

Cambodia

May 1995

The fourth annual *Dhammayietra*, Walk for Peace & Reconciliation

The suffering of Cambodia has been deep. From this suffering comes



Landmine awareness banner

Compassion. Great Compassion makes a Peaceful Heart. A Peaceful





Pilgrims with hosts



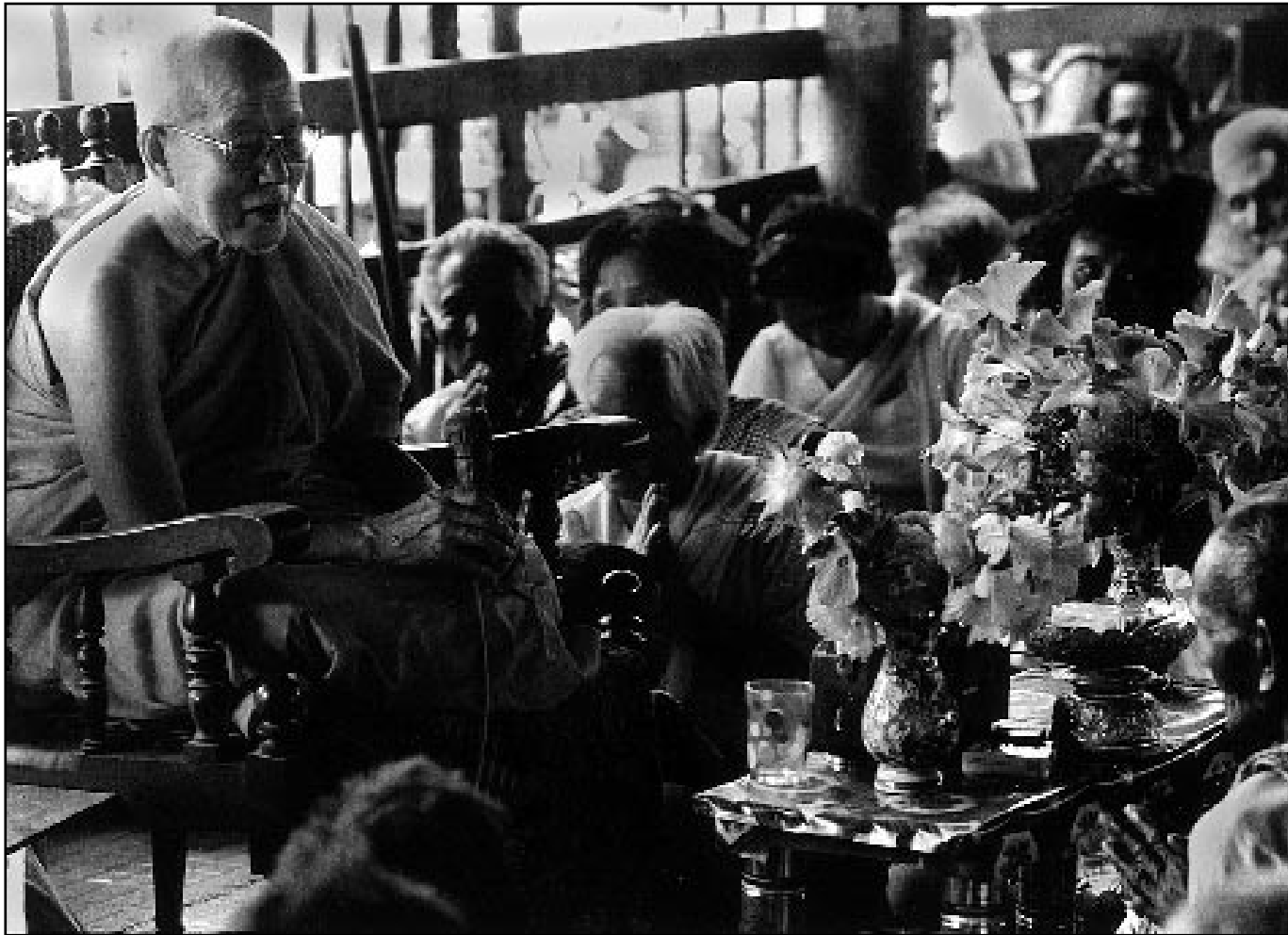
Cambodian family

make a Peaceful Community. A Peaceful Community makes a Peaceful



In from

Peaceful Nation makes a Peaceful World. May all beings live in Happiness.



