face-to-face counselling and/or shelters for women experiencing some form of violence.

Part II of the exchange was an unusual series of events in Beijing in May 1994. This exchange included a forum on women's problems and situations in the three countries, several organizational/institutional visits for the exchange of briefings including universities, women's studies centers and social work schools, a banquet and press conference attended by some fifty high level people and representatives from all major Chinese media. The host for the exchange was the Beijing Women's Hotline, one of the first Chinese NGOs. New ground was broken by bringing this organization together with women from the official All China Women's Federation and with women from NGOs in Hong Kong and in Malaysia. This brought discussions of women's issues in China to a more open and level, and paved the way for the counselor training which followed.

ADVANCED SEMINAR ON COUNSELING SERVICES

This seminar or training immediately followed the exchange in Beijing in May 1994. Seventy women and men attended the training. The participants, all Chinese, were from six provinces and Beijing. They are all highly educated professionals, doctors, psychologists, lawyers, medical and scientific workers. Most serve as volunteers on the various counseling hotlines burgeoning all over China.

This exchange included a three day certificate course in advanced counselor training. The training team of six were all ethnic Chinese from Hong Kong and Malaysia and the course was taught in Chinese. Drawing on their Chinese adaptation of social work principles, the team, supported by QIARs, provided an exciting, client-centered, interactive counseling modality to participants. The training itself was designed to model the counseling style being presented. It was the first social work training in China undertaken since 1949 by anyone outside the country.

The training was very well received with requests for follow-up training next year. We believe the training will help efforts to improve social services in China today. The Chinese NGO host, strengthened by its success with this event, plans to host in conjunction with the official All-China Women's Federation in

March 1995 the first event of the Fourth World Conference On Women/NGO Forum cycle. It is the kind of event which bridges government and non-government efforts to address the urgent topic of women's needs for social services and their ability to find, provide, and use them.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, addressing the World conference on Human Rights in Vienna summed up the world's need to deal more equitably with women:

Violence and discrimination against women don't just victimize individuals; they hold back societies by confining the human potential of half the population. Guaranteeing women their human rights is a moral imperative. It is also an investment in making whole nations stronger, fairer, and better.

Friends, it is long past time to take this moral imperative seriously, at home and with our sisters in Asia. 1995 will bring the World Conference On Women to Beijing. We have much to do to prepare for this event, and we'll have even more to do when it concludes.

In December 1991 an Indian leader of the women's and people's movements in development in Asia concluded a wonderful speech to the Asia-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education with the exhortation: "Asia has been called the land of the rising sun. Let's make it also the land of the rising daughter."¹²⁶

CONCERNING MINORITY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS

Situations women face in Asia are mirrored by those faced by minority peoples all over the region. We therefore touch briefly here on some of the commonalities people of minority groupings share all over Asia with women. In doing so we mean neither to gloss over the many differences, to de-emphasize either group's needs in favor of the other, nor to pretend that we're presenting a comprehensive view of either situation. Our only intention is to highlight, particularly for those who may not regularly deal with these issues, aspects that may be helpful in looking at needs and of minority peoples. Their greatest connections are in being outside the mainstream, frequently disenfranchised, and generally under-represented, undereducated, and underpaid if employed at all.

In Asia several events have come together to worsen the situation of minority indigenous peoples just at the time when they have reason to expect the circumstances to improve. Without any attempt to do justice to this broad and important area, we'll list some of the key factors we've experienced in Asia or Asian contacts have shared with us.

1. Minority indigenous people are undereducated compared to those of the majority.
2. Minority people are discriminated against in the labor sector and limited to low-paying jobs by their lower levels of education.
3. Minority people are therefore employed in labor which does not use their full intellectual capacity.
4. People of ethnic majority are the primary employers and therefore wield the greatest power in the employment sector.
5. Jobs of any kind are becoming more and more difficult for ethnic minority people to find in virtually any country in the Asia-Pacific.
6. Professional positions are particularly difficult for minority people to find.
7. Minority people are grossly underrepresented in government.
8. Minority people continue to be treated as the property of a country rather than as full citizens, and as such are marginalized in the distribution of all goods and services and often denied citizenship or even resident status.
9. Traditional patterns of ethnic minority living are under incredible stress, and there are no real alternatives in sight for most people.
10. Rising value of natural resources in some areas where indigenous minority people live has threatened the customary land use understandings under which they have lived for generations as more powerful figures have seized the lands they occupy, driven them out, or cheated them by purchasing timber and gems from them at a tiny fraction of their market value.

11. Rising inflation in countries like China has hit isolated minority people in areas with marginal arable land hardest. Forced to purchase rice rather than growing it, they have seen the quality of their lives reduced as their earning power remains constant or decreases while the cost of essential goods is going up.
12. Minority people are generally unaware of their rights under the law, and legal protection for them is more likely in any given area to be decreasing rather than increasing.

There are well-intended efforts to support improved education, health, employment and legal services, as well as humanistic development for minority people in many areas of the Asia-Pacific region. These efforts are essential, though too few for the very real needs they aim to address. Much more needs to be done, and we may have helpful roles in advocating that more appropriate steps, and more of them, be taken.

Friends in Australia, like Friends in the United States, have long had a significant interest in the condition of aboriginal people denied an equitable present by the now majority culture of their land. What has been briefly enumerated here will therefore come as no surprise to the audience of this lecture, which is long familiar with such needs and such injustice.

At the Asia-Pacific Preparatory Conference in Bangkok for the World Human Rights Meetings in Vienna, the joint NGO statement on indigenous peoples noted that the "indigenous peoples of the Asia-Pacific region carry the burden of colonialism and militarism." Many are not recognized as indigenous or as peoples, and as such are denied the right to self determination as recognized under international law and all United Nations instruments and covenants. They are denied their specific cultural identity and entitlement to protection under relevant international human rights instruments. "If they are acknowledged as indigenous peoples, they are still denied the right to self determination in accordance with their own values, customs, and culture."¹²⁷

This same report notes the predictable and terrible consequence that "One of the processes of colonization, militarization and materialization is that indigenous women are oppressed because of their race, culture and their gender, and suffer the most extreme violation of human rights as a result of this process.

Indigenous women and children are made objects of sexual exploitation such as sexual slavery, rape, and molestation. Whilst these practices are allowed to continue unchecked, this amounts to the continued degradation and subjugation of *all* indigenous peoples." ¹²⁸

A statement presented on behalf of more than 30 secular, Protestant, and Catholic agencies in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Europe called for "concerted effort to ensure that the world's marginalised people attain their rights, all their rights." Surely we can do no less. ¹²⁹

One of the most dreadful consequences of the oppression of any people is the internalized oppression that leads them to believe they can do, have, or become no more than what they have been wrongly forced to accept. In rural Malaysia, the indigenous people called *orang asli*, 'original people,' are among the most marginalized people any of us will ever meet. Regularly, repeatedly, and sincerely, they say as they have said to us personally in a remote area: touchingly to explain their difficulties, "We are stupid people."

