



## Tsunami: CROSS-Effects?

**Christian Religious Organizations' Support  
and its Socio-cultural Effects  
on aid recipients  
in Tsunami Rehabilitation**

**A case study  
at Thungwa, Thabtawan  
and Nahm Khem villages  
of Phang Nga's Takua Pa district**

By Pikula Sithiprasertkula,  
in cooperation with Save Andaman Network

**Tsunami Aid Watch** is a programme of the Southeast Asia Regional Office of Heinrich Böll Foundation, in co-operation with Southeast Asia Consult and Resource Co., Ltd.

**Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF)** affiliated with the German party Alliance 90/The Greens and headquartered in Berlin, is a legally independent, non-profit organization working in the spirit of intellectual openness. The Foundation's primary objective is to support political education both within Germany and abroad, thus promoting democratic involvement, socio-political activism, and cross-cultural understanding. Development cooperation is one of the major fields of the Foundation's activities. Tsunami Aid Watch is a special contribution to the Development Watch initiatives that the Southeast Asia Regional Office of HBF has been carrying out for many years.

**Southeast Asia Consult and Resource Co., Ltd. (SEA-C.R.)** is a consulting agency based in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The company's core competence is in the fields of development cooperation, organization development and facilitation. In its cooperation with clients of the private and public sectors alike, SEA-C.R. employs a strong cross- and intercultural perspective.



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**With an attachment on Morgan and Morglan communities and  
aid provided by Christian religious groups,  
by Samroeng Choey Chuendjitt**

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## **Krabi Declaration on Sustainable Post-tsunami Rehabilitation**

The participants of the forum would like to extend their gratitude and heartfelt thanks to all individuals, communities, national and international groups, parties and organizations for the help and aid they have provided for the individuals and communities affected by the tsunami of December 26<sup>th</sup> 2004. We hope that they will continue to give us unwavering support during the remaining task of long-term rehabilitation. The tsunami has left Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, the Maldives and other countries with devastated coasts, shattered communities, economies and hundreds of thousands of people in need of support. This destruction was, however, only the initial direct impact of the tsunami disaster. The ensuing aid efforts were part of just the first phase of tsunami rehabilitation.

Nine months have now passed since the tsunami and in most affected areas treatment has been delivered to the wounded and basic shelter is available for the surviving victims; in many cases the boats and fishing gear needed for livelihood restoration of the fisher folk have been provided; the remaining tasks are ready to be overseen by restored community structures and local administrations. The situation can, thus, in most instances be described as approaching stability. However, it is a far cry from being normal.

The tsunami recovery now enters a second phase of transformation that is the recovery from a disaster into a more permanent and functioning economic and social set-up, i.e. the mitigation of the secondary tsunami impact. While the aid to rehabilitate from the initial direct impact of the tsunami was characterized by speed and efficiency, the recovery support effort needed for the indirect impact recovery must strive for long-term effectiveness and sustainability. Taking into account livelihood, economic recovery, disaster management, issues of land and housing for the displaced, the landless, women, children, gender issues as well as migrant labor problems. In order to achieve this, a number of measures are urgently needed. Based on past aid delivery experience we therefore ask the international community and supporting NGOs and GOs to mobilize all available resources to:

- Ensure that the long-term rehabilitation of the tsunami affected area is based on definitions of fairness, justice, sustainability and stability as perceived and defined by the tsunami affected communities and individuals;
- Develop the secondary tsunami recovery support into an opportunity to address and solve pre-tsunami problems that have been worsened and/or exposed by the disaster;
- Deliver assistance and support in an accountable and transparent form that ensures participation of those affected in planning, implementation and execution of long-term rehabilitation programs;
- Establish – a vitally important point - a proper, honest and forward-looking information system and data-base on the tsunami disaster for the use and to the benefit of its affected individuals and communities, independent of nationality, race or religion;
- Initiate an aid-tracking system / mechanism to avoid the misuse of aid-resources or its appropriation for something other than aid purposes;
- Ensure that the remaining rehabilitation becomes a stepping stone for further development of the affected areas leading to better conditions than before the tsunami disaster.

If the international community, governments and civil societies help to continue with the tsunami recovery support based on the conditions given above, the tsunami disaster itself can be turned into an opportunity for development that is in line with sustainability needs and economic progress of all mankind. We believe in the strength of cooperation, coordination, openness and solidarity in times of need.

## Table of Contents

<b>Prefaces</b>	1
<b>Prologue</b>	3
<b>1. Introduction</b>	4
<b>2. Aspects of aid giving by religious support organizations</b>	6
<b>3. Gaps between recipients of aid</b>	8
<b>4. The relationship between Christianity and Buddhism</b>	10
<b>5. The socio-cultural effects of aid</b>	13
<b>6. Conclusion and recommendations</b>	21
<b>7. Sources</b>	23
<b>8. Attachment on Morgans, Morglans and Christian Religious Groups:     ‘Cham’ – a two- edged sword for Morgan culture,     by Samroeng Choey Chuendjitt</b>	24
<b>9. Publications of the Tsunami Aid Watch Series</b>	30



## **Preface I**

One of the main objectives of the Tsunami Aid Watch programme (TAW) of the Heinrich Böll Foundation's Southeast Asia Regional Office is to display, analyze and bring into the rehabilitation discussion some of the conflicts that have been arising during the mid-term reconstruction process in the Tsunami aftermath. And it has been at the heart of the TAW concept to do this from the point of view of the communities in the affected area.

The publication at hand is the first of a whole range of studies that has been facilitated by the Save Andaman Network (SAN), our main partner organization in the Tsunami-impacted provinces.

These studies are based on research that was conducted by authors from the affected areas who were selected by Save Andaman Network. It is their perspectives that are presented in this paper as well as in the forthcoming publications in the TAW series. It is also our purpose to make those points of view accessible for a wider, non-Thai speaking public. Therefore, besides the original Thai scripts, each publication provides an English language translation.

The Heinrich Böll Foundation wishes to thank SAN and their member communities, as well as Pikula Sithiprasertkula, the author of this study, for providing illuminating insights into the issue of Christian organizations' aid in a predominantly Buddhist local society. We wholeheartedly appreciate their fruitful cooperation, making possible a number of studies, this one being the first of them that hopefully finds an interested reading audience.

June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Dr. Heike Löschmann**

Director of the Southeast Asia Regional Office of Heinrich Böll Foundation

## Preface II

When one travels today in the area of Bahn Nahm Khem and Khao Lak in the post-Tsunami province of Phang Nga/Thailand, one cannot avoid seeing the symbols of Christian aid organizations. This aid left behind a significant number of churches, as well as the names of Christian organizations along with bible quotes being inscribed in the buildings (re-)built with the help of their funds.