Maha Ghosananda, Supreme Buddhist Patriarch of Cambodia, gives teaching

and Peace. (Maha Ghosananda, Supreme Buddhist Patriarch of Cambodia)

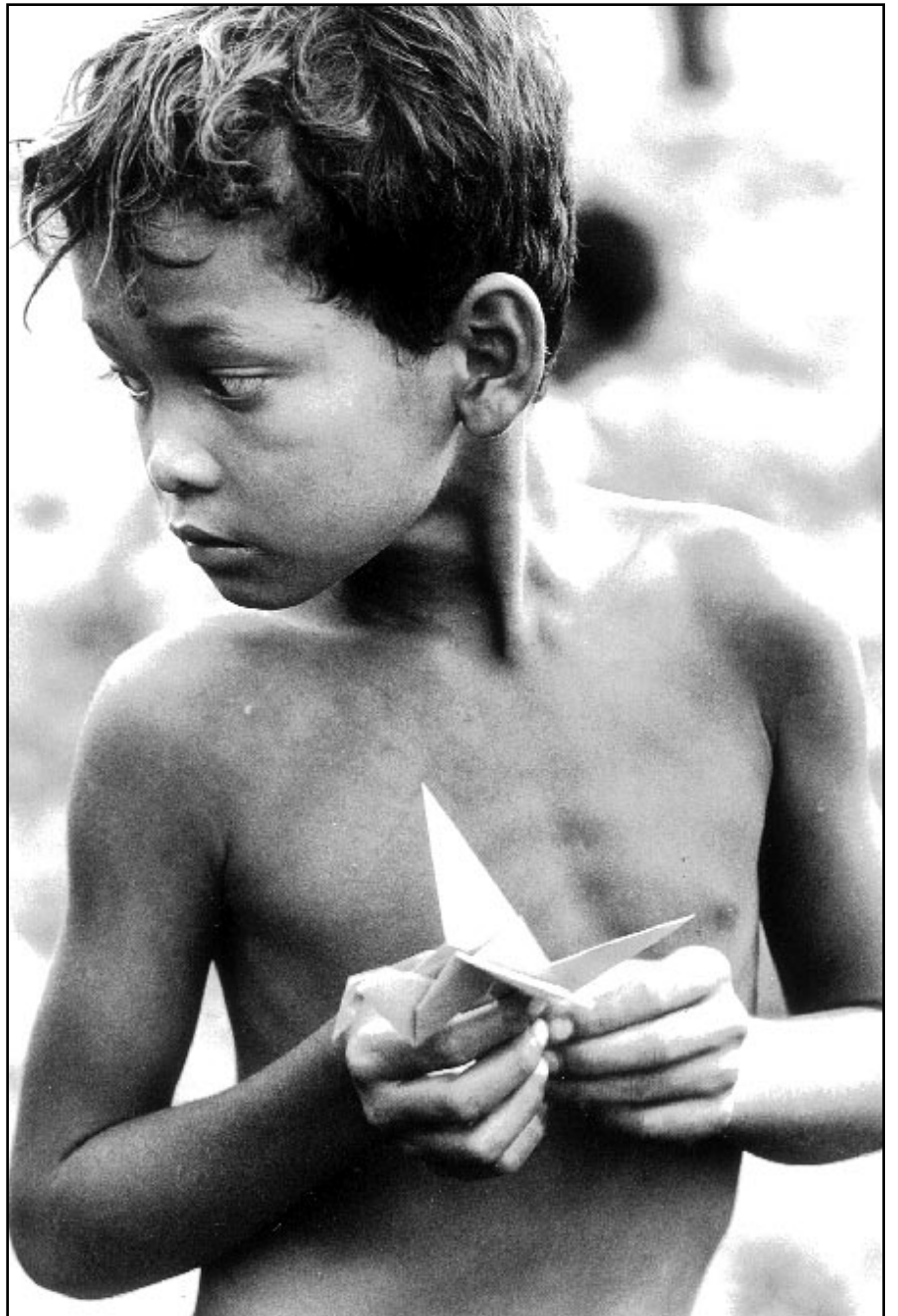




Monks



Nuns

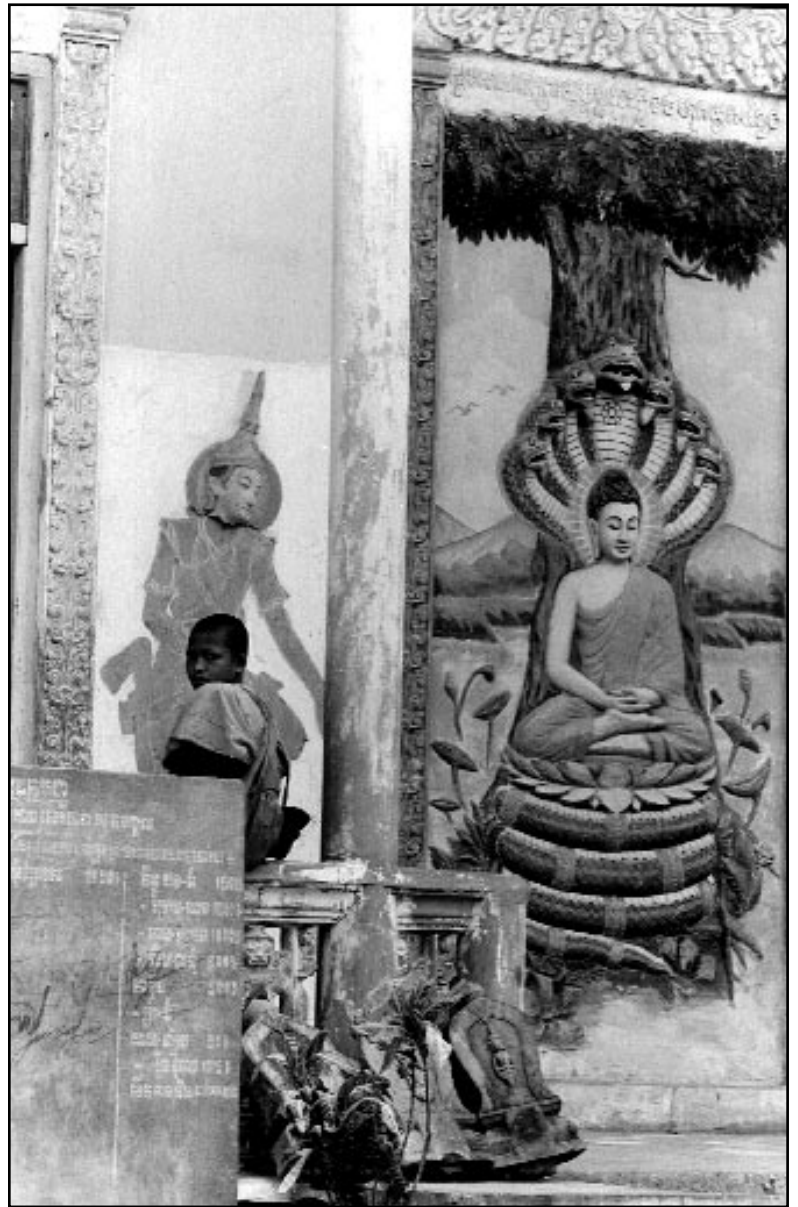




On the bus



Water blessing

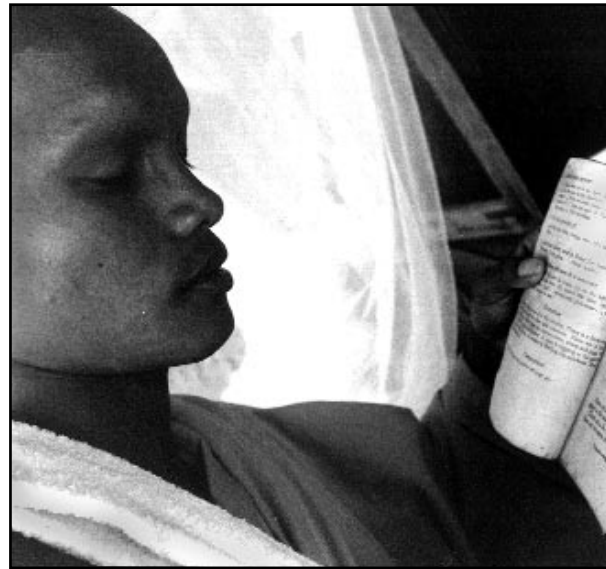
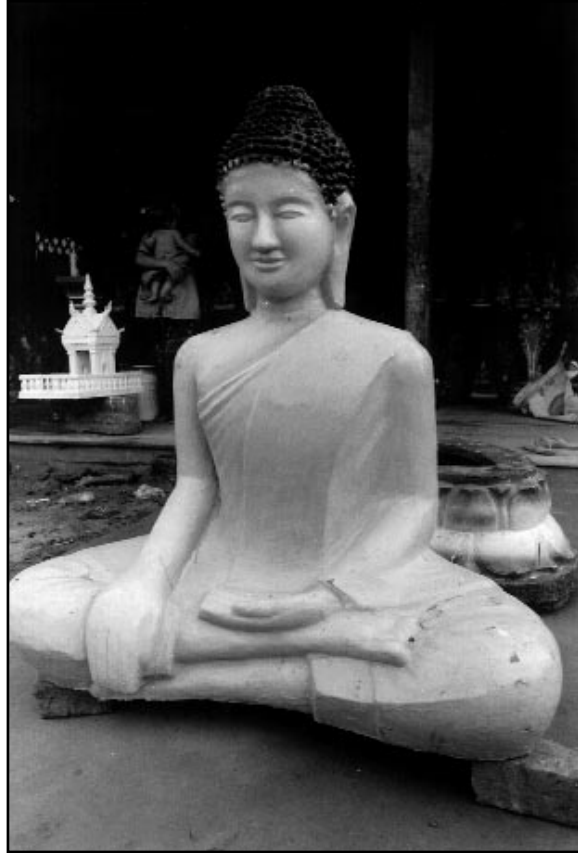




Into the dawn



Waitin



Monk learns English



Bob Maat, Jesuit Brother, one of the Pilgrimage organiz-



Thirteen days into a 24 day walk across Cambodia, probably now past the active war zone. Little sign of mines (except for the mine awareness display our organizers install at every lunch and overnight stop), no more shelling sounds, yet a continuing government army presence...

We rise as early as 3, leaving by 4, or as late as 6, to walk in the relatively cool hours. Dawn walking is among my most preferred, the light slowly seeping into the sky. We pass many people kneeling at



Men vow-takers

(many people gather to greet and watch us—not much solitude). The sun had almost set, the sky was gray with many shades, the air cool,. The country seemed at peace. I felt joy. Five young men joined me, out of the darkness, one speaking very broken English. Flashing through my brain was, “This is an abduction by the Khmer Rouge, they’ve got their foreigner, I’m bound for deep in the jungle, perhaps never to be heard from again.” He said, “Can we speak English, my

roadside in candlelight, incense-heavy, av
Then a long break for lunch (after break
hours during the most intense heat (up to
2—4 hours walk to reach the next wat (a
and within one hour, night has surround
and shower (water from a small bucket p
This is the routine...