Neither the orang asli, the Tetum of East Timor, the Karen of Burma, nor any other group of indigenous people we meet are stupid people. They are oppressed, marginalized, abused people. We *must* do what we can to help change this state of affairs for women and indigenous minorities.

QUERIES

What steps can we take to learn about and support the needs of women and of indigenous minority peoples, safeguard their rights, and find scope for their empowerment, in our own countries and in the Asia Pacific region?

What can we do to influence our leaders, our governments, and international institutions to put real energy, money, effort and appropriate treatment to women, members of indigenous minorities, and other marginalized people?

How well can we really say we're attending to these needs today

9. PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

BRIEF SUMMARY

Asian concerns about the environment are strong and growing. Air pollution from coal in the major cities of China; water pollution in Thailand and everywhere there has been excess logging or rapid urban development; desertification from the unwise deforestation of formerly lush areas; continuing harvest losses and multi-generational genetic damage in people from Agent Orange during the American War in Vietnam; the list goes on and on.

Environmental destruction today is linked, too, to continuing exploitation of community resources-oil, gems, timber, fishing, etc., both internally and by foreign powers.

Northern/Western powers trying to help people in the Asia-Pacific see the danger in environmental impact of their actions are looked at suspiciously. If they have exhausted their own forests, people ask, how dare they now threaten ours? If they have poisoned the atmosphere through their conspicuous consumption and carelessness, who are they to lecture us about the consequences of our actions?

SELECTED ILLUSTRATIONS

Walking up Smoky Mountain in Manila reminded us of nothing so much as Dante's inferno. This urban garbage dump, constantly burning, is home to hundreds of families whose livelihood depends on garbage picking, sifting through other people's discards to find saleable bits of wire and other recyclable materials. Children playing on giant earth movers and their mothers and fathers poking through new loads dumped in the path of their oncoming headlights are thin, emaciated, and coughing. The heat, noise, and stench are everywhere.

As we drive down laterite Highway 1 through Bhorikamsay Province in Laos, the sight of giant rosewood trees, hundreds of years old, strewn willy-nilly near the roadside waiting for airlift by helicopter for a Japanese firm is sobering. Recently towering giants in the Lao countryside, these beautiful trees are now a means for someone else to prosper.

Walking along a secluded beach south of Pattaya in Thailand, we see the full panoply of human waste in the Gulf of Thailand, the results of mainly-foreign shipping, sex tourism, and recreation in other people's back yard.

Flying over the island of Borneo, the destruction from long-time logging that has so disrupted the indigenous people and lined the pockets of the exploiters is fully visible in what could only be termed the rape of the landscape.

Examples abound, and we will not belabor them. Peoples of the Asia-Pacific, often without realizing the consequences of their actions, have permitted devastating destruction and threat to their environment, often in the service of too-rapid development and understandable courting of foreign exchange. We who have excelled in such damage in the past and now hope to help others avoid our mistakes are viewed with suspicion.

Environmental cleanup and avoidance of further damage in vulnerable areas are long and complex topics. Rather than explore them in detail, we focus here on the aspect of suspicion Asia-Pacific residents feel toward us in the North on this volatile subject. The United States has long been accused, often rightly we believe, of hypocrisy as it urges people, for example, to stop logging in Asia, now that it has devastated its own forests. Even worse is the urging of Asians not to consume so conspicuously, out of regard for environmental impact, when residents of the U. S. on average consume many times what Asians typically use. United States regulations support U.S. firms in offshore practices which are now forbidden by law in the U.S. Our country of origin is justly criticized on these and other volatile points in the international environmental debate.

Perhaps we may be forgiven, therefore, for citing examples in which Asia-Pacific people are critical of certain Australian outlook and behavior. We do so to illustrate to an Australian audience a few examples of concerns like those that have long been raised vis a vis the United States. Kalinga Seneviratne reporting recently from Brisbane for Inter Press Service, was the source of these examples. The 15-nation South Pacific Forum held in August 1994 was the venue.

Australia has refused to cut down coal exports to help reduce global warming, which may submerge Pacific Islands in the coming century. Cook Islands Prime Minister noted that "The Pacific has had resources for some time and the world has had a ball exploiting these resources." Geoffrey Henry went on to say that "If we had the right support from Australia and New Zealand [near neighbors] in developing the skills to protect them and develop them ourselves or jointly, and if Australia and New Zealand provide proper financial support to exploit those resources to our mutual benefit, we would not be talking about this subject today." According to Kalinga Seneviratne, some regional observers say it

was clear from the start that Australia had a set agenda for the meeting: "to show that Asian businesses were ripping off the Pacific Islanders and the island nations were breeding too fast. Unless they listen to Australia's advice on how to manage their resources, living standards will not improve." ¹³⁰

Australian Max Quanchi, lecturer in Pacific studies at Queensland University of Technology, says Australia played up the conference theme, "Managing Our Resources," for its own political interest: "The impression you get at the Forum is that this is an Australian-generated agenda," he said. "Australian politicians have hijacked this theme for political advantage here in Australia where there's considerable debate about uranium mining, logging, forest development, national parks, and about creating a sustainable environment and economy." ¹³¹

We do not know enough to evaluate and comment on this remark, and it might be unfriendly to do so, anyway. Our simple point here is that even friendly efforts toward environmental assistance from Pacific Rim nations like the United States and Australia will continue to be greeted with suspicion because of our long and troubling behaviors individually and as nations in the past. Yet there is no more urgent matter on the world agenda than what to do about environmental risk and alternative approaches to salvage what we can. Robert D. Kaplan has written portentously,

It is time to understand "the environment" for what it is: the national security issue of the early twenty-first century. The political and strategic impact of surging populations, spreading disease, deforestation and soil erosion, water depletion, air pollution, and, possibly, rising sea levels in critical, overcrowded regions like the Nile Delta and Bangladesh—developments that will prompt mass migrations and, in turn, incite group conflicts will be the core foreign policy challenge from which most others will ultimately emanate, arousing the public and uniting assorted interests left over from the Cold War. ¹³²

Seeing and hearing what we have, we could not disagree. Perhaps we Friends can take special roles in trying to clarify human issues in the environmental debates, to help assure that our approaches to others in the Asia-Pacific are both cooperative and generous-spirited. Surely we can try to learn as much as possible and support international cooperative efforts toward greater environmental responsibility.

QUERIES

How can we better learn/teach what's needed for environmental responsibility and the environmental impact of government, business, and individual actions?

What can we do to influence our leaders, our governments, and international institutions to make free and honest environmental debate the norm rather than the exception and environmental responsibility a truly shared goal with our international neighbors?

Are we treating the problems of the environment and our opportunities to solve them as seriously as we must?

10. DISPLACED PEOPLE AND PEOPLES

BRIEF SUMMARY

Displacement of peoples is a real and growing problem in Asia. While current events in the Asia Pacific region do not mirror the tragedies of African refugee streams, for example, there are very real concerns about displacement of people in Asia.

Despite the repatriation of Cambodian refugees so long resident in camps along the Thai border, there are large numbers of real refugees in Asia today.

