



Project Report

International Workshop

Oriental Wisdom: Alternative Pathways towards Environmental
and Natural Resource Management

10 -11 April 2008 at Royal Princess Hotel,
Bangkok, Thailand

&

Alliance Workshop

Living with Nature through Oriental Wisdom
for our Common Future

7 October 2008, Room 133,
at Barcelona International Convention Centre (CCIB)
in

The 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress
5-14 October 2008
Barcelona, Spain

Organized by

Good Governance for Social Development and
the Environment Institute (GSEI)

Supported by

Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA)
Thailand Research Fund (TRF)

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Alliance Workshop

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Activity I:

International Workshop

**“Oriental Wisdom: Alternative Pathways towards
Environmental and
Natural Resource Management”**

10 -11 April 2008

Royal Princess Hotel, Bangkok –Thailand

1. Background and Justification

According to the report entitled “*the Millennium Development Goals: Progress in Asia and the Pacific 2007* (which is a joint undertaking by UNESCAP, UNDP and ADB), in terms of the region as a whole. Environmental Sustainability integral to the achievement of sustainable development remains unattainable for most countries. Forest cover still disappears at the alarming rate. The region is now losing clean surface water and underground water as a result of industrial contamination and untreated wastewater from urbanization. Rising energy use has contributed to higher GHG emissions aggravating global warming. Rapid economic growth without proper environmental management has brought about excessive natural resource use and accelerated degradation of the environment.

In order to alleviate poverty, most countries in the region recognize that high GDP growth is a significant component of their national development policies. However, many countries have begun to realize that the trick-down effect from economic growth sometimes does little to alleviate poverty but has instead widened the inequality gap in their countries. Moreover, if rapid economic growth is driven by environmentally-unfriendly processes and at the same time brings about excessive consumption level (because high income is normally associated with high consumption), it will certainly result in natural resources and environmental degradation.

The recent report on Global Environmental Outlook launched by UNEP has shown that in terms of humanity’s ecological footprint in 2003 we need approximately 1.4 planet Earths to sustain the current rate of consumption. The excessive use of global resources and the global environmental per capita mainly originates from North America and Europe.

Further, the World watch Institute’s State of World 2006 report stated that if the populations of China and India were to consume resources and produce pollution per capita at the current level of the U.S., it would require two planet Earths to sustain these economies. Imagine that the U.S. and other developed countries still continued to consume substantial resources and release considerable pollution and GHG at the current level, and at the same time our whole region aspired to the same standard of luxury as the developed world: how many more planet Earths would we need to serve the unlimited consumption of these countries?

Owing to the limited carrying capacity of the Earth, experts consider that it is a must for China and India, as well as other developing economies, to seek development pathways which leapfrog the existing industrialized countries by using environmentally-friendly and energy-saving approaches. Nevertheless, the excessive consumption pattern of the developed countries

should not be overlooked. The adoption of the Western development approach is normally aimed at the most efficient use of natural resources for sustainable production such as clean technology, energy-saving , and industrial ecology or what we call technology fix. However, these approaches tend to pay scant attention to consumption patterns and levels. Therefore, it is imperative that all countries should seek alternative development approaches which can bring about balanced production and consumption.

Meanwhile, in Asia-Pacific region, we have many examples of the application of local wisdom to national development policies, such as Gross National Happiness (GNH) in Bhutan, Sufficiency Economy in Thailand, and Harmonious Society Concept and Circular Economy in China. These concepts focus not only on sustainable production but also emphasize sustainable consumption.

Compared to Western approach, the Eastern way of life tends to be more in harmony with nature. Moreover, it might be quite a challenge for us to consider the possibility of being able to acquire greater happiness with even less material consumption by drawing on the spiritual dimensions of Eastern Philosophy. This approach would certainly put less stress and demand on the environment.

With the above mentioned reasons this project is aware of the importance of the options for developing the country based on the natural resource sustainability. This project also realizes that this oriental wisdom based on the traditional wisdom that exist in Asia will be the new important approach. For example, the self-sufficiency economy and gross national happiness are based on social values; and circular economy and 3Rs are based on material flow. It would be imperative to provide the framework that suits the local knowledge and interest in a country. Moreover, These approaches will play a significant role in developing many countries' environment especially the Asian countries that are rich in their local wisdom which needs the synergic power of cooperation and the help to restore and strengthen this valuable and powerful local wisdom in order to serve the idea of sustainable development among the globalization stream that moves fast and effects widely the environment in the present. Hence, the project could develop a generic guideline on the oriental wisdom and country specific framework for selected countries. Thailand could be selected as the first pilot country.

1.1 Objectives

- To facilitate brainstorming international workshop and exchange the ideas and practicable experiences of the Asian countries about existing

knowledge and local wisdom of the environmental and natural resource management. The recommendations from the forum will be used to develop oriental wisdom-based framework for environmental and natural resource management.