...Last night at our wat I sought the c



friends here want to speak to you. I will not too good. He says, “I love America.” I am dumfounded. I repeat the question and find darkness comes, “Because people have lost freedom.” This man, slightly older, tells me I am with other fellows on a road repair crew. We’d go from pocked gravel to fairly smooth asphalt

responsible for incrementally extending the blacktop. They work when the government sends money, otherwise not. They stop during the rain, which is becoming more frequent. (monsoon's on the way.)... As simply as I can, I try to explain: "Yes, many have much, and many more have little. Yes, there is freedom—to speak—but you might never be heard. And skin color—yours, for example (he was very dark as most Cambodians are)—might keep you from getting a job as a road building engineer even though you are qualified. They insisted, "We love America. We'd like to live there."

Stories, and impressions and dreams concatenate. Many images: young orange-robed monks joking and smiling, aging white-clothed nuns walking in silence, their sandals or thongs shuffling through the gravel, more white-attired figures. These, the "precept-takers," men and women who undergo the suffering—and joy—of the dhammayietra...

And now, on a rest day near Phnom Penh, four of us guys ensconced in the AFSC residence and office, enjoying the shade, the shower, the quiet, the solitude.

We have just left Phnom Penh—so recently fully depopulated and now a screaming city of some 2 million. Motor bikes, cars, and a few trucks and buses and all with regularly used horns, jam the

roads. I can hardly hear the drums and chanting. Sap and Mekong (Phnom Penh is sited at the confluence of the two rivers) provide a respite with a wide long palm tree-lined road. As we walk parallel to the Mekong for awhile on our

The monsoons are due soon. We've had a few showers, usually in midafternoon. often with a bit of thunder, always dramatic and bold. Being



The 4th annual Dhammayietra: Walk for Peace and Reconciliation

ously, I no longer see a clear sky, some soft clouds, some thunderheads, some cumulus. The sky is just a flat and crash, a slight coolness, a slight coolness, a clear sky.

We eat what we've prepared in the community kitchen, or collected from the road. Always a few times as good as good, sweet banana bread, always salted, sometimes boiled (sometimes delicious), a sp

ularly served, along with about five other greens, crushed roasted peanut garnish. And for confectionery, a gelatinous material, crackers spread with fluffy white cream, fruit. Mangoes are just past season. Lots of banana bread I've never had. Like one all prickly and pale blue out

mushy pear-flavored interior, then a nut.

Many pilgrims (westerners) are sick, the usual problem is diarrhea, sometimes with fever. Some maybe with typhoid. In some cases hospitalization is needed. Some have food poisoning. Some are extremely fatigued, just sag into inertia. Heat is a major factor, of course as is the strenuous exercise. Temperatures up to 115 F but averaging a high of 95. Distance is between 14 & 28 Km. 2 rest days in 24 days.

The monks spray water on the waiting people using branches they dip into buckets provided by the greeters. I've seen shock, then joy and gratitude, in the faces of those blessed. They could be bullet-sprayed, not water-blessed. And the jasmine petals we drop on the children could be bombs. The line is narrow for Khmer people since they are so often visited by war.

Today we crossed the



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Patricia
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In a hotel in Ho Chi Minh City, shortly after arriving in Vietnam, skeletal and sick after three weeks walking in Cambodia



