



BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

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Understanding Burma by Kim Roberts



With the July 26th resignation of Ne Win, who seized power in a military coup in 1962 and steered Burma along a path of strict isolationism and economic decline for more than a quarter of a century, Burma sprang to front-page notoriety. Reports of the subsequent mass protests for democracy, arrests, beatings and killings of unarmed demonstrators, including monks, students, and workers, and the rapid turnover in political leadership are being seen and heard around the world, despite the ban on foreign journalists in Burma.

Some Recent Events

- Student riots were sparked in September 1987 when the government withdrew from circulation the top three notes in Burmese currency, the 25, 35, and 75 *kyat* bills (US \$4, \$6, and \$12 respectively). For those who kept their life savings in these bills

rolled and stored under their beds, the move was devastating.

- Students protested in March and June 1988, calling for major economic and political reforms. The demonstrations have continued throughout the summer, growing in strength and number.

- 1,451 demonstrators were arrested in Rangoon, the capital, on August 8 and 9 alone. As of August 25, official arrest figures indicate that as many as 1664 people arrested in connection with the demonstrations were still imprisoned, apparently without charge or trial. Among them are children as young as 3 years old.

- Government security forces have responded to demonstrations harshly. On August 9 and 10, diplomats reported that security forces fired repeatedly into crowds. Diplomats placed the death toll for August 10 at up to 100, far higher than the official count of 33.

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From the Editor

This issue of *BPF Newsletter* will be my last as editor. I have enjoyed nearly three years of producing this heartfelt journal and I look forward to continuing to help the next editor. David Schneider is a trained writer, editor, calligrapher, graphic designer, and Buddhist in several traditions. I am confident he will continue to improve the *Newsletter*.

In this issue, once again we look in depth at the situation of Buddhists in Asia. The case of Burma is unique. 85% of the country is Buddhist, and practice is widespread, both among the monastic Sangha and also among the laity. But as you will see, what some observers are calling a "Buddhist holocaust" (not systematic, but nonetheless devastating) also affects them.

We also continue "watering the seeds of American Buddhism," emphasizing practice in everyday situations, in the midst of creativity, and in the face of the madness of our times. Recommended especially is Joanna Macy's proposal for building monasteries to mindfully attend to nuclear waste.

This is a year of restructuring for BPF. Now 10 years old, BPF, at the recommendation of its founders, board, and a number of members, has designated the period from June 1988 to June 1989 for developing a structure which is strong enough to perform the tasks requested of us and dynamic enough to generate adequate funding. Anyone interested in helping, please see the report of the June Elders Meeting (page 34), and contact Norma Burton in the BPF office. Many thanks to so many of you for helping and encouraging me these past three years.

—Arnold Kotler

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Understanding Burma (cont'd from page 1)

- Bodies have been disposed of covertly. Soldiers are alleged to have taken many bodies away on trucks and cremated them secretly. This apparently has prevented families from knowing the fate of some of the victims.
- Hospital staff and Buddhist monks have been shot. At the height of the August protests, large crowds reportedly gathered at Rangoon General Hospital to seek information about missing relatives and friends. Diplomats report that troops fired at a crowd of medical staff demonstrating in the streets for an end to the shooting. Two doctors, three nurses, and two Buddhist monks were killed.
- There have been massive peaceful protests. On September 7, one million demonstrators filled the streets of Rangoon, a city of 3 million, peacefully protesting for democracy. Other major protests included those in the northern cities of Mandalay and Monywa, with 700,000 turning out for each.
- Government employees have joined in the protest. Originally led by students, thousands joined the waves of demonstrations for economic and political reforms last month, including Buddhist monks, workers, lawyers, and physicians. Surprisingly, the crowds included employees of the Council of State, the Parliament, the Bureau of Special Investigation (civilian intelligence), and air force soldiers.

July, August, and September have been tumultuous months in Rangoon. Ne Win, the nation's powerful autocrat for 26 years, stepped down, citing the demonstrations as evidence of a widespread lack of confidence in his regime. His successor was Sein Lwin, known as the "Butcher of Burma" for his harsh treatment of dissidents. Public protest was so rampant that he lasted in office only 17 days.

Crowds continued to demonstrate for multi-party democracy, economic reform, and the protection of human rights. The next president, Maung Maung, a civilian leader, acquiesced to popular demands, calling for a referendum on multi-party rule this month and the resignation of all party members. But on September 18, General Saw Maung seized control through a

military coup and reimposed martial law. At the time of this writing, public protests have abated. The official death toll is given as 430, but unofficial estimates are much higher. The protests, however, do not seem to have been in vain. The government is promising free elections once peace is restored, and an opposition party—the newly formed "League for Democracy"—is consolidating its power base and choosing leaders.

The Role of the Monks

Students have been the main force in the protests for economic and political reforms, but Buddhist monks have lent substantial support to the movement since joining the demonstrations in late June.

Eighty-five per cent of the Burmese population is Buddhist, mostly Theravadin. So much is Buddhism a part of the national character that Ne Win incorporated full freedom of conscience and religious worship into the "Burmese way of socialism" early in his rule. Because Burma has a just one political party, much of the dissent is channeled through the Buddhist religious leadership, as they are highly respected and trusted by the Burmese people.

When the monks first joined the student protestors this summer, some observers noted that those who marched in the demonstrations were novices and less influential than their seniors. But the *Christian Science Monitor* reported that on August 10 Burma's highest-ranking monk, Mingon Sayadaw, formally petitioned the government to bring justice to the people. "[Although] so far, few monks have joined the protest," the *Monitor* reported, "the government seems worried that the monks might help escalate the demonstration in the future." In a subsequent interview in the same newspaper, State University of New York anthropology professor John Ferguson supported that notion. "When the monks finally join in, that's what will turn over this government Then I think the troops will not fire on [the protestors.]"

By late August, it was apparent that Buddhist monks were in fact taking a leadership role in the current upheaval. Not only were hundreds of thousands of monks joining students and workers in demonstrations, but diplomats reported that monks,

students and others had taken over about 40 town governments as officials abandoned their posts. Even Mandalay, the second largest city and seat of traditional culture, was reported to be administered by a committee of monks. Since the military coup, the government has regained control of 95 cities, including Mandalay. Opposition leaders are now calling for the release of students and monks jailed since September 18.

Ne Win Destroyed the Economy

Burma's economy is widely recognized to be in shambles. Ne Win's economic policies have reduced the country's status from that of Southeast Asia's rising star in 1948, rich in rice exports, oil,



teak forests, and gems, to that of least-developed nation, as designated by the United Nations last year. The country's per capita annual income has plummeted from \$670 in 1960 to less than \$200 last year, and *The Washington Post* calls Burma's black market "the most vibrant sector of its economy."

Who Will Lead?

As we go to press, it is still not clear who will lead the opposition. We cannot assume that the opposition will stay united in the coming months. There is enormous ethnic diversity among the Burmese: ethnic Burmans comprise approximately two-thirds of the population, but there are seven major ethnic minority groups constitutionally recognized as "native" or "national races" of Burma, as well as ten other ethnic groups, including Indians and Chinese. Since the country's independence from the British in 1948, chronic armed rebellions, most of them ethnic based, have plagued the country, provoking governmental repression.

Who will lead? A number of individuals have emerged during the August protests around whom demonstrators have rallied, including Retired Brigadier General Aung Gyi (one-time colleague of Ne Win and outspoken critic of human rights abuses in the recent protests) and Aung San Suu Kyi (daughter of founding patriot Aung San.) Former Prime Minister U Nu, whose democratic government fell to Ne Win in 1962, announced on September 8 the formation of a rival government. In addition, the government will have to contend with the nine organized ethnic minority insurgency groups, recently unified to assert their opposition to Ne Win's government.

In the meantime, the most recent coup indicates military personnel will be serious contenders for leadership positions in Burmese government.

Human Rights Outrage

Amnesty International began intensifying its efforts in monitoring the human rights situation in Burma last year. Through the recent protest, and the subsequent conflicts with the security forces, AI has continued to monitor the situation and appeal to the Burmese government for the protection of the rights of dissidents.

Violations of basic human rights during the protests since August clearly include the arrest and detention without charge or trial of hundreds of people solely for the nonviolent expression of their beliefs, as well as the ill-treatment, torture, and killing of demonstrators.

These abuses are not new in Burma's human rights record. In May, Amnesty International published its first full-length report on Burma, *Extrajudicial Execution and Torture of Members of Ethnic Minorities*, which focused on atrocities committed against the Karen, Mon, and Kachin minorities. A follow-up report, issued in August, documents similar abuses against the Shan, another ethnic minority. The fact that this follow-up report was issued even as the turmoil in the major cities was reaching its climax indicates how serious AI judges the abuses against the ethnic minorities to be.



In waging intensive counter-insurgency campaigns against various armed opposition groups in Burma's remote mountainous regions, the Burmese army has placed harsh restrictions on villagers, including regrouping and relocating entire villages into "strategic hamlets"—fenced settlements under strict curfew.

One Buddhist monk described how soldiers opened fire on villagers in April of this year. The shooting took place after about 100 Burmese Communist Party insurgents (Wa ethnic minority) attended an ordination festival at the village monastery. Though the BCP insurgents had left two hours earlier, "villagers were still [at the monastery] because the festival hadn't ended. They were all terrified, and tried to run away, but they couldn't because they ran into the Burmese soldiers. The soldiers drove them back into the monastery. Then they opened fire on the monastery.... They simply opened fire without warning."

Villagers have been tortured or summarily shot if suspected of links with the insurgents. Countless of them have been seized and forced to work as porters or guides for the army. Those who collapsed from heavy loads were beaten and abandoned or killed. Many have been used as "human mine detectors," forced to lead troops through minefields. "So numerous and similar are the accounts of human rights violations given by the refugees [along the Thai border] that in AI's view they show a consistent pattern of gross violation of human rights. The organization was told of case after case of people being apprehended, tortured and killed in defiance of Burmese and international law."

Recommended Action

Amnesty International, through diplomatic and grassroots action around the world, is urging authorities to launch a full-scale inquiry into these reports of human rights abuse. The following are some steps which must be taken in order to restore basic human rights in Burma:

- The Burmese government should bring to justice those responsible for the violations mentioned above.
- Anyone imprisoned on account of their nonviolent political

pinions or peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression or in connection with their ethnic minority background would be released.

- Anyone against whom there is credible evidence of violent anti-government activities should be promptly charged and given a fair trial, or released.

- International observers, including representatives of international human rights and humanitarian organizations, should be allowed full access to Burma.

Though it is unknown at this time who will assume the leadership of Burma in the coming days and weeks, we can voice our concerns over the human rights situation in Burma. Please send a short letter asking for an investigation into the human rights violations outlined above to :

General Saw Maung
Prime Minister and Minister of Defense & Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Defense
Signal Pagoda Road
Rangoon, Burma

and a copy to:

Ambassador U Myo Aung
Embassy of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma
2300 S Street NW
Washington, DC 20008

Members of Congress are also effective in bringing human rights violations to the attention of the Burmese government. Senate Resolution 464, passed unanimously on August 11, condemned the killings and mass arrests and supported the restoration of human rights in Burma. Please make your concerns known to your Representative and Senators so that U.S. support of human rights in Burma does not end with the adoption of SR464.

The ongoing expression of concern by those who care is needed if human rights abuses are to end in Burma and throughout the world.

As the Burma Coordinator for the US section of Amnesty International, Kim Roberts has kept abreast of political developments there, but all analyses and opinions expressed in this article are her own.



Background: Burma, Buddhism, and Revolution

For centuries Burma has been a scene of political turmoil. It has a history of bloody wars with its neighbors as well as among the 67 ethnic groups that people its rich landscape. The Buddhist Sangha has traditionally been identified with the monarchy, but during the last century, Buddhism has seen its role transformed from that of supporting the state into being a force for social and political change.

Burma is one of the great centers of Theravada Buddhism, and has been influenced by Buddhism since the emissaries of the great Indian emperor Ashoka arrived in the third century B.C.E. At that time, present-day Burma was populated by the Mon people, who developed close ties with Sri Lankans and propagated Buddhism throughout Southeast Asia. The Mons were eventually defeated by invaders known as the Burmans, who came from the China-Tibet border region; but many elements of Mon culture, including the practice of Buddhism, survived.

When King Anawrahta founded the first Burman dynasty at Pagan in 1044, he created a synthesis of Buddhism and elements of the indigenous animistic *nat* cults. This popularized Buddhism and helped Anawrahta unify the country. In fact Anawrahta's chief religious advisor held power second only to the king himself. Thus began a system by which the chief *pongyi* (Buddhist monk) worked with and often dictated the affairs of state.

Since that time, one of the primary duties of the king has been to protect and promote Buddhism. The close association of Buddhist institutions with the state, in turn, legitimized monarchic rule in the eyes of the populace. The Sangha also filled a number of important social roles. Temples became centers of education and medicine; and monks were given quasi-judicial powers and were sent from time to time on diplomatic missions to other Buddhist countries, including Sri Lanka and China.

This intimate relationship between church and state collapsed in 1886, when the British took control of Burma and began to administer it as a state of India. Without royal patronage, the power of the Sangha declined significantly. It was undercut even further by the secularization of the educational system. Although monks were active in the early resistance to British rule—there were reports of monks leading bands of armed rebels as early as 1886—most of the armed resistance was led by local village leaders called *myothugis*, who made sufficient impression on the British to cause the word 'thug' to enter the English language. Organized political resistance, however, did not develop until the twentieth century.

The first significant event in the modern Burmese nationalist movement came in 1906 with the founding of the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA), a combination of Buddhist elites and young, western-educated lawyers. They founded Buddhist schools all over the country, presenting an alternative

Burma, Buddhism, and Revolution *(continued)*

to the British and Christian missionary systems which predominated in the more remote areas.

In 1916 they led the first anti-British demonstrations, protesting the continued wearing of shoes by Europeans into the pagodas. In 1919, this issue culminated with an attack on British shoe-wearers in Mandalay; the foreigners finally began to conform to local custom after 100 years of flouting it.

That same year the YMBA joined a boycott of British goods, organized as a demand for limited self-government along the lines granted India proper after World War I. In 1920, a massive student strike closed down the British-run Rangoon University. Students were forced to take refuge in monasteries and temples, where the monks and pilgrims shared alms with them as a gesture of support.

In 1921 the activist *pongyi* U Ottama was imprisoned and later died in jail, becoming the first martyr of the nationalist movement. Another *pongyi*, U Wisera, died in jail on a hunger strike over the right to wear monk's robes while in prison.

Resistance gained momentum as the world depression hit in 1930. As economic conditions worsened, political tension came to a head with the Saya San rebellion of 1930-32. A physician and former monk, Saya San believed he was an incarnation of Maitreya, the future Buddha, come to re-establish the Burmese monarchy. He declared himself King, and proceeded to lead a peasant revolt against the British, which was easily suppressed.

Buddhist Socialism

The 1930s saw the rise of a new nationalist group, the *Thakins*, whose members were to dominate Burmese politics until Ne Win stepped down this year. Young, well-educated, and fiercely nationalistic, they turned to the revolutionary ideology of Marxism in their calls for independence. Buddhist involvement in this group resulted in a synthesis of Buddhist and Marxist ideologies unique to Burma.

In the years preceding World War II, the more militant *Thakin* elements looked to Japan as a model for Asian development. The guerrilla leader Aung San went there with 30 other *Thakins*, including the young Ne Win. As the Japanese invaded Burma, however, it became clear that they had not come to liberate; Aung San then allied his guerrilla movement with the British to help drive out the Japanese.

After the war, national independence brought with it the problems of uniting and governing the country. A split developed between communist and socialist elements, and the assassination of war hero Aung San compounded the confusion. In the years immediately following 1948, no fewer than five insurrections were mounted against the young government. The army, now under General Ne Win, contained the communists, but the ethnic minorities—particularly the Shan and Karen peoples—continued to resist the government.

The position of the ethnic minority groups has always been a problem for the Burmans, who constitute about 70% of the

population. The cultural differences were exaggerated under the British policy of 'divide and rule', when the minorities were granted semi-autonomous states. Though the Shan and a few other groups are predominantly Buddhist, most of the smaller hill-tribes retain their indigenous animist religions. Christian missionaries also found more success with the hill tribes than on the Burmese plain, further underscoring religious divergence. The fact that many of the tribes have their own language serves to keep them ethnically distinct.

The emergence of devout Buddhist U Nu as Prime Minister in 1948 accentuated the problems of the minorities. Nu saw Burma as a Buddhist nation, and under him the government essentially returned to its historical role as a promoter of Buddhism. Although controversy over this eventually led to the collapse of his government, the experiment worked for over a decade.

U Nu emerged on the world stage as a leader of the neutralist movement during the cold war of the '50s, encouraging small countries to remain non-aligned. He was a great Buddhist thinker, and his time of leadership in Burma represents a rare reconciliation between Buddhism and Marxism, which have been in conflict in so much of Asia. U Nu saw Marxism as a tool of the Buddhist state. His colleague U Ba Swe said in 1951 that Buddhism and Marxism were essentially two sides of the same coin, with Marxism providing a guide for man's material needs and Buddhism his spiritual needs. Nationalization of industry and private property were undertaken to rid people of their worldly worries and leave them free to concentrate on spiritual concerns. Orthodox Marxism gradually gave way to more moderate socialist policies, which U Nu hailed as the emergence of "Buddhist socialism."

Nu's promotion of Buddhism reached its apex in 1961 when it became the official state religion. This move was unpopular with the minority groups, and led to the destabilization of Nu's government. In 1962, General Ne Win, the head of the armed forces seized power, and the experiment of the Buddhist state was over.

Ne Win had ruled ably for a few months during 1959, but by 1962 he had become reclusive and autocratic. U Nu and other potential opposition leaders were imprisoned, and Ne Win began to rule the country by personal decree. He was distrustful of the Sangha and sought to depoliticize it. One of his early laws required registration of the *pongyis* and a pledge from them to remain apolitical. Monastic protest and one self-immolation forced him later to modify this.

For the next 25 years the economy stagnated. Burmese control of certain border areas has continued to be tenuous, as a lucrative opium and smuggling trade has kept tribal insurgents well armed. Periodic protests in central Burma had gotten nowhere, until the economic frustration finally exploded into the streets and into the newspapers this year. The latest chapter has just begun.

Tom Ginsburg, who compiled this history, is a student at the University of California, Berkeley.

“Buddhism really is the heart of the Burmese people.”

An Interview with Alan Clements

Alan Clements is a vipassana Buddhist meditation teacher who trained in Burma. He went there in 1977, practiced as a monk there for most of 1979-83, and has since returned annually. David Schneider and Arnie Kotler interviewed Alan in early October for BPF Newsletter, and he told us about his experiences in Burma and his analysis of the current situation.

It is said that two Rangoon merchants met the Buddha soon after his enlightenment and, observing how radiant he was, asked him what was the cause of his brilliance. He told them, “Well, I’ve just become a Buddha, I’ve fully awakened.” The story goes that they said, “Could we please have something to remember this moment by?” And he pulled out several hairs from his head, and these became the foundation of the Shwedagon Pagoda, the biggest temple in Rangoon. In the third century B.C.E., emissaries of the Indian King Ashoka, his children, introduced Buddhist principles and practice into Burma.

So Buddhism has been in Burma for a long time, especially the practical elements of Buddhism. Being there you feel a deep commitment to generosity—a beautiful display among the people of the five precepts rooted in harmlessness, and among the Sangha with their monastic discipline and the wisdom tradition: the practices of *samadhi* (concentration) and *vipassana* (insight). There is a thorough “Oxford-like” system of training in Buddhist theory which complements the meditation practice. There are now well over a million monks and nuns in Burma. Buddhism really is the heart of the Burmese people.

This is perhaps even more true today than in the past, because during the last 40 years the practice of insight meditation has taken firm root throughout the society. In most Asian Buddhist countries, at least previously, the role of the laity has been to support the monasteries out of faith and a commitment to generosity and ethical behavior. Few laypersons felt that meditation was something that they could practice. But the unique aspect of Burma I found is that there are teachers who truly speak to the heart of the everyday life situations that people face—working with the children and the families—finding ways to integrate these meditation techniques.

Mahasi Sayadaw, perhaps the greatest living meditation teacher in Burmese history, brought the ancient teaching of insight meditation, attributed to the Buddha, to Rangoon and established one of the first meditation centers principally for lay practitioners. He did this in 1949 upon the invitation of Prime Minister U Nu. Before that, the teaching of meditation was primarily limited to monks and nuns in isolated forest traditions. Mahasi Sayadaw brought it to the city with the firm intention of making it available to ordinary householders in business situations who had families and responsibilities.

Since then, more than 1,000,000 people have come to the Mahasi Meditation Center he established. The population of Rangoon is 3,000,000. That is equivalent of one out of every



three people in the city! When I was there, at times there were as many as 5,000 people meditating at once, and at any given time 600 to 1,500 people were in residence at the Center to devote themselves to the practice of meditation. It is a large place—24 acres, 70 buildings—all within 3 miles of downtown Rangoon. There are 350 branch centers throughout Burma. Mahasi Sayadaw also sent very qualified vipassana teachers to Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and Indonesia, and reintroduced or further inspired the practical teachings of vipassana meditation to those countries. The vipassana practice we see in America today mainly derives from Mahasi Sayadaw’s inspiration. Several teachers in the West studied with his disciples throughout Asia.

