Extra

BPF National Members Meeting
Sunday, June 12, in Berkeley

BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 10, NO. 1-2, SPRING 1988

Buddhists and AIDS

The Work of ACCESS Group, LA Buddhist AIDS Project, MAITRI, and SF Zen Center Hospice

"What is going on is very important"

The Buddhist AIDS Project of Los Angeles
by Steve Peskind

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, AIDS, is of enormous concern to all of us, especially those in high risk communities, their loved ones, health care professionals, counselors, and others working with AIDS patients. Although this epidemic is in its eighth year and shows little sign of diminishing, most of the public at large and even many who are living with AIDS lack basic information. A lot of information is available and its dissemination can reduce risks, irrational fears, and misconceptions, and nurture health and a more skillful response to this stressful time. The Buddhist AIDS Project was formed in Los Angeles in March 1987 as a network of individuals, sanghas, and agencies, to inform and encourage the Buddhist Community in responding to this epidemic, and to help and reach out to anyone affected by AIDS.

Steve Peskind, a student of the Very Ven. Kalu Rinpoche, is the Coordinator of the Buddhist AIDS Project. He has been involved in AIDS education and counseling for seven years, and is presently the Director of the Laguna Shanti Project, which provides free support services to persons with life-threatening illness and grief. Ken McLeod, one of the senior Western students of Kalu Rinpoche and the resident teacher of KDC in Los Angeles, is "Spiritual Consultant." Lama McLeod has studied and practiced Buddhism for 16 years, including two traditional three-year retreats.

The Project began when Ken McLeod invited Lama Yeshe Dorje, a Nyingma doctor and assistant to His Holiness the Dalai Lama to offer a healing ceremony in Los Angeles for persons with AIDS. A month later, a video, *Exploring the Heart of Healing in AIDS*, with Stephen Levine and Ram Dass, was shown and provided the basis for discussing of issues of grief and dying, spiritual practice and service in the context of working with AIDS. (See pages 4-5) From these two events, the response to developing a Buddhist AIDS Project was positive, and the Project's first general meeting was held in May.

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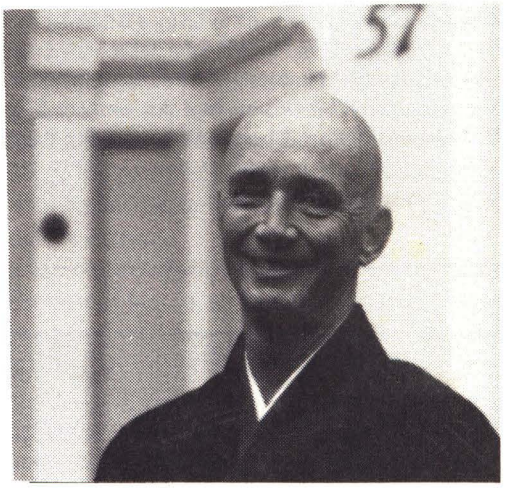
Gay Buddhist Activism

Hartford Street Zen Center Plans AIDS Hospice
by Tensho David Schneider



Issan Dorsey, head teacher at Hartford Street Zen Center
Photo by Gladys Hansen

When Issan Dorsey ran the kitchen of the San Francisco Zen Center, he used to say he didn't know how to cook. He'd meet with the meal prep crew before going to work, smoke a cigarette, drink coffee, maybe pass cookies around, and ask for ideas. "Read me that recipe—not the amounts or anything, I just want to get an idea what kind of stuff goes in." Two and a half chaotic hours later, a soul satisfying meal for 90 people would be served.

Though he ran the kitchens at each of the Zen Center's three practice locations, and worked with food for years, Issan carefully avoided learning how to cook. The Directors of each center would worry during his term; they invariably loved the food, but they were never able to instill in him reverence for the idea of a budget (or any other idea of reverence, for that matter.) " I cook good food, spend what I have to spend, and

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Buddhist Peace Fellowship Newsletter
Volume 10, No. 1-2, May 1988

National Office P.O. Box 4650 (1918 Bonita Avenue, 3rd floor), Berkeley, California 94704. (415) 548-3735.