Perhaps 300,000 people, mostly ethnic and religious minority people, have fled Burma for neighboring countries. In Vietnam, many Vietnamese refugees whose families have been resident in Cambodia for generations have fled to the Vietnam side of the border in fear for their lives. Other Vietnamese still in Cambodia are sometimes terrorized and now have been told they will not have permanent residence rights.

Economic migrants pour from the countryside to cities in countries as diverse as China and Indonesia. From most countries of the region, including China, overseas work draws construction workers, commercial sex workers, technicians and professionals of many walks of life who seek gainful employment they cannot find at home.

Lack of protection domestically and abroad leads to the occasionally-publicized, generally widespread abuse of people at risk from under-employment outside the spheres of home, family, friends, and country which had in past been primary protection.

Many factories, workplaces of joint ventures or foreign national companies, have become new places of slave labor, often beyond the purview of the host countries where they are located and generally outside the sight of the international community.

Transmigration, best known perhaps in Indonesia, is also practiced at least in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, China, the Philippines, Burma, and Malaysia. Internal refugees abound, and are often overlooked in counting the displaced.

SELECTED ILLUSTRATIONS

In an introduction to the 1994 evaluation of Quaker International Affairs Program, Thai political scientist Chaiwat Satha-anand spoke of the hope springing from "a historical moment when world leaders would be allowed to shift their

focuses and resources to more humane and environment-conscious issues." Then he turned from hope:

But there are also signs of sorrow. Turning on television for news of the world, we witness the atrocities in Rwanda resulting from brutal tribal wars, the ethnic cleansing project engineered by the Serbs against the Muslims in Bosnia, terrorists' bombs exploded killing many Jews in Argentina, Buddhist Tibet as well as the Turkic Muslim minority as victims of China's forceful policy, Hindu militants destroying the 16th century Babri mosque in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992, which resulted in the loss of thousands of lives from subsequent communal violence, and the Dili massacre in East Timor at the hands of Indonesian military on November 12, 1991. As a result of these violent events, streams of refugees are seen flooding the world. A United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees commented recently that compassion in the world is drying up on problems related to refugees.¹³³

We all know Achaan Chaiwat is right when he says that compassion is down. William Shawcross once called this "compassion fatigue." Diminishing compassion, coupled with diminishing resources nations feel ready to expend for matters not perceived as in their strategic interest, has led to a downfall in funding support for some of the most vulnerable and needy peoples of the world. The U.S. Refugee Council reported in 1991, for example, that although the number of refugees in the world had increased by 50% in the five years prior, the amount of U.S. support for refugees had decreased 30% in the same period.¹³⁴

We Friends who value compassion are in a good position, we think, to nurture compassion in ourselves and others. Here we'll offer just a few facts as grist for the mill. Population growth and worsening poverty give rise to international migration. In the past three decades, at least 35 million people from developing countries of the south have taken up residence in countries of the North. The current rate of one million per year would be higher were it not for immigration quotas sharply limiting the numbers who wish to come. Each year, another million work overseas on contracts of limited duration. There are perhaps 15 to 30 million additional illegal migrants internationally. There were, according to United Nations estimates in 1993, nearly 20 million internally displaced people in the world, with some 19 million refugees worldwide.¹³⁵ Pressures of expanding populations, limited employment opportunities, closed international markets and continuing environmental degradation will be forcing millions more to leave their countries. So, too, will eruptions like those in Kigalia, which

produced the largest most rapid stream of refugee migration in the history of the world.

Whether we speak of refugees from war, terrorism or low intensity conflict; economic migration caused by shifting population and trade patterns; transmigration forced on individuals by governments eager to use their lands and resources or to make them minorities within their homelands, we are facing a rising tide of displaced, dislocated, people at serious risk. In Australia and in the United States, public sentiment is away from accepting more refugees. Even if it were not, the numbers just cited are staggering. Just as we are justifiably celebrating changes in the world, however inadequate, which made it possible for Cambodian refugees to go home, their numbers are dwarfed by refugees in other parts of Asia, in the Middle East, in Africa, in Eastern Europe. As the song said, "The beat goes on." We must look anew at the conditions that make refugees, and reason together about what, if anything, we can do to help change conditions so fewer people will need to flee or be thrown out of their homes.

QUERIES

How can we better learn/teach what is providing the impetus today for the streams of refugees we see worldwide?

What can we do to influence our leaders, our governments, and international institutions to bring their aid to bear not only on the facts of refugees but on the conditions themselves that lead to refugee flight?

How active are we in meeting these needs today?

Opportunities for Friends: What Can We Do?

Friends, there is work to do. A lot of it.

We're not suggesting that we Quakers in Australia and the United States can solve all the problems we've been detailing. In fact, we believe the problems in mainland Asia can and must be addressed by Asians in their own countries.¹³⁶ But we outsiders, especially we who come from Asia's major trade partners, military allies, and neighbors, have our roles to play, too. In this concluding section we want to suggest some areas we might consider as we seek ways to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

Let's begin with a remark from an American context that challenges us as Friends. Friends are aware that the treatment of Native Americans, the indigenous people erroneously called Indians for so long, has

been a particularly tragic and shameful episode in the history of the United States. A recent film depicting the capture of the Chiricahua Apache Geronimo did a good job at detailing some of the tensions of this era. The film portrayed conflict between dedicated U.S. Army officers who followed principle as best they could in a difficult situation, and those other officers who took the path of expediency. The capture of the warrior Geronimo was ultimately accomplished by deceit, by making yet another promise which was broken. In the film, a dedicated young officer spoke to the Army commander to whom Geronimo surrendered, telling him how essential he felt it was for the Army to keep its word. The officer, Brigadier General Nelson Miles, replied:

I hate an idealist.

There's always something messy about them.¹³⁷

Whatever we undertake, we're convinced we can only find and act toward solutions to any problem if we believe we can. We need to be idealists, and to resist temptations to cynicism even as we think about those who are cynical in their actions. That's always a little messy, isn't it?

There are, we believe, several very important things we can consider doing as we ponder Asian problems:

1. *We can be as informed as we readily can.*
2. *We can use the information we have.*
3. *We can undertake direct service.*
4. *We can support or be involved in the service of others.*
5. *We can remain open to the opportunities which may come our way, however small or large they may be.*
6. *We can keep our goals modest but meaningful.*

Above all, we might suggest, we can take our work seriously and ourselves with a huge grain of salt.

In 1994 the American Friends Service Committee undertook the most extensive evaluation of its work in Asia to date. The evaluation of the Quaker International Affairs Program was conducted by an independent team of three evaluators, two Asians and an American, two women and a man. The introduction to the evaluators' final report was written by Dr. Chaiwat Satha-anand, a Thai political scientist, Muslim peacemaker and Vice-Rector of Thammasat University. We'd like to share it here as a spark to our thinking together:

FRIENDSHIP AND ASIAN POLITICS AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

As the twentieth century comes to a close, many look forward to the rise of the twenty-first century as the century of hope. The collapse of the Berlin Wall signalled the end of the Cold War and with it, billions of dollars spent on intercontinental nuclear weapons cease to have any *raison d' etre* in terms of real politics. Through the spread of micro-electronic capabilities, the globalist paradigm with the cumulative impacts of global scale technopolitics is becoming more visible. As a result, the Westphalian conception of a world, order based upon territorial sovereignty seems to be on a much less firmer ground. The hope comes from, among other things, a historical moment when world leaders would be allowed to shift their focuses and resources to more humane and environment-conscious issues.