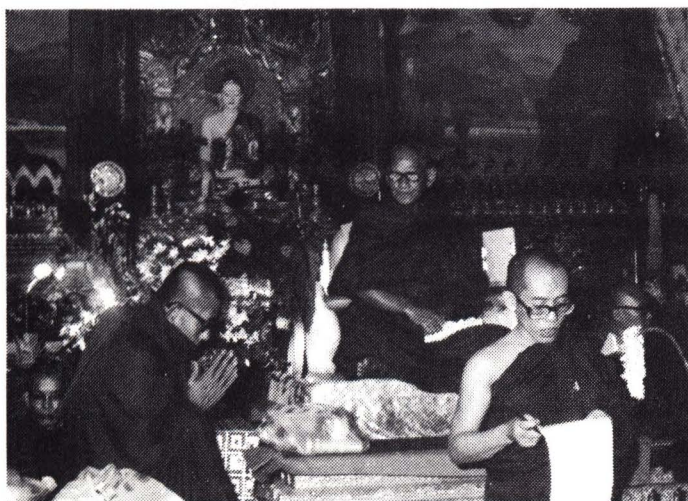
Most every household in Burma contains a Buddha statue, a way of reminding us of our highest potential. You frequently see people sitting in meditation, and it’s a spectacular sight—some in the pagodas, some in the monasteries, perhaps a random group in the forest. Imagine going to downtown San Francisco and seeing the largest single daily gathering to be people meditating together. You can walk into one center—and there are many in Rangoon—and see 600 women and men sitting silently for an hour, getting up and doing an hour walking, sitting again for an hour. During the summer months, you see 200 or 300 boys and girls there, who come frequently during their summer vacation to train in traditional Buddhist meditation.

Burma has a unique form of government. Ne Win called it “Burma’s way to socialism.” Prior to that, private enterprise was integrated with a kind of democratic socialism with a Buddhist ethic. Those who made a lot gave a lot. The leader, U Nu, was a Buddhist meditator, which is almost unthinkable in the world—to have someone who might respond with Buddhist

principles as a leader of 38 million people. He tried to manifest the five precepts and over time he spoke to hundreds of thousands of people, not only about politics and government, but often about the teachings of the Buddha. He was sort of a national Dhamma teacher, a very devout practitioner.

During the years I was there, I interviewed U Nu on two occasions, receiving special permission to visit him. He was under house arrest. I had to sign in and receive confirmation from inside his house to enter, and then an armed guard would open the gate and let me in. We mostly spoke about the role of Buddhist principles in politics and society, but occasionally we talked about his history as a leader.

At one point U Nu told me of the coup—that Ne Win simply came in to his office with guns and his comrades, surrounded him, and demanded, “I want the government.” U Nu told him,



Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw at the Mahasi Meditation Center

“Well if you think you can do a better job at this, I have no choice. You may take it, and I wish you well. May you do the best.” He was imprisoned for five years in a strict, harsh environment, and then went to India in exile. He stayed there 16 years. Under a government amnesty act, he was allowed to return to his homeland, but placed under 24-hour guard. This type of thing happened with many people. U Nu is still alive. I hear that he is in hiding.

Although the government has changed hands three times since U Ne Win stepped down in July, there is no question that he is still in control. Everyone knows that it is he who has masterminded what has happened. All of the recent governments have had to be controlled by Ne Win. Ne Win is so feared in that country that during my 10 or 11 years there it was rare to meet anyone willing to utter a sentence about him, even in private, for fear of being taken away or having some economic restrictions or family difficulties imposed.

The political complexities of Burma were explained to me by many people, including U Tin Oo—the ex-defense minister and general of the army—lawyers who have been very actively involved in politics, ex-ministers that I’ve met and known, and others best kept off-record. Burmese politics involves so many

factions, concerns, languages, and ethnic groups, that to understand it in any cohesive way is nearly impossible. Although I wouldn’t go so far as to say the military honors the Dhamma, it is interesting to note that Ne Win has allowed Buddhism to co-exist with his repressive regime. Even today, the troops are not shooting in monasteries. They are not killing monks and nuns within the boundaries of the centers, eliminating their presence. I respect their restraint in this one case. Troops did, however, shoot onto the grounds of a hospital, and many health care workers and medical students were killed. But the monastery has been a cool haven in the midst of fire.

When I was last in Burma in December and January, I felt that something like the recent uprisings would happen. I said goodbye to the people I had studied with, to my teacher, to friends and “family.” My friend and I were scheduled to ride on a train from Mandalay to Rangoon, but at the last minute, we were given airplane tickets, which are extremely difficult to get, and flew instead. It turned out the train we would have taken was bombed, and nearly 100 people were killed. I think the Karen rebels claimed responsibility.

I asked another friend what is it like to get basic staples such as oil, rice, or ghee—they must have escalated five-fold as has gasoline—and she said to me “Alan, it’s no longer merely expensive. People gather in the morning around vendors who offer these commodities, and the vendors sell them to the highest bidders. We can now buy only half of what we could normally buy, and we pay quadruple the price for inferior items.”

During my last visit, no fewer than five friends asked me to help get out of the country. “Alan, I can feel it coming. There’s going to be mass chaos here. Can you do something to get me out?”

The description I gave earlier of the Mahasi Meditation Center and the tranquility found there has of course been quite different for the past three months. A friend of mine who is a monk there telephoned this morning and told me he can hear the automatic gunfire and screams coming from downtown.

I asked him a series of questions: Are the monks in jeopardy? Are people living in the monasteries being threatened? Are the monasteries being used as sanctuaries for demonstrators and students as they run from the gunfire?

He said the closest they’ve seen to the reign of terror—when Ne Win first took over from U Nu—was in August when a large group of army officers and infantry were shooting into a crowd, and many students came into the Center for sanctuary. The army simply stopped at the gates, then continued firing down the road that runs adjacent to the monastery. Soon the students left. For the most part the monasteries have not been used to house students or demonstrators, at least in this one Center in Rangoon.

During the past month, many people have been killed,



random shootings into crowds of demonstrators. I asked my friend on the phone today, "How can we believe the casualty figures in the press?" He too has been reading them—people have been bringing them to him. He said "Usually Alan, you know you can multiply the figures by 6 or 8 and it may come close to what is actually happening." No one really knows. The government is quickly taking bodies to the crematoriums and disposing of them. Communication in the country is controlled by the government.

In my estimation, we are not in the "eye" of the violence yet. We still don't know what the ethnic insurgencies will do now that the central government is shaky. We've only seen what has happened when people have demonstrated peacefully. Although there is a small violent element among the students, mostly they are unarmed, albeit very frustrated. The Karens, the Shans, and many other insurgency groups have automatic weapons and are seasoned fighters. I think there could easily be a long, protracted civil war. At the very least, we know there is a country of Buddhists oppressed in spirit by a power-obsessed military hierarchy.

For the last couple of months, ever since this situation arose, it has been like watching my loved ones suffer and die. Burma is my spiritual home, these people are my family. Being in Burma brought me near to elders, men and women who have devoted

their entire lives to Dhamma, and provided an opportunity for a young westerner like me to come and drink openly of the teachings of the Buddha. They gave me everything that I ever wanted, free of charge. They let me live there, and asked nothing in return. They said, "Here is your room, these are your teachers, these are the texts, this is your support system. Stay here as long as you want."

When I disrobed in 1983, I was in tears, and as I disrobed, my teacher told me, "Simply trust that the seeds of purification are within you. The form is supportive, but ultimately if you keep in touch with those seeds, there will be nurturance in your path. And simply be a gentleman."

Thinking about that great pool of the Dhamma being lost to the world, and certainly lost to us as emerging Buddhists in America, Europe, Australia, and elsewhere, I feel we're seeing a spiritual disaster taking place in Burma today. I think all good people, not only persons labeled "Buddhists," who are concerned with human rights and the principles of truth should call upon their deepest place and do what is conscientious to protest the situation. Even as I sit daily, I cannot help but send loving thoughts of peace and protection to so many Dhamma brothers and sisters in Burma.

Alan Clements teaches vipassana meditation retreats in North America and Australia. For a schedule of his retreats, please write to Buddha Sasana Foundation, 45 Oak Road, Larkspur, CA 94939.

The Karens: An Oppressed Minority in Burma

by Harold E. Klein

I was seated next to Saw Hla Htoo—"A.G." as he is known by the Karens of Kawthoolie, the rebel government of the largest ethnic minority of Burma. General Bo Mya, President of Kawthoolie, said the Burman army was rounding up 20,000 Karens to be used as human mine sweepers in their next campaign. I was stunned. For a few moments I could not say anything. I turned to A.G. and asked him to clarify this with General Bo Mya, as A.G. was acting as my interpreter. It was true. "Did he have the evidence," I asked. A.G. translated. There followed a rapid exchange of Karen, some of which I could understand since I had grown up among the Karens of Burma for the first 13 years of my life, when my parents were missionaries among them.

A.G. and I had been playmates on the Shweggyin Karen Mission compound during the seven years my parents were assigned there. Of course he wasn't A.G., Adjutant General, then. He was just my friend, Hla Htoo, with whom I climbed trees, went swimming, and did all the crazy, wonderful things that kids do together. I hadn't seen nor heard of him since 1935. It was now 1986, 51 years later, and I hadn't recognized him when I first arrived at the refugee village in Thailand. Yet, as we talked that first day, there was something about him that seemed so familiar, but I could not put my mind into focus. It was such a delight to me when he finally identified himself. We spent several hours reminiscing before I could get the conversation back to the present and the reason I had come to visit with the Karen refugees in Thailand.

Within a year after Burma received her independence from Great Britain, the Karens were in rebellion against the new government. The insurrection came close to success in 1949. I returned to the refugee camp in 1986 to try to find out who, how, when, and where the Karen National Union had acted to take the Karens into such a drastic and dramatic course. The struggle was still going on. Why had it not been resolved?

What I had just been told by General Bo Mya overwhelmed me and I asked A.G. if I could see and, if possible, talk with the people from whom the evidence (that the Burman army was rounding up Karens to be used as mine sweepers) was acquired. He replied that General Bo Mya had just ordered that I was to be taken through the Karen refugee camps to meet with the latest victims of the Burman army's "four cuts" campaign: (1) cutting the lines which supply provisions; (2) cutting the line of contact between the Karen masses and the Karen National Liberation Army; (3) cutting financial resources of the border trade between Burma and Thailand which Kawthoolie controlled; and (4) cutting off the heads of any revolutionaries, i.e. those Karens who set mines or defend Kawthoolie territory.

What I actually learned during this trip, and from the U.S. State Department's documents when I returned home far exceeded my wildest imagination. To this day I find it hard to believe that these courageous and simple people have been dealt with so unjustly and with such rapacity. But such was the

picture that emerged during the long hours of interviews, taping, picture taking, and later transcribing personal testimonies of Karens. Over and over I heard stories of women and children forced at gun point to clear the road of mines, using rakes, logs, and ox carts, forced labor with no compensation, inadequate food and water, and death if one lagged, fell, or succeeded in exploding the mines.

Frequently I heard stories of death administered for no apparent reason. At Clo Thay Lu refugee camp, Ma Mgwe Hla said her husband was returning to the village when Burman troops seized him. They shot him in the leg and in the head. She did not see it happen, but saw her husband's body.

T.L. (a fictitious name) said that in the concentration camps, which they had been forced to build, the people had to feed themselves as best they could. They had to carry ammunition and food for the Burmans. Women and children were allowed out of the camp to gather food. There were about 200 families (500 people) in his camp. North of Pa-an, there were more than 100 camps, with more than 10,000 Karens. He reported numerous beatings with a bamboo cane about two inches thick. They nearly broke the legs of one man. Men and women were tortured to reveal the whereabouts of Karen soldiers, even when there were no Karen soldiers close by.

Naw Kho Mey, a woman in Ma Ta Wah refugee camp, reported that the whole of Hlaing Bwe township of Pa-an District was deserted, all the villages destroyed, and about 2,000 square miles of farm land burned out.

The Burman troops had no respect for religion, even Buddhism, the religion of 85% of the country. At Show Klo refugee camp, this became apparent when I talked with two refugees, one a Muslim, and the other a Buddhist monk. Saw Kyaw Kyaw, an Indian Muslim, reported that his religious leader, an *Inman*, was beaten to the ground. His cap fell off and the Burman soldiers trampled it. He also reported that as the Burman troops were attacking Maw Po Khe, they forced both men to carry ammunition up to the front lines to resupply the troops. He said that since he, a Muslim, lived with the Karens, the Burmese said he sympathized with them, and so he was treated as a Karen.

U We Ma La, a Buddhist monk for 34 years from Da Moi Yah village and monastery, reported that when the Burman troops took over his Karen village, they camped within the monastery walls, tore up a good deal of the flooring for firewood, stole about 40 woven bamboo mats, and defaced the property. When he reported this to his superiors, nothing was done to stop the troops. He was told to reorganize the village administration, but the Karen villagers told him it was not the job of a monk to be a politician. When the Karen villagers fled, he and some young monks left with them. Other monks from other villages reported similar experiences, such as the monk from Thoo Lei, who was forced to serve as a guide for Burman troops several times.



My Karen friends told me that they had been oppressed by the Burmans for centuries before Burma became a British colony in 1885. Then, for the first time, they were free to become educated, to participate in civic activities, and to develop economically, socially, and politically. However, they said that when the British granted Burma her independence in January 1948, the English and the Burmans betrayed the Karens. The whole truth of the matter awaited me at home, in the State Department documents I found in the National Archives:

In the second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852, British officers discovered that Karens had been pushed ahead of the Burmans at spear point, to die by the bullets of the British. All Karen villages within 50 miles of Rangoon had been burned by the Burman army.

As the Japanese invaded Burma in 1942, both Japanese troops and members of the Burma Independence Army, massacred Karens in the Irrawaddy River Delta and elsewhere.

In 1948, following liberation of Burma by the British army, accomplished with massive help by recruited Karens, again Burmans set upon them. This time they surrounded a Christmas Eve service at Mergui and opened fire, killing between 70 and 80 Karens.

Earlier, in January 1947, Aung San and other members of

the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), went to London to draw up an agreement for independence. (The Karens sent their own delegation, which was snubbed by Clement Attlee.) The AFPFL government saw that Western ideas would undermine traditional Burman and Buddhist values. Around that time corruption of the Buddhist clergy was a serious problem, and if not corrected, Buddhism verged on dissipation. The free flow of ideas was not welcome.

This fear of foreign ideas is still prevalent after 40 years of isolation. A Burman newspaper in February 1987 reported that the country's leaders were calling for increased control and discipline over ethnic and religious minorities to eliminate such activities as break dancing. While outlawing break dancing may seem like a ridiculous activity for government to undertake, this was only a symptom of "deviant western ideas" which the government was not going to allow. This was the extension of a long history of Burmese support for Buddhism stretching back into the times of Burma's kings in which the government supported the preservation of Buddhism by giving it a preferred place in society.

Harold E. Klein is a retired Professor of History from Claremont College in California.

Can Tibet Survive?

Berkeley Conference Advocates Five Point Peace Plan

by Catherine Ingram

From the moment the monks from Drepung Monastery began blowing their long horns on the U.C. Berkeley stage in late September, the audience of 300 entered another world and time. Dazzling maroon and ochre robes swirled, incense wafted through the auditorium, and cymbals clanged as the hypnotic multi-tonal drones of the Drepung monks generated sounds to "purify the mind, heal the body, and cleanse the planet."

Since the 15th century this sacred music and dance of the Drepung Loseling Monastery has been a ceremonial method of instruction, but for the past 30 years it has not been allowed in the land of its origin. Now American and European audiences enjoy it as a concert of sorts, complete with reviews in the local papers.

The participants in the North American Conference on the Five Point Peace Plan, which began the day following the monks' performance, examined how the precious jewel of Tibetan culture could become lost forever under Chinese rule. Specifically, the conference focused on the Dalai Lama's Peace Plan for Tibet, and what we in America can do to help realize it.

In a letter to Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa on the occasion of the Archbishop's receipt of the Albert Schweitzer Award in March 1988, His Holiness the Dalai Lama wrote: "It is a sad reflection of the time that violent, more than non-violent, attempts to solve problems in the world invariably attract more attention. This is, in a way, indirectly encouraging more violence."

Yet the Dalai Lama remains steadfastly committed to a peaceful resolution for Tibet. On September 21, 1987, he presented his Five Point Peace Plan to the Congress of the United States. The proposal, designed by His Holiness and the Tibetan government in exile, is perhaps as elegant a document for peace as ever was written, calling for the establishment of Tibet as a sanctuary of peace in the troubled Himalayan region, insuring human and economic rights for the Tibetan people, and protecting the whole of the Tibetan plateau as an ecological preserve.

It is a far cry from the current situation there. Since the forced occupation of Tibet by the Chinese in the early 1950s, basic rights to happiness have disintegrated for the Tibetan people. By 1959, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet, was forced to flee his homeland. Conditions in Tibet became so intolerable that more than 100,000 Tibetans have walked out of Tibet across the snowy plateau, risking death from freezing or starvation, risking capture and torture by the Chinese.

Rinchen Dharlo, the Dalai Lama's representative in the U.S. told conference participants that life in Tibet under Chinese rule is "the darkest period of our history." Out of a population of only six million, "1.2 million Tibetans have died fighting, in prison, and from starvation," he noted. "More than 6,000 monasteries have been destroyed by the Chinese." Torture, espe-

cially the use of electric cattle prods and clubs studded with nails, is rampant. But greater than all these threats to the Tibetan people is the influx of Chinese settlers to Tibet which Mr. Dharlo said "reduces the Tibetan population to a minority in their own country, and transforms Tibet into Chinese territory."

Calling the Five Point Peace Plan a "crystallization of more than 30 years of Tibetan education and experience in exile," Rinchen Dharlo noted that international support for the plan had been "very impressive." Not only the U.S. Congress, but the European, Indian, and Dutch parliaments have expressed their support for the plan.

Unfortunately, the Chinese have failed to enter into any discussion of the plan whatsoever. In fact, after the announcement of the Plan in Congress last year the Chinese reaction to it, said Rinchen Dharlo, "was swift and brutal." Three days after the announcement of the plan, the Chinese staged a massive rally of 15,000 people in Lhasa to denounce the Dalai Lama's political activities in the United States. At the rally they executed a Tibetan nationalist and sentenced eight others to life imprisonment. The following day they executed another Tibetan nationalist. On September 27, Tibetan monks led peaceful demonstrations protesting these executions and the denunciation of the Dalai Lama. Then on October 1 and October 6 larger demonstrations were held and 32 Tibetans were killed. Since that time many demonstrations have occurred, the largest being on March 5, 1988 at which 40 Tibetans were killed by Chinese authorities. At the end of March, 1988, Lord David Ennals of the British House of Lords, having visited Tibet on a fact-finding mission, accused the Chinese government of imposing a "reign of terror" in Tibet. According to witnesses more than 5,000 Tibetans have been imprisoned over the last year.

Although the day before the Conference the Chinese made an offer to the Dalai Lama to conduct talks with him at a time and place of his choosing, they qualified the offer with a refusal to discuss the Peace Plan. In his plenary address at the conference, Michael van Walt, legal advisor to the Dalai Lama, said that Chinese hopes for the discussion probably center on "having the Dalai Lama return to the Motherland, whether or not he will have a palace, when his *last* press statement will be held, or which titles he will hold."

Mr. van Walt believes that China's legal claim to Tibet, based on the marriage of a Tibetan emperor and a Chinese princess in the 7th century and Tibet's later association with the Mongol and Manchu emperors in the 13th and 18th centuries, respectively, is flimsy legal reasoning. Noting that "Tibet, if one compares it to other U.N. countries, has been the least influenced by other countries," van Walt exhorts the international community to discuss the status of Tibet's legal claim to independence.

In addition to his appeal to the Chinese on legal grounds, Michael van Walt also thinks that the Chinese may be persuaded on a moral basis. "Colonialism, imperialism—it's purely that in Tibet," he noted in his speech. Other countries have had to give up their colonies. Mr. van Walt pointed out that nowadays there is reason for pride in withdrawing from occupied territories, such as the Soviet agreement to withdraw from Afghanistan and the Vietnamese in saying they will withdraw from Cambodia. And the world applauds such actions.

Describing the current second-class status of the Tibetan people in their own country, Michael van Walt said, "You feel it at every point. I can't tell you how many times I went into a restaurant with my Tibetan friend and he was literally and physically kicked out. Soon [the Tibetans] will end up in reservations."

Indeed, several of the conference presenters and participants who had visited Tibet described similar feelings of oppression. In an interview following the conference, Michael Sautman, one of the conference organizers, compared what is happening in Tibet to the Nazi occupation of Europe. "It's like it was perhaps in France with a completely different culture running things. It's the saddening thing about being in Tibet even though it's a grand place."

Tourists and foreign journalists visiting Tibet have been the source of much of the news out of the country in the past few years. However, according to Tenzin Tethong, Director of the International Campaign for Tibet, "Tourism is very helpful to the Chinese. There were 40,000 western tourists last year to Tibet which brought probably 18 million dollars in cash to mostly China Airlines and Chinese hotels." Acknowledging that "foreigners helped get the news of [last year's] demonstrations out," Tenzin Tethong suggested that anyone thinking of visiting Tibet "bring back the story on human rights and conditions in Tibet."

Perhaps one of the most remarkable aspects of the Tibetan people who work for Tibet's independence is the quality of forgiveness toward the Chinese. As Rinchen Dharlo explained in an interview just after the conference, "Our struggle is not against the Chinese people based on their race or ideology. Our struggle is against a foreign people ruling our own country. We are not against the Chinese people as such—those who are sent to work in Tibet or to be settled in Tibet."

It is this extraordinary attitude of kindness which compels those who come into contact with the Tibetan people to rally for their cause. This enthusiasm was felt at the conference-sponsored workshops which formed "action" committees in the areas of media, education, human rights, ecology, outreach to the Chinese and more.

In the late afternoon, the monks from Drepung monastery took the stage again, and again the audience was transported to a visceral tranquility, inwardly riding on the sounds of the monks' deep drones. Later in the evening, one of my dinner companions asked Tenzin Tethong what the monks' afternoon chant had meant. "The chant was 'Compassion for our Oppressors.'" Tenzin Tethong said quietly.

The Five Point Peace Plan

1. Establish the whole of Tibet as a peace zone.
2. The end of population transfer of Chinese into Tibet.
3. Respect for Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic reform.
4. Restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and the abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste.
5. The commencement of earnest negotiations of the future status of Tibet.



Catherine Ingram is the author of In the Footsteps of Gandhi: Interviews with Spiritual Social Activists (forthcoming from Parallax Press). She is a long-time Buddhist practitioner now living in Larkspur, California.