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship was founded in 1978, as a network of individuals and local chapters, to bring a Buddhist perspective to the peace movement, and to bring the peace movement to the Buddhist community. Membership and subscription information are on the back cover. Single copies of this issue are $4 postpaid from BPF National Office. Chapter Addresses: See Page 43.

From the Editor

This is a very rich time for the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Joanna Macy and Christopher Titmuss will lead a public dialogue in Berkeley a week from today, Thich Nhat Hanh will lead a conference and retreat, "Watering the Seeds of American Buddhism," and many similar events are planned which we will host or co-host. In addition BPF's only book to date, *The Path of Compassion: Writings on Socially Engaged Buddhism*, is due back from the printer tomorrow, dressed in a lovely new jacket and fully revised inside. But even more significantly, it is the tenth anniversary of the founding of BPF on Aitken Roshi's porch in Maui. To celebrate this event, the founders and many active members of BPF during this groundbreaking decade will meet for a day and a half in June, to enjoy seeing one another, to review the past, and to articulate a vision of the present and the future. It would be wonderful if we could all be there, but space limitations mean we must participate in this Elders Meeting in other ways. I hope many of you will share your hopes for and vision of BPF with Therese Fitzgerald, the Office Director. (Address is to the left.) And I hope many of you can come to Berkeley on June 12, the day after the elders meet, for a national general meeting, to further this discussion. BPF has enormous value and enormous potential to help many of us integrate the aspects of our lives we find most essential. It has barely begun to tap this potential, and it would be wonderful if these events help us take the next step, shall we say into organizational maturity.

—Arnold Kotler

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Gay Buddhist Activism

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that's my budget, not the other way around."

A decade later, Issan finds himself Teacher-in-Residence at the Hartford Street Zen Center—a thriving meditation center in San Francisco's Castro district. He is also fiercely intent on opening a hospice for AIDS patients in the building next door, the first Buddhist hospice in America and only the second residential hospice in all of San Francisco, a city known internationally for its progressive attitudes and programs for AIDS patients. In both these endeavors his 'don't-know' attitude serves him well, keeping him flexible and open to unlikely connections, and protecting him from the forbidding problems inherent in operating either a meditation center or a hospice.

Granted, there are lots of meditation groups in the United States and the world, but none of the others is quite like Hartford Street. From the beginning, practitioners there had a strong sense of their historical importance and chronicled events carefully. The first newsletter, June 1983, contains a detailed account of how the Hartford Street Zen Center came to be.

Mr. Arthur White tells us that the building at 57 Hartford Street—a single family house with eight rooms on three upper floors and a basement, handsome but unremarkable on a block of many such houses—was the home of the San Francisco Dharmadhatu from 1973 to 1979. The group used the large, wood-panelled basement as a shrine room, while the resident teacher and students lived upstairs. Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche visited the center and blessed it with rice and invocations, in the traditional Tibetan way. The space was also blessed by His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa on one of his visits to San Francisco.

Eventually the Dharmadhatu moved to larger quarters, but one of the residents stayed, delighted to find himself at the geographical center of an explosively developing gay community. He and another resident began to discuss the difficulties they felt in practicing Buddhism, particularly Zen, and being gay. While sexual orientation had never been a reason for excluding anyone from any activity at the San Francisco Zen Center, several gay men felt less than comfortable with what they perceived as an overwhelmingly 'straight' vibe there.

Word went out via one of the gay papers and a surprisingly large meeting of similarly concerned men coalesced in April of 1980. Issan Dorsey attended the meeting, not as someone particularly disaffected with Zen Center zen, but as someone who had found a way to practice Buddhism, be gay, and remain unconflicted. He went, also, having discussed the issue with his teacher, Richard Baker-roshi. Baker-roshi, in turn, had just met with Robert Aitken-roshi, who had questioned him closely about how he was making Buddhist practice available to the burgeoning gay and lesbian community. Baker-roshi pointed to Issan and said "This is our contribution to the gay community." He and Aitken-roshi encouraged Issan to attend the meeting, find out the concerns, and be supportive.

The meeting turned into a series, held every Tuesday evening at 57 Hartford Street. The group at first called itself The Gay Buddhist Club, later changed the name to Maitri. "At first we'd just sit around and smoke cigarettes and complain about how hard it was to practice and be gay," recalls Issan. "Gradually, we began to meditate for a while before our discussions, and pretty soon there was a Buddha and incense and flowers...We've come a long way."