La

Vietnam
June 1995

Releasing the spirits of the battlefield



Near Hai Phong



Laughing Buddha
a glass cage



Peace tourists

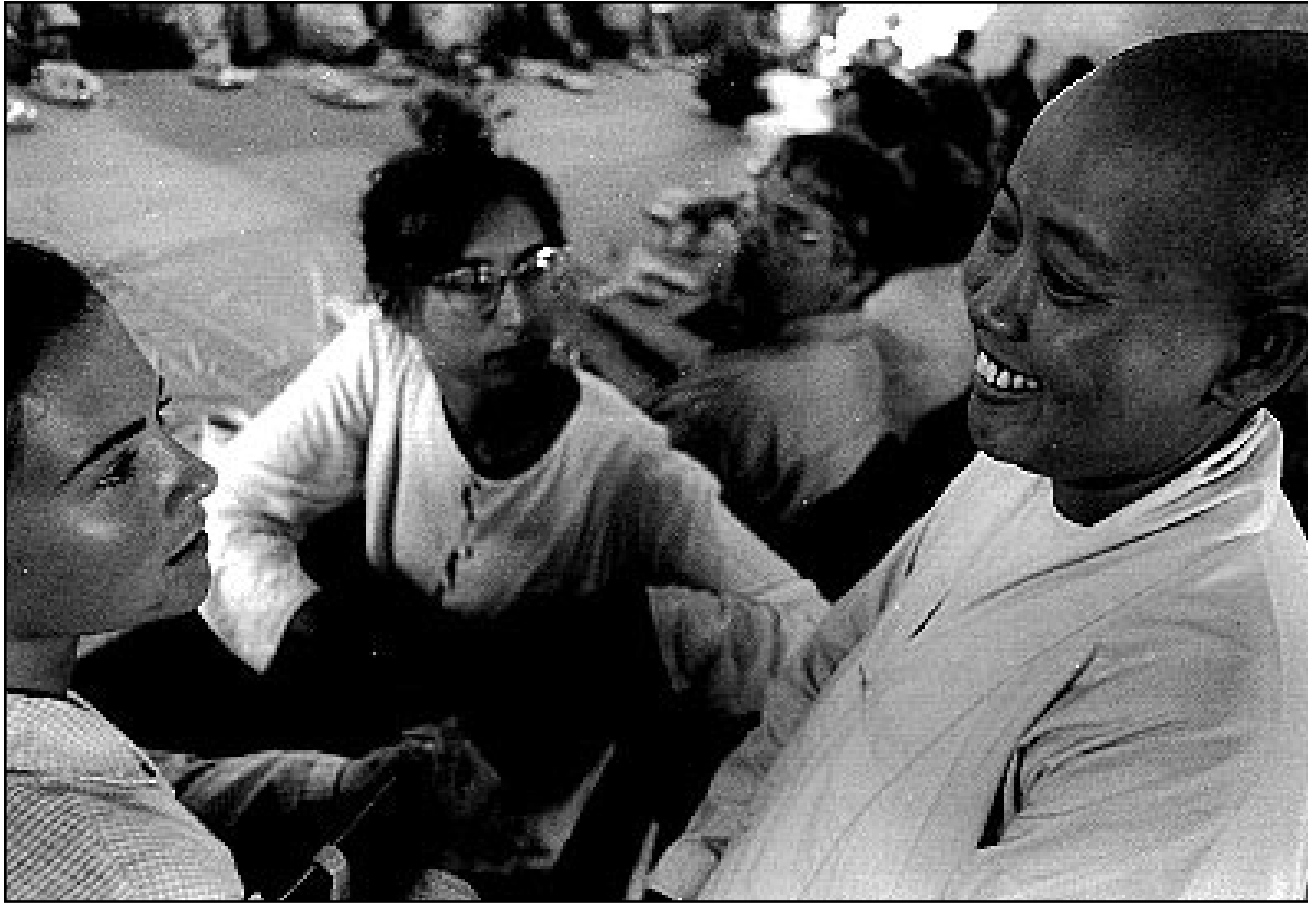
Mother Earth, mother of us all, Listen to our prayers. You, who



Near the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone)



birth to us, Whose Breasts nourish us, Whose heart loves us, Whose



Meeting a Buddhist nun

us when in anguish, Whose songs delight us when in joy, Listen



Prayers for the Vietnamese victims of Japanese atrocities

Mother Earth, I join with others to ask that the battlefields of Vietnam be liberated from any anger and hate that has remained because of great suffering and despair...

Mother Earth, many have been the tears, From here and abroad, For those who fell on these battlefields

Our prayers join with these tears...