The North American Conference on the Dalai Lama's Five Point Peace Plan was sponsored by Humanitas International Human Rights Committee and organized by Ed Lazar of Humanitas. Ed magnificently brought together a group of volunteers and co-sponsoring organizations, including BPF, Bay Area Friends of Tibet, Snow Lion Publications, and the U.S. Tibet Committee.

Drepung Monastery

Sitting on top of this quiet mountain
next to the yellow & blue Buddha painted
on a large boulder
and another with colored letters of 'om mani padme hum'
in the midst of the temple ruins
bombed by the Chinese 17 years ago
10,000 monks' quarters almost flattened
a few adobe white walls still stand
some black moss & green weeds grow
out of some crevices
the rest rubbles of rock
mixed with dried bones, Tibetan shoes,
tattered maroon robes & Mao caps.
I stumble thru the rubble & find a half-buried
rusty tin bowl filled with dried red paint
probably used to paint the red in Mahakala's
tongue or pink peonies on the eaves, or the blood
of humans stabbing each other on the painting of
the wheel of life, on the main temple's entrance wall
tattered prayer flags, hanging from a willow tree, move
gently in the breeze,
several swallows busily build nests in the bombed-out niches

the late afternoon sun warms the broken-brick walls
& beyond the ruins the light reflects pure clarity
on the roofs of the still intact main temple
hanging bells tinkle in the wind
the roof-tops' golden sertos stand like meditating
Buddhas above Lhasa valley, proud against the
ranges of white-capped mountains & clouds in the
vast blue sky
in the near distance the deep voices of monks
doing early evening chants
and in the far-distance the eerie sound of gun-shots
it seems, or is it merely the Chinese dynamiting
another main road, through this for so long, hidden
Buddha valley.

5/9/87 Pat Donegan
Drepung Monastery, Tibet

Patricia Donegan is a long-time practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism and a poet and teacher. This poem is from her forthcoming book, Dakini Doors: Poems of India and Tibet (Parallax Press).



What You Can Do to Help Tibet

1. Urge your congressional representative to support bill H.R. 4570, which links failure to improve human rights in Tibet with economic sanctions against the Peoples' Republic of China, and also provides for Voice of America broadcasts to Tibet, monetary assistance for displaced Tibetans and for preserving their culture in exile, and U.N. assessment of environmental damage to Tibet. Please also ask them to honor previous legislation which ties transfer of U.S. defense articles to the Peoples' Republic of China with their acting in good faith and in a timely manner in resolving human rights issues in Tibet. Suggest that they send a letter stating their concerns to His Excellency Ambassador Han Xu (address below).

2. Write letters in support of the Dalai Lama's Five Point Peace Plan as a just resolution to the conflict in Tibet to:

His Excellency Ambassador Han Xu
Embassy of the Peoples' Republic of China
2300 Connecticut Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20008

and to: Secretary of State George Shultz
United States State Department
Washington, DC 20050

Send copies of this correspondence to Senator Claiborne Pell, Chair, Senate Foreign Relations Committee; and Representative Dante Fascell, Chair, Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3. Support the International Campaign for Tibet, 1511 K Street NW, Suite 739, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 628-4123. BPF member Michele Bohana, who is Director of the International Campaign, asks that you send copies of all letters received from members of the House and Senate on this issue, so they can present information to them accordingly.

4. Additional Five Point Peace Plan conferences may be held in major U.S. cities. If you would like to help with any of these or would like information please contact Michael Sautman, 2711 Shasta Road, Berkeley, CA (415) 848-4944 or Catherine Ingram, 45 Oak Road, Larkspur, CA (415) 927-4447.

Chittagong At Critical Turning

by Johnson Thomas

International attention is increasingly being focused on the brutal treatment of the non-Moslem peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. Within the last year a number of U.S.-based organizations have joined the efforts—initiated by Survival International, the Anti-Slavery Society, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship—to halt the killings of the indigenous peoples of the Hill Tracts by the Bangladesh government and military forces.

In 1987, Amnesty International was granted observer status in the south Asian nation and met with Bangladesh leaders to discuss the treatment and fate of the tribals. AI has now issued its report, and other reports will soon follow from Asia Watch and the U.S. Committee for Refugees, both of whom joined this project in 1988. The Bangladesh government is now under considerable pressure, in the form of cutbacks of much-needed aid, to stop its land theft and slaughter against these long-established Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian tribes.

The Amnesty International mission visited Bangladesh between January 24 and 30, and met with the President, General Mossain Mohammed Ershad, and other top government and military officials. Though many scores of tribal towns and temples are reported to be destroyed, and 200,000 individuals have allegedly been murdered since 1971, AI's team was unable to establish responsibility for the abuses and killings. AI reports it "is still awaiting further details from the Bangladesh Government on the procedures and findings of ... inquiries" and cannot, at this time, make any final assessment of the conditions in the CHT.

Encouraging developments, however, have begun to take place through legislative bodies in the United States and Canada. In April of this year the House Sub-Committee on Pacific and Asian Affairs discussed the problems of the CHT and directed the U.S. State Department to produce information on the matter. The Canadian House of Commons, at the prompting of the Canadian chapter of Amnesty International, has begun to voice serious concern over the killings in Bangladesh and the need to protect minority rights there. As Canada has done in the past through its aid channels, it now is seeking to develop an assistance agreement for Bangladesh that includes express reference to international rights instruments.

As for current conditions in the CHT, there is no evidence that the Bangladesh government is taking tangible measures to change past behavior, according to BPF's Chakma tribal contacts. This spring General Ershad declared Islam the national religion of Bangladesh. Recent documents indicate that serious abuses against the non-Moslem tribals continue; there appears to be no effort to rehabilitate any of the tribal peoples who have lost their land, and in fact, many tribals remain in concentration camps. More than 100,000 troops are being maintained in the Chittagong region.

We are at a critical point in the campaign to protect the Chittagong tribes. After years of effort, the story of the CHT is getting into the press. Western governments with influence over the Ershad regime, and many private organizations in Europe and North America are focusing attention on the region. With this level of international concern, we may indeed be able to shield the tribals from extermination. Please join with us and write your representatives in Congress to express your concern about the violation of life and religious persecution in the CHT. Please mail a copy of your letter to the Chairman of the House Sub-Committee on Pacific and Asian Affairs:

Rep. Stephen J. Solarz
1536 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

Johnson Thomas, of the Washington D.C. BPF, has been the BPF specialist on the Chittagong crisis for 2 years. He will be succeeded by Susan Baldwin of the Seattle BPF chapter. It is largely due to his excellent work that this case of genocide is finally being looked at by the world press and taken on by a number of international organizations. For a full set of BPF reports on the human rights abuses of Buddhists and other tribal peoples there, send \$1 to BPF, Box 4650, Berkeley CA 94704.

Survival

200 Spiritual & Parliamentary Leaders Confer in England by Dominique Side

"Ethics are a luxury," His Holiness the Dalai Lama told participants of the Global Conference on Human Survival in April. "If you can follow them, that is very good, but if you can't you will still survive. But compassion, love, and concern for the environment and humanity are not a luxury, they are a question of survival."

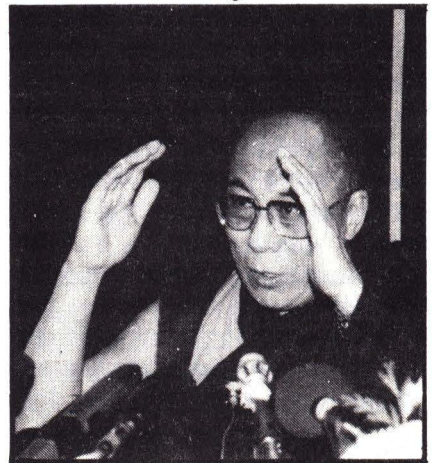
The conference held in Oxford was a serious attempt to reconcile moral and political priorities. By bringing together over 200 political and religious leaders from every corner of the Earth, the conference offered an opportunity for genuine dialogue, in the hope that this would help participants come to grips with the life and death issues which confront us. The first ever global conference of its kind, it was organized by the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary leaders on Human Survival, based in New York.

Certainly the diversity of geographical and ideological backgrounds of the participants was impressive; one could have been forgiven for recalling the "oneness of humanity." From Mother Teresa to Dr. Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, from Manuel Ulloa, former prime minister of Peru to Mawupe Vovor Kodzo, president of the Togolese National Assembly, and from U.S. space scientist Carl Sagan to Evgueni Velikhov, vice president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences: all shared a common ground. A recognition of the seriousness and urgency of the environmental devastation threatening the planet.

"The earth is being stripped naked, abused, wounded and left to bleed to death," said Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt Movement of Kenya. Deforestation, desertification, acid rain, the depletion of the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, and the nuclear threat were cited by several speakers and the most serious issues.

It was not clear whether the planet itself is at risk, or only human beings. Scientist James Lovelock sees the planet as a self-sustaining organism he has termed Gaia, within which species are expendable—particularly those which adversely affect the environment. Carl Sagan agreed, at least as far as the nuclear issue is concerned. "The nuclear arsenals challenge the continuing survival of the human species," he said. "They do not challenge the survival of life on Earth. The grasses, the roaches, the submarine worms that live off the oxidation of sulphur in deep sea vents: these beings will survive very nicely, thank you."

But other threats such as the depletion of the ozone layer led the conference to accept that it is the survival of life on the planet which is at stake. As the ozone layer thins, so it lets more and more ultraviolet light reach the Earth. The big danger, according to Sagan, is that we are at the top of a great "ecological pyramid," a food chain at the base of which are microbes that are vulnerable to increases in ultraviolet light. If the base goes, the pyramid crumbles.



*H.H. the Dalai Lama addresses the Conference
Photo by Dominique Side*

So in some sense we are all to blame. While politicians were criticized for acting on short-term, narrow-minded, national interests, religious leaders acknowledged the need for more tolerance between religions. Dr. Runcie admitted that Christianity had often taken an approach which was too human-centered. In fact, "our concept of God forbids the idea of a cheap creation, of a throwaway universe in which everything is expendable save human existence," he said.

The idea that love and compassion are necessary for survival may seem far-fetched and perhaps romantic, certainly too nebulous and unscientific to take to the letter. Yet His Holiness reminded us that neurologists have found that a mother's mental peace is a crucial factor in the development of her fetus. In the early weeks of life, it would appear that simple physical touching of the baby's body is important for the development of his/her nervous system. And it is widely accepted that a lack of warmth and kindness from others creates emotional and behavioral disturbance in an adult. So perhaps it is not that nebulous after all.

Another meeting full of good sentiment which will lead nowhere, you may say. Well, it is too early to tell, but the mood was extraordinarily optimistic. At the very least, some of the concerns and ideas which have been debated within the ecological movement were being expressed by leaders in positions of responsibility. Although on the whole the meeting involved the influential more than the powerful, the personal interactions which took place in workshops and over meals ensured that each individual will return to his or her institution highly motivated to use that influence on decisionmakers. And even decisionmakers are human beings.

Dominique Side is a free lance writer specializing in environment, development, and Buddhism. She lives in London, England. This article is reprinted with permission from Resurgence, July-August 1988 (\$20 per year from Rodale Press, 33 East Minor Street, Emmaus, Pennsylvania 18049).



"We are in this all together" Global Survival Conference at Oxford

They came from around the world: from parliaments, senates and assemblies, from churches, temples and mosques, from newspapers, radio and television, from scientific laboratories, universities and boardrooms. It was the first time the world's spiritual and parliamentary leaders had come together to discuss global survival with renowned experts on the issues. On April 15, after five days of dialogue and contemplation in the ancient university town of Oxford, they acknowledged that each of them had been changed by the encounter.

The Most Reverend Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, explained why they must transcend parochial constraints. "We are confronted by problems which transcend national and medial boundaries, which are urgent and potentially terminal, and which require no less than a global solution," he said in a synode address to the Global Conference of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival.

Even though there was no preset agenda, speaker and speaker sounded one common theme: the need to make a personal commitment for a new beginning.

"When we talk about global crisis or a crisis of humanity, we cannot blame a few politicians, a few fanatics or a few troublemakers," His Holiness the Dalai Lama told an audience of more than 350 in the Oxford Town Hall. "The whole of humanity has a responsibility because this is our business—man business. I call this a sense of universal responsibility."

Standing under a gigantic photograph of the earth from space, U.S. astronomer Carl Sagan stressed that many global crises—the threat of nuclear war, ozone layer depletion, explosive population growth, the AIDS pandemic, and others—cannot be addressed locally. They cannot be solved with short-term military solutions. What is needed, he urged, is a "rethinking our global obligations."

The significance of the Oxford conference was that spiritual leaders were brought together, on an equal footing, with parliamentarians—the two pillars of our communities—to begin the process of working with each other and with representatives of the world's news media. "Each of us has been changed by our Oxford experience," the participants said, calling it a "timely convergence of hearts, minds and events." The next step is a steering committee meeting in October 1988 in Moscow.

Background

In 1973, Akio Matsumura conceived the idea of a global network of parliamentarians who would address the complex

and unsolved problems of population and development. By 1982, when his initiatives had led to the establishment of the Global Committee of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, he was asking himself why were parliamentarians not in touch with spiritual leaders, since both were addressing the same audience. Might not something important result from a dialogue between them? Early in 1985, Matsumura spoke with Rev. James Morton, Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, and they decided to try to arrange such a meeting.

A "core group" of spiritual and parliamentary leaders met in Tarrytown, New York, in October 1985. There were two each from five major religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, joined by eight legislators from eight different countries. The Tarrytown meeting showed the inclination of the two groups to approach the issues from quite different directions. The lawmakers tended toward pragmatic solutions to urgent problems, while the spiritual leaders preferred to place the issues in a larger ethical framework. The encounter suggested the development of a wider, more embracing perspective that could offer new possibilities for solving global problems. So the group organized themselves as the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival, with the task of organizing a world conference. As support grew, both financial and moral, what had once seemed impossible became a reality. As Krister Stendahl, the Bishop of Stockholm said, "This is an occasion whose time has come."

"My personal impression of the Conference was that its main effect was the event itself—the coming together of spiritual and political leaders from all over the world, to sit side by side and hear and speak in plenary session of the state of the world from half a dozen perspectives—and then to speak to each other personally over meals and mixing in the hallway and at small group meetings. This was something.

"A precedent has been set, and at the next gathering of its kind we can start working on some issues together, and at the one after that begin to experience a new level of awareness in all the members, and a sense of global teamwork, finding the roots of common truth, common plight, and common opportunity—and beginning to spread that spirit through the religious and political bodies of the world."

—Tyrone Cashman, BPF Member from Minneapolis, who attended the conference as representative of Father Thomas Berry

Watering the Seeds of American Buddhism

"Interdenominational Floating Sangha" Meets in California by Allan Badiner

On June 5th, one hundred fifty people, members of what poet Deena Metzger dubbed "the interdenominational floating sangha," met under the auspices of BPF amidst untrammelled natural beauty at Mount Madonna Center for five days of sitting and walking meditation, discussion and Dharma talks by Thich Nhat Hanh.

The retreat, situated high above the Pacific near Santa Cruz and nestled in mountain redwoods, was entitled "Watering the Seeds of American Buddhism." It attracted families and all variations: couples, children, teens, singles, lesbians, and gays; an eclectic array of primarily long-time Buddhist practitioners; and a few newcomers, with occupations that ranged from psychiatrists and shamans to ecologists, artists, and novelists.

Barbara Meier, BPF activist and co-organizer of the event, observed in retrospect that the retreat atmosphere, marked by "that vibrancy of energy from creative minds magnetized around the Dharma," reminded her of gatherings with Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche in his early days of teaching in America.

The agenda seemed loaded—nothing short of a thorough inquiry into all the issues around Buddhist practice in America today: male dominance, elitism, the role of families and community, psychological issues, right livelihood, the relevance of monastic practice to daily life, political and social activism, and the growing diversity of Dharma-doors (the sciences, eco-feminism, the 12-step programs, Native American and other religions).

Each day began with meditation followed by a Dharma talk by Thich Nhat Hanh. All meals were taken in silence, a practice that was initially uncomfortable to some, but recognition of how it helped us more fully appreciate our food and each other grew throughout the retreat. Quietly, we bowed to each other on the paths and in the main hall, committed to noticing the Buddha-to-be in everyone.

Silence was a major element of the retreat, which could just as honestly be called a conference or a seminar. But, outside of the afternoon workshops, lunchtime discussion groups, and the plenary sessions each evening, silence was more the rule than the exception. Every 10 or 20 minutes, day after day, a bell was "invited to sound," at which time all activity ceased; all talking, moving, eating, and thinking were gently stopped while everyone took three deep breaths.

Thich Nhat Hanh, affectionately known as "Thây," began his talks by reciting his now famous mantra for inducing immediate mindfulness: (*Breathe*) "Calming." (*Breathe*) "Smiling." (*Breathe and smile*) "Present moment." (*Breathe*) "Wonderful moment."



Thich Nhat Hanh reads "Two Promises" to children

Photo by Thanh Thien

"Accept, don't transform," advised Thây. "Give up your struggle for enlightenment." In his gentle, breathy, Franco-Vietnamese flavored English, Thây relayed the story of how the enlightened followers of the Buddha gathered at Vulture Peak to hear the Noble One speak Dharma. After two hours, not a word had been uttered and the crowd grew restless. Silently, tirelessly, the Buddha held up a flower.

Only Maha Kashyapa, one disciple among great numbers of realized beings, got the message and smiled. "The others were thinking," Thây explains. "None of the others were in touch with the flower. Their minds were not free—they were incapable of seeing the flower directly in front of them," he marveled. "They had not yet removed the obstacles to their being in the present moment. Our appointment with life," Thây soberly concluded, "is in the present moment."

In an afternoon workshop located on a sunny patch of green, Joan Halifax's bright blue eyes sparkled wildly as she gave words to the insight of our interbeing with the earth, animals, and trees, and the wisdom ways of native people. She smiled widely as she spoke. "It's beautifully paradoxical, this process. We sit alone in silence in order to discover our connection with all other things."

Effortlessly, Joan shared from the depth and richness of her experience and then, just as skillfully, pulled the same from everyone in the circle. A founder of the Ojai Foundation, anthropologist, writer, shaman, longtime student of Buddhist and native American cosmologies and herself an ordained member of the Tiep Hien Order (the Order of Interbeing founded by Thich Nhat Hanh), Joan Halifax spoke with both the confidence of a sound academic and the warmth of a committed heart.

Someone asked about Transmission. Joan debunked the idea that there is something given to you by someone else. "It is awareness of being in the presence of an already present



understanding.” She quoted Carl Jung’s definition of discipline—“the obedience to awareness.”

“Buddhism is a kind of sorcery, she whispered. A sorcerer is one who works with the source and that is where we, and all things, are connected. Buddhism is about our interconnectedness.”

Halfway into the retreat, *Thây* talked about technologies for achieving mindfulness in the busy moments of daily life. Just as we stopped at the sound of the bell, breathing peacefully and happily in the present moment, so can we stop at the sound of the telephone ringing.

Thây explained how the telephone can be used as a “mindfulness device.” When the phone rings, it causes a vibration in our nervous system. We can train ourselves to breathe and smile for two rings, and then, when we pick up the phone, “how lucky for the person on the other end!” He promises that this practice, a wonderfully random reminder to return to mindfulness, will take the boredom out of a ringing telephone and may even reduce the monthly bills!

In the pause while you breathe deeply with each ring, you can remind yourself that you will listen attentively and say only constructive things. This technique can also be employed when you are calling someone and listening to the ringing on the other end. “It will enhance the quality of your conversations,” *Thây* earnestly suggests.

“The television is also an instrument of mindfulness,” adds *Thây*, “when we have to have the courage to turn it off.” People complain about having no time, but when they do they become very uncomfortable—as if they are alone in a vacuum. “It is a state of emergency when you can’t sit down with your family at the dinner table and smile authentically,” *Thây* reminds us. “This is an urgent practice.”

He recommends keeping the television off at mealtimes, taking three deep and conscious breaths before the first bite, and limiting conversation at the table to talk that nourishes the feeling of family togetherness. “Enjoying your dinner is the practice of Buddhism,” he says, urging us to really look at our food in order to enjoy it. “You can see a lot in your tofu—the whole universe collaborated to produce it.”

An automobile, too, can be used either as an instrument of mindfulness or as an escape from that “vacuum” feeling. Since

cars pollute our air, *Thây* suggests cutting out driving for diversion. He offers a verse to recite silently on the breath before starting the ignition: “As I start the car, I know where I am going. The car and I are one. If the car goes fast, I go fast.” Each red light and stop sign can be a reminder to stop and breathe, to return to mindfulness. “Driving a car is also a practice of Buddhism.”

The key is to make use of everything around you as a symbol of and a device for mindfulness. In fact, according to *Thây*, the place where Buddhism ends and non-Buddhism begins is a very fine line—and hard to find. “Frequently, the less you look like a Buddhist, the more you are like a Buddhist.” *Thây* praised children for their excellence as Buddhist teachers. “They prove to be the most helpful in reminding us to practice at red lights and during phone calls.”

What it would be like to consider everything in your environment, everything you encounter in your life as a contribution to your awareness? Accepting, understanding, and loving in all circumstances. “These are the seeds of American Buddhism,” *Thây* said softly.

Does staying in the present moment mean you are unable to plan for the future? No, said *Thây*, you will plan and “your plans will be connected to the here and now, they will arise out of the actual conditions of the present moment.”

One of the highlights of the retreat proved to be the most controversial—an evening plenary session devoted to the feminine. It included Cynthia Jurs on the Dakini principle, Wendy Johnson on being grounded—the joy of raising children and working the garden, Mobi Ho on storytelling and forming a small, local sangha, and Deena Metzger on the blending of what is work and what is practice.

Ty Cashman expressed the awareness of how women suffer, and in consequence all human beings, in the face of a culture oriented toward domination versus partnership and patriarchal attitudes about women and spirituality. Emphasized with great clarity was the need for all of us to contact the feminine within and recognize our own suffering.