But there are also signs of sorrow.

All of this is taking place against the current fact that 50% of South Asian people lack safe water, life expectancy in Afghanistan is 41

years compared to 77 in Japan, and for every 1,000 Cambodian children, 130 of them will not live to see their first birthdays.

In other words, the post cold war era is without agenda, plagued with continued structural violence, challenged by fierce ethnic conflicts with their characteristic high level of violence and lasting effects.

The burning question, then, is what can a philanthropic organization such as the American Friends Service Committee do to alleviate these difficult and sometimes inter-related problems?

Not only is the organization facing the world where compassion seems to be drying up, but a significant many in today's world are blind to pain of the sufferings and deaf to cries of the oppressed.

The Quaker International Affairs Program of the American Friends Service Committee in Asia tries to open the eyes, clear the ears of the world while it works to rekindle the fire of compassion so that the public will "do something" about what is seen and heard. This has been done through contacts with different people from all comers of the continent, with primary emphasis on Southeast Asia and China. Workshops have been organized, for example, to bring people together so that important ideas can be shared and relevant steps taken. Small projects that need assistance are given help when possible because a small step in the right direction can lead to a meaningful transformation in the future.

If the main objective of the American Friends Service Committee is to work for the betterment of humankind, then the guiding principle for the organization's methods is captured in the notion of "friendship." To be a good friend of someone means to help that person see reality as it is, hear alternative points of view, think about steps to be taken for human solutions in facing problems, and try to act so that his/her own constructive potentialities can be realized. In the process, both friends learn and grow. Lessons learned are then shared and the beauty of experiences appreciated so that networks of friends are strengthened and expanded. Then friends can work together to do what is humanly possible to come to terms with problems of violence, lack of human rights, religious intolerance,

oppression of women, and suppression of democracy in different societies.

When there is a clash of ideals and interests as is currently the case with members of the Southeast Asia Network for Human Rights [SEANET] and the Bangkok Peace Seminar Group on the one hand, and officials of the ASEAN ministerial conflict on the other, compassion and understanding of differing perspectives are needed. But then the truth needs to be told. To be told the truth by a friend may be difficult but it is necessary if friendship were to last for mutual benefits in the long run. It should therefore not be a surprise that AFSC chose to provide a small support for the Bangkok Peace Seminar while trying to be friends with the host country.¹²⁹

This report is an attempt to evaluate the works done by AFSC's Quaker International Affairs Program in Asia from the organization's committed value, the reality of existing contexts and impact on friends who work with AFSC all along.¹³⁰

What can we Friends who want to be friends with Asia do? Let us turn briefly to each of the six points raised above.

1. We can be as informed as we readily can.

All of us know how difficult it is to be fully informed in this changing, complex world. Details of complexity can seem bewildering, and the rapidity of change is daunting. The flow and management of information have become sophisticated tools of those who would influence our thinking, seek our support, and assure our acquiescence.

If we are not specialists in an area of knowledge - development, Burma, AIDS, aboriginal people's needs - how can we possibly know how to keep up? How can we understand the dialogue even if we do not aspire to contribute to it? Especially when it comes to listening and understanding people from other cultures, it takes time, insight, background information, a critical ear, and good analysis.

It's a challenge to anyone, but we Friends have a few advantages we can mention. There are among us a number who specialize in these areas, and many

more who follow these issues. We are not alone in our quest for information. As a Society, we have a history of interest in the many areas of peace, justice, and equality. We have friends and colleagues paying attention to political and socio-economic matters in our own countries, abroad, and in the interface between our Northern countries and countries of the south, including Asia. Aside from our own reading and interactions, we can turn to Friends both as sources of information and for feedback on our impressions. Friends' institutions-Quaker Service Australia, Quaker Peace and Service (London and New Zealand), the American Friends Service Committee, Candian Friends Service Committee, Friends World Committee For Consultation and others can all provide invaluable additions.

2. We can use the information we have.

Information by itself can be good, but information put to use is powerful. We can share what we learn and refine with others - family, friends, our Meetings. Each of us has some part of the truth we can use in our family and personal relationships, and in our political actions, whether they consist of voting, of speaking up at meetings, or other more specific steps. Together and singly we can share information with those in positions to influence policy, make decisions, and oversee implementation. We can, by the time tested method of speaking truth to power, empower the truths we find. We can make differences.

3. We can undertake direct service.

We as QIARs have been extremely fortunate to have more than five years in our assignment in Friends' service. But we have now finished that assignment. We are not posted in Asia any more - since a few days ago. Unlike most of you, we hope, we don't even know what our next work will be. So we stand with you and want to ask now:

What are we called to do in service?

What can we do?

What are the practical limitations on our expectations?

What does it matter whether we do it or not?

The Prophet asks

What does the Lord require of us ?

and answers clearly

To do justice, to Love mercy, to walk humbly before God.

It is for each of us to answer this call, to seek and therefore to find in every aspect of our lives, the opportunities for service that await us. It may be that it does not matter so much what we do as it matters that we do it, and that we do it as well as we can. Edmund Burke was surely right when he wrote, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men [sic] to do nothing."

We'd like here to tell you in brief some of what we were able to do in our now-previous assignment in Asia. We concentrated on dialogue, reconciliation, representation, and information activities, especially

- * Monitoring the social, economic, and political situation of each country of the region as well as the region as a whole, especially by meeting regularly with representatives of a diverse cross section in each country, to stay abreast of current issues of peace and justice, anticipate trends, assist in their own program planning and keep AFSC and other agencies and individuals apprised of developments in major issues as appropriate;
- * Giving support and encouragement to diverse people concerned with issues of peace and justice by providing a Quaker presence in the region,
- * Helping create opportunities for dialogue and discussion among people who do not ordinarily have the opportunity to meet, including situations in which meetings could only be convened by neutral third parties not overly identified with one viewpoint or group among the parties,
- * Providing quiet second-track diplomacy appropriate to the context at times of crisis within or among countries of the region, especially in and for East Timor, Burma, and China/Tibet, and
- * Interpreting findings to diverse parties in Asia, the American Friends Service Committee and its constituencies, and both governmental

and non-governmental agencies and individuals in the United States, Pacific Rim nations, and other parts of the world.

In an appendix following there is a listing of events we've sponsored during our years of service that carried out the theme of helping create opportunities for dialogue and discussion among people who do not ordinarily have the opportunity to meet (Cf. pp. 153-155 below).

