

# SAI LOM RUDURAUN

## A Warm Breeze from Thailand

Issue 5 December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004



Morning mist from the office.



Monks on the Mon bridge.



Sunset from the office.

Greetings and wishing you all a happy and healthy new year!!!

We have had many concerned emails coming our way regarding the recent devastation that has struck this part of the world. We want you all to know that we are safe and healthy although our hearts are sad with the incredible loss of life and livelihood of so many people.

Our hearts and prayers go out to all of you during this time of the new year and especially to those families who lost loved ones to the recent tragedies here in Southeast Asia, especially for the thousands of young ones whose lives were taken so unexpectedly. We are doing what we can to see how we can help and keeping everyone in our prayers.

As for the developments of our project over the last few months, things have been very busy.

### Our Time in the US

During September and October we spent our time in the states and Canada. Nao received a partial scholarship to attend the Gulf Island Film School on an island in British Columbia, Canada for 5 weeks. She was able to experience the beautiful Pacific Northwest and gain the fundamental skills to begin to make films. During her 5 weeks, she made 3 films, a short animation film which will soon be on our website, a film in 36mm and a documentary film. Inspired by her alone time in Canada she desired to experimental the fun of film making program with children.

### Settling in at the Farm and a New Office in Sangklaburi

We have been back in Thailand now for just about a month and have been extremely busy. We have rented an office space in the local town of Sangklaburi, about 30-40 minutes from our farm along the border. We have needed a space where we can access internet and a place for books and paperwork. Fortunately, we found a wonderful space out over the lake in Sangklaburi. The office is high up over the water and looks out towards the local temple, the wooden bridge going into the Mon Hill Tribe village and the coming and going of long tail boats.



A holiday time together!!

We have been able to connect with people here in the local town and have started to learn more about the challenging situation facing the local Karen and Mon Hill Tribe groups regarding citizenship. We continue to learn more about Burma and the local situation affecting undocumented groups and refugees coming in from Burma.

We continue struggling to learn the local Karen language and jim has started to learn to write the Karen script which is very similar to the Burmese script. Walking over the bridge into the Mon village we met some wonderful young children and learned our first Mon words!!!! Sooo difficult!!!! Everywhere we go with children we are surrounded by the unfamiliar sounds of Karen, Mon and Burmese.

## **Ready for the Mud!!!!**

We have already started making mud bricks to use for our first earthen house at the new farm!!!! We spent just two morning so far making bricks with the Tamariki group and local children and have almost 100 bricks made. We only need 800-1,000 for our house and about 60 to make a mud brick bread oven.

Throughout the rest of December and January we will be making bricks in the early morning and evenings to get ready to build the house during our training at the end of January.

## **Tamariki from New Zealand and Sally from Global Village School**

Just after our return to Thailand about a month ago, a group of eleven students, staff and parents from Tamariki School in New Zealand and Sally Carless, the director of Global Village School for Peace and Diversity Studies in California spent an incredible twelve days with us. We met the group at the stupa in **Nakhon Pathom** where they had their first experience in a Buddhist temple and some of the sights, sounds, tastes and smells of Thailand. From there, we went to **Moo Baan Dek, Children's Village School**, a democratic school for 150 children coming from orphaned and abusive backgrounds. Then we went up to the **Whispering Seed**, where everyone had a chance to live at the farm for four days, sleeping in the bamboo hut, living without running water and electricity. We started making the first bricks on the land which will be used to build our first house!!! In the local area we also visited **Ban Thor Phan** and another children's home. We also went to **Three Pagoda Pass** at the **border of Burma**. We then left The Whispering Seed for a public talk in Bangkok, which featured us in the newspaper!!! We then went back to **Moo Baan Dek** and participated in an **alternative education gathering** with projects from the north of Thailand and then went to **Wongsanit Ashram** where we helped to paint a mud brick house using local clay and tapioca flour. View more about their journey at [www.whisperingseed.org/tamariki.html](http://www.whisperingseed.org/tamariki.html)

Here are some thoughts from the group about their learning!!!



Tamariki group teaching a Maori song & dance to Karen & Mon children at the local school.

*"The most remarkable part of the whole experience is that I have a connection with children, without speaking their language. I learned that the thing I want to do the most is that I want to help people."* Elana

*"The most fun is swim with children. At The Whispering Seed there is a lot we can do and help with, making mud bricks, getting dirty, having a mud fight and getting to wash in the river. I learn how much I take when I live in New Zealand, how spoiled I am. I want to come back to help with children. I am learning how to deal with the ants. I really appreciated the Loi Krathong festival. The children thought me to make the Krathong. I like the idea of Loi Krathong, to make the beautiful krathong and then we float it out in the river, to give something back after we use the river, to show our gratefulness and appreciation."*-Emma

*"I hope we can come back soon. I have never seen the kind of generosity as in the Thai people. I love the physical open space and buildings in Thailand. I have been upset at the times I have seen kids that I want to take home with me but I cannot, I wonder what their future will be. How will I go back to live my comfortable life? It is hard to bring two worlds together. I want a simple and richer life, like I have seen here. I have seen my students that came together on this trip changed. They are starting to talk about other people, more than just themselves. They see that there are people living hard lives everyday, "What can I do to help them?" They said they want to come back. "I know what I want to do with my life." One of the students said it will be easier this time to choose to not buy the chocolate bar, instead to save the money to come back sooner. They are having real life experiences, finding their strength and ability to make something different in this world. When the children here look into your eyes, it teaches you more than any learning in the classroom. Hours and hours spent in the classroom cannot teach as much as when you are here, and a child looks into your eyes."*-Lisa



Three Pagodas Pass-  
Burma is just behind us!!!