With the wave of aid in the Tsunami aftermath Christian religious organizations arrived along with others in the affected areas of Thailand. They distributed urgently needed material support, as well as psychological consolation for the victims, a dimension often neglected by secular aid.

Still, there were frequent discussions coming up regarding the role of Christian religious organizations' aid efforts. These discussions were often caused by rumors about missionary activities that were said to be closely linked to the urgently needed support. The local population's ambiguity toward this kind of aid effort was the starting point for further investigation of the issue within the scope of Tsunami Aid Watch.

The result is a paper that describes and analyzes from a local Buddhist perspective the way in which Christian groups supported the local population and why their aid was considered particularly helpful by local communities. It asks questions about possible hidden agendas of Christian support groups and their problematic impact on the local social structure. As a result, though, the author claims that missionary activities, if intended, did not prove all too successful in the area.

We sincerely hope that our reading audience will appreciate this glance at the religious Christian groups' involvement in Tsunami aid, impacting on a local social structure that is a predominantly Buddhist one in the case displayed. It presents insights into the perception of such Christian activities by the local population and gives hope that Christian missionary activities will not prove too successful in Southern Thailand in the future.

June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Karl H. Segschneider**

Director of the Tsunami Aid Watch Programme of Heinrich Böll Foundation

## **Prologue**

The most serious natural disaster ever to strike Thailand was the December 26<sup>th</sup> 2004 Tsunami. Perhaps because of Thailand's favorable geographical position, we had never had to deal with such a horrific disaster before. However, there was a very generous response from many sections of society in Thailand. They were able to fulfill the tsunami victims' needs in the immediate aftermath of the emergency. Some of that help carried over into the reconstruction phase where the support provided started to develop in different ways according to the methodologies of each of aid organization.

Because of the complex problems of reconstruction due to the major loss of infrastructure and a lack of coordination between units of the same organizations, the amount work that each of them had to undertake every day was very large. They became focused on their own work problems and hardly had any chance of an exchange with colleagues from other organizations to share ideas. This exchange of experiences could have been very helpful to improve aspects of their work for the victims so they could have benefited even more from their aid services.

This study will take the reader to the scene of the Tsunami affected areas to experience the love and compassion of many support organizations who worked with generosity for their friends in need. Slowly but surely, the uncertainty about the relationship between aid and the sometimes hidden agendas of Christian aid organizations will become clearer, so the victims and their communities will be able to take maximum advantage of this help.

**May peace come and stay in your hearts,**

**Pikula Sidhiprasertkul**

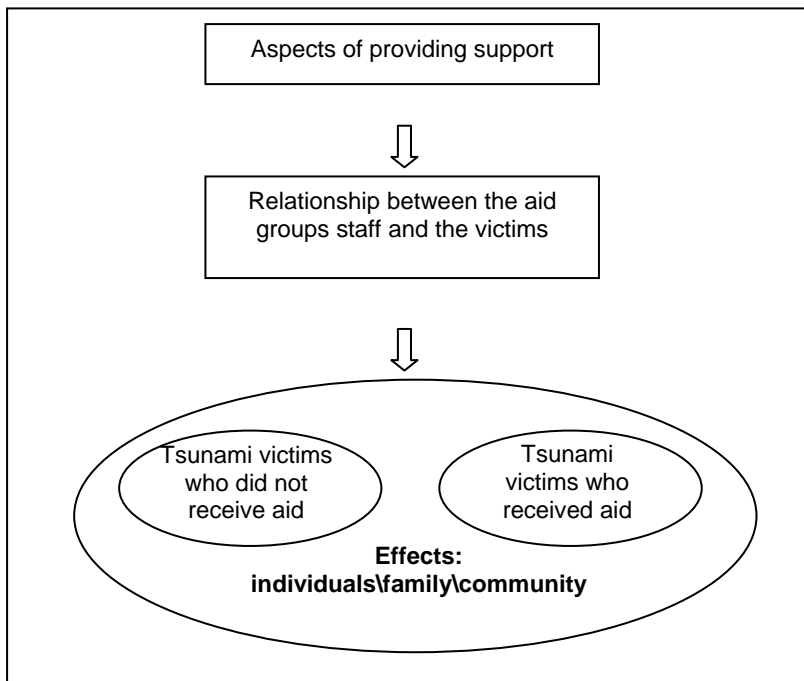
## 1. Introduction

Phang Nga is the province of Thailand that was hit the hardest by the unexpected Tsunami on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December, 2004. The aid groups, as they arrived and tried to build up a relationship with the local people, had to adjust themselves in order to be able to serve the victims' needs and desires.

This simply stated fact implies an important consideration. No matter what kind of developmental context there is, whether it is a normal situation or a post disaster one, if the aid giver is not sensitive to the society and culture of the individual aid receiver or community, there will be problems, no matter how good the intentions are.

This study limits itself to looking at the side effects of support given by religious groups and organizations. Owing to data, resource and time limitations, there are just two dimensions to the study, social and cultural.

### An outline of the study



## **Methodology**

This study was carried out to first look at various aspects of aid provided by religious organizations and their staff to supply the needs of the victims, and secondly to investigate the side effects of the aid (both negative and positive) on the communities and individuals.

**Means of study:** This study is a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews, group interviews and observations as data collecting devices. This study targets two groups;

1. religious aid organizations' officers and staff,
  2. the Tsunami victims who received aid and those who did not.
- The interviews to collect the overall data were conducted with community elders (both men and women) who commanded the respect of their villages.

**Areas of study:** The areas of study cover three of the most severely affected villages; Thungwah village of Khuek-Khak, Thabtawan village and Nahm Khem village of Phang Nga's Takua Pa district.

**Time period:** 10<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of April, 2005.

**Findings of research:** The results of this study suggest that aid organizations, in this case the Christian religious support groups, have to offer appropriate help to the victims at the right time. It also reveals the limitations of previously established ideas on how to go about providing aid. This study shows that the real situation was far too complicated to take fixed aid regulations into practice since the Tsunami disaster caused tremendous damage to property and had a very negative psychological effect on the community's collective state of mind. So, flexibility in purpose and operation plus good cooperation between state offices and aid agencies was needed in order to provide help in a thorough way.

This study had as its final objective to reveal the Christian aid support groups methodology and traditional ways of operation in contrast to those of Buddhists in response to psychological suffering and social crisis solutions. The study concludes with findings on the positive and negative effects of received aid for the victims' communities, their families and themselves.