“The practice of Buddha Dharma is the practice of healing,” Thich Nhat Hanh said as he began another morning Dharma talk. “But it must also be joyful,” he added. Buddhism must deal with the illnesses of our times: broken families and individuals alienated from their roots. In America, *Thây* noted, Buddhism is mostly lay and the appropriate center of practice is in the family and in communities of families.

“The individual needs to return to the community.” *Thây* defined taking refuge in the Sangha as the giving up of “individualism,” the idea that we are autonomous, disconnected pockets of life. “Our family is also our Sangha.” He helped us envision a family that recites the five precepts together. “Not as rules or commitments, but with the intention to cause a miracle—the manifestation of mindfulness. Mindfulness enables perception of the true nature of things, their *suchness*. It allows us to see, together, the roots and fruits of all things.”

The family as an institution can be rebuilt with elements of the Buddhist teaching. *Thây* explained that in Vietnamese families, everyone feels qualified to help the other in times of un-

happiness or difficulty. It is not necessary to be a psychiatrist or a monk or a nun. The family practices meditation, mindfulness of breathing, and the fruits of this are understanding and love.

The evening discussion on activism and Buddhism focused on AIDS. Lama Ken McLeod reminded us that AIDS will wear down our assumptions about life and death. Buddhism brought, in each culture that it entered, a perspective on death that radically changed peoples lives. A culture in the shadow of death has much to learn from Buddhism. One of the marked features of AIDS is the inability to escape it. There is no escape for anyone from death, either. Someone aptly quoted Soen-sanim: "We are all already dead."

We learned from Kijun Steve Allen about MAITRI, A Buddhist home and hospice for people with AIDS at the Hartford St. Zen Center in the heart of the primarily gay Castro district of San Francisco. They are providing 24 hour care and hope to extend it to five people at a time by purchasing the building next door. "Buddhism offers no master plan or solution... it helps us respond to what is really present," said Steve, who lives and works at the Center with his wife Angelique.

Steve Peskind, of the Buddhist AIDS Project of L.A., outlined what's needed from Bodhisattvas in response to persons with AIDS. Listening with an unjudging heart, and touching—persons with AIDS are starving to be touched. And humor. "Breathing and smiling cuts through self-centered preoccupation with pain," Steve noted. The Buddhist AIDS

Project, affiliated with KDC, is working to provide meditation training to persons with AIDS and hospice training to those wishing to be volunteers in AIDS care.

The nature of love was the subject of Thây's closing talks. A controversial message of the Buddha was that "love involves worry and despair." Thây made the distinction between what we often think of as love and what he called "true love," the compassion to "suffer with," unconditionally, with kindness. True love (*maitri* and *karuna*) and deep understanding (*prajña*) are inseparable.

Thây suggested we inquire what kind of love we have for others. Perhaps we should ask the object of our love to describe our love.

"Does my love suffocate or support you? Does it nourish you or curtail your freedom?" Thây recommends that we be curious enough to learn about the nature of our love from others. "Please," Thây concluded, "Let us practice Buddhism with a small 'b'."

People spoke frankly, with open hearts, throughout the retreat. Therese Fitzgerald was a lively model of calmness with her soothing and centered moderation of the event. The evening group discussion with 150 people, contrary to what one might expect, did not devolve into group therapy for just a few. The vegetarian food was a constant joy, the Madonna staff was warmly attentive, and the weather for our daily walking meditation across the grounds was zen perfect.

Most of us attributed the ecstasy we felt in the final hours of the event to the pure, gentle dignity and lovely presence of Thich Nhat Hanh. Without a hint of domination, hierarchy, or excessive identification with being a "teacher," Thây communicated his expectation that we would maintain an atmosphere of mindfulness for five days while we conducted our business. The interdenominational floating sangha sensed his confidence and rose to the occasion.

"Where is the American Buddha?" asked Thây. "Where is the American Dharma and Sangha?" He said Buddhism could be summed up in three words: mindfulness, concentration and understanding—all in the present moment. However, in each moment of history, as Buddhism spread from nation to nation, it acquired a new form.

"Through deep practice," Thây predicted with a smile, "you will have your own Buddhism very soon."

Allan Badiner is a Buddhist practitioner and free lance writer in Los Angeles. He is editor of Dharma Gaia (forthcoming from Parallax Press).

Thich Nhat Hanh's schedule for his visit to the U.S. in the Spring of 1989 is on page 45 of this Newsletter. For further information about MAITRI or the Buddhist AIDS project, please see the Spring 1988 issue of BPF Newsletter.

American Buddhist Music

During the "Watering the Seeds Retreat," there was a fair amount of singing. In fact I've heard Thây say, "If there is no singing in a family, that family is in trouble."

After one lecture, Thây asked Therese Fitzgerald to sing "Billy Rose," and then Mobi Ho to sing another favorite song. Both were beautiful. But most engaging of all were the songs composed and performed by Betsy Rose. Long-time folk singer, associated with "women's music" and creation spirituality in Boston and California, Betsy was inspired by the Artists Retreat at Ojai last year to record a 60-minute cassette of songs on Buddhist practice. "In My Two Hands," the title song, is a deeply moving adaptation of a poem written during the Vietnam war by Thây: "I hold my face/in my two hands/I am not crying/....." Also included are the two children's promises: "I vow to develop understanding in order to live peaceably with people, animals, and plants. I vow to develop my compassion in order to protect the lives of people, animals, and plants;" the three refuges with a country/western guitar solo; "Silence;" and "The Five Rivers," about the interconnectedness of the five skandhas, based on the *Heart Sutra*. The tape will be available in early November from Parallax, Box 7355, Berkeley CA 94707 (\$12—includes postage).

Designing a Women's Conference

by Lane Olson

On August 11-14, 1988, the second "Celebration of Women in Buddhist Practice" was held at the Lone Mountain Conference Center in San Francisco. It began noon Thursday and ended early afternoon Sunday, offered free childcare and overnight accommodations, and was open to 300 women. The days were spent in discussion and experiential small groups while the evenings offered a Tibetan Bell concert and meditation; a performance of various artists' work incorporating humor, song, and theater; a networking bazaar supporting rightlivelthood; and an ecumenical Buddhist ceremony.

Those of us who worked on this conference and the first one held in March 1987, began with one overriding theme, "no hierarchy!" In terms of form and organization this immediately posed terrific problems and introduced us to a process of experimentation and development. Both organizers and participants felt emotionally enriched and firmly grounded in the process of questioning, sharing, and listening that has so encouraged us all in this work.

The Beginnings

Convening a women's conference in the Bay Area was the brainchild of Sandy Boucher and Barbara Wilt. The group they gathered around them in the summer of 1986 included women from the major Buddhist traditions represented in the Bay Area, all with many years sitting practice.

Several of the women were recognized Buddhist teachers: Anna Douglas, Yvonne Rand, Julie Wester. Others were authors and artists: Lenore Friedman, Cornelia Schultz, Sandy Boucher. Barbara Wilt was an acupuncturist, Carolyn North (also an author) was a movement specialist, both were healers. Stephanie Kaza was a naturalist with a background in science, Sue Schmall had a strong grounding in Tibetan practice and Marion Tripp in Vipassana practice. I had worked as a graphic artist and editor and was at that time working at Green Gulch Farm. All of us had concerns around issues of hierarchy which came from our experiences in our mother culture and our Buddhist practices. We wanted to use the conference as an opportunity for developing a new model, a women's model of teaching and sharing practice in a conference setting. But how to do this?

It was the stated intention of the steering group to develop a form that would encourage the gathering and sharing of information in a way that was not coercive—a form that could be the basis for any group and would reflect peaceful intentions. As the date of the conference grew closer we set up a planning retreat. This was to give us open-ended time together in which we could formulate more clearly our individual and collective views of the conference itself. We began by reading a letter from Lenore who couldn't be with us. Each of us felt moved and unified by Lenore's relating her experiences, dreams, and personal process. We in turn wanted to take the opportunity to



share our stories with each other.

What happened that day became the heart of the conference itself. As so often happens when situations are allowed to breathe free of expectations the content also became the form and as we listened to the stunning, painful and rich experiences and philosophies of the women that we had come to know and yet not-know through the preceding months of meetings, we saw that this was the way to put the actual conference together. We wanted each person to open up to the individual stories of the others. We wanted the conference to be leaderless, everyone free to say what she wanted to say, with the conviction that we would become our own teachers through both our intentions and the events of our lives.

The program committee designed the conference around a mosaic of sitting, several gatherings, and small theme groups, with a base home group for each person to return to each day. The groups included discussion on addictive behavior, our relationship to the natural world, expressions of feminine power, and social service and political action. These were to remain intrinsically leaderless, facilitated by a trained volunteer. We also had movement groups and, to add a bit a levity, organized a fashion show which included the robes and outfits of various

Continued on Page 30

Sacred Waste by Joanna Macy



I was in New Mexico in July for a Council of All Beings, Past, Present, and Future, to address the shared responsibility for nuclear waste. The Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) near Carlsbad, New Mexico, is where the Dept. of Energy and Westinghouse Corporation have prepared extensive permanent facilities for storing radioactive waste beginning this Fall. This “trans-uranic” waste, mostly plutonium, will come from many weapons sites across the US, where it has been piling up since 1945 and causing heavy contamination of water, air, and soil. The WIPP issue has polarized people in New Mexico, with those who want the jobs and money it creates pitted against those who fear the hazards and resist being a “National Sacrifice Area,” as the term goes.

Day One. “Sacrifice” is the theme for a gathering of Sacred Arts co-workers at Robert and Colleen’s house near Santa Fe. Marlow reminds us that rather than having to give up, be martyred, “sacrifice” means “to make sacred.” To make holy. In silence and then in words, we listen to what beings of other times would say to us, especially the ancestors who have gone long before us in our planetary journey.

Day Two. Five of us fly down to Carlsbad to spend the day at WIPP with Westinghouse people. Our hosts give us lunch, lectures, tour—and a clear sense they feel they are on the cutting edge both technologically (in devising ways to “isolate” the lethal waste) and in terms of responsibility. They know *something* must be done with the enormous amounts of radioactive waste from our defense program; opposing citizen groups seem to just want nothing to do with it.

The whole approach that WIPP represents, however, is unworkable. The excavated chambers in the salt beds 2000 feet down are already weeping brine, which eventually can bring the wastes into the aquifers, the Pecos River, the Gulf of Mexico. WIPP officials see this as unlikely for several centuries. Their time-frame is less than 1/1000 of the radioactive life of the plutonium, which is a *quarter million years*. Given inevitable corrosion, leakage, embrittlement, it is unrealistic to suppose that nuclear wastes anywhere will be safe for long if they are hidden and their containers are inaccessible for repair.

Day Three. Some 30 citizens active on the WIPP issue attend our preliminary invitational Council. We invoke the Beings of the Three Times—past, present, and future—and, in the same time sequence, structure the Council as a three-part pilgrimage. We meet at the old estate of Christian Herter in Los Barrancos, where Los Alamos scientists used to meet. Then we drive in caravan to Los Alamos and the science museum there. Seeing the exhibits and two movies we witness the stories our society tells itself about the nuclear bomb and radioactivity. Lastly, most importantly, we climb to Tsonkawi and a red mesa rock just outside and above Los Alamos for a council circle that lasts 3 hours. In the setting sun, that rock platform sacred to native forebears helps expand our horizons to wider sense of time.

Joan Price opens our proceedings with a powerfully moving invocation of the six directions and those who’ve played a role in our nuclear history. As a talking object we pass a bowl of salt from WIPP, the reddish crystalline rock which DOE expects to receive, hold, and hide our radioactive wastes.

It is there that we try Gavin’s superlative idea: to make for future generations a tape that would be put near the surface above the wastes. Several talk into the handheld recorder, e.g. “My name is ...back in the year 1988 ... we’re trying to stop this stuff being put in the ground...please believe us it’s dangerous...” That simple experience does something to time, makes more real, more immediate, the ones who are yet to be born.

Resistance to this conversation with the future erupts, as a committed activist speaks her anger that we are assuming defeat in our fight against WIPP and expecting that our generation will leave nuclear waste behind. Instead of talking to future beings about radioactivity, we should find a way to “neutralize” it. I’ve met others, too, who give priority to the discovery of some method to transform radioactivity. It dawns on me that this hope, which seems about as likely as finding a way to neutralize gravity, is similar to that of our government: to find a technological fix.

In any case, the only foreseeable technology that seems adequate here is that of the heart—of simple, faithful mindfulness in caring for this waste. Because of corrosion and embrittlement, the stuff cannot be safely buried out of sight, out of mind. But it could be guarded above ground, and without danger, if the containers were monitored and repaired.

The notion of “enshrinement” catches hold of the Council: spiritual communities for guarding the waste from generation to generation.... Some speak of of appropriateness of beginning in New Mexico, where the nuclear story started. Some point out the likelihood that such a response to nuclear wastes would spread across the country, obviating the need for risky transportation. Several young people say they would give their lives to such a work. On the red rock platform in the setting sun that readiness to embrace time knocks walls away from my heart and mind.

Day Four. A Peoples Council on storing nuclear waste is held, as a public event in Santa Fe, under the Navajo hangings at the Unitarian Church. Though the event was not mentioned in the press, some 50-60 people attend, ready to experience a form where people can meet and speak their hearts in a nonpartisan fashion. We go easy on liturgy: only invoke the Beings of the Three Times, pass the bowl of salt rocks, use silence, use drum. But the modicum of liturgy instills a reverence before the enormity of the issue and a readiness to listen to each other and ourselves. Prayers and personal insights combine with networking and strategizing. It is clear that this Council form holds a lot of promise.

Enshrinement, as a response to nuclear wastes, continues to take hold. Some of those present are contacting the National Council of Churches about erecting chapels at the WIPP site; others plan an October 4 religious service at Alamogordo on the one day each year it is open to the public; others plan a dedicational convening on the issue with Native Americans. Meanwhile, back in Berkeley, I work on my story (about the monas-

tery at Three Mile Island) and pull together a local group "for study, strategy, and spiritual practice" on the issue of nuclear waste; I expect to focus somewhat on the leaking storage at nearby Lawrence Livermore labs.

The challenge of radioactive wastes is essentially, of course, a psychological and spiritual one. It can pop us out of our cramped compartment of time—and into healing collusion with those who came before and those who come after us on this earth. I am convinced of this.

Robert Ott, Colleen Kelley, and Marlow Hotchkiss are helping carry out this vision. They can be reached clo Sacred Arts Foundation, 6 Frasco Place, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505.

Joanna Macy is a member of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship International Advisory Board, and the author of Dharma and Development (Kumarian), Despair and Empowerment in the Nuclear Age (New Society), and co-author of Thinking Like a Mountain (New Society).



A Summary of the Council Discussion by N. Llyn Peabody

This is my interpretation of what was said at the council:

Nuclear waste is a reality.

We feel a responsibility to effectively deal with it until it no longer poses a threat to life on earth.

We don't want any more waste created. We don't want any more bombs. We want unmined plutonium and uranium to stay in the earth.

We see that many problems will arise from storing the waste in the earth. We see technical problems and psychological problems.

The waste will remain toxic for thousands of years. How do we protect future generations?

Burying nuclear waste is an attempt to ignore it. Out of sight, out of mind. This is an outward manifestation of an inner dis-ease.

Our work, as humans at this time is to acknowledge the shadow side of ourselves. And not only to acknowledge it but to embrace it.

In Aikido one learns to "know" one's opponent. It is time to know those who are on "the other side." It is time to know our own dark sides. Nuclear waste is the outer manifestation of our dark sides.

Perhaps the only way to insure protection for future generations from nuclear poisons is to bring a special mindfulness to the storage of this waste.

This mindfulness is akin to the devotion found amongst the

initiates of a religion. We are calling for radiation monks; nuclear ministers. We need caretakers of the physical, toxic material but more than that we need a certain consciousness alive, regarding this material. Humans have come remarkably close to irrevocably soiling their own nest. Let this nuclear waste be a reminder for centuries to come of the mistakes we and our ancestors have made so they will not be repeated.

We picture separate nuclear shrines being set up wherever this material is produced. This is to limit the risks of transportation and also because it is only right that a facility be self-sufficient in dealing with its own waste.

It was said in council that for some the fear of death is not so strong as the fear of failing to carry out the responsibility of the monster we have created. Let these shrines provide an opportunity for concerned citizens to actively shoulder this responsibility in a meaningful way.

It appears that it is actually not too difficult to handle this poison-fire safely, if it is done consciously.

Wouldn't it be better to have the waste monitored by those who share a deep caring for the earth than by those who seek to "handle" her or "dominate" her?

Let us build beautiful shrines, life-affirming shrines, with gardens and rooms for meditation. Let them be light centers where people gather to remember a dedication to the health of the earth, and a commitment to peace.

For aren't the acts that acknowledge and affirm a picture larger than each of our short separate lives the acts that are truly sacred?

Art in Global Crisis

By Kazuaki Tanahashi

Art in a period of widely perceived global crisis can never be the same as art in more normal times. Placid ripples of lake water on canvas may reflect the deadly poison of factory wastes. A photograph of a family dinner may convey messages about the millions for whom half an egg is a mere fantasy. A tender voice singing a lullaby may compel us to remember the massive nuclear attack which might occur any moment.

Artists need audiences. More fundamentally, artists need people to love and to be loved by. Artists need landscapes, dreams, and ideas. Just like other beings, artists need earth to stand on, water to drink, and air to breathe. Artists need the world; without the world there can be no art, no artist. Thus global survival is the primary issue for artists just as it is for all other human beings.

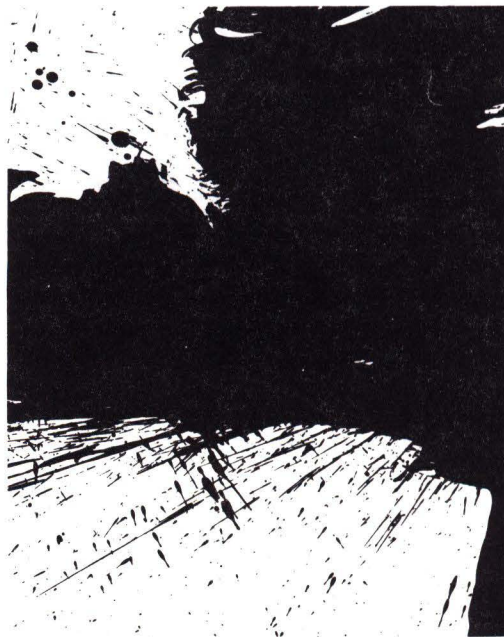
We could ignore the terrifying situation we have been living in since the onset of the nuclear arms race. We could regard art as separate from our political concerns. We could deny art as a tool for social change. Art could seem to remain innocently pleasing. But in the end we cannot escape from reality; we need to leave messages of our utmost concern to those we care for. Many artists have started working with global awareness, and I feel encouraged by being a part of an invisible community of engaged artists.

In late 1986 I conceived of a series of paintings called "Stop the arms race or..." They would represent images of the world's destruction in a thermonuclear war. I thought of creating brushstroke paintings small enough to be easily shipped by air cargo or checked in airplanes. Accordingly I determined that the frames should be 24" x 30".

In March 1987, I laid out four ivory-colored illustration boards on the floor and drew with two fairly large brushes a violently exploding curved line across them. I was not concerned with details of the brush effect, as I thought pictures of the end of the world should not meet all my aesthetic expectations. The next day I painted another set of four pieces again with one stroke; thus I completed the series of sixteen paintings in four days with four strokes. On one of the boards I pasted a baby's striped shirt, which suggested a child's body lying on the blasted ground.

While preparing for the birth of the artwork, I thought of asking people who were doing peacework to send me brief statements that complete the sentence: "Stop the arms race or...". After asking some friends to give me names of peaceworkers they knew, it occurred to me that I was excluding these friends by assuming that they were not doing peacework. It did not feel right to me to be selective.

I wondered if peacework is something many of us do daily, whether we notice it or not. Imagine what would happen if we didn't stand in lines, stop for pedestrians, or train our children to be nonviolent. Some peaceworkers are prominent, but most are invisible. Just as it is said in Buddhism that everyone has



"Stop the arms race or... 7." Kazuaki Tanahashi. one-stroke painting. sumi ink on paper. 22-1/2" x 28-1/2". 1987.

buddha nature, I thought everyone has "peacemaker nature." So I decided to ask everyone I knew to contribute statements.

By the time of the first exhibition of "Stop the arms race or...", which was held at the LiveArt Gallery, San Francisco, in March 1987, I had received responses from over sixty people. I printed each person's words on a sheet of paper and pasted all the messages on the walls, mingled with the paintings. Some of their statements are straightforward, some artistic, some funny. Often they are somber or tragic.

Stop the arms race, or the birds will have no worms; cats will have no birds to chatter at; nothing will fly or cry.

—Pamela B. Brooks

Stop the arms race, or we will, collectively, become one very large, ethereal, homeless person. —Rob Lee

Stop the arms race, lest the moving finger writes on without us, spells our common doom... —Sandy Diamond

Others suggested alternatives:

Stop the arms race and start cooperating to feed, clothe, and house the people of the world. —Will Walkon

Stop the arms race; stop paying for the arms race; stop paying war taxes. Pay attention to children instead.

—Robert Aitken



Stop the arms race by embracing a new image of invincibility which arises from the individual consciousness that is truly at peace with itself... —Linda G. Scheifler

I had also asked friends to describe their life's work and the peace work they had done or were doing. It was a moving experience for me to get in touch with the diversity of things people do: working for a free clinic, writing a documentary poem, painting a banner, civil disobedience, nuclear comedy, "cultural park" project, organizing international meetings on peace and war, helping alcoholics, hospice work for people who have AIDS, being a consultant to the United Nations, or trying to be human. There are many imaginative ways to work for peace.

During the first year, "Stop the arms race or..." was seldom exhibited, partly because I was worried about insurance. Who would pay for it—the host, I, or angels? And who would look for angels? (I am ill suited for fundraising.) Then I decided to make new paintings to replace lost or damaged pieces in case of accident. It seems to be an obvious solution, since each painting consists of only a quarter stroke. Now these statements and paintings are scheduled to be exhibited in a university, a public library, meditation and conference centers. People here and overseas have offered to host or arrange viewings in other places. The exhibition is open for viewers to participate. I invite them, as well as the readers of this article, to make statements completing "Stop the arms race or..." This is "one-line art" for every participant.

