



Update 5 from Golden Buddha Beach

12th January 2005

Dear friends of Golden Buddha Beach,

Bodhi and Dick went down to the island on Monday 10th January to assess the damage and to get a clearer idea on the best way forward. They are being joined today by a Swedish television crew who will be filming the devastation. The entire restaurant area was lost and the ground on the peninsula where the yoga sala used to be has been reshaped completely. Many of the houses were washed away, but fortunately some remain and will serve as the control centre during the rebuilding stage.

Stories from people surviving the tsunami are incredible: many were washed into the sea and stayed there for up to three hours before being rescued, others managed to climb up to Monkey Mountain and were safe. Tragically, those who were carried into the mangrove swamp did not survive.

Some breath-taking photos of the event can be seen on http://pg.photos.yahoo.com/ph/redchili@sbcglobal.net/my_photos Please also keep your eyes on the website as this is being updated regularly and www.gbbmembers.com does seem to be working at the moment.

Golden Buddha

Exciting news: GOLDEN BUDDHA IS REOPENING ON 1st DECEMBER 2005!

By that stage, we would like to assure everyone that it will be returned to its full natural splendour and will offer the beauty and friendliness that it has come to be known for. Please support us by recommending the resort again to all your friends, and encouraging bookings (reservations@goldenbuddhabeach.com). Ulrika has already booked Golden Buddha for a Yoga Journey from 10th -18th December, so please come for some wonderful Anusara Yoga and support the re-emerging of GBB (ulrika@Yoga-Journeys.com)

Relief Fund

Thank you to all the wonderful people who have been donating so generously to the Relief Fund. It is now possible to donate via the website (PayPal), directly to Wells Fargo Bank in the States, or via Go Differently in the UK. We are in the process of setting up a fund in Thailand and a tax deductible address in the UK. More information about how the fund will be used is available on http://www.godifferently.com/golden_buddha_beach.asp

Some people have experienced problems in donating to the Wells Fargo account: please check that the account number is 5004426739. A different account number was given out at one point; we would like to apologise to anyone who was affected by this.

Richie Ralphsmith, who was on the island when the tsunami struck, has very kindly offered to help with coordinating donations from his base in Singapore. He is doing a wonderful job and everyone at Golden Buddha would like to thank him. All enquiries about ways to donate can still be sent to lhtravel@inet.co.th, and they will be forwarded to him.

If anyone knows an alternative internet payment gateway, please let Lucy know (lhtravel@inet.co.th) as some people have expressed concern over using PayPal.

Volunteers

The call for volunteers in the last update has produced an overwhelming response. We will be formulating an action plan over the next few weeks, with specific tasks and time lines. The initial stage will involve

clearing the island of debris and trying to rescue any undamaged items. For this we will need strong manual labour from people who can survive with no luxuries! The water is not yet suitable for drinking and there are still problems with electricity and communications. We will also need Thai speakers to consult with the villagers about how best to assist them and how to provide for their immediate needs. Stage two, possibly in late Feb/March will be reconstruction when we will need skilled carpenters and builders. By then will also have a better idea of how to contribute to the villages and the Turtle Conservation Project.

Happy Birthday to Richard Jones

Richard is already helping out on the island and everyone who knows him would like to pass on their greetings in what will doubtless be a very memorable birthday.

With love, Lucy
On behalf of Bodhi