## 2. Aspects of aid giving by religious support organizations

After the shock of the Tsunami disaster on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December 2004 the victims received a flood of aid from Thailand and many different parts of the world. The focus of this study is on the aid given by Christian religious support groups that took place in the disaster area of Pang Nga's Takua Pa district. This has been one of the most badly hit areas in all of Thailand in terms of losses of lives and property. The religious support groups are classified into the following three groups:

- a) Vocational Development Organizations,
- b) Christian Foundations and,
- c) Christian Church Support Groups/ Units.

a) The author cannot be sure who founded the Vocational Development Organizations, perhaps it was by Christians who collected and raised funds from outside the usual religious sources. Later, when the organizations became larger, they needed to improve the overall effectiveness in their ongoing work and had to seek for non-religious financial support from other sources. These vocational organizations mainly work whole-heartedly for those who have no access to public resources, in many developing countries around the world, including parts of Thailand. They have a clearly defined mission, vision and structure of work, e.g. Supanimit Foundation (World Vision of Thailand) and Siam Care Organization.

b) Christian Foundations are organizations that provide social and financial services and are funded by Christian church members in Thailand and abroad. They are well supported and have a high degree of financial security, e.g. Surat Thani Catholic Foundation, San Camillo Foundation of Thailand (Bangkok Camillion Hospital) and God's Love Foundation (Pon Metta).

c) Christian Church Support Groups are founded by groups of Church Christians. The organizations are usually under autonomous control by their own members and are directly supervised and financially administered by trusted priests. They utilize and distribute the money and other resources donated by church members, friends, relatives and other generous people. Support groups come from various Christian churches and Christian volunteer groups.

There were two phases of aid: the first six months of emergency support beginning just after the tsunami; and help for the longer term. The first phase of support provided the four main elements of survival - food, clothes, medicine and accommodation. It comprised mainly medical first aid for the survivors and expenses for day-to-day living. During the second phase, some of the religious aid organizations who did not have field offices left the disaster area and conducted visits at various intervals. The three main support groups differed from one another by the type of aid provided:

- Health care services, especially for groups of young women and children have mainly been supported by vocational development organizations. They also helped the Tsunami victims by giving advice about disease prevention, supporting jobs, education and community development under the terms of contract with the target group.
- The rebuilding of permanent houses, house repairs, the provision of facilities and medicines, as well as scholarships were often contributed directly by the Christian foundations.
- Christian church member groups, have given out help only when urgently required or financially possible. This mainly depended on the amount of funds raised at the time. So the work was both varied and temporary.

A positive aspect of aid from Christian member groups was that they were able to cut through red tape and give a green light to aid without delay. They were more flexible in the amount of aid provided, adjusted to the victims' needs. But there were limitations in the amount of money they were able to give. Hence, when funds ran out, the victims were left without help and had to wait for the next round of fundraising.

Noticeably, the support groups of the second and third kind especially, have not only been responsive to the victims' physical needs, but also their emotional and mental states. They would visit each home to offer advice to the elderly, the poor and their families on recovering from their suffering due to the bereavement over lost family members and property.

The study discovered that only three support organizations have long-term aid projects – Surat Thani Catholic Foundation, World Vision of Thailand and Siam Care. Surat Thani Catholic foundation planned to provide an

ongoing and extended medical care service from the immediate post Tsunami period until the end of 2005. After that they encouraged the victims to develop programs of health care support in their respective communities. The other two vocational support groups have worked according to the principles of their funding resource providers. However, this study cannot go into details.

The findings of this study show no signs that the Christian religious support organizations have had plans to proselytize Christianity, to find ways of attracting new recruits or exerting pressure on those in need to become Christian. Their aid is not only for those of their own religion. Besides, not all the staff of the organizations is Christian.

### **3. Gaps between recipients of aid**

The villages of Thungwa, Thabtawan and Nahm Khem were three of the most severely affected by the Tsunami in 2004. However, these communities had accumulated pre-existing problems for a long time before the Tsunami struck, which subsequently grew larger so that the victims found them much more difficult to deal with.

These difficulties can be itemized as follows:

Thungwa and Thabtawan villages were settled by the Morgan people (sea-gypsies) and they have lived there for over a century. The Morgan people still have a traditional way of life which is self-sufficient. They have lived happily and independently on small fishing farms without accumulating much material wealth. This is because their ancestors were nomads and never desired to own land or settle down in one place, never considering what nationality they were for many years. So claiming landownership and nationality from the country in which they lived was not important for them.

Nowadays, even though Thailand is the country where they were born, many of them are treated as second class citizens and do not have identification cards. Hence, even though they were victims of the disaster, it is not surprising that they did not have access to public resources, services and aid.

Moreover, since the Tsunami a struggle has arisen for land rights where these two villages are situated. This has become the subject of much controversy for the Thai public and in the mass media. There have been a

variety of reports showing the two community leaders laying claim to the land, at several meetings and on many other occasions, With the help and support from NGOs together with financial support from other organizations, foundations and private individuals they may be able to solve this problem and go back and reconstruct their homes. This is crucial, since the communities have received very little support from the government to help with the reconstruction of their communities.

Nahm Khem village has only been in existence for less than forty years, though in the beginning it was a much smaller place surviving on catching fish. Not long after, Nahm Khem rapidly expanded when sea mining for resources started. It returned once more to becoming a smaller village making a living on fishing when this period ended. Slowly, but surely, Nahm Khem increased in size along with their fishing business until it became the largest center of its type along the coast of Phang Nga. It is estimated to have a population of 6,000 people with around 1,600 families with or without house registrations. This figure for the population does not cover the number of foreign workers employed in the fishing businesses.

Nahm Khem is a large village with a great variety of people from different ethnic backgrounds and nationalities. As with the first two villages, Nahm Khem has had land disputes over false landownership and fake land rights in the area, which has since become an issue which limits chances to receive support as victims of the disaster. The reason is that individuals can only receive this support if they have the correct land ownership documents as a prerequisite. This causes a difficulty for those who are without them or those who just rent the land. Because of this, some Morgan people and Thais have found themselves unable to obtain support from the government.

Moreover, the central government's strict regulations for support of the victims are also a problem and constitute a serious drawback resulting in the victim's poor access to aid. That is to say, there was obviously a big difference between two groups of victims, i.e. those who suffered from damage to their houses and those who incurred damage to other kinds of property, their tourism businesses, fishing boats and equipment, for example. Even though the latter group did get money for compensation, it was limited due to the inadequate government definitions of who were supposed to be victims. However, they were able in the end to find the money for themselves. With the timely help from the religious support groups, some of the victims' material and emotional needs were met. This

aid helped to reduce the problem of the lack of government support. The religious organizations were able to provide a faster and more flexible assistance because their funds were not only accessible through a complicated and lengthy process of red tape.

#### **4. The relationship between Christianity and Buddhism**

Normally as individuals in society we do not reflect much on the religious perspective in our ordinary lives. Most Buddhists, especially, differentiate between the ordinary ways of the world and going for refuge to the Dharma (committing oneself to the Buddha's teaching). Nowadays, there is a breakdown between the values of the older generation and those of the younger. Older people still pay regular visits to the temples; whilst the youth's connection with Buddhism is limited to attending funerals rites and ceremonies for the initiation of monks. Beyond that, they are more concerned with making a living for themselves and their families.