4. We can support or be involved in the service of others.

We have just had the opportunity to provide some orientation to those who followed us in the Quaker International Affairs work in Asia. Rekha Shukla and Greg Victor are a young couple who are taking up where we left off in our assignment. They may not do the work the way we would - they may not pick out the same issues we would - they probably won't have the same priorities we would and they certainly won't even know all the same people we would. We think that's great. Greg and Rekha will follow their lights, find their truths, do their work. People in Asia, the American Friends Service Committee, Friends, and therefore all of us will be richer for this fact. So we support their work by letting ours go.

Similarly, we think, all of us can support the work of others in different ways. It's good to give money, good to give a hand when we can, good to be involved in others' service when that's what others want. When that's not needed or we don't have the means, we can support the work of others by knowing about it, by expressing support for them individually, and by staying out of the way.

5. We can remain open to the opportunities which may come our way, however small or large they may be.

We never know when or where the opportunity for service will come. We need, we think, to be alert to whatever comes to find the places we can make contributions.

As Quaker International Affairs Representatives for the American Friends Service Committee Asia we two have had the chance in Asia to do service in a big way - fulltime and with the support of Friends and Friends' organizations around the world. We have been involved with some of the big issues in one of the big, important areas of the world. Few people are so lucky as we have been.

Throughout, we realized all along that what we could actually do, what differences we could make or help others make, might be very small indeed. Perhaps an example will help. Since we came to Asia we have followed intently the complex of issues in Burma. We've learned a lot of history, talked to a lot of people, interacted with many who have suffered from events in that unhappy country, and provided support for some who are trying to restore hope to that ravaged country. In the course of our work on behalf of Burmese people, we even had the chance to join a delegation of recipients of the Nobel Prize for Peace on behalf of Aung San Suu Kyi and the people of Burma.

During the delegation of the Nobel Laureates and a little later in Dharamsala, we had the chance to meet several times with the Dalai Lama. It was he who first called for "a strategic plan to follow our visit here in Thailand," he who first said human rights has no frontier, and he whose support as a Buddhist leader especially encouraged the Burmese in exile from their Buddhist homeland. His whose presence among the Nobel delegation electrified Thailand and particularly inspired the Burmese who met with the delegation. At the end of that meeting one of us was close enough to see and hear the Dalai Lama say goodbye to the Buddhist president of a Burmese student exile group who had been invited to brief him and others in the delegation on the situation Burma as he saw it. Taking Maung Maung Than's hand, he murmured, "Since we left our home thirty-four years ago, we never gave up our determination." Then clenching his right fist as in Asian martial arts, he urged, "So hold tight to your determination to go home."

At the conclusion of the Nobel Laureates' time in Thailand, Maung Maung Than asked if he could come to see us. "I need a friend," he said. We welcomed the opportunity, so we welcomed him to our home. That was the beginning of a fine friendship. We had been open to the Nobel Laureates' mission, and we were open to a relationship with Maung Maung Than. As you'll see below, we're very glad we were.

6. We can keep our goals modest but meaningful.

We have been working, as so many others have, inside Burma and outside, to try to help change the conditions that make life so marginal for so many there. The problems are not solved, the peace and NGO community is not in agreement about whether or how to work in Burma, and it sometimes appears that little

progress will ever be made. But we continue our work, lighting our single candle rather than cursing the darkness.

And in the course of our work for Burma we've had another opportunity which may mean even more than our other efforts. Maung Maung Than, our Burmese friend above, was jailed with seven others for illegal political activity when he continued to lobby student groups and others in Thailand on behalf of the issues as he sees them in Burma. He and Nye Nye Soe [Baw Baw], one of the friends he was jailed with, were visited in their cell by a man who identified himself as a member of Burmese intelligence. "Son, you're going home," the intelligence officer said to each. This would have meant a sentence of death, since the two men had been wanted in Burma for years for insurrection and other acts against the SLORC regime.

Maung Than and Baw Baw were frightened. As we visited them, our main goal was just to show up ... to be F/friends ... to bring food and other necessities not provided by Thai jails . . . and to see what might open before us. As the months in jail went on, Maung Than especially despaired. He had an attack of malaria with an acute case of boredom, and he sometimes felt hopeless. We were able to remind him of the Dalai Lama's words that had been so compelling to him when they met "Never give up your determination Hold tight to your determination."

Through the good offices of the Australian Embassy in Thailand, we were able to help Maung Maung Than and Nye Nye Soe complete papers and interviews to enable them to be resettled under a special program in Australia for Burmese refugees. "Now I know what freedom means," Maung Than said when we visited him just before his trip to Australia in July. Today the two men are continuing their education in Canberra, where we will visit them next week. The problems in Burma are not solved, though they're being worked on. Maung Maung Than and Nye Nye Soe may, through their new educational opportunity, become a part of the eventual solution. What this shows, we think, is the truth of a remark by M. Scott Peck, the American psychiatrist and peacemaker:

The whole course of human history may depend on a change of heart on one solitary and even humble individual-for it is in the solitary mind and soul of the individual that the battle between good and evil is waged and ultimately won or lost.¹³⁸

Thus it is with a modest, human-sized goal that we may through our simple efforts effect the greatest change we can hope to achieve.

In 1988, Jamaica entered a bobsled team, of all things, in the Winter Olympics in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Recognizing the process of the race as more important than the outcome, their captain named their recycled sled "Cool runnings," with the wish to his team, "Peace be the journey." ¹³⁹

The American peace activist A.J. Muste noted:

"There is no way to peace. Peace is the way."

The Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh has written

Peace is every step.
The shining red sun is my heart.
Each flower smiles with me.
How green, how fresh all that grows.
How cool the wind blows.
Peace is every step.
It turns the path to joy. ¹⁴⁰

Peace be the journey.

But man, proud man,
Dress'd in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.

Measure for Measure
William Shakespeare

Appendix

Selected formal Asian gatherings facilitated by Quaker International Affairs Program [QIAP] since September 1989

REBUILDING THE SOCIAL SERVICE SAFETY NET:

Social work in China

May 1994: Hosted ten-day exchange between women of Hong Kong and women of China, including individuals, the independent Women's Research Institute (China's first NGO), the All China Women's Federation and a variety of academic, technical, professional, and official groups.

Hong Kong and Malaysian visitors conducted intensive training for some eighty women and men from Beijing and six other provinces, re-introducing social work from outside China with Chinese characteristics as tailored by overseas Chinese women.

China/U.S. Relations: Between and among peoples, governments, and NGOs of the two superpowers

November 1993: Hosted two-week study tour in the United States by delegation of four from CAFIU, the Chinese Association for International Understanding, led by a key member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference [CPPCC], as guests of the American Friends Service Committee. Visits with officials and NGOs at the United Nations, at the Ford Foundation, with AFSC offices in five cities, and with Clinton Administration officials, members of Congress, Senators, and political parties and institutes in Washington, D.C.

Networking On Issues of Violence Against Women in Rapidly Changing Economies

August 1993: Organized/hosted with AFSC colleague a nine-day exchange for women from China and Hong Kong to increase understanding and strengthen their efforts to provide a kind of social service safety net for Chinese women caught in a downward spiral of crisis due to rapidly changing economies. A press conference associated with this event proved to have confidence-building results

in Hong Kong, as Hong Kong Chinese people were intrigued and encouraged by the support of the People's Republic of China for work of a genuine Chinese NGO on behalf of women's issues.