The group grew steadily, hosted many inspiring speakers, including Allen Ginsberg, Susan Murcott, and Baker-roshi. On December 8, 1981, the group formally opened a zendo at 57 Hartford Street, with Issan as 'spiritual advisor.' Today, the Hartford Street Zendo is a defiantly independent affiliate of the San Francisco Zen Center.

Of all the people attending the first Gay Buddhist Club meeting, none trod a more colorful path there than Issan. Born and raised in Santa Barbara well over fifty years ago, Issan—then Tommy—ran away to sea at the age of 18. He and his boyfriend were summarily discharged from the service for failing, as Issan puts it " to ask permission to be a Navy couple." Inherently outrageous, Issan put his talents to commercial use and began a long career as a female impersonator. Touring around the country performing took its toll, and he fell into a life of drugs, alcoholism, and sexual debauchery. In his first lecture as Head Monk at Tassajara, a lecture in which the monk recounts his or her personal history, Issan confidently told the assembly that he had fallen off more stages in Chicago than they even knew existed.

Such a life was not always humorous : Lenny Bruce gave him his first shot of heroin, and Issan vividly recalls waking up in a station wagon one time, on the way to the East River in New York. His friends, certain that he had overdosed, were heading to the docks to dispose of the body. "You've heard of being in the gutter, well, this *body* has been in the gutter."

Issan survived his thirteen years as a female impersonator and drug addict. He graduated from one anti-establishment style to another smoothly, and when the hippie movement blossomed in San Francisco, Issan was there, running an urban commune.

An all night adventure led him one morning to Sokoji temple, where he encountered Shunryu Suzuki-roshi, and zen meditation. "Dirty, high, barefoot, long-hair, beads... the whole mess," Issan sighs, remembering how he presented himself to the man who would become his Zen teacher.

Nonetheless, something clicked for Issan, and he became a regular practitioner. He went to Tassajara, Zen Mountain Center, to do a training period, and eventually took up a floating sort of residence among Zen Center's practice centers. He was ordained as a priest (Tokudo Ceremony) in 1975, and served as Head Monk at Tassajara in 1979.

Issan's most unique contribution to Zen Center was his ability to act as a buffer, or channel, between the rather severe countenance of the Center itself, and the assorted strange or deranged people who often approached it . During his years in

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Exploring the Heart of Healing in AIDS

A Conversation with Stephen Levine, Ram Dass, and Daniel Barnes

Stephen: Ram Dass and I were looking into the words "Exploring the Heart of Healing in AIDS," and he said, "You know dying isn't mentioned anywhere in it." It became evident how small, how shallow, we tend to consider healing. How we miss the point. Healing may not be changing the nature of the body. I don't know exactly what healing is, but my sense of it is "to touch with love that which you have often touched with fear and hatred." It seems that when we start to move toward making room for ourselves, making room for our pain and room for joy in our heart, healing is occurring. Whether or not it manifests in the body may be secondary. Some of the most miraculous healings I've ever seen were in people on the way to dying. They left no traces of unfinished business, no broken hearts, no closed minds. They did what they could to finish, to touch with love that which they may have touched with confusion in the past. They healed their life, not just their body.