It is in times of crisis, when we as individuals begin to feel lonely, hopeless and abandoned that we do reflect on our experience of suffering and go in search of psychological support. Religion can emerge as a solution to help us overcome our problems (see Snitt Smakarn 1996). So religion has two functions in society:

1. Psychological
2. Social

In the past, the connection between religion and society was much closer. They were mutually supportive. However, as the years passed the social structure developed to become more complicated and the relationship between society and religion changed. In this study we will focus only on the relationship between Buddhism and Christianity.

Followers of Buddhism believe in the law of Karma (previous actions having consequences). Right action (ethical behavior) will later result in true happiness, whereas the opposite will bring great suffering to one's life in this world or even the next. This will be the case whether the individual is aware of it or not, and if the individual is punished for it by others or not. Whatever you do in body, speech or mind, Karma will result. Popular understanding of Buddhism is that it is more flexible than other religions. So followers believe they are freer, living with fewer restrictions, as there is no

compulsion in the precepts. For example the five precepts for the laity are described rather than proscribed and are to be practiced to the best of their ability. There is no one in the community who will judge the success or failure of any individual's attempts to live up to them.

The Buddha's teaching strongly emphasizes self-restraint, self-discipline and most of all the importance of attaining enlightenment, so that one no longer has to repeat the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. To achieve enlightenment the individuals must learn by themselves, whether they practice within the community (Sangha) or alone.

For Christians on the other hand, God is regarded as the centre of the universe and all Christians are believed to be the children of God. According to Christian belief, God through Jesus (The son of God) is able to wash all their sins away. Christians have to obey God, so that they can go live in Heaven after death. In order to achieve this wish before the judgment day, the Christian must accept Jesus as the redeemer, surrender their will to God, be God-fearing and observe the Ten Commandments.

Most Christian religious ceremonies are held to create a link between human beings and God (see Jinda Chankaew 1989). Christianity pays great respect to God as a centre of hope and generosity. They gather at local churches to join in group activities to experience unity. Religious places like churches also play a social role as institutes for teaching and studying the bible, the English language and for members to meet and take part in voluntary activities, such as helping disaster victims and caring for members in need.

Most Buddhists explain the loss caused by the Tsunami using the law of Karma in that the loss reflects the consequence of previous evil deeds. In the midst of the shock created by the overwhelming suffering caused by the Tsunami, some of the victims could accept this whilst others were not able to. Nevertheless, they had to accept the reality of the situation.

Ten days after the Tsunami at the Bang Muang village sheltered accommodation, there was the case of a monk preaching to a large crowd of victims voicing the opinion that the terrible thing that had just happened was the consequence of everybody's old bad deeds. This made one of the accommodation committee members warn that this kind of preaching was not appropriate at that time. He wanted someone to go tell the group of monks to ask him to stop this kind of preaching; otherwise the crowd might

respond by throwing stones. (An exchange between one member of the sheltered accommodation committee and the author, January 2005)

In tragic circumstances like this, people needed sympathy, support and hope for the future. Were Christian principles and practice applied, they would be more in tune with the circumstances. If the victim submits himself to God, God will shoulder this burden of suffering and redeem his purity. God's love is endless for everyone; sinners and the holy, the poor and rich, all are equal in the eyes of God. At any time God can intervene to change any human's mind to faithfully serve God now and forever. A Christian aid support team, for example, reinforced this belief by giving material and psychological aid to the victims, such as frequent home visits to find out how they were doing and laying on fun activities for the children. They provided these activities each month and it was considered to be very helpful in this hopeless and grim situation! Much better for them than the law of Karma, which they did not really understand.

One of those individuals from Nahm Khem village who had respect for Buddhist teachings explained that the Christian aid associations provided money, home visits and useful advice very quickly. However, he did not see much sympathy or help from one of the local Buddhist monasteries out of several which did not suffer at all from the disaster.

One could say that Christianity is more advanced in the role of social work than Buddhism. 'In the past, the wat served as a community centre. Villagers would flock in whenever there was a Buddhist religious event. But today many chapels have appeared in the village and nearby areas, and the wat is almost empty,' Mr Maitree Chongkraichak from Nahm Khem Village Development Centre was cited in a Bangkok Post newspaper story one year after the Tsunami.

Apart from the differences between Buddhism and Christianity on social issues, their preaching is also different. Most Buddhists see Dharma practicing and adhering to moral principles as a personal concern. As a result, the inner moral dimension of the individual is neglected in the midst of the material world where violence is increasing and people have to struggle to survive. As mentioned above, going to temples and listening to Dharma is increasingly perceived as a concern of older people.

The Tsunami affected area is like other places in Thailand in that most of the people there are followers of Buddhism. This is also true for the Morgan people (Sea Gypsies), even though Morgans are classified as pagans. Their beliefs, however, are historically related to Buddhism.

Most Buddhists in this area neglect the dharmic principles that guide daily life and have been progressively moving away from them. But when they were hit by the Tsunami they were shocked into realizing just how vulnerable they were.

One year after the Tsunami disaster, the three target villages of Thungwa, Thabtawan and Nahm Khem had several new Christian churches. Nahm Khem village, which as previously mentioned is a large community, has a large church serving both Thais and mostly Burmese foreign workers. At the moment there is another church under construction at Plutiew village, Takua Pa district. It is located in a new area to build permanent houses for some of Nahm Khem's victims. In the area close by Thabtawan village, there is going to be erected a large building believed to function as a new church and hospital of a religious foundation.

The number of those who have changed their religion to Christianity is difficult to indicate. However, the number of participants in the weekly religious ceremonies as stated by the priest and a Church member during the interview was not likely to reach one hundred. Each of the churches can accommodate between 20 and 40 followers; some of them are Christians from before the Tsunami, whilst others have become Christians since, a few of them being just observers and still undecided whether to convert.

The issue about the number of people who have changed their religion does not really matter, if we remain true to the basic tenets of the main religions of the world. It is their goal to teach us to behave well and be good people. In contrast to this, the arrival of timely aid from religious organizations really does matter.

## **5. The socio-cultural effects of aid**

There were a variety of organizations and groups who came to provide the Tsunami victims aid and they used a number of different working methods. What follows, are some examples of the kind of aid given out to the victims. This included interest free support from wealthy tourists and organizations who did not personally know those in need beforehand; help, that came

from personal acquaintances; and a semi-circular fund that can be used again after the first loan has been paid off without interest and used to develop the community. However, it is necessary to form a group before asking for this kind of loan. Aid given for free from the central government always took long time, as each step needed to receive a green light before it was approved.