When I was living in San Francisco as a part of the Zen Center community, I often wondered about the part of the chant done before meals: "...the third portion [of this food] is to save all sentient beings." Can we physically save all sentient beings? Is it merely a symbolic phrase that doesn't mean anything? It

seems ironic to me that, since we have constructed systems for the first time in history that can destroy the entire planet, we do have power collectively to save all beings.

An urgent role for artists is to help transform people's consciousness in the direction of a world where we do not have to fear global suicide. We will be able to make a difference, if we don't wait too long.

Kaz Tanahashi is a painter, poet, and translator. His published works include Enku, Penetrating Laughter, and Moon in a Dewdrop. Until May 1989 he will be in India, and the "Stop the arms race or..." exhibition will be represented by the California School of Japanese Arts, 526 Ashbury Avenue, Santa Rosa, California 95404 (Phone: 707/578-8014).



Dharma Art

It is important in becoming artists to make sure that we do not pollute this world. Moreover, as artists we can actually beautify this world. Anybody in contact with some kind of Dharmic art finds himself completely inspired, and so there is less room for neurosis...

At that point the artist has tremendous power to change the world. The concept of the world—visually, audially, and psychologically—could be changed entirely by the power of this particular visual dharma.

Genuine art—Dharma art—is simply the activity of non-aggression.

—Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche

Tales of Mindfulness

by Lee Klinger Lesser

The June retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh at Mt. Madonna was the first time I have ever gone to a retreat focused on being mindful with my children. It was a wonderful opportunity, as demanding as any sesshin I've sat. Now, just three months later, in the midst of innumerable daily tasks, I find myself pining for the luxurious simplicity of the attention I was able to give Jason (age 5) and Carol (then 6 months) during the retreat.

In our family life, we are attempting to create regular days of mindfulness for ourselves, linking them to the Jewish Sabbath. We are also trying to find ways that can help us be mindful together during our daily life. The practice that has helped the most so far is the bell of mindfulness.

During the retreat a huge bronze bell from the nearby Vietnamese monastery was invited to sound by Steve Allen every fifteen minutes, reverberating through the grounds of Mt. Madonna Center. "Listen, listen, this wonderful sound brings me back to my true self." After three breaths we continued what we were doing. It was so powerful to share this experience with children and adults.

At the end of the retreat, my husband Marc, Jason, and I agreed to buy a bell for our house. But we postponed going to San Francisco to buy one, and a few nights later when Marc and I were arguing heatedly, Jason stood right next to us and said, "I wish we had a bell of mindfulness already, because if we did I'd ring it right now."

So the next day, Jason, Carol and I went to the Buddhist Bookstore and picked out a bell, stick, and cushion, and brought them home. We decided that it would live on Jason's altar in his room, and whenever anyone wanted to sound the bell, they could go to his room and get it, and bring it wherever they wanted people to hear it. They would awaken the bell with a little tap and then sound it fully. All of us agreed to stop whatever we were doing and give our attention to three breaths, then mindfully continue what we had been doing.

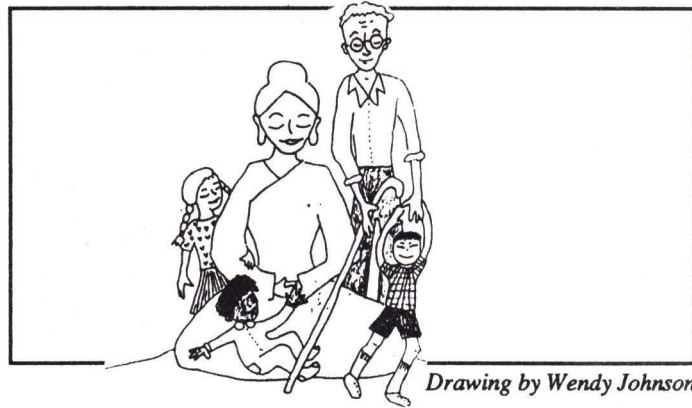
Jason was enthusiastic. Whenever anyone came to visit, the bell would appear. It took a while for him to understand that we had to explain our practice to our guests before we could expect them to share the quiet with us. It also took me some time to discover that I didn't feel awkward explaining our practice and inviting others to join us. I'd always assumed my Zen practice is foreign and uncomfortable to others who don't practice themselves. But this was something we were doing in our home, not in the zendo, and I found they seemed to appreciate it as well. We would all breath together for a few seconds, then continue the conversation.

On many evenings during the past three months as I am rushing about preparing dinner, the sound of the bell fills the kitchen, and I am grateful to Jason and the bell. He knows I am grateful when I thank him afterwards and return to making dinner with more ease.

One day Jason was rushing off to the bathroom, and I thought that would be a good place for him to practice mindful-

ness. I waited until I thought he was settled, and I sounded the bell. After the time for three breaths elapsed, Jason came out with a patient smile, and said softly, "Mommy, you rang it at the wrong time. I couldn't get my pants down." He wasn't blaming me, just informing me of the situation. He had stopped, followed his breath, came and spoke to me, and then quickly returned to the bathroom.

Last month I thought my children had been exposed to whooping cough (they hadn't been immunized), and I was quite worried and preoccupied. Jason and I were working in the kitchen together when he did something I had asked him not to, and I yelled at him with the full force of my own worry. A few minutes later the sound of the bell brought me back to myself and tears came to my eyes. Jason said, "Mommy, I rang the bell so you wouldn't be so angry."



Drawing by Wendy Johnson

It is important to me that Jason understands that sometimes I am mindful and sometimes I'm not, that I can come back to my true self, and he can help me. I think he even understands this about himself. I believe having a bell we share is empowering for him, especially in the face of what can be overpowering adult emotions and judgments.

I am seeking other practices for myself in the midst of our home life and other practices for us together. I am grateful for how we have begun.

At the end of each day, we gather in Jason's bedroom in front of his altar. He lights a match, and Marc or I light the candle. We turn off the light and Jason offers incense and sounds the bell to say "Good night" to the house and to beings everywhere, as we follow our breathing. When Carol is still awake, she gurgles and coos to the sound of the bell, the dark, and the stillness.

Lee Klinger Lesser is a long-time Zen student and also a student of Charlotte Selver's Sensory Awareness work. She will help coordinate the Easter Week 1989 Retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh for children and their families.

We would like to continue to publish experiences about everyday practice in families, at work, etc. Please send submissions to the Newsletter Editor, Box 4650, Berkeley CA 94704

Watering the Seeds in Ourselves

by Thich Nhat Hanh

On the first evening of the conference-retreat at Mt Madonna Center, Thich Nhat Hanh told this story:

Once upon a time there was a river finding her way among the hills, forests, and meadows—a beautiful river. The river began by being a joyful stream of water, a spring always dancing, always singing, running down from the top of the mountain. She was very young at the time, and as she came to the lowland she slowed down. She was thinking of going to the ocean. As she grew up, she learned to look beautiful, winding gracefully among the hills and meadows.

One day she noticed the clouds within herself. Clouds of all sorts of colors and forms. She did nothing during these days but chase after clouds. She wanted to possess a cloud, to have one for herself alone. But clouds always float and travel in the sky. They do not retain their form. Sometimes they look like an overcoat, sometimes like a horse. Because of the nature of impermanence within the clouds, the river suffered very much. Her pleasure, her joy was just chasing after clouds, one after another. You can imagine how hard it was for her. Despair, anger, and hatred filled the life of our river.

One day a strong wind came and chased away all the clouds in the sky. The sky became completely empty. Our river thought that life was not worth living; for there were no longer any clouds to chase after. She wanted to disappear from life. She wanted to commit suicide. "If there are no clouds, why should I be alive?" But how can a river commit suicide?

That night the river had the opportunity to go back to herself for the first time. She had been running for something outside of herself, namely clouds. She had never seen herself, never returned to herself. That night was the first opportunity for her to go back to herself. She could hear her own crying—because water always emits sounds, the flapping sounds against the banks of the river. (That has always been true.) Because she was able to listen to her own voice, she discovered something quite important.

She found out that clouds are nothing but water. Clouds come from water, and she has water within herself. She is nothing but water. Clouds are born from water and will return to water. That is what she found out. That insight made her stop her yearning for something else outside of herself. She realized that what she had been looking for is already in herself, is already herself. Looking at herself, she discovered her own roots, and she also saw the fruit of her present moment. Her roots are water, and her future will also be water. She saw that this is also the nature of clouds.

The next morning when the sun was in the sky, she discovered something wonderful. She saw the blue color of the sky for the first time. She had never seen it before. Now she knew that it had been there since her coming into being. Earlier she had



been interested only in clouds, and she was not yet capable of seeing the blue sky, which is a symbol of peace. Clouds are impermanent, but the blue sky is stable. She has had the immense sky within her heart since the very beginning. Discovering this fact brought her a lot of peace and happiness. The immense sky is the home of all the clouds. As she perceived the wonderful blue color of the sky, she knew that her stability and her peace would never be lost again.

That afternoon all the clouds returned. But this time she didn't have the desire to possess one particular cloud. She could still see the beauty of each cloud, but she was able to welcome all the clouds. When a cloud came by she would greet him or her with loving kindness. When that cloud wanted to go away, she would wave to him or her happily and with loving kindness. She realized that all clouds are her. She didn't have to choose between the clouds and herself. Peace and harmony existed between her and the clouds.

That evening something wonderful happened. When she opened her heart completely to the blue sky she received the image of the full moon—beautiful, round, like a diamond ball within herself. She had never realized that she could receive such a beautiful image. In Chinese there is a very beautiful poem: "The fresh and beautiful moon of the Bodhisattva is traveling in the utmost empty sky." When the mind-rivers of living beings are free, that image of the beautiful moon will reflect in each of us.

This was the mind of the river at that moment. She received the image of that beautiful moon within her heart. Imagine that night: water, clouds, and moon took each other's hands and practiced walking meditation slowly, slowly to the ocean.

When the river realized that she didn't have anything to look for, that everything is fully here in the present moment, she began to have peace and happiness. There is nothing for us to chase after. There is nothing that we have to run after. Go back to yourself, enjoy your breathing, enjoy your smiling, enjoy yourself, enjoy your environment. I would like very much that our practice, or our non-practice, during the next five days be centered on this kind of spirit.

Ojai Sestina

60 artists in Shangri-la California foothills: a meditation retreat w/ Thich Nhat Hanh, embracing the joy of American Buddhism & Art, scratching the itch to mingle them in action, inviting the Awakening Bell. Five dozen plunge into the steaming hot cauldron of creativity, allow our discursive minds

to sink like pebbles to the bottom of the stream. Mind peaceful in the pleasure of pebble-meditation.

Delight: just *being* the pebble, the joy of calmness, stability beyond the itch: water's comings and goings. The bell throughout the day punctuates our practice: the loud hot

roar of the lion—Buddha's haunting call each dry hot afternoon beckons us to awaken, again & again. It reminds us to remain in deep relaxed meditation: breathing, smiling, experiencing joy through the eyes of Avalokitesvara. Even though we're itching to crank up our artistic engines, answer the doorbell

of the Muse, we stop chattering whenever we hear the bell ring, breathe three times before drinking dinner's hot delicious soup or returning to our projects rededicated to our mind-

fulness. When my knees ache during evening meditation I attempt to appreciate the balance of interdependence: suffering & joy.

This is harder to do w/ the poison oak I am dying to itch.

I try to become one with, smile away the itch of irritation I want to scratch when the bell-master interrupts my red hot ideas for art or poetry, invites me to a meeting of the minds w/ my true self, "Please join the tea-meditation." Thây encourages us to share our hearts, experience the joy

of simply *this moment*, the present we rarely enjoy; we're usually caught up in one seven-year itch or another, under an anxious bell-jar for what's hot off the press, stumbling in mindlessness when we could be in the oak forest, serene in walking meditation.

The big hope for American Buddhist meditation is discovering true joy: the calamine lotion soothing the itch of our bell-icose culture, cooling the hot, heavy turmoil of our USA minds.

Barbara Meier is a poet, painter, and a former member of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship board. This poem, written during the retreat Thich Nhat Hanh held with artists last year at the Ojai (California) Foundation, appears in her new book, The Life You Ordered Has Arrived (Parallax Press).



Book Reviews

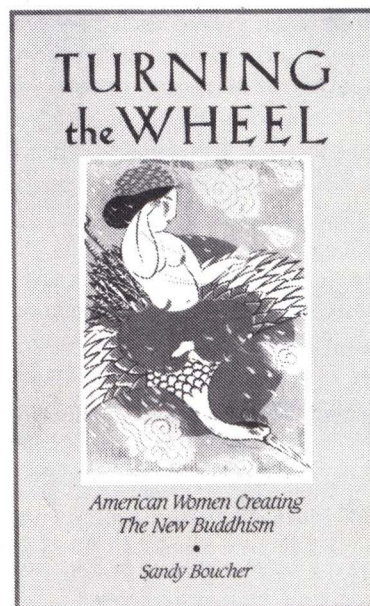
A Provocative Meditation

Turning the Wheel: American Women Creating the New Buddhism, by Sandy Boucher (Harper, 1988) \$22.95, 401 pp
Reviewed by Yvonne Vowels

In the introduction to her most recent book, *Turning the Wheel*, Sandy Boucher, identifying herself as a feminist, a political activist, and a Buddhist, finds common cause with feminist theologian Mary Daly's assertion that "the work of fostering religious consciousness which is explicitly incompatible with sexism will require an extraordinary degree of creative rage, love, and hope." That Boucher is able, through this courageous work, to embrace her own creative rage, love, and hope to an extraordinary degree, is made evident by the subtlety and complexity of the interviews and analysis which follow. Her book is a provocative meditation on the richness and diversity of American women's deeply-felt experience in a Buddhist world which, despite teachings to the contrary, seems intent upon the denigration of the female along with its attendant associations: sex, anger, emotions in general, the body, death, interdependence, vulnerability, motherhood and home life, etc. It is a meditation on the creative rage, love, and hope—and, I would add, grief, joy, and humor—of some 85 women representing the Zen, Theravadin, Tibetan, and Nichiren traditions. Extending out from those traditions the book encompasses everything and everyone who has ever been relegated to the realm of the objectified other, to the realm of invalidation and denial. The problems of racism and classism within American Buddhism are also addressed here by some.

Boucher succeeds in creating a space big enough, and safe enough, for the telling of stories which are often poignant and always important. The stories are not without apparent contradictions—contradictions which reveal, for me at least, differing degrees of awareness of, and recovery from, the diseases of sexism and misogyny which live within all of us—male and female alike.

Boucher suggests that one possible reason for disagreement among American Buddhist women on questions regarding the role or status of feminism, anger, sexuality, motherhood, and political action, etc. in Buddhist practice is that some female practitioners have had a perspective so focused on spiritual work (narrowly defined) that they have ignored the politics of their situations and the surrounding environments. This type of ignorance has become increasingly difficult to maintain, however, especially in the face of public disclosures over the past six years of sexual misconduct and abuse of power by prominent Buddhist male teachers in relation to their female students. In her chapter on the problem of the male teacher, Boucher displays great courage and foresight by helping break the conspiracy of silence which still persists concerning these matters.



In order to counteract tendencies within American Buddhism to settle into a false dichotomizing of the spiritual and the political, Boucher presents numerous examples of American Buddhist women involved in political action. Perhaps, the spirit which infuses such political involvement, is best expressed in the words of Ruth Klein, recently president of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, as she recounts the death of her father:

Recently because of the turn of events in my life, I have been very keyed in to the dying process as a way to manifest peace work. "When my father was dying, he was enraged much of the time. It was total rage, his anger and his explosion of words were complete. There was no place where he stopped. And when it was over, it was over. And there was something even in that which was peaceful, because of the harmony within him. And in a way the disharmony in that situation wasn't created by him but by my own fear. I brought the barrier, because I was so afraid of that expression. But within himself it was complete. I have a big question about anger, I have had for a long time. It seems if we just be it completely we can go beyond it.

Perhaps it is fear of the truth—of reality-as-it-is—at the basis of patriarchal constructs, which sets up a barrier against the right expression of anger by oppressed people, and which makes that right expression a necessity of survival and wholeness. Perhaps what is required of us is that we live each moment, like Ruth Klein's dying father, as if it were the moment of our death, which, according to Buddhist teaching, it is. And perhaps "being anger completely"—not to be confused with the violent attempt to control another—entails, among other things, having our anger heard completely by the appropriate parties. At least, that is what seems implied in the closing chapter of Boucher's book, entitled "Two Women on a Hill."

Here she discusses the need to right the balance within Buddhist practice, suggesting that the pendulum has swung so far to the male side that there is a need to swing it all the way back and for a time allow only women to be teachers. It is only when men have had decades of training under female teachers, teaching in teams in order to keep each other honest, that men can rightly begin to emerge as potential teachers, she says. This apprenticeship on the part of men, it seems to me, will require much in-depth listening to the voices of those who have previously been silenced. It will require female teachers to sometimes raise their voices in compassionate anger when to do so is to employ "skillful means."

"There is such a thing as an historical moment. When all the pre-conditions have been created for some change to occur, it will happen despite opposition," Boucher concludes. The historical moment for the feminization of American Buddhism is upon us. Many women now involved in the practice of Buddhism here sense a paradigm shift occurring. I speak for myself and others in expressing gratitude to Sandy Boucher for her radical, visionary, heroic, and timely contribution to that impending shift in consciousness.

Yvonne Vowels is a graduate student in Buddhist studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley.



Women's Conference *(Continued from Page 21)*

traditions displayed with humor but also with an eye to educate.

The form in last year's conference worked and became the subject of many letters and discussions. Interestingly however, the most often heard remark was (to paraphrase) "how can we keep the conference free of hierarchy and still recognize that some women have more experience and spiritual authority gained through the work they've done clarifying their insight?"

The Second Go 'Round

As the second steering committee began to take shape this question was on everyone's mind. Approximately 40 women responded to our call for input at the first meeting held at the Berkeley Zen Center. The steering committee dropped to seven. We were able to add Rita Coriell, Marsha Angus, and Frances Dougherty, with many others working on a more infrequent basis. We were concerned about groups not represented: women of color, women from the Tibetan tradition, nuns, and concentrated on an outreach program to communicate our dream.

The program committee again began to focus on the question of hierarchy. How do we now stretch the form to recognize the teachers among us and give us access to their teachings? Out of our discussions came the idea of the "polylogue." Two panels of women teachers would be chosen to speak to a specific topic and microphones would be set up

Continued on Page 43

Nourishing the Human Tree

Jai Bhim: Dispatches from a Peaceful Revolution
by Terry Pilchick (Parallax Press, 1988) 240 pages, \$12.50
Reviewed by Annabel Laity

If you are wondering, "What does the title *Jai Bhim* mean?" it means "Victory to Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar" in the Marathi dialect of India. For myself I wonder how many Buddhists practicing in the U.S. and Europe know about Dr. Ambedkar and his following of untouchable-caste Hindu converts to Buddhism which remains to this day in hundreds of thousands. Personally I did not know that much until I found myself more by accident than design in the Yerawada and Dapodi districts of Pune two years ago. In India it is not difficult to find books about Ambedkar, but one is not likely to see them on the shelves of American and European bookstores. I hope this book will lead the way to a greater interest in the West to the fate of Buddhism in present-day India.

The story of Dr. Ambedkar's life is remarkable and deeply moving. It is the story of a man who was born an outcaste, an untouchable, and had to suffer all the degradation of being looked upon as the lowest of the low. However by diligence, perseverance and freshness of vision he was able to receive all that Indian and Western education had to offer. He held a post as professor of law in India, was a member of the Bombay legislative council and, at the time of Indian independence, was asked to chair the council responsible for drafting India's new constitution. We can picture some of the barriers which beset him. Imagine, for instance, a child nine years old being asked to walk up to the front of the class to write something on the blackboard and as he walks past the caste-Hindu children they pick up their lunch boxes and move them well out of range of his shadow which they fear will pollute their food. Or imagine not being able to drink water from the supply in the office where you work, because you are told that your doing so will pollute the supply. Ambedkar was refused admittance to the Sanskrit classes too (formerly it had been the practice to pour molten tin into the ears of any untouchable who happened to hear Sanskrit being recited), but he studied the language in secret.

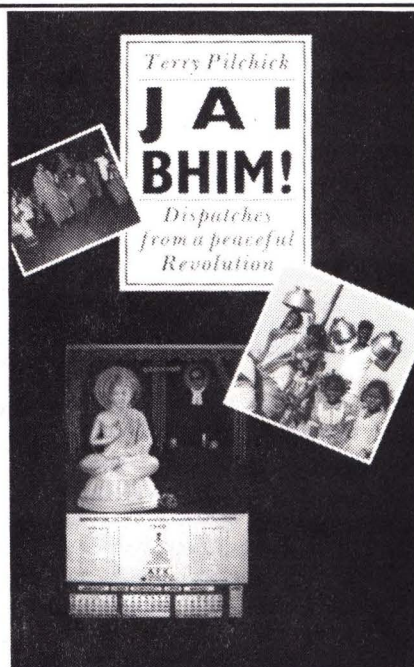
In spite of all the barriers, physical and psychological, Dr. Ambedkar was able to keep his heart and mind fresh enough to see that there was a way out. He declared that he had been born a Hindu, but that he would not die a Hindu, because Hinduism was the shrine where caste was worshipped. Buddhism from the time of the Lord Buddha has never accepted the divisions of caste. Buddha acted in a revolutionary fashion ordaining untouchables as monks; and in the sangha of monks they were in all ways equal with monks born in the brahmin or warrior castes.

Dr. Ambedkar did not rush to embrace Buddhism at the first opportunity in order to escape from something unpleasant or to get revenge. He spent years studying all religions to see which was most suitable for himself and fellow members of the untouchable caste, and then, perfectly convinced that Buddhism

was the most suitable path, he took the step of taking refuge as a Buddhist only six weeks before his passing. Before taking refuge, Dr. Ambedkar knew enough about Buddhism to have begun writing the book, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, which was the fruit not just of knowledge but of understanding and deep experience.

