

**FACT SHEET:**  
**PHRA SUPOJ SUVACANO**  
(assassination of environmental monk  
based in Chiang Mai)



- ☞ Venerable Supoj Suvacano's body was found the morning of June 18, 2005. It was covered in deep cuts and wounds caused by a sharp weapon. He was murdered the previous day (time uncertain). The site of the murder was at least 300 meters from Phra Supoj's residence in a place out of sight and hearing of local people at a time when other monks were in Bangkok for a meeting.
- ☞ Phra Supoj and his colleagues moved to Mettadhamma Forest Dhamma Center (Ban Huay Ngunai, Tambol Sansai, Ampoe Fang, Chiang Mai Province in Northern Thailand) on December 20, 1998. They came from Suan Mokkh, a famous Buddhist monastery in Southern Thailand in order to continue their Dhamma studies and practice, as well disseminate Buddhist teachings, in line with the approach of Ven. Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu, a renowned Thai Buddhist master.
- ☞ The monastery occupied 600 acres donated by Ven. Ajarn Sington, a senior monk and former university professor from Chiang Mai. Before long, certain parties began pressuring the monks and local villagers to allow tangerine plantations on the land intended for forest conservation.
- ☞ Phra Supoj was a quiet, gentle monk whose primary activities involved publishing, with his colleagues, books and periodicals about Buddhist teachings and practice, especially those of Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu.
- ☞ Phra Supoj was not overtly political, but he loved the forest and its wild life. He wanted to help conserve and rejuvenate what little remains of Thailand's original forests (in the last century forests have shrunk from over 90% of the country to less than 10%).
- ☞ To this date, the police have not carried out a competent investigation. They seem more intent on intimidating local supporters of Phra Supoj and the Dhamma Center. The woman who found his body had her house burned down and was forced into hiding.
- ☞ Other conservationists have been murdered during the current and previous Thaksin governments. Their murders have not been solved. Local police appear to be afraid to mount a valid investigation. Even special police units from Bangkok seem unable or unwilling to mount a serious investigation.
- ☞ Local people believe that the killers sought



***For updates & action ideas please visit <http://www.liberationpark.org/supoj.htm>***

economic advantages from the Center's land and that they are protected by national political figures with whom they are connected, including some in the governing party of Prime Minister Thaksin. (This is a common problem in Thailand and similar countries. This has been exacerbated since President Bush's "War on Terrorism" provided cover for authoritarian governments in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.)

- ☞ Ven. Supoj is not the only victim of such economic-political violence. The case of environmentalist Charoen Wataksorn from Tambon Bo Nok in Prachuap Khiri Khan remains unsolved, though he was killed more than a year ago, June 21, 2004. There have been many others.
- ☞ In Thailand, as in many countries around the world, courageous religious and community leaders help to protect the poor and politically weak who are threatened by political, economic, and criminal violence. When these religious and community leaders can be killed with impunity, the countless unknown villagers, as well as wildlife, forests, and wetlands they help protect are in even greater danger. Solving these murders and holding those responsible to the law is necessary for the safety and well being of all people.
- ☞ After two decades of steady improvement, the level of violence and human rights violations in Thailand has deteriorated since the election of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Political violence in the south, especially, and environmental violence throughout the country have increased under a regime that responds to violence with more violence. (The Bush administration's "War on Terrorism" provides political cover for Thaksin's heavy-handed authoritarianism.)
- ☞ More than a year has passed since the murder. Still, the government and the Police Department have no results in their investigation. The Deputy Prime Minister (also Minister of Justice) has made vague promises of a full investigation, but nothing concrete has occurred. Police Department spokesmen have taken to blaming local people for the lack of progress in finding and prosecuting the culprits.
- ☞ Interest from people of goodwill around the world can help the Thai government find the motivation it needs to solve these and others murders, as well as prevent further violence from escalating.

**For more information, and updates as they become available, please visit:**

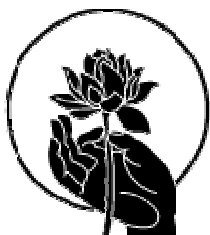
<http://www.liberationpark.org/supoj.htm>

<http://web.amnesty.org/appeals/index/tha-010606-wwa-eng>

**This site also contains examples of a Letter to the Prime Minister that you may sign & send.**

**Thank you for your concern.**

*Wednesday 9 August 2006*



# Buddhist Peace Fellowship

## Chicago Chapter

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