This way of providing aid brought about both positive and negative effects. The victims started to learn which kind of aid left lasting effects. Many of them considered long and hard before asking for help or turning it down when it was not for free. Many also learned how to take full advantage of the various sources of support.

This study limits itself to the socio-cultural effects of aid by the religious support groups. There were three levels of aid: for the individual, the family and the community.

#### **A) Effects on the individual level**

- **Positive effects**

**Psychological support.** The tragic disaster caused by the Tsunami can be considered one of the worst that has ever happened to our world. For those who survived, it felt as though they were reborn and they regarded it as good luck. However, not long after the initial shock, struggle to overcome the great suffering caused by the losses of their family members, relatives and friends began. A few of the victims who did not lose anything also felt deeply about it, when seeing widespread devastation all around them.

The religious charitable groups arriving on the scene to help with aid differentiated themselves from secular organizations. That is, they had a variety of priests, nuns and religious students who were very committed to studying and applying the basic teachings of their religion as a guiding element in their lives. They all had a sense of the special moral and spiritual dimension in life. After they arrived, they not only discovered the destruction of property, but also recognized the importance of helping in emotional and psychological ways as well. They were often seen spending time in victims' homes, talking kindly to them for psychological support along with providing medical help. 'They frequently visited us every week

with kind greetings and giving us books to read and clothes to wear', said two elderly women from Thabtawan and Bonsai villages.

A Christian missionary from the group 'U-Turn for Christ' was interviewed by the Bangkok Post newspaper on the first anniversary of the Tsunami. She was quoted: 'We tried to talk and befriend them, let them release their emotions. When they got sick, we took them to hospital. When they trust us and have faith, they feel they are connected to God.' Similar contact with the disaster victims was described by a priest from the church of Phang Nga which is located in the Nahm Khem village area. He said: 'We do not need to talk much about Jesus but we have to be 'an example of His message'. Interpreting this statement could mean, the priest should live simply but happily without becoming involved in bad deeds, adhering to basic principles of living and learning how to love one's self and others through generosity. In other words, allowing others to feel respect and goodness in others, putting trust in God through those whom they respect.

One Nahm Khem villager who was recently converted to Christianity admitted that he felt wonderfully assuaged, calm and full of energy when he talked and took part in ritual worship with church members. Following that, he decided to practice Christianity.

**Help that is appropriate, beneficial and immediate.** Receiving aid that is appropriate, beneficial and timely can help fill in the gap of flawed or inadequate aid from the national government. The financial support provided by the religious support groups does not need to go through a complicated process. The victim only needs to qualify according to the organizations' criteria, since the donations are provided by both domestic and overseas Christians. This aid can be given immediately to the victims who are in need. The organizations' workers are comprised of temporary volunteers in aid programs who have come forward to offer their generous help.

An example supporting the statement cited above, involved a Morgan woman from Nahm Khem village whose husband had been sick prior to the Tsunami. She said that in previous years her husband had suffered convulsions even when he took medicine to cure the malady. When he was taken to see the Christian doctors at a white sheltered tent next to the Japanese one in the area of Bang Muang sheltered center, she saw that the condition became more positive with her husband recovering in a few days,

thus improving the situation in the family. She now whole-heartedly believes in God, she added.

A patient with a chronic asthmatic disease who has just changed her religion argued that she was so lucky to find the right way of life and consequently have a less serious illness now. A wealthy Thai woman from Bangsak village whose house and other belongings were lost in the terrible disaster was only given a little accommodation help from the state after she had moved with her family to live with her relatives instead of a sheltered centre. Later she was given aid by the Pon Metta Foundation who built her a new house for free without requiring that she change her religion. Now she is able to run her own small shop. 'By the time the house building was complete, they left without asking for a change of religion from me'. 'I would become a Christian if I didn't have any dependents, my husband and parents to look after, but I do, so I don't know what they think', she added.

- **Negative effects**

**Lost opportunities.** Immediately after the Tsunami attack, aid provision flourished. The victims were pleased that many sources of help rushed to their aid. There was no need to worry about what the consequences would be, since the supporters showed sympathy and generosity and did not make any profit from the aid. When this critical phase ended, the means of aid changed as cited above.

Some of the victims who were given plenty of help from religious support groups expressed a positive attitude towards the aid that was given. Others, though, did not. They thought, and this was reinforced by talking and exchanging opinions with their neighbors, that the religious support groups had unstated intentions even if the help had no obvious conditions. They were very concerned about the aid given because they thought they might have to pay back one day by becoming Christians for what they had accepted. So these people did not go to ask for help, even though they were in need. A Morgan woman from Thabtawan village said that support workers had come to see her quite often, bringing with them clothes and money worth 100 – 200 baht, so she could feed herself. At first, she accepted because there was no other help. But later on she said: 'I started to think that one day they might ask me to convert, so I said 'no' to more support, even though I had no money left'.

There was quite a lot of hesitation in asking for aid from the religious support groups, especially at the beginning. This was confirmed by a member of staff of a Medicare unit of a Christian foundation. He had been responsible for taking care of people's health in the community. After he had worked for the victims at the sheltered accommodation, he admitted he was surprised to find there were so few people who came to see him at the start of his work.

These misgivings in asking for help were mostly found among the Morgan people, the elderly in particular. They hold fast to ancestors' spirit worship called 'Grandfather (Ta) – Grandmother (Yai)', to which they pay respects every year between the fourth and sixth months. They perform this ancient rite in order that the Grandfather and Grandmother bless them and their family. They believe that If this traditional rite was not held, they would be punished in supernatural ways by making their grandchildren fall ill. These beliefs prevail in all Morgans from young to old. Inside coffee shops around Thabtawan village, batik cloth is hung to decorate the shops, telling the story of a Morgan ancestor spirit called 'Grandfather Sampan'. There are three additional local spirits deeply respected by the local Morgans in Thabtawan village: Grandfather Sumpun, Koohor and Tamor.

There is an important reason why ordinary Morgans cannot accept a religious change. They are afraid if they are unable to have the traditional Buddhist funeral rituals for themselves after they have become Christian, they might not be able to meet their offspring in the afterlife. This understanding reflects the importance Morgans place on meeting their children in the afterlife. In contrast, information was provided by a Thai Christianized woman from Nahm Khem village in an interview at her home. She informed that she hesitatingly asked about funeral ceremonies when joining in singing at a church with some Thai Christians from many other places. They said she could have the funeral rite as usual except for the white string around the wrist, which must be taken off.

The Morgans are also afraid that they would have to throw anything referring to Buddhism away, such as the Buddha image, the shelf, amulets and white wrist strings. The last reason to be cited here is that they find it uncomfortable to go to church every day, or at least once a week as they still have to earn a living for their family.