Jai Bhim is a readable introduction to the life of Dr. Ambedkar and the continuation of his work among the scheduled castes in India, and as the author himself puts it, "Mine is no scholarly work on Ambedkar, nor is it a comprehensive account of his Dhamma Revolution." Perhaps the reviewer should define a little more closely what the book does include. On more than one-quarter of the pages, the reader will find references to the teachings of the Ven. Sangharakshita, an English-born, Buddhist monk who knew and spoke to Dr. Ambedkar. The author is a member of the Western Buddhist Order in England, and himself a disciple of Sangharakshita's. Although the work of the Order in India, assisting the ex-untouchables study and practice Buddhism and improve their social, economic, and educational lot is enormously inspiring and exemplary, and is described throughout the book, the reader, if he or she is not a student of the Ven. Sangharakshita, may find some of the teachings presented a little surprising. For example, I found the attitude to Christianity a little uncharitable. The heart of Buddhism for the reviewer is that it is not sectarian. The way I have learned Buddhism is not that I have to purge myself of the Christianity in which I was brought up, but to look deeply on my Christian roots and find their true meaning. The author of *Jai Bhim* writes of being "free to fly beyond the Christian, God-dominated outlook of early religious condition. . . . The damage went too deep, further steps were needed to loosen the hold that the authoritarian element in Christianity still exerted." But it seems to the reviewer that authoritarianism is not a peculiarly Christian trait. The reviewer has met it in Buddhism too. It all depends on the practitioner, not on what we call Buddhism or Christianity. We are our conditioning, and we cannot expel it by slander or by blasphemy. We just need to observe deeply and understand our condition, and, as Thich Nhat Hanh has suggested, we can "stop being a battlefield." We can accept all our past and present selves; we do not need to throw anything out. That is how the reviewer has understood the teachings of Buddhism.

But do read the book *Jai Bhim*. When I skip over such paragraphs and take to heart the other three-quarters of this book, I find it a most important introduction to the life of Dr. Ambedkar, the meaning of caste, present day poverty in India, and how Buddhist practitioners are engaging themselves in working in an environment of poverty and millennia-old degradation. One of the most important things that is being done is removing some of the handicaps to education which beset the poorest families. Take a family living in a one-room hovel. It is no environment to study and the electric light will go out early to save electricity. So the young student will find herself sitting under the street lamp to study her lessons. In order to have enough money to buy food, the children may well be pressed by parents to go out scavenging in the rubbish. Perhaps baby brothers and sisters have to be looked after every



day while Mother goes out to work to earn a little to feed the family. So it was Dr. Ambedkar's idea, and the work is still being carried on today in east and central India by Buddhists, to set up hostels where school children can be housed, fed, given extra tuition and help with their studies, while going to school so that they will not have to face the huge disadvantages that life in a poor scheduled caste family would mean. Of course, links with the home are not severed, and there are children who want to go back and work in the villages they come from to improve the lot of their own people.

When the reviewer was in Pune in 1986, she met some of the students of the Ven. Sangharakshita mentioned in this book. She was impressed by the feeling of lightness she felt amongst them. They had thrown off the burden of being utterly downtrodden and they moved without the heavy weight of inferiority on their hearts. Such an atmosphere of no-hierarchy is not the rule in India, and it is quite refreshing. I have heard it is not always to be found amongst Ambedkar Buddhists either. Dr. Ambedkar has laid cornerstones for his followers in Buddhism among the scheduled castes in India, and these stones are well described in the book here under review. We could go on and ask the question, "What now?" What is to happen for the best for Buddhism among the poor in India now? It may be to rediscover an Indian Buddhism that is rooted in Indian culture. We have to observe deeply and find the true Indian culture, free of all aberrances like the caste system. There may be a danger otherwise of Ambedkar Buddhists finding themselves cultureless. True culture is one of those essential minerals which nourishes the human tree.

Annabel Laity was an active member of the UK Buddhist Peace Fellowship from 1984 - 1986. She now lives in Plum Village in France, where she is the coordinator of the program for Sponsoring Hungry Families in Vietnam and in refugee camps. She will be visiting the ex-Untouchable communities in India again later this year.

Enlightened Ecological Engagement

Buddhist Perspectives on the Ecocrisis, ed. by Klas Sandell

Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka, 1987

Wheel Publication no. 346/348, 76 pages

Reviewed by Ken Jones

This useful small book comprises six essays, preceded by a statement by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In his Foreword, Bhikkhu Bodhi maintains:

With its philosophic insight into the interconnectedness and thoroughgoing interdependence of all conditioned things, with its thesis that happiness is to be found through the restraint of desire, with its goal of enlightenment through renunciation and contemplation and its ethic of non-injury and boundless lovingkindness for all beings, Buddhism provides all the essential elements for a relationship to the natural world characterized by respect, humility, care, and compassion.

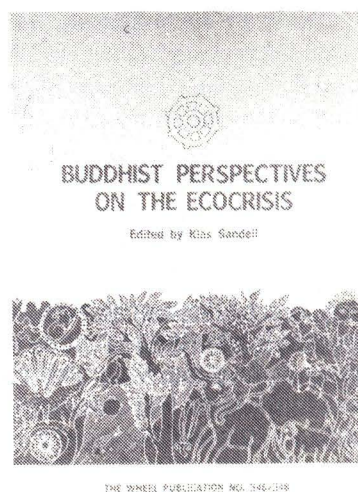
In the essay by Padmasiri de Silva, Buddhist practice and lifestyle are said to imply “a modest concept of living, simplicity, frugality, emphasis on essential goods and cutting down wastage.” He explains that the Buddhist understanding of the planetary ecological crisis derives, in the final analysis, from the “critique of one’s sense of the self.” The “psychological roots of the ecological disaster” are to be found in “greed, hatred and delusion.”

The same theme emerges in Lily de Silva’s essay which combs through the Pali scriptures to reveal the “Buddhist attitude towards nature.” She undertakes this task skillfully and comprehensively, including attitudes to pollution, plant and animal life, and much else, well supported by quotation and references. For example, she refers to the commentary on the *Cakkavattisihanada Sutta* “When mankind is demoralized through greed, famine is the natural outcome; when moral degeneration is due to ignorance, epidemic is the inevitable result; when hatred is the demoralizing force, widespread violence is the ultimate outcome.”

All the contributions bear witness to what Lily de Silva calls the traditional Buddhist “sensitivity to the beauties and harmony of nature, colored by spontaneity, simplicity and a non-sensuous spirituality.”

There is a demanding and yet very rewarding essay by the Norwegian Buddhist eco-philosopher and activist Sigmund Kvaloy, who draws inspiration and guidance also from Gandhian nonviolence, and the *Bhagavad Gita* dictum to “Act but do not strive for the fruit of action”—the road is the destination.

One of Kvaloy’s striking perceptions is that our industrial culture is essentially spatial in character, struggling to conquer the transience and insubstantiality of phenomena with a mass of solid spatial achievement (e.g. urbanization) but careless and unaware of the past, of the still point of the present, or of consequences for the future. It is thus a ‘time ignorant’ culture. In contrast, traditional cultures like the one represented by the group of ancient Welsh farm buildings across the river from



where I am writing, have been extended, patched, adapted, fallen into ruin, and restored over many decades, and naturally fit their buildings into the landscape.

Although this book draws only upon the Theravada tradition of Buddhism, it offers a helpful introduction to the Dharma of ecology. However, apart from Kvaloy’s highly original essay, it hardly touches the controversies and problems presently affecting Green politics and the ecological movement. For example, ‘deep ecologists’ like Kvaloy have been critical of the anthropocentric attitudes of ‘environmentalists’—notions such as “Christian stewardship” by man as the lord of creation. Such instrumental, paternalistic, and patriarchal attitudes, they argue, maintain our alienation, our sense of separation from other beings, our landscape, and our own physical being. But deep ecology is now in turn being challenged by ‘social ecologists’ who argue on the contrary that to value humankind equally with birds, trees, and microbes is to fail to recognize the uniqueness of human consciousness, with its capacity for freedom of action and creativity. Notions of deep ecology, it is claimed, can lead to sentimental and naive attitudes toward planetary problems, and even to an elitism which ignores or patronizes the needs of millions of powerless and impoverished human beings, ultimately failing to relate ecology to social justice. Humanists like Murray Bookchin are associating deep ecology with a spirituality they dismiss as other-worldly, narrow in its concerns and socially regressive.

This debate is very much on our doorstep. I have the impression that even socially aware Buddhists tend to go strong on rain forests, dolphins, primal peoples, animal rights, and even human rights and world peace—but faced with the emotionally charged issues of social justice, politics and revolutions, we become (not without reason) fearful for our spiritual equanimity. On the whole, we are still unaware of the equivalent to Liberation Theology that is to be found in Dharma.

Ken Jones lives in Wales. He is an active member of the British Buddhist Peace Fellowship and the author of The Social Face of Buddhism (Wisdom, forthcoming).

Pain Relief

The Great Path of Awakening, by Jamgon Kongtrul
Ken McLeod, trans. (Shambhala, 1987) 90 pages, \$9.95
Reviewed by Roger Walsh

The appearance of Buddhist groups organized for social activism seems to be a relatively new phenomenon in the history of Buddhism. One of the major questions facing the movement concerns the relationship between the foundation of practice and its expression in social action. What types of practice will best support conscious skillful compassionate action? Certainly one type consists of the practices which cultivate compassion. One of the central Mahayana practices for this is called "taking and sending," *Ton Lin*, or "exchanging our self for others" and Jamgon Kongtrul's book focuses on this practice.

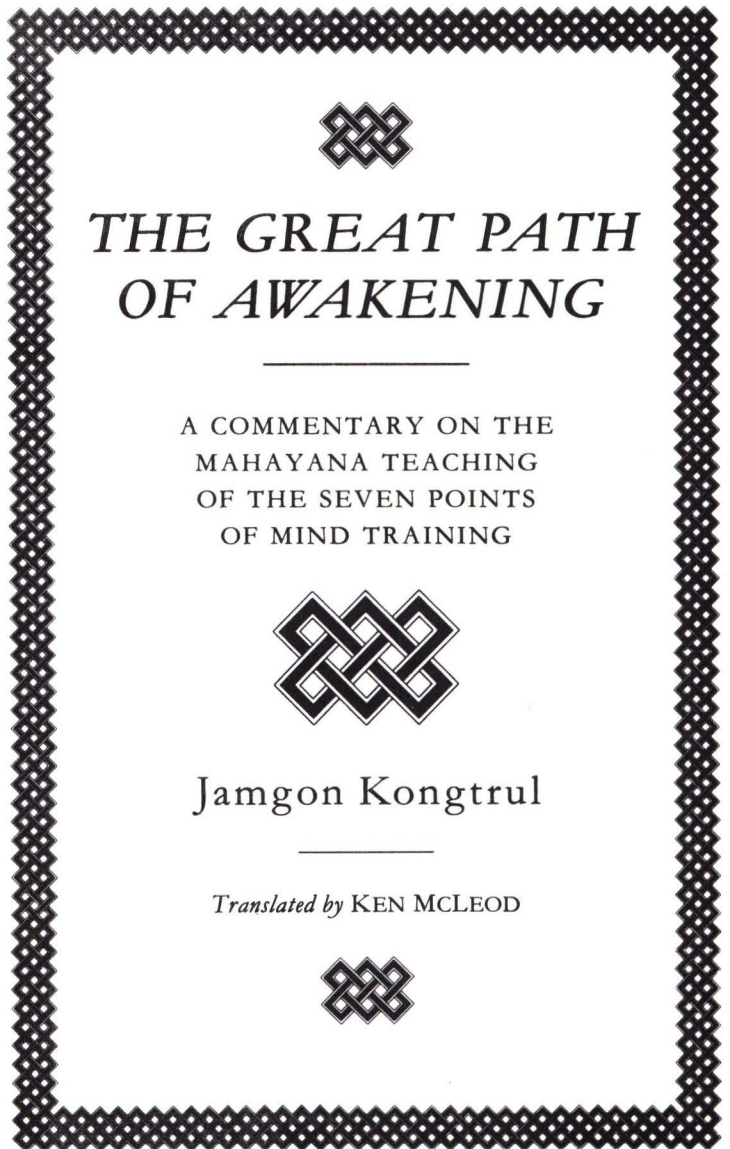
The Great Path of Awakening consists of the original aphoristic instructions on "the seven points of mind training" for doing taking and sending together with commentary by Jamgon Kongtrul, a 19th century Tibetan teacher whose wide-ranging creativity and scholarship were legendary. The essence of the practice is in visualizing oneself as taking other people's pain from them, taking it in to oneself, and sending one's own positive qualities, benefits, and good fortune to those who suffer. One therefore takes on the suffering of others and gives away one's benefits. Hence the names "taking and sending" or "exchanging oneself for others."

The book covers instructions both on specific sitting meditations and putting the practice into everyday life. One begins with preliminary reflections—the inevitability of death, the nature of *samsara* and *dukkha*, etc.—that are designed to arouse motivation for the subsequent exercises. The text then goes on to give brief instructions for the actual taking and sending. This is followed by a variety of practices, principles, and rituals with which to cultivate and apply the appropriate attitudes in all social interactions.

As with translations of many classical works, the text is aphoristic at times, and it is doubtful that anyone could do the practice fully having simply read the book. However this is probably the case with almost all meditation practices. The terseness of this text is mitigated by the translator's notes, which are extensive and useful.

For me the most helpful aspect of *The Great Path of Awakening* is its inspirational quality. Simply to read a systematic exposition of such extraordinarily high idealism, altruism, and compassion is inspiring, and I've felt more and more moved each time I read it. Doing the practice in conjunction with reading the book was especially helpful and I'm happy to recommend both.

Roger Walsh, M.D., Ph.D., is on the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at the University of California, Irvine, and a practitioner of vipassana meditation. He is the author of *Staying Alive: The Psychology of Human Survival* (Shambhala), and co-editor of *A Gift of Peace: Selections from A Course in Miracles* (Tarcher).



Minutes of the BPF "Elders Meeting" June 10 and 11, 1988, at Green Gulch Zen Center

Attendance: Robert Aitken, Nelson Foster, Michael Roche, Joanna Macy, Bill Anderson, Joe Gorin, Therese Fitzgerald, Arnie Kotler, Norma Burton, Andy Cooper, Ruth Klein, Jamie Baraz, Barbara Meier, Tyrone Cashman, Masa Snyder, Catherine Parker, Carol Melkonian, Gregg Krech, Ryo Imamura.

The Elders Meeting of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship convened at Green Gulch Zen Center in Muir Beach, California, on Friday evening and Saturday, June 10 and 11, 1988. The meeting had been suggested a year earlier by Nelson, Ryo, and Arnie as a way to "permit" BPF to "take the next step." It seemed important that those who first created the organization fully represent their intention in any planning session concerning confirmation and/or changing of direction. Since the founding of BPF in Hawaii in 1978, growth has been significant, and this meeting was called in response to the need to look carefully at history, vision, and adequacy of the present organizational structure to handle the varieties of activities BPF is doing and might do.

The group invited to attend included all past and present Board members, office directors, and newsletter editors, along with others who have been active during BPF's first ten years, with an eye to keep the group to a manageable size for such a meeting.

The First Ten Years

Friday evening was spent reviewing together the past ten years of BPF history. Aitken Roshi and Nelson Foster, who first envisioned the need for a Buddhist Peace Fellowship, read the original letter that had been sent out on August 24, 1978, to 100 Buddhists throughout the United States asking them to become founding members of the organization. Thirty-one people responded and became the first members, including Joanna Macy, Michael Roche, Jack Kornfield, Andy Cooper, and Barbara Spalding.

The original vision for the Buddhist Peace Fellowship was to serve as a non-sectarian, networking organization to draw together Buddhists from the United States and around the world of different sects or orientations to focus on engaged Buddhism. There was a concern both for applying Buddhist ethical principles to specific social action tasks and establishing a Buddhist ideology of peace. It was noted that there exists an apathy traditionally present in Buddhist groups toward social action concerns. A common pitfall of social activists is to be "ought" or "should"-driven. The question of "How as Buddhists can we work in the world from a different orientation?" needed to

be addressed. Thus the BPF network was envisioned as a forum for Buddhist groups to formulate the philosophical underpinnings for Buddhist peace work.

Some of the first projects were a prison outreach ministry and protesting a satellite tracking station in Hawaii. Mike Roche traveled to the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, and established a project BPF still maintains (See p. 15, this issue).

Today BPF has evolved into a viable international network of over 25 chapters of Buddhists and others engaged in a variety of peacemaking initiatives. Therese had compiled a folder for the Elders containing copies of newsletters from the chapters illustrating the host of activities they have sponsored.

A lengthy discussion ensued covering topics of concern in the growth process of BPF over the last ten years. Some of the issues raised were:

- the relative non-involvement of Asian Buddhists in BPF and what could be done to encourage this involvement;
- the importance of staying connected to the original visions and ideology of BPF as it grows and makes alliances with other organizations;
- the need for an organizational structure and funding support for the BPF central office which can accommodate the rapid growth the organization continues to experience

Envisioning Possible Futures

Joanna Macy facilitated the Saturday morning session. She suggested that although there was much more history-sharing we could do, we might begin exploring future goals for BPF, referring to the past as it helps us visualize the future. She cautioned against entering into a linear mindset about future planning because change doesn't happen that way. Leading the group in an imaging exercise she encouraged the group to allow our widest visions of the future to guide the discussion. Visions that members shared were recorded on the black Board and copied down. (See illustration on page 35.)

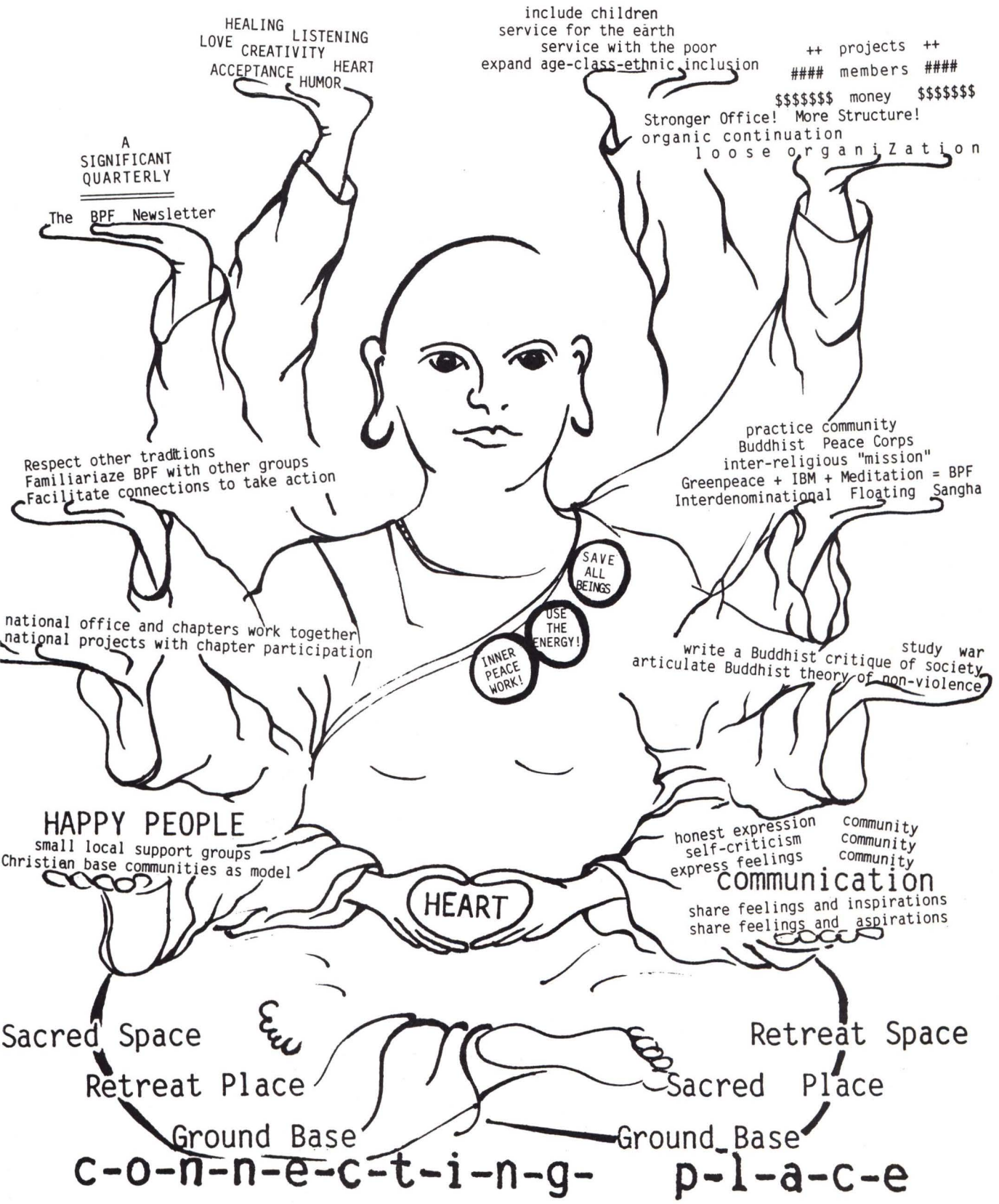
Office Report

Therese Fitzgerald, the Director of BPF, has been working 15 hours per week and has hired an assistant who works 5 hours per week.

This has clearly been inadequate, as the phone rings all day and any number of important requests are made of BPF which are worth our attention. The answering machine is an adequate alternative for receiving calls, but additional office coverage

VISIONS & IMAGES OF OUR FUTURE

FROM THE JUNE, 1988 BPF ELDERS' MEETING. IMAGED BY RUTH RAPHAELA KLEIN.



Elders Meeting *(continued from page 34)*

would be preferable. BPF now has a Macintosh 512 computer for correspondence, mailing list maintenance, and to some extent helping with the Newsletter. Office rent is \$150 per month.