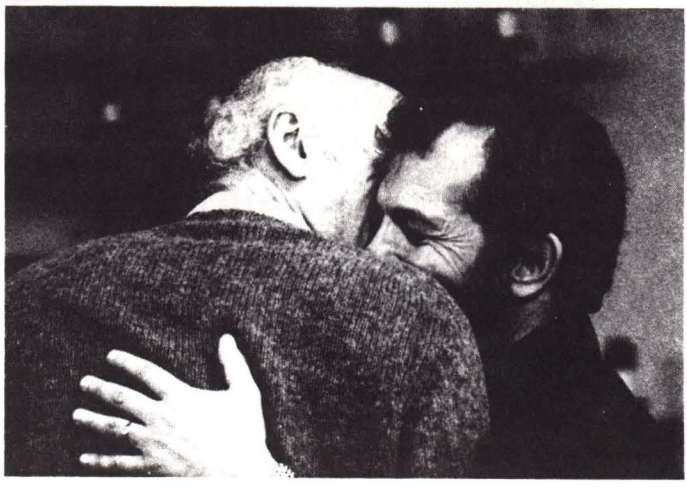

Photo courtesy of The ACCESS Group

Those people we know who are working with healing often seem to come to the place where there is no such thing as healing *my* body. It is healing the body we all share, entering into the shared heart to experience the shared pain in the body we all share. At the end of Buddhist meditation, one shares the merit. You are not elbowing your way into heaven. The path is not that narrow; in fact it has no edges. Many people I know, at the end of healing meditations, send it out to all sentient beings. The pain in their knees is the pain in all those 10,000 knees.

Two hundred thousand people die each day on this planet. So when you are lying there in pain, you are *absolutely* not alone. It seems to be shared healing. Finding in the separate the universal seems to be one of the remarkable primary stages in letting healing in, in trusting that healing doesn't have to do with life and death, it has to do with just this moment, the heart of this moment. I think that all of our work is to let healing in—not to think it, not to presuppose it, not to have a model of it, but to open to it, to let it in.

Ram Dass: We are being healed out of our separateness, through shared caring, to our shared heart. Realizing this is an intense moment of truth. We come together to reflect about and bring forth in each of us a quality that allows us to be with others in a way that is healing. We are being healed out of a sickness of a society. It is a collective sickness, not a personal sickness. It is a sickness of separateness, isolation, paranoia, and loneliness. The intense reality of sickness, death, and the unknown suddenly awakens us, and we realize we are alive again. How strange that it takes this kind of trauma to awaken us. How strong the socialization process is that reinforces our isolation that it takes this drama to bring us back together.

Underlying these ideas is a basic premise: that life is an opportunity for growth, an opportunity for awakening out of the illusion of separateness. Once this is recognized, every experience becomes grist for the mill, the stuff through which you can awaken. It is not just when you are sitting in meditation, or sitting before a spiritual teacher, or climbing a mountain in the Himalayas. It is when you are dealing with your parents or with the IRS. These are all spiritual teachings, chances to awaken out of the stuff that keeps us asleep, suffering, and in pain. It is all an opportunity. At the simplest level, the antidote to burnout is the perspective that we are growing beings and that everything, including AIDS, including our own lives and our own deaths and approaching deaths, are opportunities for growth.

For this to work, it requires some kind of philosophy or perspective on life. If you figure than when you die, you're dead and that's it, and that all you were was your body and when that decays, you decay, when your body dies, you die, then why would you want to grow at the time of dying? For what? Towards what? But if you suspect that that model may be just a model, then you can look between the cracks, between the veil and see other possibilities. You can learn how to watch the place in yourself that is not just your body. Then it makes sense to use everything around you.

Most of the time we deal with people who think they are just their body. They suffer intensely all through life because they have to milk as much as possible from every second, because they believe that's all there is. If they don't accomplish it now, later they're going to be dead. It's very frightening. An AIDS volunteer said to me last week, "My problem in dealing with by buddy, the fellow I work with, is that he's my age, and I feel that I don't want to lose all those opportunities for life experiences and die young." In a way, the deepest pain is for people who have not yet touched the possibility that they are more than

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their own bodies. That is the deepest pain, because the body, even those in the height of their powers and virility, are decaying at this moment. It's built into the system. Buddha's basic teaching was that everything is changing. If you cling to what is changing and try to hold onto it, you'll suffer. How can you not suffer?

I have some stock. Someone gave it to me, and it went way up. Suddenly I went from being someone poor to someone who is rich. I mean relatively rich, not rich-rich. Not like Bhagwan Rajneesh. It just happened. So I started to feel like I was rich. It didn't change anything, but I felt like I was rich. One morning last Fall I was looking for a bun to have, and we left the hotel to look for a cinnamon roll or something. We walked into the Safeway, which was the only place we could find—it wasn't a French bakery or anything, it was just a Safeway, very simple and humble—but I was feeling rich and expansive. I could certainly buy a cinnamon bun. Then my eye flashed across the newspaper, and it said, "Biggest stock drop in years," and suddenly I lost my appetite. I didn't want the cinnamon roll. Just like that, suffering from clinging.