- To present a synthesis paper of practicable experiences based on the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy for environmental and natural resource management in Thailand.
- To build up international networks of policy-planning agencies, academic institutes and civil societies in order to promote the application of alternative pathways for sustainable development.

1.2. Methodology

The two days workshop was divided into 4 sessions including special lecture, panel discussion, brainstorming session and paper presentation. This international workshop was attended by Thai participants and participants from Asian countries.

1.3 Expected participants

The workshop was invited 50 participants including 5 speakers including Bangladesh, India, China, Japan and Bhutan, 43 local participants including representatives from the embassies of ASEAN member countries in Thailand, academics, international organizations, international non-governmental organizations, international cooperation agencies, policy-maker agencies and civil society organizations.

1.4 Expected outcomes

- International cooperation among policy makers agencies, academic institutes and civil societies at the regional level in order to identify mutual concepts and indicators with regard to oriental wisdom on environmental and natural resource management.
- Workshop recommendation on the synthesis paper based on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy for environmental and natural resources management
- Networks between Thailand's policy-planning agencies, academic institutes and civil societies and those of other Asian countries

1.5 Date & Venue

A two-day International workshop was held on 10 -11 April 2008 at Royal Princess Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand.

1.6 Responsible Agency

Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment
Institute (GSEI)

1.7 Supportive Organizing Agency

- Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA)
- Thailand Research Fund (TRF)

2. Workshop Agenda

10 April 2008	
Time	Programs
08.30 – 09.00	Registration
09.00 – 09.15	Deliver overview and objectives of the workshop By Thanpuying Dr.Suthawan Sathirathai, Chairwoman of Good Governance for Social Development and the Environmental Foundation (GSEI), Thailand
09.15 – 09.30	Opening Welcome Remarks Dr. Chitriya Pinthong, Director-General of Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA)
09.30 – 09.45	Opening Remark By Mr.Virasakd Futrakul, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
09.45 – 10.00	Coffee Break
10.00 – 10.30	Special Lecture “ASIAN Road Map : The Application of Local Wisdom in Environmental and Natural Resource Management” By Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji, IUCN Asia Regional Director
10.30 - 11.30	Panel Discussion: “Oriental Wisdom : Alternative Pathways for Environmental and Natural Resource Sustainability” Moderator: Assoc.Prof.Dr.Soparatana Jarusombat, Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University Panelist Presentations: Group 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Future of Sustainability and Challenges to Asia Dr. K. Vijayalakshmi , Assistant Vice President (Environment), Development Alternatives, India ▪ Fight Against Poverty – Search For An Alternative Strategy: Lessons from BRAC Programmes in Bangladesh Mr Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury, Chairman of BRAC BdMail Network Ltd and Former Executive Director, BRAC- Bangladesh
11.30 – 12.00	Q & A
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch Break
13.00 – 14.00	Panelists Presentations: Group 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Chinese Circular Economy Model to Create Environmental Development Prof.Dr.Dajian Zhu, Director of Institute for Sustainability and Governance, Tongji University, China

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Japan's Experience in Applying the 3R Model for Sustainable Development Dr. Akira Ogihara, Manager and Senior Researcher, Waste and Resource Project, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan
14.00-14.15	Q & A
14.15-14.30	Coffee Break
14.45 - 15.45	<p><u>Panelists Presentation: Group 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gross National Happiness in Natural Resource Management Mr.Dorji Penjore, Senior Researcher, Centre for Bhutan Studies, Bhutan ▪ Sufficiency Economy towards Sustainable Development in Thailand (1) Prof. Dr.Apichai Puntasen, Director, Rural and Social Management Institute (RASMI), Thailand (2) Thanpuying Dr. Suthawan Sathirathai, Chairwoman Good Governance for Social and the Environmental Foundation, Thailand
15.45 - 16.00	Q & A
18.30 – 20.00	Reception Dinner
11 April 2008	
09.00 – 09.30	<p>Research Presentation :<i>The Synthesis of Practicable Experiences based on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in Environmental and Natural Resource Management in Thailand</i> By Assoc. Prof. Adis Israngkura Na Ayudthaya, Director Training Center, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA)</p>
09.30 – 10.00	<p><i>Holistic Approach (based on Buddhism) for Natural Resource Management</i> By Phra Subin Paneeto, Founder, Satcha Community Savings Group, Wat Pailorm, Trad Province, Thailand</p>
10.00 - 10.30	Q & A
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee Break
10.45 – 11.15	<p>Summary of Day I Presentation By Assoc.Prof.Dr.Orapan Nabangchang, School of Economics, Sukhothai Thammathirat University</p>
10.45 – 12.00	<p>Brainstorming Session : <i>Synergies Mutual Concepts and Indicators of Alternative Pathways for Sustainable Development in Environmental and Natural Resource Management</i> Moderator: Assoc.Prof. Surichai Wun'gao, Director, Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University</p>