*Let the hurt of those who died,
And of those who survived the battlefields*

*Take wing as your children
Enter this new day.*

*(Ramon Lopez Reyes, Vietnam veteran,
Prayer to Liberate the Battlefields)*

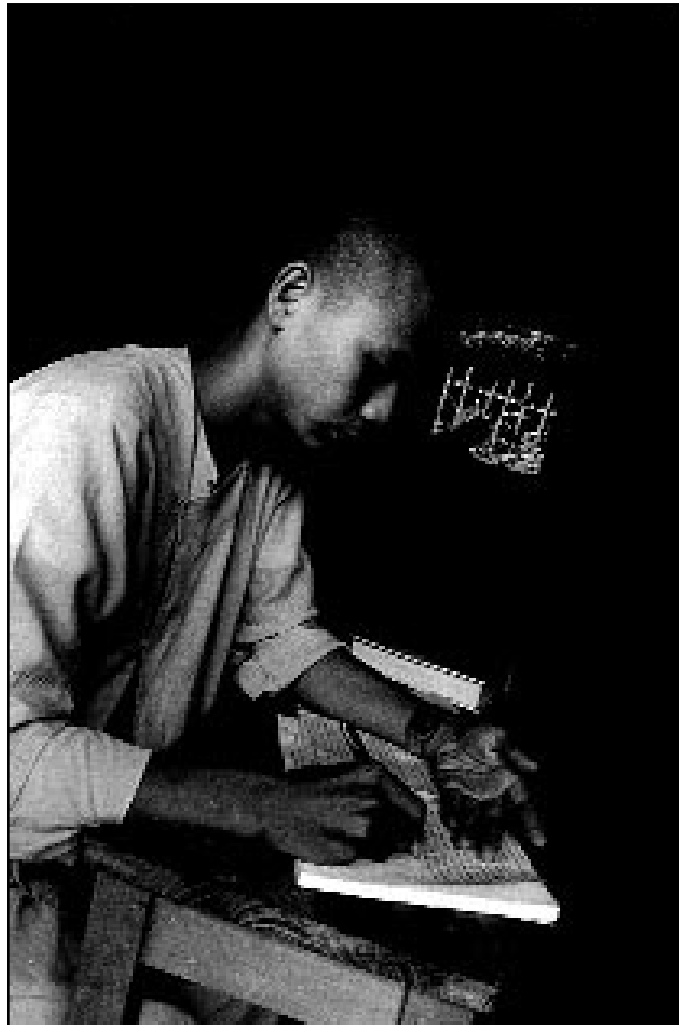


Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, the Demilitarized Zone, Haiphong, and the tunnels of Cu Chi were part of our eleven day, government-organized tour. All very official. Later, several of us pilgrims, independently, explored Hue. And there—thanks largely to Greg Hessel, a student of Thich Nhat Hanh—we met the monks of Tu Hieu, the home temple of Venerable Nhat Hanh.

One morning as I sat in a Hue guest house in meditation, the inspiration came to me: why not photograph at Tu Hieu? Might make a fine gift for Thay (as he's called by his followers) and folks at home might like to see the temple and monastery. The abbot chuckled when I asked (in translation), and replied, "sure, go ahead, no problem." As easy as that, getting started. He also liked the notion of a gift for their teacher.

So for one day I had almost complete access to the grounds, buildings, and people of Tu Hieu. I was charmed and inspired by the good-natured reception I received, and heartened by the apparent steadfastness of the monks and novices. This resolve and dedication to learning and living the precepts of Buddhism continued despite harassment from the Vietnamese government. We learned that conditions are improving slightly—foreigners can freely visit the temple (though not reside overnight), some foreigners have come to study or meditate—but Vietnamese are not allowed to visit Plum Village, Thay's home in exile in France.

These pictures are my offering to the s
some use in purveying the Buddhist teachi



Monk at Tu Hieu

gift to you, but the ideas of making you and inviting retreatants to purchase photos to her.