What can we do for our brothers and sisters who see a diagnosis of AIDS as an indictment, a judgment, or a death sentence. I think the answer to that question is in *being*, not in doing. If a place is opening inside of us and we experience a kind of rebirth which we want to share with others, it is nearly impossible to convince anyone else of anything that essential, that long-conditioned. But if you *be* it, that which is *it* in them will be drawn. They will have trust, not in your words, but in your being. It is like the truth. In a sense, you can't know the truth, you can only be it. Knowledge is too superficial. The doing would be too superficial. The being says more than words. This is frustrating because you want to help. But we have to remember how frustrating it is when someone tries to help us, and we don't want help.

Daniel: A few years ago, I knew a lot more about all the AIDS business than I do now. Now I don't know much except that sometimes life is very difficult for persons with AIDS, and sometimes life is very difficult for persons who do not have AIDS. Sometimes death is very difficult for persons with AIDS, and sometimes death is very difficult for people who do not have AIDS. This sounds simple, but it took me six years of experience to really believe it, to really accept it.

The ACCESS Group

In 1981, as a doctoral student at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco, Daniel Barnes began working with persons with AIDS. Later that year, he became one of the first Shanti support volunteers and an early member of the AIDS biopsychosocial group at UCSF. He has been a consultant and program evaluator for the AIDS Activity Office in the Department of Public health. In 1984, he became a counselor on the AIDS unit at San Francisco General Hospital, where he provided support to hundreds of persons with AIDS, their families, friends, and loved ones. After two years on the unit, Daniel formed The ACCESS Group, to share the understanding that death is not a failure, and that healing is so much more than changing the nature of the body.

During the past two years, The ACCESS Group has produced a number of events reflecting on spiritual practice, meditation, relationships, and service, with Ram Dass, Stephen Levine, Jack Kornfield, Robert Hall, and Achaan Sumedho. Initially centering on life-threatening illness, including AIDS, these gatherings explored the possibility that healing may be more than changing the nature of the body, and that gentle work on oneself is where the heart of healing lies. Through the variety of perspectives offered by the teachers who participated, the scope of these events expanded to include healing of suffering in all its forms.

The proceeds from each ACCESS Group conference have been used to videotape the events. What has emerged is an excellent video series, "Exploring the Heart of Healing," which is comprised of 7 audio and 7 video tapes. Each tape includes material on AIDS, but does not separate AIDS from the suffering we all share. For a complete listing of available tapes, upcoming events, or further information, contact The ACCESS Group, 4 Cielo Lane, #4D, Novato, CA 94949, (415) 883-6111.

The first offering in the series was a conference with Stephen Levine and Ram Dass. The conversation with Ram Dass and Stephen excerpted above is an example of what the ACCESS Group offers through its work, conferences, and tapes.

"What one takes in by contemplation one pours out in love."
—Meister Eckhart

"...the flavor of this practice is taking care of the smallest details of our daily life." —Zen Master Dogen

I slept and dreamt that life was joy
I awoke and saw that life was service
I acted and behold, service was joy
—Tagore

Gay Buddhist Activism

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show business there was very little craziness that Issan didn't see or experience. When the full moon would attract the homeless, despairing, mumbling, and unkempt to Zen Center's front stairs, it was Issan who could be with them most solicitously. When zen students would find themselves spiralling downward in inexplicable depressions, they often turned to Issan for support. When crisis erupted in people's lives—trouble with drugs, or relationships, or legal matters—Issan would understand. He'd been there.

When the Zen Center itself experienced a painful schism in 1983, Issan remained in close touch with both sides. He declared himself Baker-roshi's student, but also took a position on Zen Center's board of directors, and worked for reconciliation. He eventually left San Francisco to work intensively with Baker-roshi in Santa Fe.

During his absence, the Hartford Street Zen Center decided they needed Issan, if they were going to make the practice there equal to the challenges they were facing. They raised money, wrote to Santa Fe, and after eight months away, Issan returned to San Francisco and took up residence at Hartford Street.