Consultation On Islam in Changing Circumstances

January 1993: Hosted (in conjunction with AFSC Middle East colleagues) a participant-facilitated, one-week off-the-record consultation among fifteen Muslim women and men thinkers from nine Asian, Middle Eastern, and northern African countries.

BRIDGING THE GAP-Community Health Work in Especially Difficult Circumstances: Meeting the Present Challenges

March 1992: Organized and hosted, with AFSC Bangkok and Manila colleagues, an eight-day conference of some 43 participants from 13 countries of Southeast Asia, South Asia, and China. Resulted in substantial new linkages supporting health care development in China, India, Sri Lanka, and border areas of Burma as well as strengthened local initiatives.

Learning With Women in Development: Seminar on rural development for socialist women from Indochina

May 1991: Organized and hosted with colleague and Lao Women's Union a two-week seminar on women and development for village women, provincial officials, and central policy planners from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Group visited rural development projects in three Lao provinces to assess initiatives and discuss issues of women's participation in sustainable village development as an ingredient in nationbuilding.

Hong Kong Meeting of UNHCR staff and Service Providers for Vietnamese "Boat People" with Hong Kong Security Overseers and Legislators

June 1990: Convened and facilitated, at the request of individuals in Hong Kong social service agencies concerned about Vietnamese refugees and economic migrants in the Territory, the first meeting ever held of all the parties to this

difficult situation. Representatives and leaders of the Special Branch of Hong Kong Criminal Services Division (overseer of the camps) met with the Director of UNHCR and members of his staff, directors of Hong Kong Chinese and international NGOs providing services to the Vietnamese detainees, legislators concerned about problems created by such a large, expensive, and controversial presence, and with representatives of the "boat people" themselves to identify issues and concerns dividing the parties and search for underlying common concerns. Immediate result was formation of an ongoing working group which led in time to more open terms of detention. This gave the Vietnamese seeking to resettle in a third country participation and some control over organization of their communities in the Hong Kong refugee/detention centres.

Journalists' Seminar and Reporting Tour in Cambodia

December 1989: Facilitated with colleague a two-week + tour for Asian journalists from both ASEAN nations and Indochina in Cambodia, to assess local situation firsthand (rather than through international wire services), report on findings, and engage in concluding seminar on the roles of journalism in information flow to people and nationbuilding consequences.

Working Group of the Women's Crisis Centre Network

October 1989: Helped facilitate working meeting of this Quaker-facilitated network supported by Quaker Service Australia, then oversaw resulting production of two handbooks: *Working With Rape Survivors and Becoming Whole: A Handbook for Working With Abused Women*. Translated into Thai, Filipino, Bahasa Indonesia/Malaysia, Chinese, and Spanish for use by indigenous women's groups in a variety of cultures.

In 1991 translation of these books by the first women's NGO in the People's Republic of China, an organization proactively supported by QIAP since 1990, enabled NGO to establish in 1992 a hotline for services to women which is now in its third year of active work, serving women, men, and organizations across the PRC.

Selected Events Supported by the Program

- * *Bangkok Peace Seminar: People's Agenda for Asia-Pacific Security* a four-day gathering parallel to ASEAN meetings known as the Asean Regional Forum [ARF] in July 1994
- * *Cooperation and Confidence Building: South Asia Gathering* eight-day gathering convened by Quaker Peace and Service colleagues from the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka, which Barbara Bird helped facilitate in Colombo as part of the Quaker core convening the meetings in July 1993
- * Nobel Peace Laureates' trip to Thailand on behalf of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners in Burma: QIAP assisted and travelled with the group, representing the American Friends Service Committee, co-recipient in 1947 of the Nobel Prize for Peace
- * *Women Overcoming Violence*, the fourth War Resisters International Conference, sponsored by the Thai NGO Friends of Women in Bangkok, which the QIARs assisted as consultants in planning the event, as financial friends by a very small cash grant, and as participants
- * 1990 American Friends Service Committee high-level delegation to China headed by Steven Cary, with planning, travel assistance and staffing provided by QIAP Asia and Donna Anderton travelling as a member of the delegation.

REFERENCES

- 1 George Lakey, "Global Adventures for Nonviolence (or The Ego Takes Its Knocks)," *Friends Journal* 40, no. 4 (April 1994),7.
- 2 Phyllis Piotrow, *World Population Crisis* (New York: Praeger, 1973), p4.
- 3 *Human Development Report 1994* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.34.
- 4 Philippine Population Commission, quoted in letter to QIAP from Fr. Jack Walsh, MM (8 August 1994).
- 5 Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994, p59
- 6 *Human Development Report 1994*, p37.
- 7 Lester Brown, *Asian Wall Street Journal*, also quoted in Eduardo Lachica, "Growing Taste for meat prompts fears of a grain shortage," *AP-Dow Jones, in The Nation*, 2 September 1994.
- 8 Thomas Fraser Homer-Dixon, "On the Threshold: Environmental Changes As Causes of Acute Conflict," *International Security*, fall 1991, quoted in Kaplan, *ibid.*, p59.
- 9 Freedom House, New York City, in *What Counts*, p69
- 10 John Sayers, Program Director of Oxfam Hong Kong, letter to QIAP evaluation team 2 August 1994.
- 11 *Human Development Report 1994*, p47.
- 12 Margaret Reynolds, *Pacific Vision*, April 1994, quoted in Willis, *Military Buildup and An Alternative Security in the Asia-Pacific*.
- 13 *SIPRI Yearbook /1993: World Armaments and Disarmament* (Stockholm) and CDI quoted in Patti Willis, *Military Buildup and an Alternative Security in the Asia-Pacific* (Bangkok: paper presented to Bangkok Peace Seminar, 22 July 1994). p5.
- 14 Nic Maclellan, *Notes on Australia and Regional Security* (Bangkok: paper presented to Bangkok Peace Seminar, 22 July 1994), pl-3.
- 15 Willis, p.6
- 16 Albert P. Blaustein, Rutgers University School of Law (Camden, NJ) quoted in Charis Cohn and Ilena Silverman, *What Counts: The Complete Harper's Index* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc.,1991), p69
- 17 Agencies working in the Horn of Africa as reported by Edith M. Lederer, {20 million may starve in Horn of Africa," AP, AFP, and Reuters syndication in *Bangkok Post*, 23 August 1994, p35 ..
- 18 Elizabeth Bowen, *A Compass Error*.
- 19 Wallerstein [1974] and Deutsch et al [1957] quoted in Cal Clark and Steve Chan, *The Evolving Pacific Basin in the Global Political Economy* (Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Reiner Publishers, Inc, 1992), 1.
- 20 S. Linder, *The Pacific Century: Economic and Political Consequenses of Asian-Pacific Dynamism* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1986) .
- 21 Tommy Koh, {What Asian Wants From Bill Clinton," *Asian Wall Street Journal Weekly*, Nov 9, 1992, p.14.