Wongsanit Ashram floating house

*“It is a life changing experience for me. I always wanted to be nanny but never felt very pleased to take care of rich children. But here it feels more meaningful, to help take care of children that really need care and have nothing, not even parents. I also learned about myself, how easy it is to connect with children and feel attached with them and how hard it is to leave that connection behind” – Tui*

*“The most fun on the trip was swimming with the little children, they just clung on you, and jump on you. Washing ourselves in the freezing river in the early morning, sleeping in bamboo huts in an open space on the floor. What I see here is that people can use stuff around them, natural stuff, bamboo to make house, mud to make house, long drop composting toilet, more open and close to nature.”- Isabella*

### **Ashram Wongsanit-Intentional Communities Gathering**

On December 10-12 we participated in Wongsanit’s 20 year anniversary and International Communities Conference. There were groups from all over Thailand and representatives from India, USA and Britain as well.

For three days we discussed the work we were all involved in, challenges we faced, new learning we have experienced and how to connect with each other. We have organized another gathering next year to follow up with this one to support those involved in creating sustainable alternatives in education, learning, building, farming and community living. We will meet next year at the community Santi Asoke for three days to further our connections and sharing.

We also had the pleasure of finally meeting, face to face, Ramu Manivannan from Buddha Smiles in India. Mani helped for a short while to organize the IDEC in India. After a many years of email we finally met and he is planning a wonderful Festival of Alternatives to be held at Buddha Smiles in December 2005-January 2006 with some wonderful presenters, including His Holiness the Dalia Lama, the exiled Prime Minister of Tibet, Vandana Shiva and many others.

### **Future Plans and New Breezes!!!**

#### **Cultural Immersion & Youth Empowerment Trainings in Thailand**-(on-going)

We welcome school groups, individuals, homeschoolers and I others to contact us if you are interested in setting up a program to come and visit Thailand. Programs can be designed for any length of time. Please view our website for previous programs with groups from New Zealand, Korea and USA.

[www.whisperingseed.org/youthlink.html](http://www.whisperingseed.org/youthlink.html)

#### **4 Week Exploration of Sustainability** (January 22<sup>nd</sup>-February 19<sup>th</sup>)

In January and February we will host our 2<sup>nd</sup> Permaculture and Natural Building workshop. We are expecting around 15 foreign participants and 15 community leaders, activists and youth from Thailand and Burma. We will focus the training on 6 areas of sustainability; *Permaculture, natural building, herbal health, cotton weaving-spinning & natural dye, holistic learning and community building.*

Robin Clayfield from Australia, author of You Can Have Your Permaculture and Eat it Too will lead the Permaculture portion of the training, Jon Jondai of Pun-Pun community in Chiang Mai will come to lead the building of the first earthen house at our new farm, Nuttarote Wangwinyoo from Chiang Rai will facilitate a section on Deep Ecology, community building and the dialogue process, along with lots of local guest speakers and facilitators from around Thailand.

If you are interested in the course, we still have a few spaces available. More details are on our website, [www.whisperingseed.org](http://www.whisperingseed.org)

#### **Rainbow Camp& International Children’s Festival**-(January 29<sup>th</sup>-February 2<sup>nd</sup>)

From January 27<sup>th</sup> to February 6<sup>th</sup> our dear friend Kazu, from Japan will bring a group of 25 people from Japan to Thailand for the Rainbow Camp. This will be a 3 day festival at a beautiful lake outside of Sangklaburi from

January 31-Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>. The camp is to celebrate and support the children in this border region of Thailand. Together we will camp, laugh, tell stories, go swimming and celebrate life!!!!

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of January there will be an International Children's Festival at Ban Thor Phan, a local children's project in the area. Following this, a group may come and visit our farm on the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> of January to help make bricks for the mud house.

**Mudnimation**-(March-May 2005)

10 day Alternative Media of arts and films workshops for local children- Nao is planning a series of 10 day film making workshops for Karen, Mon and Burmese children from our local village and also for children from local schools and children's homes. The course will incorporate film making, shadow puppet theatre and some natural building projects with the kids.

**Mango Festival**-(May 2005)

When the mangoes are falling, we will hold a festival at the old land of the Whispering Seed in northern Thailand to eating mangoes, telling stories, dancing, swimming and making lots of mango treats!!!

We thank you for taking the time to share in the stories of our lives and hope you enjoy hearing about our developments. We now have a PO Box here in Sangklaburi and can now receive letters!!!

With warm thoughts and many blessings to you all!!!  
nao & jim at The Whispering Seed

You can now reach us in Thailand at this address:

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