Since coming back, Issan has stressed steady, daily, mindful practice for the residents and members of the community. "Careful attention to the details of daily life" is a kind of watchword for him these days. Living as he does in the midst of the gay community, Issan is also a constant witness to daily death. Students, donors, and a horrifying number of the practicing community around Hartford Street have fallen prey to AIDS. Issan has done funerals, been on panels, and led retreats for members of the larger gay community—all focused on responses to the epidemic. "These kids are dying all around me," he says, looking around. "I want to take care of them." To that end he has committed himself to creating a Buddhist hospice.

As of this writing, the Hartford Street Zen Center has been providing 24 hour in-house care for several weeks for one of the students dying from AIDS. Hartford Street is already seen as a collection point for medical supplies; when someone connected with the community dies of AIDS, the friends and family are bringing the wheelchairs, beds, and other supplies to Issan. Issan has secured a promise from his next door neighbors to sell their house, if he can find a buyer and he is actively looking. In the mean time, they are paying the neighbors whatever they can scrape together each month, to hold the space. A hospice training program is underway at the San Francisco Zen Center; Issan participates in that, and members of the program come to Hartford Street to get actual experience. As Philip Whalen said "Issan is just going to do a hospice and that's the end of it."

The temptation arises to see Issan as a kind of local Mother Teresa. Not to deny that in the least (though perhaps Avalokitesvara would be closer to my image of him) I suspect his primary motivation is quite simple. "The Path is under your feet," he says, in his lectures. There are a lot of sick people on Issan Dorsey's path. He is going to help them out.

Tensho David Schneider is a writer, calligrapher, Hellerwork body worker, Zen priest, and Vajrayana practitioner in San Francisco.

MAITRI

Buddhist Home and Hospice for People with AIDS

The proposed MAITRI hospice in San Francisco is a first step towards a Buddhist response to the AIDS epidemic. The name MAITRI was chosen because it is an ancient Buddhist term that conveys, not only an attitude of "friendliness" (literally) but also a feeling of how to prepare the ground of sangha life. From this basis of friendliness, wisdom and compassion take root in our social environment and allow the teaching to manifest openly. Without maitri, that is, without the friendliness that arises from an understanding of the interconnectedness of all being, there is no real basis for enlightened action in the world. Based in this intention to develop and manifest care and compassion for all beings as an active expression of Buddha's teachings, Issan Dorsey and the Hartford Street Zen Center members have been attending to the daily needs of people with AIDS and ARC for several years.

MAITRI was founded in the summer of 1987 as a natural extension of Hartford Street Zen Center's existing work in caring for the sick and dying as well as a recognition that a more planned and formal approach could accomplish this in an increasingly wide-reaching and effective way. They are now planning to purchase a building at 61 Hartford Street, next to the Hartford Street Zen Center, to create a small hospice that will provide care for five people at a time (the average stay for people with AIDS in a hospice is 28 days). A residential hospice is necessary because many people with AIDS do not have the financial and family support to enable them to die at home. This facility will enable us to establish an "environment of service and care" which can deal with the complex issues that are arising around the care of people with AIDS. In addition, we want to achieve our goals in a way that expresses compassion and understanding and creates peace for people with AIDS, their families, and their caregivers.

Because there is no existing cure, MAITRI operates in the belief that the best treatment is to offer understanding, support, comfort, care and compassion, "environments of service and care" which provide the understanding of interdependence necessary to meet the psychological and spiritual needs, as well as the physical demands, of those affected by the AIDS epidemic.

To establish MAITRI hospice will take the effort and resources of the wider Buddhist community and with this first step we can all begin to share in the joy of offering the reality of our Buddhist practice, not only to those immersed in the deep tragedy of the AIDS epidemic itself, but to the wider society as well. Please help with your advice and financial support. All contributions are tax-deductible and checks can be made out to MAITRI. For any further information please contact Issan Dorsey or Kijun Steven Allen at Hartford Street Zen Center, 57 Hartford Street, CA 94114, (415) 861-6779.

S.F. Zen Center Hospice

Training Program for Volunteers

For 2500 years Buddhists have contemplated suffering, old age, sickness, and death as a means of being fully alive. Caring for the dying is an act of compassion which may arise naturally from this reflection. The newly created Hospice Program of the San Francisco Zen Center is an unfolding of this practice, a fusion of spiritual insight and practical social action.