- 22 Dr. Walden Bello, Asian-Pacific in the Post-Cold War Era (Bangkok: paper presented to Bangkok Peace Seminar, 22 July 1994), p7.
- 23 James Fallows, *Looking at the Sun: The Rise of the New East Asian Economic and Political System* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994),. reviewed in *Asiaweek*, 8 June, 1994, p8.
- 24 Willis. op cit. pl.
- 25 *The Asia and Pacific Review 1993/94: The Business and Economic Report* (13th edition; London: Kogan Page Limited, 1993).
- 26 *The Asia and Pacific Review 1993/94 Ibid*, 1.
- 27 *The Asia and Pacific Review 1993/94 Ibid*,1.
- 28 *The Asia and Pacific Review 1993/94 Ibid*, 2.
- 29 *Human Development Report 1994*, p20.
- 30 Phillip Bennoun and Irene Bain, *A Discussion Paper on On Participatory Approaches For Poverty-Oriented Development Programming in Rural China* (Beijing: United Nations Development Programme, 1992), p 19.
- 31 Chen Ya'an, Director of the Office of the Chinese Association For International Understanding (CAFIU) in private conversation with QIAP in Bangkok 27 July 1994.
- 32 *China Daily* 5/3/91, quoted in Bennoun and Bain, 20.
- 33 Geo Hongbin, Director of Fupinban, in private conversation with QIAP (Linchi County, Shandong Province, October 1993), and in his paper "Strategy For Eradicating Poverty by the Chinese Government" presented to the conference organized by the China International Co-operative On Economic and Technical Exchanges, October 1992.
- 34 John Quincy Adams in Niles National Register. Jan 22, 1842. PP 327-28 in Harry Magdoff, *Economic Aspects of U.S. Imperialism*, Monthly Review Press 1966, p.3, quoted in Stewart and Charlotte Meacham, *Imperialism Without Invading Armies: Peace, justice, and the Multinationals in Southeast Asia*, The Twelfth James Backhouse Lecture 1976 (Broadway, New South Wales: The Religious Society of Friends, Amber Press, 1976), p.12
- 35 *The Asia and Pacific Review 1993/94*
- 36 Office of U.S. Naval Intelligence, U.S. Navy, *The United States Navy as an Industrial Asset - What the Navy has done for Industry and Commerce* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1923), in Magdoff 4, quoted in Meacham and Meacham, 13.
- 37 *The Asia and Pacific Review 1993/94*
- 38 *Human Development Report 1994*, 197.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 69.
- 40 Eugene R. Black, "The Domestic Dividends of Foreign Aid," *Journal of World Business* Vol I. Fall 1965, in Magdof p.4, quoted in Meacham and Meacham, p.13.
- 41 Meacham and Meacham, 13
- 42 *Human Development Report 1994*, 7 and 73. Ten countries with two-thirds of the world's poor are Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, and Vietnam.

- 43 Ibid., 75.
- 44 Ibid., 22.
- 45 Theera Nuchipian, "Preventative Diplomacy: Issues to be Addressed in the Asia-Pacific Region," (paper presented to Asia-Pacific Roundtable - Confidence building and conflict Reduction in the Pacific, 5-8 June 1994, quoted in Willis, 2.
- 46 Daljit Singh, "The Politics of Peace: Preventative Diplomacy in ASEAN," *Harvard International Review*, Spring 1994, quoted in Willis, 2.
- 47 Greg Ansley, "The Arming of Asia," *New Zealand Defence Quarterly*, Summer 1993, quoted in Willis, 2.
- 48 Andrew Mack, "Arms Proliferation in the Asia-Pacific: Causes and prospects for Control," (Working Paper, 1992/10, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, December 1992) in Willis, 2.
- 49 Summary of well-documented cases in Willis, 3.
- 50 Andrew Mack, "After the Cold War and the Gulf War: Prospects for Security in the Asia-Pacific" (Working paper 1992/1, Australian National University, February 1992) in Willis, 4.
- 51 Bello, 2.
- 52 *The Asia and Pacific Review 1993/94: The Business and Economic Report* (13th edition; London: Kogan Page Limited, 1993), 3.
- 53 Walden Bello, *People and Power in the Pacific: The struggle for the Post-Cold War Order* (Quezon City, Philippines: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, Inc. and London: Pluto Press, 1992), 28.
- 54 Margaret Thatcher, quoted in Bangkok newspaper *The Nation*, 7 September 1993, and later by Bello, *Asia Pacific*. 3.
- 55 All quoted in Willis, 7-8.
- 56 *Human Development Report 1994*, 170 and 199.
- 57 Maclellan, 3.
- 58 Nic Maclellan, *Notes On Australia and Regional Security* (Paper presented to Bangkok Peace Forum, 22 May 1994), I.
- 59 Willis, 7.
- 60 Maclellan, 4.
- 61 Kusuma Snitwongse, "Securing ASEAN's Future: An Overview of Security in South East Asia," *Harvard international Review*, Spring 1994 in Willis, 4.
- 62 Jose Tigro, "A Changed Neighborhood: Some Notes on Labour Migration as a Security Issue in the Asia Pacific Region," ASEAN-ISIS 8th Asia-Pacific Roundtable - Confidence Building and Conflict Reduction in the Pacific, 5-8 June 1994.
- 63 Pauline Kerr and Andrew Mack, "The Evolving Security Discourse in Asia-Pacific," Department of International Relations, Australian National University, (Conference paper, July 1993), in Willis, 5.
- 64 Reinhold Niebuhr, quoted in Inis Claude, Jr., *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House, 1962), p.79, quoted in Bello's Paper, 4.
- 65 Mahbub ul Haq, United Nations Development Program, in *Ploughshares Monitor*, March, in Willis, 10.

- 66 Stephen G. Cary, Russell S. Endo, Corinne B. Johnson, Donna K. Anderton, and DeWitt Barnett, *CHINA 1990: Seeking Balance* (Philadelphia, PA USA: American Friends Service Committee, 1991), 25.
- 67 Phra Maha Somchai Kusollachitto, Violence and Non-violence in Civil Society," talk presented to the Bangkok Peace Seminar, People's Agenda for Asia-Pacific Security (Bangkok, 24 July 1994).
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, quoted in Donna Anderton, *Consultation On Islam in Changing Circumstances, 25-31 January 1993* (Penang, Malaysia: Confidential report, 1993),6.
- 72 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland, Johannesburg Vintage, 1993), xii.
- 73 Peter Hoeg, *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow*, first published in Denmark with the title *Froken Smillas Fornemmelse for Sne*, 1992 (London: Flamingo an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 1993),212.
- 74 Sulak Sivaraksa, *Seeds of Peace* (Berkeley, California: Parallax Press and Bangkok: International Network of Engaged Buddhists and Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, 1992, 5.
- 75 Ibid., 5-6
- 76 Ibid., 9
- 77 First expressed by Corinne Johnson, Director of AFSC's international work, in *International Development: An AFSC Perspective* (Philadelphia, P A, USA: The Americans Friends Service Committee, 1985).
- 78 *Human Development Report*, 1.
- 79 James Gustave Speth, preface to *Human Development Report*, iii.
- 80 Sulak Sivaraksa, *ibid.*, 41.
- 81 *Human Development Report*, 4.
- 82 *Human Development Report /1994*,90.
- 83 Hoeg, 212.
- 84 Confidential remark at QIAP-sponsored off-the-record conference on Islam, with speakers therefore not identified, in Penang, Malaysia, 25-31 January 1993.
- 85 Phra Maha Somchai *Ibid.*
- 86 Phra Maha Somchai *Ibid.*
- 87 Phra Maha Somchai *Ibid.*
- 88 John Sayers, Programme Director Oxfam Hong Kong, private letter to QIAP evaluation team, 2 August 1994.
- 89 *Relations Between Northern and Southern NGOs: Policy Guidelines* (Geneva: International Council of Vouluntary Agenciew), 1994.
- 90 *Human Development Report*, 13.
- 91 Sulak Sivaraksa, *ibid.*, 26.
- 92 ?