One notices that Morgans from Thabtawan and Thungwa villages still hold strongly to the belief in the spirits of the ancestors and go asking for alms from local Buddhists at the local monasteries on Buddhist days<sup>1</sup>. Their way of life continues this way because they still have a clear bond with the traditional way of life in the Morgan community. They normally marry with other Morgans in order to retain their culture and traditions. Not many of them marry with Thai people and go live with them. In the latter instance the preservation of their individual traditional culture becomes impossible.

**Becoming segregated from traditional society.** The dispossessed who had been forgotten by the government and by the private sector because they fell outside the criteria set by them, were consequently forced to ask for help from the religious organizations. This kind of help from the religious groups was so valued by them that they felt compelled to pay them back by converting to Christianity. They came under scrutiny by their neighbors who were suspicious that they had abandoned their traditions. This situation caused much inner conflict to some of the aid recipients, even after they had made the decision to convert.

In situations like this, the individuals concerned could feel they were becoming ostracized from their friends and neighbors, contributing to this sense of being alone. Under these circumstances of an inability to be able to talk to anyone in the community, or the church, who could offer advice and help solve their conflicts, it is easy to see how a conversion could take place without careful consideration.

A disaster victim from Thabtawan village who had just received accommodation support from a religious support group was interviewed. He said that he hardly visited or spoke to his neighbors anymore and did not want to talk to anybody but to stay by himself. In this case he seemed to not yet have admitted that he had changed his religion and found himself being treated with suspicion by his neighbors after having received the aid.

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<sup>1</sup> The tradition is called 'Khor-Boon' (begging for good things) by Morgans. The items consist of things like food, clothes and money. They are given out in a festival organized by Buddhists in the Tenth Month every year. They believe they would very likely be condemned to fall ill and be unhappy by the ancestors' spirit unless they go to take these things. On such occasions, Morgans are able to meet each other (from the same ethnic background) for this festival.

## **B) Effects on the family level**

- **Beneficial effects**

The positive effects on the family are similar to the individual level, that is to say, those families that have suffered have been able to take sanctuary in the support groups who provided timely and appropriate aid.

- **Negative effects**

**The possibility of conflicts between blood relatives.** In Morgan communities a close relationship between relatives and community groups prevails, with a centuries old tradition of worshipping ancestor spirits to emphasize family ties. A ritual for worshipping the ancestors is held every year and conducted by different families from the same lineage. When one family member changes his or her religion and follows another, thereby dropping the traditional belief in the ancestors' cult, he or she makes the rest of the family members who still whole-heartedly adhere to the tradition, feel uncomfortable and afraid of the punishment handed out by the spirits.

One old Morgan woman from Thabtawan village was once asked to change her religion. She refused, saying that she had to discuss this first with her children and her family. Whatever the others were willing to do they could do and that would not matter to her, she added.

Some victims were hesitant. Whenever asked to change their religion, they said in response that they did not want to do so at this time but it was possible their relatives might. In reality, their parents or close relatives disagreed with them and they did not want to hurt them by causing family conflicts. To sum it up, this study did not find any serious family conflicts over the issue of changing religion, because decisions always respected family wishes when bad feelings were created by the subject.

## **C) Effects on the community level**

- **Positive effects**

**Community development support.** A year after the Tsunami disaster the religious support groups who were still working in the disaster area started adjusting the aid offered from short-term to long- term support projects.

They consisted of providing vocational development programs, interest-free loans for careers and the encouragement of community members to save money, together with scholarships for young people. However, this study was not able to evaluate these programs thoroughly because at the time the organizations involved only just started to implement them. And they were only then transforming the projects into long term community development programs. They would also have to check if the aid offered overlaps with projects already started.

- **Negative effects**

At the moment there do not appear to be any clear negative effects. So the following is just a presentation of possibilities of what could happen in the near future.

**The Local government system is adversely affected.** Semi-traditional communities like the Morgans have a non- official governing system that helps to deal with minor problems in the community, as well as to provide unity among the community members. This system serves to create a hierarchy, to follow as role models for the next generation, based on the seniority of age. Their way of life is led and transmitted by the community elders from one generation to the next. A community can have only one head who will take a leading role as spiritual support in the performance of community rituals. So he must command respect in the community. Those rituals comprise the ancestors' spirits worship each Morgan family conducts every year.

The social support principle used in the Morgans' governing system could be established for the long term, if the community members institutionalized its principles. Such a system can be weakened, when people think it is useless to follow and one by one abandon it. For those who still advocate the traditional system might feel let down, when it turns into a crisis of confidence and there are no other systems to take its place.

When a community member stops believing in the old ways, the authority of the community leader will become diminished. This can lead to a community's structural ruin.

**Disunity in the community.** Religious support groups offered help when there was an inadequate supply of aid from other sources, especially

government aid. However, not all of them were given aid. For those who did not receive anything, it was possible to feel a disparity between themselves and those who got aid. They often assumed those who were aided must have been asked to follow the organization's beliefs and religion.

It has long been believed that there are many strict rules and regulations in other religions apart from Buddhism or from the traditional beliefs that the majority of the Morgan community advocates. This makes the rest of the community feel unsure of how they are expected to adjust themselves in their social relationships with newly Christianized neighbors. Some were reluctant to ask their neighbors to come to their Buddhist wedding parties because they did not know whether they were allowed to take part. Others who were invited to the ceremonies did not know whether they could participate.

Some of the converted victims have been able to keep up good contacts with those who are still Buddhists and seemed happy to give a clear explanation of what it means to be a Christian.

As you can see, aid from the religious Christian support organizations had both positive and negative effects. However, we should never forget the main point, that the victims should all have had a golden opportunity for self-improvement, family support and community development in the most appropriate way.

## **6. Conclusion and recommendations**

Every religion has a basic teaching on the avocation of behaving well; and each of us has the right as a human being to believe in, articulate or convert to any of the world's religions. It is highly honorable for one who shares his beliefs that brings happiness to others to show deep compassion for other human beings. However, it would be wise if he understands what he is trying to do for others. For that we must rely on his own good intentions. He should also learn about all aspects of the side effects that can occur when he interacts with traditional cultures.

Religions are a place of refuge for individuals. In considering the religion that really best suits oneself and supports one's own psychological dimension, we should prepare ourselves with as much information as possible. The circumstances that exist in a community or society should be

supportive in allowing people to choose a way of life on their own, rather than to be at the mercy of a difficult situation.

In conclusion, this study provides some practical suggestions in order that communities in need can benefit from the advantages provided by the support groups.