Some projects BPF National has recently helped with:

- Sponsoring Hungry Families: There are now 50 families sponsored at pledges of \$200 per family per year. A group of four Americans and four Vietnamese routinely go to Kim Son Monastery in Watsonville to wrap the packages with children and send them to Vietnam.
- Urgent Action Petition initiated by Steve Denny along with Amnesty International and Humanitas has been widely circulated for signatures and sent to officials in Vietnam urging the release of several political prisoners.
- Meditation and Social Action conference with Joanna Macy and Christopher Titmuss held in the Bay Area attended by over 400 participants.
- Watering the Seeds of American Buddhism, a five day conference with Thich Nhat Hanh held near Santa Cruz, organized by Barbara Meier, Sam Rose, Arnie Kotler, Carol Melkonian and Therese Fitzgerald.
- A host of other events co-sponsored by BPF, and projects endorsed and/or worked on by BPF were noted in the packet of information handed out during the Elders meeting. Many of these require time and effort of the "office staff."

Basic Office Work: Correspondence, maintaining the mailing list, international networking and information sharing, communicating with Board, budgeting and bookkeeping, organizing special projects. These functions alone, Therese stressed, require an amount of work well beyond the 20 hours per week of paid staff time. She felt it was a necessity either to maintain a lower level of activity or to obtain funding to pay for more staff time. She could envision the need for a full time Director as well as a full time Project Coordinator and Office Assistant.

There is also the need to redefine the role of office staff in conjunction with Board members roles. Board members have been active volunteers carrying out much of the work of the organization, but it is difficult for them to maintain the level of involvement required with the present structure, and any number have become burned out in the process, further burdening the office staff.

Newsletter: Arnie Kotler has been editing and producing the newsletter since 1986. Although intended to be a 24-page quarterly, in 1988 it will come out twice in a 48 page format. We print 2000 newsletters for 1200 paid subscribers plus bookstore sales, individual copy requests, and complimentary copies. It has actually become a journal of high quality in addition to maintaining the newsletter function. There was some discussion of separating these functions and publishing both a semi-annual journal or magazine and a more frequently circulated (and less carefully produced) newsletter. Costs of producing the present newsletter are covered by membership subscriptions at a cost of approximately \$3000 for each of this

year's double-issues, including mailing.

Arnie is unable to continue as editor and would like to pass on this responsibility as soon as possible. This person needs to live in the Bay Area because it is necessary for the newsletter person to spend some time in the BPF office in order to stay reasonably current concerning ongoing events and issues that make up the much of the newsletter's content.

It is obvious that Arnie and Therese have worked as an energetic team to advance the status and production of the BPF office in the last two years. Therese will be leaving for a six month leave in mid-June. In her absence, Norma Burton has been hired as Interim Executive Director. She brings to the job the timely skills of organizational development and fund raising as well as many years of Buddhist practice and an academic background in Buddhist studies.

Board Report

Presented by Ruth Klein, President of the Board: During her term as President of the Board of BPF, the organization has grown in many ways. Just one example indicative of the overall increase in activity and workload has been the increase in membership from 450 to over 1200. Ruth said the BPF Board has functioned as a working Board, so at times during her term she worked up to 30 hours a week on BPF business. By December of 1987 she had "burned out." As the workload of BPF has outgrown its organizational structure, the stress has increased. One structural change made was to change the title of Therese's position from Office Manager to Executive Director. This was accompanied by a shift of more of the work and responsibility to the office but without increasing the office support staff the workload became increasingly stressful for Therese.

Ruth, surmising the cause of this stress, suggested that perhaps BPF was trying to accomplish too much and had held unrealistic goals. Some clarification of goals and setting of timelines could be helpful. Another problem has been the geographical spread of Board members—they are scattered around the country. There is also a need for more Board continuity. Every Board member was new in 1986. Perhaps continuity could be increased by changing the bylaws to create three year rotating terms rather than two year terms. Organizational restructuring must be a priority, said Ruth, because the fact is the organization has grown a lot means there is a lot more work to be done.

As examples of some of the projects that BPF Board members have been involved in, Ruth cited the following:

- Co-sponsoring the Peacemaking: How to Be It, How to Do It conference at Naropa Institute in Boulder two years ago
- National BPF membership meetings annually
- Participation in the American Buddhist Congress - What should BPF's ongoing involvement be?
- Lumbini Project Board - Ruth and Joanna are members, and Joe Gorin has raised some issues concerning the project: Should BPF should continue its involvement?
- Vietnam petition project - Ruth Klein has been to the UN

wice to present petitions, to the Hanoi mission and to the officer responsible for human rights in the office of the Secretary General.

- BPF has been invited to apply for membership to the International F.O.R.

Group Discussion

A discussion then opened to the group at large regarding how to use this meeting to make practical decisions about restructuring the organization. Several issues were raised.

Everyone agreed that there is a lot of enthusiasm around the country for developing BPF and that the present structure is inadequate to accommodate much increase in activity. Therefore, structural re-organization is an essential next step.

Catherine Parker, Board President before Ruth, shared that the residency had been a frustrating position for her too. With too much work to do, compounded by the inconvenience of being so far from the central office, she too had experienced burnout.

Others brought up the need to create a more effective system to handle interpersonal conflict that inevitably arises. The general atmosphere of the group was one of encouraging people to acknowledge their burnout and to "own" their limitations, and only offer to do what was realistically possible. Theresa said that she had felt overwhelmed by the quantity of work passing through the office and feared that the Board wouldn't come through with concrete help that she needed to carry out office functions. BPF has been largely a volunteer organization but it is becoming apparent that it is necessary for more paid staff to ensure adequate help. This of course requires a larger budget. The group agreed that all of the envisioned changes in organizational structure are dependent upon raising more funds for operating expenses. An important priority must be fund raising.

Changes to explore in organizational structure were brainstormed:

- How to transition from a largely volunteer organization to paid staff?
- Need to formulate written job descriptions of Staff and Board members and define Board committees
- Review Board Nomination procedure: look at F.O.R. and Interhelp models.
- International Advisory Board: How to involve them more, e.g. solicit their ideas concerning BPF, or invite them to conduct retreats when they are in the U.S. There needs to be active recruitment of women leaders on all levels of the organization.
- Setting up Regional Coordinators for BPF internationally
- Define more clearly Board roles: Is it necessary to have a resident? How to act both non-hierarchically and with efficient structure?

Afternoon Strategy Session

The afternoon session was skillfully facilitated by Nelson Foster as the group attempted to formulate specific tasks and goals for the upcoming year.

The Elders agreed that an effort to centralize the work through the national office would be more efficient, that the Board should establish and review policy, generate vision, and participate in fund raising, but not be involved in the day to day work of the office. It was decided to form a number of working committees of the Board to address tasks, starting with the tasks of reorganization and fund raising that are so needed at this time. The Board's role is to define purposes and goals for committees. The committee members can season these and other suggestions and bring back proposals and reports to the Board. It was reiterated that the ultimate financial and legal responsibility for the organization rests with the Board. There is a need to clarify in detail what the Board and staff functions are and to establish a structure that would facilitate communication between them.

After some discussion it was decided that the group of Elders assembled would function as a decision making body during this meeting, and that an Interim Board would serve a one-year term from June 1988 to July 1989 in order to oversee the organizational restructuring. The interim Board would be chosen from the Elders group, the present Board members, and those who had been nominated for upcoming Board elections, and finalized by a newly formed Executive Committee of the Board and sent out for approval to the Elders.

As the discussion progressed it became clear that the priority for the upcoming year was twofold: 1) Restructuring the organization and 2) creating a fund raising plan and stable funding base to support the new structure. As Ty Cashman aptly put it, the purpose of the next year should be to structure an organization that can adequately fund itself.

After much discussion of various possibilities of organizational structure that could facilitate these priorities the following Committee Structure was decided upon:

Interim Board - This group will be elected from among the Elders, present Board, and membership and will serve for the next twelve to fourteen months until the next national Elders and Members Meetings in the summer of 1989. The role and function of this group will be to set policy, hear committee reports, liaison between the Board committees and Executive Director. They will have monthly phone meetings and convene face to face quarterly. Interim Board Members: Bill Anderson, Jamie Baraz, Lloyd Burton, Andy Cooper, Paula Green, and Stephanie Kaza.

Restructuring Committee - Creating organizational savvy is the objective of this committee. It will hone the myriad possibilities into a viable structure that can more adequately manage the increased work load of BPF's national office. Its committee members will communicate via computer and conference calls. Face to face meetings may be possible two to three times during the year. Committee Members: Bill Anderson, Lloyd Burton, Nelson Foster, Stephanie Kaza, and Catherine Parker.

Fund Raising Committee - Since fund raising is one of the organizational priorities for the next year, this committee will

meet regularly (suggestions ranged from once a week to once a month). Its task will be to formulate and carry out a fund raising plan that will support the restructuring of the national office.

It will establish a comprehensive budget plan coordinated with organizational goals and timeline. Committee Members: Andy Cooper, Margery Farrar, Judith Gilbert, and George Lane.

Program Committee - This committee nurtures the life blood of the organization by generating and gathering program ideas from the local chapters and membership, setting programmatic priorities and linking BPF with other kindred organizations. Committee Members: Robert Aitken and Barbara Meier.

Newsletter Committee - To publish the quarterly newsletter and recruit and train new editorial staff this committee is officially named. Arnie Kotler is presently the only person involved and seeks a replacement for this fall's edition.

With a sense of accomplishment and renewed hope for BPF's systemic evolution, the meeting was adjourned at 5 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Norma J. Burton
Acting Executive Director

Editor's Update: It is slow going, getting started. The Interim Board has met twice and will meet again November 1. The Restructuring Committee hasn't met yet. The Fund Raising Committee has had several preliminary meetings, but no cohesion yet. Ah... Hoping the next 7 months of gestation can produce a healthy 11-year old.



Drawing by Ellen Sidor

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National Members Meeting in June

On Sunday, June 12, 1988, 55 members of BPF from around the country met in the Board Room of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, enjoying a panoramic vista of San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge. A visioning session of future directions for BPF and possibilities of new projects, drawing on the experience and hopes of this diverse group of social activists and Buddhist practitioners, ensued. The group agreed that to carry out this next phase of growth the proposals from the Elders Meeting for strengthening BPF's organizational structure are essential. The creation of Board committees to do this work was heartily approved by the members present, and participation in these committees was invited. (*Ed. note: If you would still like to help out in some way, please contact Norma Burton at the BPF National Office.*)

Like last year's meeting in Leverett, Massachusetts, and the year before's in Boulder, those present were encouraged by the reports from chapter representatives (14 of 16 chapters were represented) on the activities going on around the country, and even more encouraged to see and touch one another after another year of disembodied (phone, letters, modems, newsletters) communication. The smile of a friend, a casual conversation between sessions, lunch, breathing together, hearing a bell of mindfulness, these precious moments cannot be replaced.

—Report by Norma Burton and Arnie Kotler

BPF Goes to Assisi

And Formally Affiliates with Int'l Fellowship of Reconciliation

by Paula Green

The last time I had an opportunity to write about what I did on my summer vacation I was in the fourth grade. Since then, summer activities have improved considerably, culminating most notably in 1988, where I had the honor of being the U.S. BPF delegate to the International Fellowship of Reconciliation Quadrennial Council.

Women and men for 36 nations and great variety of religious, racial, and ethnic groupings gathered in a retreat house located on a hilltop outside of Assisi, Italy, birthplace and spiritual home of St. Francis and Santa Clara. The dramatic setting—full moon rising over fields of sunflowers, vineyards, and olive groves, dust beige homes the color of the earth they stand on, the magic light of Italy's lingering summer dusk, the sense of timelessness and history, the living presence of St. Francis—all this added considerable drama to the conference.

IFOR identifies itself as a "transnational religious movement committed to nonviolence as a principle of life for a world community of peace and liberation." Founded by European Christians facing the horrors of World War I, IFOR now embraces all the world's major religions. Contact with Buddhism is relatively new to many IFOR members, so our delegation was of particular interest to the others in attendance. Fortunately for all of us, two other Buddhists participated in the conference: Sulak Sivaraksa, a noted Thai scholar and International BPF Advisory Board member, and Trish Swift, a resident of Zimbabwe.

Our first four days in Assisi were a special gift: the opportunity to participate in a training seminar on active nonviolence taught by Jean and Hildegard Goss-Mayr, honorary co-presidents of IFOR and internationally revered teachers in the struggle for liberation. The Goss-Mayr's steadfast commitment to the transformative power of love and truth is uplifting and truly inspiring. For 30 years they have spread their knowledge to the poor in every corner of the earth, carefully and meticulously teaching and embodying the path of nonviolent, spiritually based, radical social change. One outstanding example of the Goss-Mayr's influence is in the Philippines, where the stopping of tanks by masses of people represented years of skillful organizing, empowering, and training.

Following the seminar came the equally full and stimulating program for the Council. Worship services from the world's religions, both traditional and highly innovative, marked morning and evening. Throughout the day we listened to inspiring reports from delegates on peacemaking efforts around the world, participated in task forces on solidarity building, and attended workshops on themes of special interest and skill development. I was continually aware of our fragility on this planet, our profound interdependence, our needs for perseverance in consistent, global, visionary efforts for justice and peace. Every workshop and discussion pointed to Thich Nhat



Hanh's concept of interbeing; it feels to me like an in-breath on one continent affects an out-breath oceans away.

There were many opportunities to speak of Buddhism and of Buddhist peacemaking initiatives. Sulak gave a lovely Dhamma talk highlighting the virtues of self-awareness, generosity, simplicity, right actions, kindness, and compassion toward members of all the religions in the global family as sisters and brothers. Sulak spoke gently of the Buddha as a "good friend," guiding us to do no harm. Trish offered a chant from the Tibetan tradition, and spoke of her own opening to practice. I introduced some basic mindfulness techniques, guided a *metta* (lovingkindness) meditation, and facilitated a 'very mini' version of Joanna Macy's Council of All Beings.

In introducing the U.S. BPF to IFOR, I felt quite happy about us, for there was much to report. I attempted to represent both the breadth and the depth of our work—from AIDS support to Hill Tribes support, from refuge in peace retreats to refugee resettlement, from taking delegations to Nicaragua to taking zafus to the tracks. I spoke of the growth of Buddhism on Western soil—the great variety of practices and teachers, and the proliferation of Buddhist centers for study, retreat, and peacemaking. I shared our concern that we Buddhists of the Christian-Jewish variety find paths that connect us to our ethnic cousins, who are immigrants or refugees in this land. I was touched as I spoke by the richness of opportunity for us—great protectors of the Dharma have arrived in our country, and shown us the way. One delightful note of synchronicity: in the entrance hall of the conference center was an enormous color photograph of Maha Ghosananda and Pope John Paul exchanging a hearty embrace!

Another block of time in this fully scheduled conference was graciously offered to me, in which I shared a taste of "Buddhism 101, The Introductory Course." I spoke briefly about the roots of Buddhist peacemaking: the precepts of non-killing and non-harming, the cultivation of generosity and compassion, the development of *sila* (morality). I read Thich Nhat Hanh's "Please Call Me By My True Names" to close; the sounds of the French translation of my English reading of this French-speaking Vietnamese poet monk reminded us of the infinite circling of life.

Toward the close of the IFOR Council, the U.S. BPF's application for affiliate status within IFOR was voted on, unanimously approved, and roundly celebrated. This is an unusual status for religious peace fellowships—one that I think was offered us in the ecumenical spirit of IFOR, in recognition of our international work. Our affiliate status acknowledges our mutual work for nonviolent social change rooted in spiritual teachings and practice. It gives us more formal friendly relations with IFOR, and the possibility of creative collaboration in the future. One BPF member will serve as a liaison with IFOR (a task I am currently and willingly undertaking) and one of us may attend and vote at the 1992 IFOR Council. This new relationship is one more strand in the great weaving of interconnectedness. It is, I believe, a good broadening of ecumenical spirit for IFOR and a healthy acknowledging of maturity and growth for BPF.

Our time in Assisi ended with a very moving peace witness within the old city walls. Wearing placards identifying our region of the world, carrying banners and sunflowers, singing songs of longing and liberation, we circled at the town square, and at the churches of St. Francis and Santa Clara, did street theater and offered talks in many languages. Tears welled up and my heart burst a little as I watched and heard all 150 of us parading and leafletting through the narrow stone streets of this 2000 year old city, singing in every accent imaginable the international anthem *We Shall Overcome*.

So, dear friends, that was my 1988 summer vacation. I am most grateful for the privilege of representing all of you at the IFOR Assisi Council; you were all very present with me. May we continue to live, serve, and join each other as women and men of peace in this global family.

Paula Green is a member of the BPF Board of directors. She helped found the Western Massachusetts BPF chapter, and also serves on the Board of Insight Meditation Society and is a supporting member of the Buddhist Peace Pagoda community in Leverett, Massachusetts. She is an activist, peace organizer, psychologist, and professor of counseling psychology.

Martin Pitt is responsible for the publication of Indra's Net, the newsletter/journal of the British BPF. Aleda Erskine is the General Secretary of British BPF. Therese Fitzgerald was Executive Director of BPF at the time of the meeting, and Arnold Kotler, who wrote the account in the next column, is the editor of the U.S. BPF Newsletter.

US & British BPF Representatives Meet



Arnold Kotler, Therese Fitzgerald, Martin Pitt, Aleda Erskine

On a warm mid-August day in Plum Village in southwestern France, Therese Fitzgerald and I met informally with Martin Pitt and Aleda Erskine of the British BPF to discuss ways in which our two organizations might be able to support one another. At the conclusion of the meeting it was clear that if we can work together as enjoyably (and efficiently) as we conducted that meeting, a great future lies ahead. It was the end of the month-long retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh, and we observed a bell of mindfulness, and weren't hesitant to breathe and smile. A number of good ideas emerged from our hour and a half together.

(1) Encourage BPF members from each country to visit one another. If any US-BPF members are going to England and would like addresses of British BPF members, please contact the Berkeley office for a list of addresses. Likewise, if anyone would like to host a British member of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, let us know.

(2) Exchange publications.

(3) Encourage other countries to form BPF chapters. Interest has been expressed in France, West Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Norway, and Japan.

(4) Clarify the relationship between US and UK BPFs. Is the US-Buddhist Peace Fellowship the International Buddhist Peace Fellowship? Is the Berkeley office a national office or an international office? To the best of our collective knowledge, no one has attempted to clarify this before. Even though BPF started in the US and organizational go-ahead for new chapters worldwide comes from the "national office" in Berkeley, we all felt that it was presumptuous of the US-BPF to assume international leadership, and in fact the UK-BPF does not regard itself as a chapter of the US-BPF. We proposed a meeting of international BPF chapters/affiliates, to be held in the summer of 1990, probably in the eastern U.S., England, or Europe (perhaps Plum Village). It is our hope that an international council of BPF country representatives might be formed at that time.

In the spirit of the maturation and organizational grounding that the US-BPF is undertaking this year, this meeting and the possibilities it begins to uncover seem one obvious and wonderful next step.

Chapters and Affiliates

British BPF

The British BPF Newsletter has now blossomed into a lively magazine, *Indra's Net*, available for £10 (approximately \$16.50) per year to Martin Pitt, BPF Membership Secretary, 38 Arnos Street, Bristol BS4 3BS, U.K.

In May there was a national coordinators' meeting chaired by the new President, Adam Curle, a well-known mediator and conciliator in international disputes and a friend of H.H. the Dalai Lama.

Although most of the active members are Buddhist practitioners, British BPF also continues to attract the support of non-Buddhists, like the peace group secretary in Wiltshire who wrote that "Although I am not a Buddhist myself, I believe that inner peace is extremely important as a basis for our work for peace in the world."

Human rights lobbying has continued, particularly in respect of the situation in Tibet, where there have been helpful responses from members of parliament.

A major concern of British BPF is the organization of retreats and workshops for people striving to combine inner peacemaking and outward social concern in a mutually supportive and enriching way. In August there was a weekend retreat on deep ecology and compassion with Pat Fleming. In October Christopher Titmuss and Father Bede Smith will jointly lead a gathering to explore a nonviolent spirituality in Christian and Buddhist thought, and in December there will be a weekend retreat with David Brandon, author of *Zen in the Art of Helping*, on the theme of letting go of trying to help and opening up to sharing.

—Ken Jones

Oahu BPF

A meeting was held in April to reorganize the BPF chapter in Honolulu. The group viewed a video sent by Sister Sandy Galazin on the current political and social conditions in the Philippines and discussed possible future BPF programs. At our second meeting in May we saw a videotape by the Christic Institute documenting the activities and history of the covert group responsible for the Iran-Contra affair. In June we held a day-long fast, suggesting that the money each person would normally have spent on food be donated to Sister Phuong's Hungry Families program or a favorite charity. In July we discussed re-forming as a base group, with a new focus on meditation practice and its application to peace work and social and political engagement. For further information about the Oahu chapter, please contact Doug Codiga (808/946-0666) or Manfred Steger (808/523-9607).

—excerpted from *Diamond Sangha Newsletter*

Los Angeles BPF

We are appreciative of the BPF conference-call on September 16, a sense of connectedness and a reminder of the fact that the BPF is about being peace as much as it is about expression through social-action of one kind or another.

A group varying in size between 5 and 12 people continues to meet at 'Ordinary Dharma' on the third Sunday of each month at 10 am. We sit for 30 minutes. There is a reading of the Precepts of the Order of Interbeing—a practice recently reinstated—and then usually an open discussion followed by lunch together on Venice Beach.

A full 'day of mindfulness' is scheduled for the November meeting. We plan to use that day to invite people doing their shopping at a nearby supermarket to include among their groceries some item of dry or canned goods which they can then donate to us. Our collection will go to the Buddhist AIDS Project. People will take turns outside the market while others continue practicing sitting and walking at Ordinary Dharma.

The project, though modest, is the first that has really brought us together as a group in some kind of public action.