- 93 We generally concur with the summary Roland Warren, Quaker International Affairs Representative in East and West Berlin, shared with Corinne Johnson, Roberta Foss, and then-Asia International Affairs Representative Sandra Sturdevant in South Korea in 1986, noting that AFSC has no vested interest in particular outcomes of issues, "and that is good." Roland Warren pointed out that QIARs cannot "right every wrong ... or be Amnesty International." Neither can any of us.
- 94 Achaan Seksan Prasertkul, Thammasat University, in private conversation with Donna Anderton and Barbara Bird, May 1992, Bangkok, quoted in Donna Anderton, *Thailand's Struggle For Democracy: "It All Takes Time"* (Philadelphia, PA USA: American Friends Service Committee, 1992), 2.
- 95 George Giacaman, Department of Philosophy, Birzeit University, Ramallah, Palestine, during private conversation at the Quaker-sponsored Conference On Political Change, Vouliagmeni, Greece: 10 April, 1992.
- 96 Sulak Sivaraksa, *ibid.*, 68-69.
- 97 Achaan Gothom Arya, chairperson of the Thai Coordinating Committee Of Human Rights Organizations and Secretary-General of the Campaign For Popular Democracy, in an introductory statement at the Bangkok Peace Seminar: People's Agenda For Asia-Pacific Security, Bangkok: 22 June,] 1994.
- 98 _____, "Insider", *Bangkok Post*, Friday, 2 September 1994. (Some of Thailand's freest writers publish anonymously.)
- 99 Journal of George Fox, I, (Bi-Centenary Ed), 316.
- 100 Ross McDaniel, in private conversation in Thailand as well as in public appearances.
- 101 Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in private conversation in Thailand during Nobel Laureates' trip.
- 102 Susuma Awanohara, Michael Vatikiotos, and Shada Islam, "Vienna Showdown," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 17 June 1993, 16.
- 103 Christine Loh, *Far Eastern Economic Review*
- 104 Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, *Human Rights in Asia: The Struggle For Human Dignity* (Penang, Malaysia: Just World Trust [JUST], 31 December 1992), 1.
- 105 Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, *Human Rights in Asia: the Struggle for Human Dignity* (Penang, Malaysia: Just World Trust [JUST], 31 December 1992), 1.
- 106 Dr. Chaiwat Satha-anand, in *The Quaker International Affairs Program Evaluation Team Report* (Bangkok: Report Issued August 1994), 7.
- 106 Jones, *ibid.*
- 107 Loh, *ibid.*
- 108 Quoted in Susuma A wan ohara, Michael Vatikiotis, and shada Islam, *ibid.*, 17.
- 109 Bangkok Declaration On Human Rights (Bangkok: United Nations, 28 March 1993), 2
- 110 Loh, *ibid.*
- 111 George Giacaman, *Democracy and Civil Society* (paper privately presented at Vouliagmeni, Greece: Quaker-sponsored Conference On Political Change, II April 1992, 1.

- 112 Thongchai Winichakul, quoted in Sapana Sakya, "Homegrown Human Rights for
Asia," *The Bangkok Post* Vol XLIX No. 222, 10 August 1994, 27.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 Chaiwat Satha-anand in Sapana Sakya, *ibid.*, and in private conversations with
QIARs Donna Anderton and Barbara Bird in Bangkok, 1993-94.
- 115 Umor Juoro, "The different Faces of Democracy," *The Far Eastern Economic
Review*, 22 April 1993, 23.
- 116 Juoro. *ibid.*
- 117 Chaiwat Satha-anand in Sapana Sakya, *ibid.*, and in private conversations with
QIARs Donna Anderton and Barbara Bird in Bangkok, 1993-94.
- 118 Kishore Mahbubani, "Live and Let Live: Allow Asians to choose their own
course," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 17 June 1993, 26.
- 119 Ibid.
- 120 Michael Vlahos, U. S. Navy advisor, quoted in Kaplan, 63.
- 121 Phra Maha Somchai, *ibid.*
- 122 Sulak Sivaraksa, *ibid.*, 6.
- 123 Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, "Democratic extremism now plagues the West," Inter
Press Service in Bangkok, *The Nation*, 27 February 1994.
- 124 From *A Declaration of Independence* (Manila: Isis International Women in Action,
1992)
- 125 *A Modern Form of Slavery: Trafficking of Burmese Women and Girls Into Brothels
in Thailand* (New York, Washington, Los Angeles. and London: Human Rights
Watch, 1994). Available from Human Rights Watch, 485 Fifth Avenue, New York,
NY 10017 (\$20 including overseas shipping and handling).
- 126 Khamla Basin, *Thoughts From Women in Asia and the World Today* (Lake Taal,
Philippines: keynote address to the Asia-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education,
1991), 14.
- 127 Joint NGO statement on indigenous peoples (Bangkok: Preparatory Conference for
Second World Human Rights Meeting, April 1993), 1-2.
- 128 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 129 Statement of the European Development Agencies About the World Conference on
Human Rights (Bangkok: Oxfam UK and Ireland, April 1994), 1.
- 130 Kalinga Seneviratne, "Resentment Growing Over Big Brother Role," *The Nation*
(Bangkok, 2 September 1994), A10.
- 131 *Ibid.*
- 132 Kaplan, *ibid.*, 58.
- 133 Chaiwat Satha-anand, *The Quaker International Affairs Evaluation Team Report*
(Bangkok: August 1994), 6.
- 134 U.S. Committee For Refugees (Washington, D.C.), quoted in What Counts, 71.
- 135 *Human Development Report* 1994, 35.
- 136 We realize that many in Australia now think of Australia as a part of Asia. In using
the more traditional sense that Australia is outside Asia, we mean no disrespect to
this interesting view, and take no position about it.
- 137 Geronimo, 1993 Hollywood film.

- 138 M. Scott Peck, *People of the Lie*.
139 *Cool Running* (Disney Studios, 1993).
140 Thich Nhat Than, *Peace Is Every Step* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), ix.