12.00 – 13.00	Lunch Break
13.00 – 14.30	Discussion (Conts.)
14.30 – 14.45	Coffee Break
14.45 – 15.30	<p>Wrap up and Concluding recommendation for the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress on 5-14 October 2008 - Barcelona, Spain by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assoc.Prof. Surichai Wun’gao, Director, Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University • Assoc. Prof.Dr.Orapan Nabangchang, School of Economics, Sukhothai Thammathirat University • Thanpuying Dr.Suthawan Sathirathai, Chairwoman of GSEI
15.30 – 15.45	<p>Closing remarks By Assoc.Prof.Suchata Jinachitra, Deputy Director of Thailand Research Fund (TRF)</p>

3. Workshop Activities

- Opening Ceremony



- **Panel Discussion & Research Presentation**



- **Brainstorming Session**



4. Workshop Summary

Conceptualizing Oriental Wisdom Model in Environmental and Natural Resource Management

GSEI held an international workshop in Bangkok on conceptualizing “Oriental Wisdom: Alternative Pathways towards Environmental and Natural Resource Management” from 10 to 11 April 2008. The workshop developed a model of core values that are common among Asian societies at a brainstorming session on “Synergies: Mutual Concepts and Indicators of Alternative Pathways for Sustainable Development in Environmental and Natural Resource Management”. Discussions focused on the complementary aspects of six different concepts within the common value system: (1) “Alternative Development” (presented by India); (2) “Community Development” (Bangladesh); (3) “Circular Economy” (China); (4) “The 3Rs: Reduce–Reuse–Recycle” (Japan); (5) “Gross National Happiness” (“GNH”; Bhutan); and (6) “Sufficiency Economy” (Thailand).

Through exchange of knowledge, experience, new ideas and recommendations, the participants arrived at the primary core value that they held in common, that of contentment with existing in harmony with nature. How to achieve that state of contentment, through community commitment to harmonious co-existence with nature, were perceived as the key in conceptualizing oriental wisdom.

The workshop created a graphic model (see accompanying figure) to illustrate their complementary beliefs. The model resembles a house comprised of (A) foundation, (B) supporting pillars and (C) roof. Each component represents a specific dimension of oriental wisdom as it applies in managing natural resources and the environment.

(A) The foundation is the base for every building or structure. The concept of oriental wisdom likewise needs a solid basis in order to establish a firm line of thinking about managing natural resources and the environment. Development planning that is based on spiritual values and morality offers the opportunity to view natural resources and the environment in constructive new ways; that is, to (1) perceive what surrounds us rather than focusing only on ourselves; (2) learn from nature how to conserve what we value in the environment, how to interact with nature on a sustainable basis; and (3) achieve harmony among ourselves as well as between humanity and nature.

During the presentation of experience from different countries, the consensus held that “spiritual values” and “morality” are the basis for the major changes that affect the management of natural resources and environment, such as changes in individual behavior, changes in production processes, changes in thinking and lifestyle. Control of personal greed for material wealth and power is essential in establishing the right kind of social system. Such changes can trigger improvements in community life, including peace and security, and help bring about sustainability in our use of natural resources and the environment.

(B) Pillars support the roof and connect the foundation with the roof. In the graphic model, pillars are instrumental in linking the concept with its objectives for development. In the context of oriental wisdom, there are three types of pillars, as follow.

Pillar 1: Knowledge with appropriate technology. In the “globalized” world of today, knowledge and technology are dominating influences in everything we do. Through the lens of oriental wisdom, however, knowledge and technology can be adapted so that they positively influence progress in achieving objectives in specific places and situations. Such practical adaptations include (1) appropriate technology that can facilitate access to

“local wisdom” in solving problems arising from issues of globalization; and (2) eco-friendly technology that does not negatively impact natural resources and the environment. The watchword here is “think globally, act locally”, or “GLOCAL”. Oriental wisdom in the context of knowledge and technology encourages approaches to problems that combine a global perspective with local wisdom.

Pillar 2: Community participation. Nowadays, social and economic development in most countries has become “people-oriented”. Natural resource and environmental management with community participation creates public awareness and community empowerment that can reinforce the goals of sustainable management. The process involves networking as well as learning for communities. Experience from India, Bangladesh and Thailand demonstrates that development requires community participation. Moreover, communities need to decide how to manage their own resources. They must understand the limitations to their consumption of resources. The perspective of oriental wisdom can help communities to find methods for improving their use of resources that steer them toward sustainability.