The Hospice movement, taking its name from the ancient tradition of way-stations for weary pilgrims, seeks to discover and provide new, humane ways of caring for the contemporary pilgrim who is passing through life's station. It is dedicated to the fact that we all deserve a dignified and honorable death. At Zen Center their vision is to train volunteers to provide supportive services to individuals with terminal illness. Hospice is a concept of care, which includes spiritual, psychological and physical support at this great time of need and vulnerability. There is an affinity between those who are cultivating the "listening mind" through practice and those who simply need to be heard. Taking this as a focus, the Program has tried to attract volunteers with a meditation or spiritual practice, though this is not a requirement.

The Zen Center Hospice Program works in conjunction with related, existing programs to avoid a duplication of services, providing in-home supportive care and hospital-based services. At the Hartford Street Zen Center MAITRI Program, in a spiritual supportive environment, Zen Center volunteers help provide round-the-clock comprehensive care for community members dying of AIDS, integrating the physical and spiritual needs of the client. At one moment there is feeding and the intimate act of caring for a suffering body. In the next moment there is sitting, cultivating spaciousness and receptivity through meditation. In still another moment there is passing time with a TV game show or a science fiction movie.

The Zen Center Program also helps provide volunteers for the Hospice at San Francisco General Hospital, working with those who are "slipping through the cracks," rejected by the system—the poor, the medically indigent, refugees, men and women living alone in Tenderloin hotels. In most cases, their clients have no knowledge or interest in Buddhism. So the work is not to be a Buddhist but to become Buddha.

Zen Center Hospice volunteers "are learning that there is very little we can do for the terminally ill. In fact, we can do just three things. We care for their bodies when they cannot, we listen without judgment, and we give them the sense that we care and the promise that we will not abandon them."

In creating the program and considering its expansion, including plans for a Hospice Home, they are confronted with a great, sometimes overwhelming, need. Daily, individuals die in isolation at San Francisco General or Laguna Honda Hospitals. The burden of care has stretched the resources of these institutions, particularly since the AIDS epidemic. Additional services and facilities are clearly needed. The Hospice program may

S.F. Zen Center Hospice *(continued from page 7)*

have only a minor effect on a worldwide problem, but they can and do have a profound effect on the individuals served.

The ZC Hospice Program intends to expand the program to include more volunteers, a bereavement program, and a respite program for caregivers at Green Gulch Farm. In the future, they hope to open a small facility in which individuals can die with dignity. All volunteers accepted into the program will be required to attend a training course. Volunteers will learn to work directly with individuals terminally ill with cancer and people with AIDS, their families and significant others. Participants in the course receive training in basic nursing and patient care skills, hospice philosophy, family dynamics, pain and symptom management, communications skills and the process of grief and loss. A variety of meditation practices will also be an integral part of the training program. To accomplish these ends, the Zen Center Hospice Program will need the support of the Sangha. Currently, the hospice has need for practical support volunteers, drivers, office workers, computer volunteers, and more. Interested individuals should contact: Frank Ostaseski, Coordinator, Zen Center Hospice, 300 Page Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. (415) 863-2910.

All are most welcome to attend a June 30 benefit for the Zen Center Hospice Program at the Unitarian Church in San Francisco. Brother David Steindl-Rast will join Jack Kornfield in a Buddhist/Christian dialogue exploring healing and the dying process. Tickets are available through the Zen Center.

LA Buddhist AIDS Project *(continued from page 1)*

Five Goals

The Buddhist AIDS Project has expressed strong support for these five goals:

• **Meditation training for those affected by AIDS** — Particular techniques include working with the breath to accept the presence of pain with empathy and less fear, and techniques of opening to the needs of others while cutting through self-centered preoccupation.

•**A contemplative support community** — Many who live and work with AIDS need support and a context for listening to themselves regularly and deeply. A contemplatively oriented service community can provide a rare opportunity to bring clear, spacious awareness to day-to-day difficulties and problems associated with AIDS.

•**Accurate information about AIDS for Buddhists** — The Buddhist AIDS Project maintains up-to-date information on medical progress, risk reduction, and community referrals, and makes this information available to all who need it.