—Christopher Reed

East Bay BPF

Our chapter hasn't had an actual BPF meeting in a number of months, largely due to the fact that three of our core members are away until January. We have had occasional informal dinners, during which we've discussed various projects we're involved in, as well as envisioned where our chapter and the BPF at large are heading. One idea that has come up from a number of sources, both locally and nationally, is that the BPF could serve to bring mindfulness and meditation practices from our meditation centers to our homes, schools, and work situations. Currently, we, with other organizations in the Bay Area, are exploring this. We had our first meeting in September with an interdenominational group of peace workers. The need felt by all was to bring mindfulness practice into mainstream society. But how do you make mindfulness appealing to a person skateboarding by you with headphones on? How do you make it inviting to practice awareness and understanding? These are not new questions by any means. However, some of the ideas that emerged from this meeting were quite innovative, including: Developing a Buddhist mime troupe, creating films on building ethnic bridges, writing Haiku as a form of nonviolence, Buddhist clown training, and conflict resolution. . . What was so pleasurable about this meeting was that we really enjoyed each other's company, and felt no need to get anything done. . . Imagine peace workers not needing to get anything done. It was nourishing and we plan to have another meeting in

October to continue this exploration.

We, with a group of dedicated Vietnamese friends, are continuing our support for the Sponsoring Hungry Families Project. We send packages of medical supplies to families in Vietnam on a quarterly basis. What we receive back from them is a deep sense of gratitude that someone across the miles, across cultural and political barriers, knows of their existence, and cares enough to reach out to them. It makes them feel hopeful in a very oppressive situation. The following is translation of a letter from one of the many families who receive the supplies:

Dear Sister,

I just received your letter and gift today. My children and I were all very happy. We deeply thank you for your kindness. Our family has lived in serious difficulty. I have had to take care of my five children, while market prices keep on skyrocketing. Day after day I have spent all my time and effort in earning enough food for the family. My mind has been occupied with my children's hunger - so much so that I rarely think of anything else. I do not know if it is a coincidence that I received your gift at this time when people are celebrating Buddha's birthday. I feel like Buddha has helped my family. I believe that we will soon be able to overcome poverty, and escape from a life in which our activities are but to get by a hungry day.

*With appreciation,
Mrs. Nguyen*

As you are reading this 50 packages are on their way to Vietnam. It's such a little trickle into a deep, deep hole. . . and let's continue.

Our monthly vigils at Concord Naval Weapons Station serve as a clear reminder of the link between our meditation practice and our interbeing with all life—particularly our brothers and sisters in Central America. A group of 8-20 participants gathers in sometimes excruciatingly hot weather to sit at the tracks, and practice forgiveness, loving kindness, sitting and walking meditations. Cars drive by and the passengers occasionally voice their anger at us—shouting obscenities, calling us communists, telling us to go home or get a job, as we sit and watch it all arise and pass away. We sit with our fear, anger, patience, forgiveness, frustration, confusion, peace . . . We end our vigils holding hands in a circle and share what is coming up from the morning. Although it's never planned, the theme seems to revolve around questions like: How does this affect our daily lives? Where are our blocks? Where is the train in our lives? Who do we call 'the enemy'? Concord has a lot to teach us. Our plan is to continue our monthly vigils for an indefinite period.

California State Senator Art Torres visited Vietnam in September to discuss with officials there the release of political prisoners and their possible immigration to the U.S. We have sent him information on the imprisoned monks, nuns, writers, and artists for whose release the BPF has been campaigning. We are hopeful that Torres will inquire about their cases upon his next trip to Vietnam. For a history on the Release of Political Prisoners Project, please see the last two issues of the *BPF Newsletter*.

BPF Chapters and Affiliates

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Buddhist Peace Fellowship
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Berkeley, CA 94704
(415) 548-3735

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510 Munsell Road
Belchertown, MA 01007
(413) 256-4227

Cambridge/Boston BPF
John Philibert
39 Main Street
Foxboro, MA 02035
(617) 543-8633

New York City BPF
Lyndon Comstock
82 Prospect Park SW
Brooklyn, NY 11218
(718) 768-5090

Rochester BPF
Bill Anderson
P.O. Box 10605
Rochester, NY 14610
(716) 442-8803

Washington DC BPF
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(902) 429-2235

Australia BPF
Subhana Barzaghi
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Lismore 2480, NSW
Australia

British BPF
Aleda Erskine
16 Upper Park Road
London NW3, England
(01) 586-7641

A conference on the Dalai Lama's Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet was held at U.C. Berkeley in September. Our chapter joined with Humanitas International, and other Buddhist and Peace organizations to prepare for the weekend program. The purpose of the conference was to help give public attention to the plan, and to develop ways for Americans to help move the plan forward towards implementation. A full report by Catherine Ingram is in this newsletter.

At our next meeting we'll begin to prepare for Thich Nhat Hanh's 1989 retreat and lecture in northern California.

BPF, for all its tumult, starts, and stops, continues to nourish quite a number of us in ways other organizations do not usually address. All our traveling members will be back soon and we look forward to resuming our potluck breakfasts and convivial actions.

—Carole Melkonian

Women's Conference (Continued from Page 30)

among the participants. After each teacher presented, individuals in the "audience" could move to the mikes and respond, share, or question.

We expanded the idea of small groups to include brush painting, improvisational theater, Tibetan bell playing, and other more experiential themes. On Saturday night, an explosion of talent burst forth—theater pieces by well-known artists attending the retreat: Nina Wise (Nina Wise Performance Works), Naomi Newman (Traveling Jewish Theater), Susan Moon reading from her new book *The Life and Letters of Tofu Roshi*, and Sheila Glover (of cabaret act Nicholas, Glover and Wray) singing beautifully. It was a joy to be in the presence of those talented artists, singers, writers, musicians, and entrepreneurs engaged in the personal struggle toward rightliveliness.

Viewing the conference with a little distance, there was much that worked. The polylogues were very well received. We must continue to work with just how to develop an experience for participants which is inclusive without being overwhelming, which includes both teaching and the teacher, which allows each of us to be heard and recognized for our struggles and victories. There is much still to be done but we are on the path.

Lane Olson is manager of the Conference Center at Fort Mason Center in San Francisco. She is working on a newsletter developed during a small group at the conference and hosts a weekly Zen sitting group at her home in Mill Valley, California, with husband, Steve Stucky.

A panel will discuss issues that were generated at the 'Women and Buddhism Conference' in San Francisco this summer at 7 pm on November 9, 1988. Please contact Norma Burton at the BPF office for further information.

Just Another Pilgrim

by Judith Ashley Haggar

"Are you looking for a particular name?"

"No." I stood there engulfed in tears. He put his arms around me. I held on to him. He felt like a rock to me. Or a tree. A safe harbor. We were standing in the rain at the replica of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial that had come to Anchorage. He had come out of an olive green tent set up near by. He had on black boots and a fatigue jacket. I didn't know his name.

I had parked two blocks away and began to cry before I even got out of the car. I walked through the wet grass to this plywood and plexiglass replica. I walked slowly, looking at each panel of names. I saw bouquets of real flowers laid carefully on the grass. And a letter wrapped in plastic, "Dear Uncle Steve," it said. I couldn't stop crying.

That was when he came to me, to hold me up above the tides of tears that threatened to sweep me away. But I felt like a fraud. I didn't know anyone who had died in Vietnam. I didn't even know anyone who had gone there. In fact, I had marched against the war. I had to tell him.

"I protested against the war," I said, "but not against them."

"They know," he said. "Have you touched the wall?"

"No." Please no.

He walked me over to the wall of names. He took my hand and placed it on the wet black plexiglass. He put his own hand over mine. "Let them go," he said.

Our hands dipped into an ocean of sorrow. We touched war. And death. And loss. My tears fell endlessly like the rain. And this tall quiet man stood watch with me.

Finally, I was empty. We took our hands from the wall. He gave me a tissue to wipe my face. "Thank you," I said, meaning more than the tissue. We talked a little. We talked of peace. We talked of never again, as mourners have since war began.

"Thank you," I said again.

I walked back to my car through the wet grass and the slow rain.

A week later, I inexplicably began to cry at my early morning yoga class. When the class was over, I drove home, made some tea and began to read the paper. I saw the headline, "Some Things the Press Missed at the Vietnam Memorial." I knew he had written it. I knew it was about me. That's how I learned his name.

Judith Ashley Haggar is a BPF member and a student of Katagiri Roshi in Anchorage, Alaska.

Spring 1989 Lectures and Retreats with Thich Nhat Hanh

Public Lectures

Exact locations will be announced in January 1989 *BPF Newsletter*

Date	Time	Location
Monday, March 27	7:30 pm	Austin, Texas
Sunday, April 2	8:00 pm	Los Angeles, California
Saturday, April 8	10:00 am	Ojai, California
Sunday, April 23	10:00 am	Stanford, Calif.
Tuesday, April 25	8:00 pm	Berkeley, California
Sunday, April 30	8:00 pm	Santa Cruz, California
Sunday, May 7	8:00 pm	Seattle, Washington
Monday, May 15	8:00 pm	Boulder, Colorado
Sunday, May 21	10:00 am	Chicago, Illinois
Thursday, May 25	8:00 pm	Washington, D.C.
Sunday, June 4	8:00 pm	New York City
Monday, June 12	8:00 pm	Boston, Massachusetts



Retreats

Dates	Location/Sponsoring Org.	For further info, contact:
March 28 - April 1	Retreat for Children, California Sponsored by BPF	Marin County BPF 218 Cleveland Ct, Mill Valley, CA 94941
March 31 - April 9	Retreat for Artists, Ojai, CA Sponsored by BPF & Ojai Fdn.	Ojai Foundation P.O. Box 1620, Ojai, CA 93023
April 17 - 22	Northern California Retreat Sponsored by BPF	East Bay BPF P.O. Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704
April 26 - 30	Retreat for Peaceworkers, Santa Cruz, CA Sponsored by BPF, Humanitas, & RCN	Resource Center for Nonviolence 515 Broadway, Santa Cruz, CA
May 2 - 5	Seattle Area Retreat Sponsored by BPF & 3 Treasures Sangha	Three Treasures Sangha 5999 Schornbush, Deming, WA 98244
May 8 - 13	Retreat for Psychotherapists, Colorado Sponsored by BPF	Boulder/Denver BPF 2390 East Asbury Ave. #410, Denver, CO 80210
May 17 - 20	Chicago Area Retreat Sponsored by BPF & Buddhist Council of Midwest	Chicago Zen Center 2029 Ridge, Evanston, IL 60201
May 29 - June 1	Washington DC Area Sponsored by BPF	Washington D.C. BPF 1908 South Randolph St., Arlington, VA 22204
June 5 - 10	Omega Institute, Rhinebeck, New York Sponsored by BPF & Omega Institute	Omega Institute Lake Drive, RD 2, Box 377, Rhinebeck, NY 12572

There will also be a retreat for Vietnam Veterans entitled "Healing and Reconciliation," in southern California in April. It is by invitation. If you are a Vietnam Veteran or know one who would like to attend such a retreat with Thây, please contact (Ms.) Gene Knudsen-Hoffman, 312 East Sola Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. We hope to be able to offer a large number of scholarships for that retreat. If you would like to sponsor a veteran to make it possible for him to attend (\$250), please contact Gene.

Announcements

H.H. the Dalai Lama in Los Angeles July 1989 Training for Peace Activists

His Holiness the Dalai Lama will confer the Kalachakra Initiation and give Lam Rim teachings in Los Angeles July 10-18, 1989. For information and/or registration materials, contact Thubten Dhargye Ling, 2658 La Cienega Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

Mind Into Image: Contemporary American Artists & the Buddhist Experience

Works by Hugh Downs, Glen Eddy, Mayumi Oda, Susie Rashkis, Cornelia Schulz, Kaz Tanahashi, & others. Sundays 9 am - 1 pm through Oct. 30. First Unitarian Church, Franklin/ Geary, San Francisco. Sponsored by the American Buddhist Society.

Family as a Field of Practice

Day of Mindfulness Saturday, Oct. 22 at Green Gulch

A day devoted to finding enjoyable and accessible ways to cultivate mindfulness for the whole family, sponsored by the Marin County Buddhist Peace Fellowship. The day will include sitting and walking meditation, offerings, service, lunch together, harvest work, theme discussion groups, tea, and activities for children. \$15, or \$25 per family. For information, call (415) 383-3134.

Meditation in the World

Bay Area Workshops Benefit for IMW & BPF

Saturday, 11/5: Work & Spiritual Practice, Rosalind Diamond

Saturday, 11/19: Meditation & Awareness of the Earth,

Stephanie Kaza and Elan Shapiro

Saturday, 12/10: Relationships as Practice, Dan Clurman and

Mudita Nisker

Suggested Donation: \$15-25 per workshop. **Pre-register**, send donation to: Donald Rothberg, 656 Arlington Ave. Berkeley 94707. **Further Information**, Ernie Isaacs, (415) 526 - 0711

Revisioning Education, with Joanna Macy

Joanna Macy and Jack Zimmerman will lead a two-day internship program at the Ojai Foundation School for educators to explore forms of learning which balance the principles of independence and interdependence, including the council process, the function of community and ceremony, and the role of myth and nature in understanding self and culture. For further information, contact The Foundation School, P.O. Box 1620, Ojai, CA 93023. 805/646-8343.

There will be an introductory meeting with a Tibetan Buddhist teacher, Chagdud Tulku, Rinpoche, on Saturday, November 19, from 1 to 4:30 pm. This is for people interested in learning practical skills to do peace activist work and in learning techniques for developing peace in one's life. The first training retreat will be January 14-15, 1989 in the San Francisco Bay Area. Contact Bob Russell at (415) 527 - 3803.

The Bodhisattva Path of Compassion

Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche will lead a 3-day retreat at the Ojai Foundation, focusing on the ways to transform poisons into nectar, obstacles into gateways, and enemies into allies—the teachings of the Bodhisattva path. For further information, contact The Ojai Foundation, P.O. Box 1620, Ojai, CA 93023. 805/646-8343.

California Proposition 102

A group of Buddhist leaders is joining together to express their concern about Proposition 102, to educate the community, and to ask those who feel called to respond. The group includes Steve Allen, Daniel Barnes, Jamie Baraz, John Hobbie, Jack Kornfield, and Frank Ostaseski.

Proposition 102 requires doctors to report anyone who is infected with the AIDS virus and anyone they "believe" to be infected; allows insurance companies and employers to require AIDS antibody tests for insurance and employment; requires those who test positive to turn in, within 7 days, the names of all their sexual partners and needle-sharing partners; will cost \$1.75 billion in the first year alone, depleting funds for existing services. (This year's state allocations for AIDS total \$74.8 million.); cannot be changed by the state legislature if it passes—only another statewide initiative could reverse any part its impact.

New and alarming polling data indicate that Proposition 102 (the Dannemeyer AIDS Initiative) has a strong chance of passing on November 8. The group of Buddhist leaders feels that Prop. 102 is a threat to civil liberties, public health, and compassionate service; they feel that it must not pass.

The campaign offices for Californians Against Proposition 102 urgently need volunteers and contributions to get the word out. They may be reached at:

10 United Nations Plaza, Suite 410
San Francisco, CA. 94102 (415) 621-4450

7985 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 109-343
Los Angeles, CA. 90046 (213) 654-3757

Letters

Shoshone Alert

October 3, 1988

Dear Arnie,

I just returned from a 3-day Celebration of Gandhi's birthday at the Nevada Test Site, where I presented to 200 participants from many spiritual traditions the Buddhist roots of non-violence. Yesterday we all participated in an action including civil disobedience at the Test Site. This land, larger than Rhode Island, was given to the Western Shoshone Nation in the Treaty of Ruby Valley 125 years ago, and has been subject to over 800 nuclear tests since 1952. I have found myself weeping frequently in the last few days at this abuse of our Mother Earth.

Recently, the Department of Energy notified the Western Shoshone National Council of the discovery of an ancient Shoshone burial site located near the site of a nuclear test scheduled for late October. DOE has given the Shoshone just a few weeks to arrange for the removal of the remains. The Western Shoshone Nation has asked for our support to help bring a halt to the desecration of these burial grounds and to halt the violations of the Ruby Valley Treaty being committed by the U.S. gov't.

BPF members and friends can help by immediately writing letters or sending telegrams to the following:

Bureau of Land Management
District Manager Ben Collins
Box 26569
Las Vegas, NV 89126

Department of Energy Headquarters
2753 South Highland Drive
Las Vegas, NV 90109

Your Senators
Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Your Representative in Congress
House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Robert Buford, Director
Department of the Interior
18th and C Streets NW
Washington, DC 20240

Please send copies of letters to American Peace Test, Box 26725, Las Vegas, NV 89126. For more information, contact APT at 702/731-9644 or me at 718/897-4746. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Ruth Klein (Past President of BPF)

Africans Sign Vietnam Petition

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We members of the Interfaith Group of Reconciliation of Kinshasa are happy for being with you in this work of Peace. It's why we have signed this petition [concerning imprisoned monks and writers in Vietnam—see Winter 1987-88 *BPF Newsletter*] and present you our encouragement. Our warm wish is to learn one day that all these cases have been released.

With you for Peace,
Buanga Mpongo
Kinshasa, Zaire

Free Soviet Buddhists

Dear BPF,

Just received your journal and was very pleased with it.

It would also be nice to have a petition to U.S. Senators and the USSR to allow Kalmuk Buddhists to leave Russia in the same way that Soviet Jews are now being allowed to leave. Kalmuks have not been allowed to leave for over 40 years, even though some have relatives living in America who were some of the first founders of Buddhist groups here. Such a petition may allow some of them to leave. The Soviet Jewry groups have opened the door that we may also be allowed to use.

Sincerely,
Rev. Charles OHara
Buddhist Center of New York
Bay Shore, Long Island

The Importance of "Being Peace"

Dear Arnie,

I finally read the Spring 1988 issue of the *BPF Newsletter*, and I must say, yours is the best publication in print. The articles on Buddhists working with AIDS patients and all the other articles on peace within and reconciliation are extremely inspiring.

As you know, I am involved with a number of peace organizations, and they all have a lot to learn from the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Many thanks for all your good work.

Love,
Gene Knudsen-Hoffman
Santa Barbara, California

Unclassifieds

TIBETAN BUDDHIST PEACE TAPES - Lectures on world peace and active compassion by the Dalai Lama, Tai Situ Rinpoche, Sogyal Rinpoche, & others. Send SASE for complete listing. Sound of Dharma, 331 Ocean View Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062.

RELAXATION-MEDITATION COMPACT DISK - *The Fine Art of Relaxation*, by Joel Levey, music by David Lanz. Themes of mindfulness, interbeing, dissolving pain, loving kindness, nature sounds, sweet silence, music, and more. Proceeds go to peace projects. \$19.95 postpaid to HumanKind, 5536 Woodlawn Avenue N., Seattle, WA 98103.

NEW SOCIETY PUBLISHERS, a nonprofit worker-managed publisher of books on nonviolent social change seeks new members in finance and production. Commitment to nonviolence, year trial period required. Write: New Society Publishers, 4527 Springfield Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143.

DHARMA SEED TAPE LIBRARY. Tapes from the Insight Meditation teachers. For catalog write DSTL, 106 Jackson Hill Road, Leverett, MA 01054.

GREETING CARDS BY MAYUMI ODA. 6 blank cards, each with a different Buddhist goddess, silk screened, finely textured paper. \$2.50 per card or 6 for \$12.50, to Editions Gaea, Star Rte Box 310, Sausalito, CA 94965

KARUNA: Journal on spiritual practice, social responsibility, women's issues. \$1 for sample copy, to: Vipassana Med. Society, POB 24468 Sta. C, Vancouver, BC V5T 4M5.

BOOKS & TAPES BY THICH NHAT HANH Contact Parallax Press, Box 7355, Berkeley, CA 94707. Free Catalog.

TAPES on a variety of subjects including Buddhism and peace work. Send for catalog. Sounds True, 1825 Pearl St., Boulder, CO 80302 (303) 449-6229.

HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE? 8-part TV series (60 min ea) featuring Ram Dass, Daniel Ellsberg, Stephen Levine, Helen Caldicott, on VHS (\$55 ea.) or audio (\$8). Orig Face Video, 6116 Merced Av #165, Oakland, CA 94611.

SOUND OF RIPPLING WATER: 2-hour tape of David Reynolds, on Morita (synthesis of Zen & psychotherapy) and Naikan (Jodoshinshu & psychotherapy). \$15 + 1.50 shipping from Music & Sound Production Services, 1908 S. Randolph, Arlington, VA 22204



"By taking care of our precious earth, we take care of our future. Maitreya, the Goddess of the future, meets us." — Mayumi Oda



BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- To make clear public witness to the Buddha Way as a way of peace and protection of all beings;
- To raise peace and ecology concerns among American Buddhists and to promote projects through which the Sangha may respond to these concerns;
- To encourage the delineation in English of the Buddhist way of nonviolence, building from the rich resources of traditional Buddhist teachings a foundation for new action;
- To offer avenues to realize the kinship among groups and members of the American and world Sangha;
- To serve as liaison to, and enlist support for, existing national and international Buddhist peace and ecology programs;
- To provide a focus for concerns over the persecution of Buddhists, as a particular expression of our intent to protect all beings; and
- To bring the Buddhist perspective to contemporary peace and ecology movements.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

BPF membership requires only a commitment to the general spirit of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Please see Statement of Purpose, above. BPF relies on members' support and suggests a minimum annual donation of \$15.00 U.S. residents, \$20.00 overseas. Please make checks payable to "Buddhist Peace Fellowship". Contributions are tax deductible. Members receive a one year subscription to the *BPF Newsletter*. For contributions of \$50 or more, we will send you a Visualize Peace T-Shirt. Please specify Small, Medium, Large, Ex-Large; or Children's S, M, or L.

I am enclosing a contribution of \$ _____ to support the work of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

Name _____ Phone () _____

Street or P.O. Box _____

City, State, Country, Zip _____

BPF encourages members to join the BPF chapter in their area, and to join the Fellowship of Reconciliation in their home country.

Buddhist Peace Fellowship
P.O. Box 4650
Berkeley, CA 94704 USA

Address Correction Requested

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