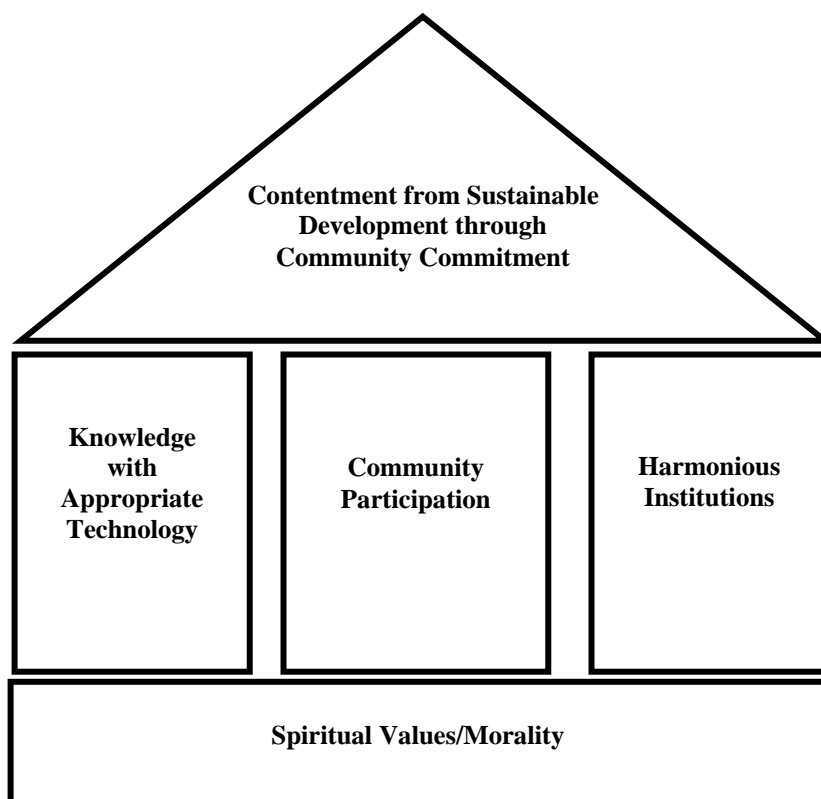
Pillar 3: Harmonious institutions. Conflicts and problems are often experienced at different levels of managing natural resources and the environment. Most societies have tools available to promote harmony in such situations. In the Western world, the “law” is the tool of choice, while Eastern societies employ “morality” in ensuring unity and peace. Besides law and morality, the concept of oriental wisdom includes the sharing of commitment to attain harmony in society, through institutions that promote harmony. Such a combination should lead to unity and bring peace into the society.

(C) **The roof** is like the objective of the total effort to develop the basic concept. The objective of conceptualizing oriental wisdom goes beyond the objective of sustainable development in general. The essence of oriental

wisdom is the achievement of “contentment” — in this case, contentment from sustainable development achieved through community commitment. A society can be content with its state of development when it is committed to sustainability and can improve its socio-economic conditions without spoiling its natural resource base.

Oriental Wisdom Model in Environmental and Natural Resource Management

Core Values for Attaining Sustainable Development with Contentment



Source: The graphic model summarized from recommendations in the international Workshop entitled “Oriental Wisdom: Alternative Pathways for Environmental and Natural Resource Management”. The workshop was hosted by Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Institute (GSEI) on April 10-11, 2008-Bangkok, Thailand.

5. List of Participants

Mr. Virasakd Futrakul	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Thailand
Dr. Chitriya Pinthong	Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency	Thailand
Thanphuying Dr. Suthawan Sathirathai	Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Institute	Thailand
Assoc.Prof. Suchata Jinachitra	Thailand Research Fund	Thailand
Ms. Supranee Jongdeepaisan	Thailand Research Found	Thailand
Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji	IUCN Asia Regional Office	Thailand
Mr. Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee	Bangladesh
Dr. Akira Ogihara	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies	Japan
Prof.Dr. Dajian Zhu	Tongji University	China
Mr. Dorji Penjore	Centre for Bhutan Studies	Bhutan
Dr. Vijaya Koneru Lakshmi	Development Alternatives Group	India
Phra Subin Paneeto	Satcha Community Saving Group, Wat Pailorm	Thailand
Prof.Dr. Apichai Puntasen	Rural and Social Management Institute	Thailand
Assoc.Prof. Surichai Wungaeo	Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University	Thailand
Assoc.Prof. Dr. Orphan Na Bangchang	Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University	Thailand
Assoc.Prof. Dr. Adis Israngkura	National Institute of Development Administration	Thailand
Assoc.Prof. Dr. Soparatana Jarusombat	Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University	Thailand
Ms. Daw Zam	The Royal Bhutanese Embassy	Thailand
Mr. Chatri Moonstan	The Royal Norwegian Embassy	Thailand
Ms. Stephanie Valera	The Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines	Thailand
Dr. Zakir Hussain	IUCN Asia Regional Office	Thailand
Mr. Tawatchai Rathanasorn	IUCN Asia Regional Office	Thailand
Ms. Radda Larpnun	IUCN Asia Regional Office	Thailand
Assoc.Prof.Dr. Rajendra Shrestha	Asian Institute of Technology	Thailand
Assoc.Prof. Dr. Renu Sukharomana	Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Institute (GSEI)	Thailand
Mr. Buntoon Sethasirote	Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Institute (GSEI)	Thailand
Ms. Yuwadee Kardkarnklai	National Health Foundation	Thailand
Ms. Apiradee Yimlamai	Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives	Thailand
Ms. Artisuda Na Nakorn	Office of National Economics and Social Development Board	Thailand
Ms. Chomphoonut Chuangchote	Office of National Economics and Social Development Board	Thailand
Ms. Chuleeporn Bunyamalik	Office of National Economics and Social Development Board	Thailand