1. The religious support groups should be explicit that there is no hidden agenda behind the giving of aid. This needs to be clearly communicated by the religious support groups to the NGOs and the recipients. They need to point out that offering help and asking for a change of religion are not related to each other. Furthermore; it should be made clear that if there is an individual wanting to change his religion because he feels really happy to believe in those religious principles, he should not be condemned for doing it.
2. The organization that provides help to the communities should support its independence and its power to negotiate its position on receiving aid. And there should be a plan to reduce the community's dependence on help and support. The ability of the community to make decisions is always the main issue concerning community development, even though this is a difficult issue to deal with. So the help providers need not only to help in a material way but also help in setting the victims free from a system of unquestioning respect for the social elder within a group of people ('Rabob Upphatam').<sup>2</sup>
3. A revision of Buddhism in Thai society, so that it supports secular human society as well as individual minds. Since Buddhism's roles are gradually weakening nowadays, there needs to be some revising of the religion's role in order to strengthen a fragile Thai society that can easily be damaged by the unavoidable impact of modern influences and problems.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Rabob Upphatam' is a system of unquestioning respect for the social elder within a group of people and guarantees his or her prerogative in decision-making for the whole group. A social elder would be a person who has earned the trust of his or her community, so the position is not necessarily connected to age. [Footnote added by TAW]

## 7. Sources

### A) References

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- Jindha Chankaew (1989). 'ศาสนาปัจจุบัน'. Mahachulabannakarn, Bangkok.
- Bangkok Post articles quoted from:  
[www.bangkokpost.net/tsunami1yearon/03-village.html](http://www.bangkokpost.net/tsunami1yearon/03-village.html)

### B) A list of religious support groups/organizations providing helpful information

1. Catholic Foundation of Surat Thani
2. Saint Camillo Foundation of Thailand
3. Christian groups from Phang Nga, Mueang district
4. Siam Care Association

The number of people and groups interviewed (no names attached):

1. 9 people from Nahm Khem village
2. Semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 people from the target group villages (2 from Thungwa, 3 from Thabtawan and 10 from Nahm Khem)
3. 2 of Siam Care's staff officials
4. A priest and 3 of the religious group's staff officials
5. Pon Metta foundation who were responsible for building houses for Tsunami victims; and a family who was offered help from Bansak village of Takua Pa's Bang Muang district.

## 8. Attachment: Morgans, Morglans and Christian Religious Groups

### 'Cham' – a two- edged sword for Morgan culture

*by Samroeng Choey Chuendjitt*

'Cham', 'Sam' or even 'Siam' is a word derived from Siam (Thailand) and is widely used by Morgans/Morglans as a nickname for Thai people and visitors coming from the cities. A long time ago ancient Morgans were nomads sailing the high seas in boats called 'Kabangs' and contact with people from outside their group was rarely made. During the modern time of 'Globalization', Chams and Morgans started to make more contact through the increase of individual travel. Among those who started to travel more regularly at that time were merchants, fishermen, government officers, researchers, community development helpers, and tourists. Things started to change as people traveled more often and commerce as well as their cultures began to spread and exchange with one another.

Far off Sapanpla harbor in Ranong's Mueng district is located a small island called Laonork which can easily be reached within half an hour's journey by a long-tailed boat. Much farther away off shore there is another island called Surin where contact between Chams and Morgans used to be limited. But when the tourism industry arrived and National parks were established, Chams and foreigners started to arrive as tourists. Other groups of people such as government officers from the Department of Forestry, merchants, shop owners, resort owners and enterprise investors became a cause of big changes in the Morgan's' way of life; eating habits for example were affected before They only ate traditional food but now all kinds of modern consumables like semi-instant noodles and colorful junk snacks have become preferable.

Local people in the two villages Thabtawan and Tabpla, in Phang Nga province, started to have contact and cooperation in working with Chams in the Sea Mining era before World War II. Later on things began to change and they had to learn about and experience new cultures from the outside. Morgans and Morglans in the two villages started to improve their diets and looked for laboring jobs on tall buildings. In general the jobs they had in the past working the sea mining industry changed to managing rubber plantations. In addition, they learnt to dress in more colorful clothes while in the villages on Koh Loa and Surin Island the kids still ran around naked.

After the Tsunami disaster we saw an array of all kinds of aid; emergency help, rehabilitation projects, monetary compensation along with venture capital support from several support organizations, groups, foundations and educational institutions from around the world. The help was so great that it would have swamped the Andaman shore if it were physically able to be touched. However, not every victim received some form of aid.

Along with the aid came the “chams”. They were mostly land development volunteers, charity workers, religious volunteers, donors, researchers and disaster developers from different parts of Thailand as well as from many foreign support organizations. They worked generously and did many useful things for the disaster victims. However, due to the limitations of time the roots of the Morgans’ traditional culture and their language were not accessible and were too difficult to understand for the aid movement. Since all the aid work had to be done immediately the aid organizations had to learn a lot of valuable lessons in a short time as a result.

The aid movement affected the Morgans’ traditional way of life partly because most of them stopped being self-sufficient and started to rely on the help given by the aid organizations, while a few of them continued to live in their old self sufficient way.

After the Tsunami, Chams especially those working in the field of community development saw an opportunity to exploit the Morgans by opening shops that sold wasteful or unnecessary things such as liquor, cigarettes, energy drinks and junk snacks, all likely to create bad habits among the Morgans. Some Chams coordinated links between Morgans and aid supporters but failed to provide enough participation for local people. The material help given was not distributed to everyone equally. Sometimes local people, though, were able to get supplies through the illegal distribution of aid. A few of the Chams were caught in a series of corruption incidents involving the storage and selling of black market items.

However, this issue was problematic for the Morgans themselves, through being uncomfortable to mention it because some Chams had been helpful in the coordination of aid distribution. The moral debt that emerged between the Chams who were well behaved at the beginning of the aid operation and the Morgans prevented them from openly complaining about the situation. Furthermore, Chams had begun to distribute aid through a credit system to

the Morgans who were fooled into thinking that this was a favor to them even though the aid was from donations provided free by outside agencies. The only thing they felt able to do was to accept the situation and say nothing.

On the surface, the fact that Chams volunteered to help Morgans in their time of need seemed very “generous”. But the issue worth reflecting on here is, who really benefited from the situation, where was the point of balance in aid provision benefit, and how can we alter such dilemmas in the future for this kind of situation. The fact that Morgans always kept silent on this sensitive issue meant that Chams jumped to the conclusion that this was acceptable for these people. Finally, it is hoped that in the passing of time, the situation and the lessons learnt from it will prevent situations like this from developing in the future.

### **Ideological conflicts between new religions and ancient beliefs**

Today’s Morgan culture and way of life conforms in many ways to their ancestors’ traditions. Consequently Morgans still have great respect for the natural systems all around them and continue to live their lives, depending on the things that nature provides. Respect for nature is embedded in their traditional belief system as seen in most of their age-old ceremonies and rites such as those for launching boats, the Lor-Pong Post ceremony and the worshiping of the spirit house of Phor Ta and a festival for Morgans called the Ta Po Won Dae rite. These community activities are representative of the ancient way Morgans relate to nature.