A note to
*Please
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of the photos, p
book.*

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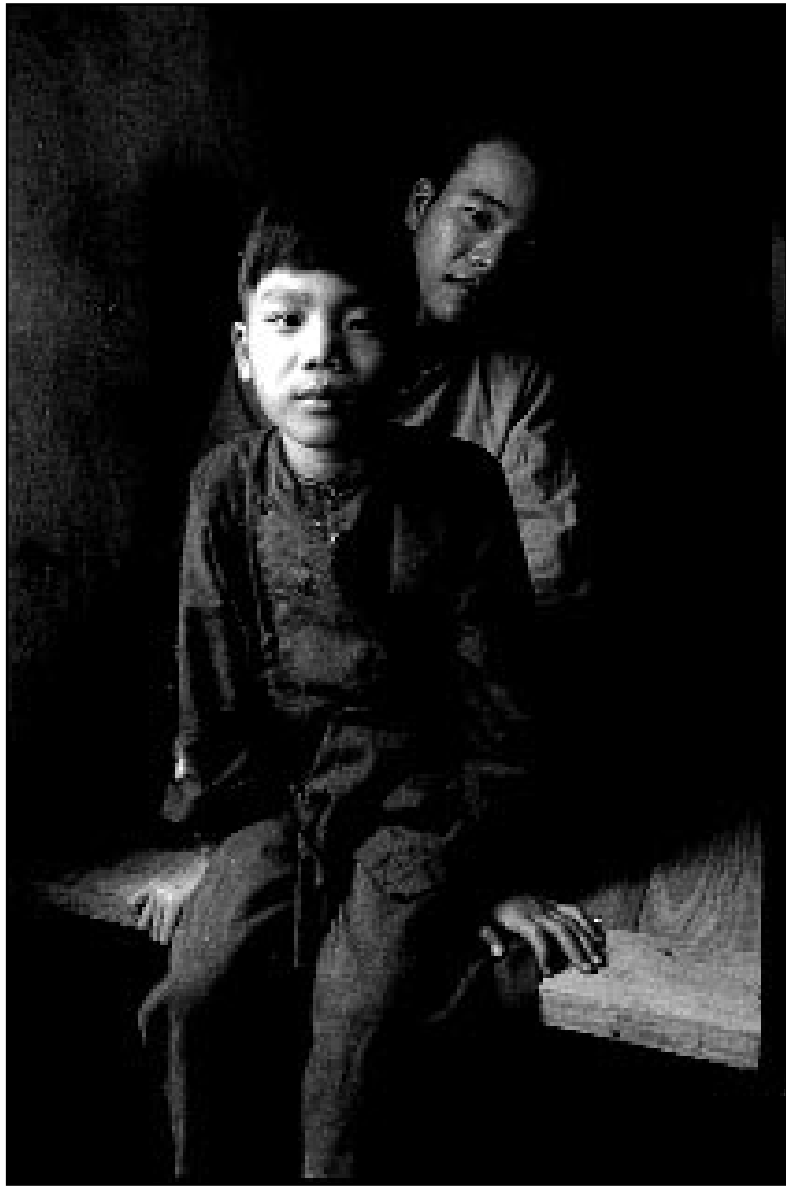
*Louise Dun
of dharma bud*

Yu might also know my sister, Elaine Schroeder and her husband, Bob, of Juneau Alaska. She makes a point of attending your retreats whenever they are on the west coast. By helping organize family retreats and gatherings, she hopes to continue the teaching in her region. And she is especially thankful for its orientation to children. Their adopted son, Vu Schroeder, of Vietnam, suffered much trauma from his first five or so years in Vietnam during the war. It was one of your retreats, I believe held in 1993, that helped him heal. On a trip to Vietnam in early 1994, he met a young woman. They plan to marry this November. Vu asked me, as his uncle, to visit his fiancée's family while our pilgrimage was in Ho Chi Minh City. Before I did and while we were in Hanoi in a meeting with Madam Binh, as is the custom, we pilgrims were asked to make speeches. I stood up, said, this is not a speech, but a story... and told the story of Vu and My Lee (his

betrothed) and me hoping to meet the family soon. later, thanks largely to their diligence in finding me to my story: the action.

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being, and you
practice our ro
Buddhist linea

—Skip Schiel





At Tu



Ph: S.S.

Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City, S.S. Recycle driver, June 1995