Ms. Chitimas Kongpolprom	Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency	Thailand
Mr. Pichet Khemthong	Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency	Thailand
Ms. Jitkasem Tantasiri	Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency	Thailand
Ms. Jayrisa Champa	Pollution Control Department	Thailand
Assoc.Prof. Kaemthong Indaratha	Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University	Thailand
Mr. Pracha Jantarasarsophon	Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University	Thailand
Assoc.Prof.Dr. Chumnong Sorapipatana	Graduated School of Energy and Environment KMUTT	Thailand
Ms. Kalayanee Brohmsubha	Department of Agriculture Extension	Thailand
Mr. Watchira Pechcho	Department of Agriculture Extension	Thailand
Ms. Kamolinee Suksriwong	Office of the Royal Development Projects Board	Thailand
Mr. Machima Kunjara Na Ayudhya	Stock Exchange of Thailand	Thailand
Ms. Nareerat Panmanee	Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning	Thailand
Dr. Raweewan Bhurides	Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning	Thailand
Ms. Pongsri Intasuwan	Satcha Community Saving Group, Wat Pailorm	Thailand
Mr. Pradit Dungsapa	Satcha Community Saving Group, Wat Pailorm	Thailand
Dr. Priyanut Piboolsravut	Bureau of the Crown Property	Thailand
Assoc.Prof.Dr. Rajendra Shrestha	Asian Institute of Technology	Thailand
Dr. Raywadee Roachanakanan	Faculty of Environment and Resource Studies Mahidol University	Thailand
Dr. Thanwa Jitsanguan	Kasetsart University	Thailand
Mr. Solos Khankhrua	Department of Environmental Quality Promotion	Thailand
Ms. Siriwon Janekarn	Foundation for Thailand Rural Reconstruction Movement	Thailand
Dr. Sutin Leepiyachart	Office of National Economics and Social Development Board	Thailand
Dr. Vanida Lavantucksin	National Economics and Social Advisory Council	Thailand
Ms. Supranee Jongdeepaisan	Thailand Research Found	Thailand
Ms. Suchitra Muangnil	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Thailand

Activity II:

Alliances Workshop

**“Living with Nature through Oriental Wisdom for Our
Common Future”**

7 October 2008

**The 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress
Barcelona International Convention Center (CCIB),
Barcelona –Spain**

1. Background and Justification

Currently, we need approximately 1.4 planet Earths to sustain the current rate of global consumption, based on 2003 estimates in UNEP's Global Environmental Outlook. Many current development approaches emphasize efficient use of natural resources and technological solutions for sustainable production. Yet these approaches often pay little attention to consumption patterns.

Alternative development approaches that seek a more balanced production and consumption pattern can offer valuable insights into this dilemma. The Asia-Pacific region offers several alternative development models based on Oriental Wisdom such as Gross National Happiness (GNH) in Bhutan and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in Thailand that apply local wisdom to national development policies. These concepts, based on moral and spiritual values, focus not only on sustainable production but also emphasize sustainable consumption.

This workshop will explore several current alternative development models based on Oriental Wisdom from the Asian region. Together with participants, we will explore how these practices can inform the debate on globalization in the context of extreme environmental challenges and ultimately to understand how they might contribute to national development policies.

1.1 Objectives:

- To facilitate an international brainstorming workshop, exchanging ideas and experiences about existing knowledge and local wisdom of environmental and natural resource management in Asian countries. The recommendations from the forum will be used to further develop an Oriental Wisdom-based framework for environmental and natural resources management
- To build up international networks of policy-planning agencies, academic institutes and civil societies in order to promote the application of the alternative pathways based on Oriental Wisdom for sustainable development

1.2 Methodology

The workshop was divided into 3 sessions including VDO presentation, panelist presentation and discussion. This international workshop was attended by IUCN participants in the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress

1.3 Expected participants:

- We expect 100 participants in the 4th IUCN World Congress (government, NGOs, universities, private sector) to attend.

1.4 The Expected outcomes

- The creation of international network and movements on the issue.
- Propose an alternative development based on Oriental Wisdom in order to achieve sustainable development.

1.5 Date & Venue

An alliances workshop was expected to be held on 7 October 2008 at Room 113, Barcelona International Convention Centre (CCIB), Barcelona, Spain.