To get a clearer picture of this, it is recommended that one should go and visit Thabtawan and Thabpla villages where you can see and appreciate the authentic Morgan way of living in harmony with nature, derived from the unspoiled mangrove forests, paddy fields and communal forests that surround the villages. In contrast to the communities on land are the islands at Lao and Surin where most of the primitive community rites are focused on the sea. There, there is a spirit house symbolizing the deep respect for their ancestors called San Pota (Daemon’s sacred place) which stands right in the sea located in front of Lao Nok village.

After the Tsunami, a tremendous wave of aid provision replaced the disastrous one at Lao island or Lao village. The communities received a great deal of aid and donations; aid for the relief of emotional and physical

suffering. This came from several support organizations and among them were the religious groups. Most of them worked under the funds provided by various foreign nations. The aid provided many new houses, fishing equipment and student grants. A church building was erected (May 2005) to enable community singing and religious rituals, including baptisms as well as to teach young children languages. This kind of aid was provided for free while some other aid organizations donated semi-circular funds that meant that half of the money given needed to be repaid. A number of Morgans converted to Christianity in order to get aid as a quid pro quo. However, for some of them this occasion was used to embrace Christianity for real. The religious groups also set up some educational services for children. At first this was accepted and appreciated by the community, since it was believed that the teaching activities emphasized secular subjects. However later on people found out that the education was mainly for the proselytization of Christianity.

When the religious organizations arrived on the scene, there were many Morgans who still needed support for their health and livelihoods. Some issues around the area of human rights were also outstanding. These new kinds of organizations' response to some aspects of their needs worked very well, especially in providing the materials needed for daily life. The things provided sometimes seemed too much, clothes for children, for example.

From the results of interviews done by aid organization officers stationed on Koh Lao in the middle of 2005, showed that some Morgan people still believed in "Ta" and "Yai" spirits. In other words, their ancestor spirits belief held strong even though they had been converted to Christianity for almost a year. This showed that the roots of ancestor worship amongst the Morgans were still very strong and that the ancient beliefs ran very deep. Two forces were in conflict. One was the new religious organizations who accomplished their role quite impressively, especially in helping the Morgans improve their quality of life. The ancient beliefs were another, fulfilling the Morgans' desire to worship the spirits from long ago. Today the ancient beliefs of the Morgans still have a strong hold over the communities, even in the face of our fast changing society. This created uncomfortable inner conflicts that really made them feel vulnerable. The scenario playing out then was seen thus: while some made the decision to change to the new religion, others did not (because they would rather follow their old beliefs and traditions). All in all, an attempt to foster a harmonious relationship between the Morgans' traditional way of life relating to nature

and the current situation with Christian conversions should be the appropriate policy.

### **Inner ideological conflicts at Tabpla**

The answer to the question ‘Which organization are you from?’ that greeted any new aid worker arriving in Tabpla village was not as simple as it sounded. The response enabled the aid worker to obtain a place to stay in the charities’ housing to which they belonged. Questions like this could be heard throughout Tabpla village which had become divided into a number of different groups. This was a result of the separate approaches by the many independent development organizations and religious support groups, involving different methodologies, theories and implementation of the aid provided.

One old man from Tabpla said “They [the charity organizations] offered new boats, fishing equipment and also some money when the NGOs cooperated”. However, when new houses, schools and community buildings were reconstructed, they all came in different styles with signs and posters attached to show the names of the aid groups that built them. It also appeared to the Morglans that to receive aid from these religious organizations’ it was necessary for them to follow some practices that were contrary to their ancient beliefs and traditions.

“When receiving a lot of money, they bought a pick-up truck” cried the same old man in offering another example about the individuals who had got so much money in financial aid that it could be spent for things other than their immediate needs. This created an unhelpful desire in others for the money that seemed to be on offer for those, who were willing to cooperate. However, in the end many felt that their ancient faiths and their own dignity stopped them. Some of the community’s elders felt disappointed when they realized that their descendants were going to become Christians and abandon their Morgan beliefs. No one in the community was able to tell which way of life was the better – the traditional or the modern Christian one. However, before the decision about which was the better option the unity among the community members was undermined and lack of community coordination and togetherness in their activities became apparent.

Finally, it is believed that time can heal all wounds and this religious conflict that has erupted between members of the Morgan community is no exception given the prevailing strong bond of kinship that underpins Morgan beliefs. Hopefully, it will not be shattered by outside religious influences no matter how effective it is. But we cannot know what will happen in the future if the deep-seated traditional values of the Morglans are diminished to the degree where it can be further undermined by outside spiritual values. This could be a serious threat to Morglan culture including communal intolerance between the different religious followers, unless the next generations can be inspired to a sense of identity, when they learn and acknowledge the great value of their ancient roots.

## **9. Publications of the Tsunami Aid Watch series**

### **Short term research projects**

1. Tsunami early warning system: Myth and Reality.
2. Morgan culture and its origins.
3. Operating structure of Save Andaman Network (SAN), a case study in rebuilding houses and rehabilitating the communities.
4. Operating structure of the Save Andaman Network (SAN), a case study of boat repair and community shipyards.
5. Land problems after the Tsunami.
6. The changing ways of life in Andaman's coastline communities.
7. Changed environments: Permanent effects of the Tsunami on communal ecology.

### **Long term research projects**

1. Data collection regarding land problems and solutions for Tsunami impacted areas.
2. Morgan (Sea-gypsies) ways of life and the history of Morgan land use.

### **Previously published**

1. TSUNAMI. A study on disaster response in Sri Lanka, with a contribution on the situation in Thailand by Karl Segschneider, Director of the TAW team, and Walaitat Worakul ,published in cooperation with Heinrich Böll Foundation, Brot für die Welt and medico international, July 2006
2. SCOPE-Chartes. Sustainable Community Owned Professional Eco-Chartes. Edited by TAW, a project of the Heinrich Boell Foundation, Southeast Asia Regional Office, Chiang Mai, December 2006. ISBN 978 974 88189 7 9
3. Renewable Energy Options on Islands in the Andaman Sea. A feasibility study for hybrid renewable energy/diesel systems in two Tsunami impacted communities. Edited by TAW, a project of the Heinrich Boell Foundation, Southeast Asia Regional Office, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 7093 51 3

4. Seal of Fair Recovery (SoFaR). A support tool for post disaster rehabilitation. A concept paper – Siegel „Fairer Wiederaufbau“. Zur Unterstützung des Wiederaufbaus nach Katastrophen. Ein Konzeptpapier. Edited by TAW, a project of Heinrich Böll Foundation, Southeast Asia Regional Office, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 8266 12 1

**Project period:** November 2005 – January 2008