1.6 Responsible Agency

Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Institute (GSEI)

1.7. Supportive Organizing Agency

- Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA)
- Thailand Research Fund (TRF)

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2. Workshop Agenda

Time	Program
18:30-18:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Oriental Wisdom by VDO presentation • Overview of Oriental Wisdom and parallel VDO show by Thanpuying Dr. Suthwan Sathirathai Chairwoman, Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Foundation
18:40-19:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by four speaker from countries include: <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Dr. Ashok Khosla Chairman, Development Alternatives Group, India (2) Mr. Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury Chairman, BRAC Bdmil Network, Bangladesh (3) Prof. Dr. Apichai Putasen ExecutiveDirector, Rural and Social Management Institute (RASMI), Thailand <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By Assoc.Prof. Surichai Wun'gao Director, Social Research Institute Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
19:30-19:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short discussion on Oriental Wisdom based framework
19:55-20:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap up recommendation

3. Workshop Activities

▪ VDO Presentation



▪ Panelist Presentations



▪ **Brainstorming Session**



4. Summary of workshop

The international alliance workshop entitled “Living with nature through oriental wisdom for our common future” which took place on October 7, 2008 at the 4th IUCN World Congress in Barcelona was coordinated by GSEI Thailand with the support of Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) and Thailand Research Fund (TRF). To continue the exploration on oriental wisdom as a basis for alternative pathways towards environmental and natural management, the alliance workshop had put in place central questions about the urgency of transition to an alternative paradigm and the ways in which oriental wisdom can offer solutions and contribution to global climate change and sustainability dialogue.

At the heart of the IUCN World Conservation Congress lies the fundamental question: Is the transition to sustainability possible without a change of paradigm of development? Many are in agreement that the dominant growth-led worldview has created great damage to the eco-system and the conflicting relationships between human and the natural environment. Many have indeed been awakened to the fact that development based on growth without limits has begun to send troubling signals, but they also found themselves struggling with the same question of how to actually make a transition toward a world of sustainability. Embracing a sustainable paradigm requires not only a thorough understanding about the relationship between knowledge of different kinds, but also an appreciation of how these different kinds of knowledge can contribute to peaceful and harmonious coexistence between human and the natural world. Inspiration for this transition must also be sought from various wisdom traditions or spiritual knowledge and naturally perhaps, some traditions are more in tune with the imperatives of nature than the others.

The Alliance Workshop began with an introductory speech by Thanphuying Dr. Suthawan Sathirathai, Chairwoman of Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Foundation (GSEI) Thailand. While calling for multiple levels of change was what most people would find most realistic and relevant at a gathering such as IUCN, Thanphuying Dr. Suthawan underscored the fact that change in the lifestyles and the mindsets of individuals were necessary to pave ways for a commitment to sustainable production, consumption and technological/appropriate innovation. Recognizing the need to respond to the environmental threats posed by global climate change with a direct and devastating impact on the humanity regardless of nationalities or political boundaries, GSEI Thailand had harnessed energy in search for alternative development approaches by initiating a regional workshop to enhance dialogues among six countries in the

Asia-Pacific region, namely Japan, Thailand, India, China, Bhutan and Bangladesh. Based on the premise that Oriental Wisdom serves as the bedrock of alternative development models, the meeting was convened in April 2008 in Bangkok with the theme “Oriental Wisdom: Alternative Pathways towards Environmental and Natural Resource Management” .

Thanphuying Dr. Suthawan’s remarks pointed to the crucial step taken by representatives from these countries in sharing not only practical experiences in dealing with environmental challenges, but also in exploring potential sources of wisdom and solutions to the global ecological problems based on the shared belief in the value of compassion and a harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. Six different concepts under the umbrella of Oriental Wisdom were presented: (1) “Alternative Development” (India); (2) “Community Development” (Bangladesh); (3) “Circular Economy” (China); (4) “The 3Rs: Reduce–Reuse–Recycle” (Japan); (5) “Gross National Happiness” (“GNH”; Bhutan); and (6) “Sufficiency Economy Philosophy” bestowed by the King of Thailand. As a result of the workshop, a synthesis of ideas led to the construction of an alternative development model in which all six concepts are encapsulated, illustrating complementary beliefs. The foundation, “A”, is the process of solidifying our thinking through the establishment of higher moral grounds such as thinking more about public benefits, harmoniously interacting with nature, and living and learning from nature. The pillars, “B”, support the roof by representing the following ideas: (1) adaptation of knowledge and appropriate technology (2) community participation (3) creation of harmonious institutions at all societal levels. Lastly, the roof, “C”, represents the commitment to create contentment: a society can be content with its state of development only when it is committed to sustainability and when it can improve its socio-economic conditions without depleting its natural resource base.

Thanphuying Dr. Suthawan ended by stating the aims of the 4th IUCN Alliance Workshop in exploring further alternative development models based on the Asian experience and additionally enriching debates on solutions to environmental challenges amidst globalization. She expressed her hope for the workshop in serving as a venue whereby thoughts on practical ways of using these models in national development policymaking could be identified and that an international network and collaborative action on environmental issues could be continually nurtured.

The Alliance Workshop at the 4th IUCN World Congress featured the work of practitioners and thinkers of sustainability livelihoods from three different cultural backgrounds namely: Dr. Ashok Khola, President of the Club of Rome, and Development Alternative Group, India, Mr. Abdul Mueyed

Chowdhury, the Executive Director of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC); and Professor Dr. Apichai Puntasen, Dean of the Faculty of Management Science, Ubonratchatani University Thailand. The workshop was moderated by Associate Professor Surichai Wankeao who is the director of the Social Science Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University.

The first speaker of the workshop was Mr. Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury. Mr. Chowdhury stressed from the outset that environmental problems and the unsustainable use of natural resources could not be fully analyzed without the concerns for poverty alleviation. Bangladesh is a densely populated country with rapid population growth. As a result, there is a tremendous pressure on the existence of natural resources, especially on land use. The people of Bangladesh have experienced repeated cycles of natural disasters due to global climate change. During the past decade, severe floods have posed obstacles to agricultural production. Yet, the country's economy grows steadily at 5-6 percent annually, and thanks to the efforts of the people and the local wisdom, forest areas in Bangladesh are on the increase.

Mr. Chowdhury then shed some light on development activities of BRAC in its efforts to alleviate poverty which includes providing income opportunities via loans. Micro-finance and job training are combined so as to assist people in learning how to produce and become self-reliant. Social business approach of BRAC focuses on production for local market consumption to ensure that profits go back to local producers. Mr. Chowdhury added that Bangladesh has a robust third sector with NGOs playing a vital role in rural development activities based on community participation.

Mr. Chowdhury concluded that the search for solutions for global environmental problems could not be done without exploring alternative development frameworks particularly the richness of local wisdom, with the conceptions of human security and sustainable livelihoods at the center of the endeavor.

Dr. Ashok Khosla, the second speaker began with a note that we all were aware that the world was in big trouble and that we faced many problems ranging from species extinction, to energy and ecological crises. The production and consumption of goods posed tremendous threats to the world natural resources. Yet somehow the awareness of knowledge of trouble and the actual operation of our production system seemed to be divorced from each other and wondered if the mind-body dualism dated back to the work of Rene Descartes had contributed to the challenge we now faced.

In terms of finding solutions to environmental problems, while Dr. Khola did not negate the role of spiritual knowledge, he found it difficult to conclude that there is more wisdom to help the world in the orient than anywhere else. In his view, all religions teach people how to live with nature, but some wisdom traditions might be more in tune with the imperatives of nature and ecological sustainability than the others. The key question for him therefore should be how humans in different natural environments work within the limits of nature and this varies from case to case.

Dr. Ashok Khosla cited an example of a study on bio-diversity conducted by an anthropologist on the subject of “sacred growth” in India. The study found that the survival of one particular kind of tree was a consequence of a belief in the sacredness of the tree which had prevented people from cutting them down. Understanding bio-diversity issue in this instance required cultural knowledge--the connection between wisdom and the ways humans devised ways to live within sustainability principles. Dr. Khosla concluded with a note that it was important that we continue to ask “What constitutes a good life? He maintained that not until we recognize the existence of one central force—that the world is in one planet—it is difficult to talk about sustainability.

The third speaker, Professor Dr. Apichai Puntasen began by stating that the problem of climate change cannot be solved via existing development paradigm as he believed it was the root cause of the problem. Dr. Apichai proposed that changing the meaning of happiness from acquisition of materials to giving or sharing the surplus to the needy ones was most important. This meant that we must reexamine Buddhist principle of the middle path. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej’s Sufficiency economy philosophy draws from this central tenet of Buddhism, for the word sufficiency itself means moderation. He further explained three key principles—moderation, reasonableness, preparedness for self immunity and two conditional ties—wisdom and moral integrity, and all are interrelated. However, one can also classify the degree of application sufficiency economy into three levels: partial practice, comprehension and inspiration. *Partial practice* includes efforts taken by anyone to develop techniques and rules in resource management and utilization. Awareness of self- immunity is the basis of action. *Comprehension* reflects the ability to understand central principles of sufficiency economy--moderation and knowledge. The application of local wisdom and innovation is based on the knowledge about carrying capacity of the environment and ecological balance. *Inspiration* encompasses an in-depth understanding of additional elements of sufficiency economy namely ‘reasonableness’ and ‘morality’. Realizing the rules of nature is a driving force for people to adapt and design ways to live in

harmony with nature, placing less emphasis on the short term gains from natural resources.

Case studies were presented to illustrate different levels of sufficiency economy application and practice in different parts of Thailand. Chumporn Cabana is a tourist resort located in Chumporn province in the Southern Thailand where the management team purposely applies sufficiency economy philosophy. With the ability to view (financial) loss as (social) gain, the primary motivation in doing business centers around the value of happiness based on giving. The resort has become more than a workplace for staff who are local community members, but a place where all staff work with dignity and in harmony with their natural environment. The resort practices organic agriculture for its own use and to minimize damages on the environment. The case of Ban Pred Nai, a community in the Eastern province of Trad, was illustrated as another example of a community practicing sufficiency economy. This case highlights the work of the Venerable Subin Paneeto who has successfully challenged and motivated the villagers of Ban Pred Nai to take action to save mangroves and simultaneously strengthen the people's awareness on natural conservation. One other notable community development activity in this community includes the establishment of savings group which does not only provide income security but also enhance the spirit of mutual assistance among community members based on principles of honesty and integrity.

Dr. Apichai concluded that at the present time, key sufficiency economy principles--wisdom, ethical integrity, moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity--are encouraged in the Thai context in all conducts from matters of livelihood to policy decisions and has now been adopted as philosophical framework for national development plan of Thailand.

At the end of all presentations, opinions and questions from the floor were diversely expressed. One participant expressed his concerns about one form of violence in the way of thinking. To him mainstream agricultural production is encouraged in many countries leading to the practice of export-oriented mono-cropping in agriculture. Thus, there is a need to stop cooperating with this violent system. One participant from Thailand expressed the need to begin teaching our youth early about sufficiency economy. The comment was subsequently responded by Dr. Apichai who elaborated that sufficiency economy curriculum has now been developed for children from primary up to secondary education. Courses related to sufficiency economy are now offered in many universities in Thailand. Ubonratchathani University's Faculty of Management Science along with a few other universities has moved further to offer a bachelor's degree in sufficiency economy.

One participant from the United States was impressed to find that there was only one workshop in the conference that the issue of ethical integrity was raised as part of the solution for change as she felt that ethical integrity was fundamental to the change process in the context. Dr. Apichai further shared his views by saying that all subjects wanted to be “scientific” while the original conception of the word science is based on physics --a study of matter and energy. Ethics-- the subject of mind-- has thus been excel of mind development are able to demonstrate that they have a mutual understanding of “truth”. Ethical integrity is part of a certain level of the development of the mind.

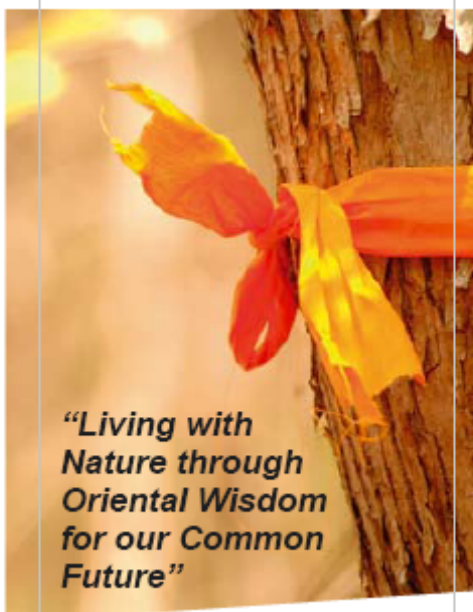
Offering yet another element of spiritual wisdom, Mr. Chowdhury touched upon the teaching of Islam, especially on contentment as guidelines and knowledge in using natural resource responsibly and fairly, entailing living in peace and harmony with nature. Others expressed concerns and offered their views about how meaningful and effective changes should be materialized and how innovations underpinned by oriental

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5. Workshop Materials

▪ Bookmark

Aliances Workshop



On 7 October 2008,
18.30-20.00 hrs, Room 133,
at Barcelona International
Conservation Centre (CCIB)



An international brainstorming workshop for alternative development approach that seeks a more balanced production and consumption patterns based on oriental wisdom. The workshop will explore how the current alternative development models can inform the debate on globalization in the context of extreme environmental challenges that we are facing.



Introduction by

- **Thanphuying Dr. Suthawan Sathirathai**,
Chairwoman of Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Foundation (GSEI), Thailand

Prominent Speakers & Topics:

- **Dr. Ashok Khosla**,
Chairman of Development Alternatives Development, India (Development Alternative)
- **Mr. Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury**,
Chairman of BRAC Bdmil Network, Bangladesh (Community Development)
- **Prof. Apichai Puntasen**,
Executive Director of Rural and Social Management Institute (RASMI), Thailand (Sufficiency Economy)

Moderators:

- **Assoc.Prof. Surichai Wangaeo**,
Director of Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University Thailand

Organized by: Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Institute (GSEI)

Supported by: Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) and Thailand Research Fund (TRF)

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▪ Postcard



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and the Environment Institute (GSEI)
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Promoting Good Governance, Public Participation, and Wisdom Creation
for Contentment and Sustainable Development.



IUCN
World
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Congress
Barcelona 2008.

Tree ordination ritual in Mae Hong Sorn province – Thailand
Visit us at www.gsei.or.th

Photo by Ginagan Suwankarn

- **Draft Proceedings of Oriental Wisdom Workshop organized on April 10 -11, 2008 –Bangkok, Thailand**