• **Hospice training** — In many cities, traditional hospital resources are already overwhelmed in caring for persons with AIDS. Hospices, intermediate care facilities, and residences are gradually developing to provide caring and more cost-effective environments. Most alternatives to hospitals rely heavily on volunteer help. The Buddhist AIDS Project intends to provide hospice volunteer training, drawing on many resources including Buddhist approaches to dying, death, and post-death experiences.

• **Spiritual resource for AIDS agencies** — Counseling and "pastoral care" by qualified Buddhist teachers and volunteers is available to the AIDS-affected community through the Project.

The Buddhist AIDS Project and KDC have offered day-long retreats on "The Practice of Taking and Sending in Working with Life Threatening Illness," and AIDS information workshops focusing on medical, psychosocial, and minority issues. The Project maintains a Speakers Bureau and representatives have consulted with and given talks at several Los Angeles Buddhist centers, has designed a Buddhist-flavored Hospice Volunteer Training Program, and maintains an extensive bibliography and a small library on AIDS-related topics, hospice care, counseling, and Buddhist perspectives on death, dying, grief, *and living*. For further information, contact the Buddhist AIDS Project, 14252 Culver Drive #A-431, Irvine, California 92714, (213) 859-5536.

Suffering is Not Enough

A Peace Walk for AIDS Victims in Los Angeles

by Cyndi Smith

The day began early with empty streets and spacious parking lots soon to be filled with many vivacious spirits. Waiting outside the gates to Paramount Studio, the line of strangers began to grow and friendships to be born. There was shouting of greetings and welcoming hugs. The air was thick with anticipation and celebration.

Finally the gates swung open and the march past cameras and police began. The AIDS Project of Los Angeles' (APLA) organization and welcome was a pleasant greeting that helped inspire each participant to complete the 10 kilometer walk. Indeed, the care displayed was as important as the task itself. The participants were a diverse group: many gay men, families with young children, people in wheelchairs, lesbian couples, a blind woman with her trusted guide, several hundred dogs with their owners, and many single people like me, perhaps alone or with friends. What a representation of the 10,000 spirits, some whom soon would be leaving this life, their bodies frail and vulnerable in the end stages of a greatly feared and misunderstood disease: AIDS. The PWA's (People with AIDS) determination to make one more effort to support other PWAs inspired all 8,000 of us to unite in this walk that helped raise money for APLA and to help overcome the ignorance and rejection that has created so much suffering.

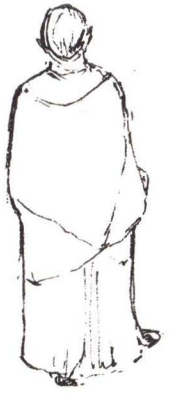
On the walk there was much laughter, some singing and shouting, colorful banners and balloons, many cheerful greetings, and some startled looks from passers by. I held a photo of Peter in my hand. This walk was to honor him, his family, and our journey together that began in 1983 when Peter was 6 months old and ended March 5, 1985 when he was 2 years old in the intensive care unit of the hospital where I worked. A year later, the confusion surrounding his illness and death was put to rest. Peter died of AIDS. He contracted the virus from a blood transfusion, and the month he died the first test to detect the AIDS antibody in blood became available to the public. Peter was the first infant at our hospital to contract AIDS, and there was much doubt in some doctors' minds he could have the disease, especially when he recovered miraculously from a blood clotting problem that had not been responsive to treatment and appeared fatal. Ignorance about AIDS was significant and the suspicion Peter might have the virus made many nurses fear they might contract it. Thus caring for Peter was thought to be a curse, and that attitude created an atmosphere of resentment and isolation.

However, Peter was a blessing to me. His first smile after months of care warmed my heart and helped it open to the confusion surrounding him. He taught me to embrace suffering and chaos rather than push such experiences away. During the last three months of his life, I would go sit with him after work into the early morning hours. He couldn't respond any longer, but I could feel his presence in the metta meditation we shared together. Those last three months were a nightmare. In the beginning I wanted him to be free of suffering and die, but I learned he would leave in his own time. He was such a fighter. There was very little peace when he died. his family lost everything, their home and business, in the struggle to help him survive. So much heartache and confusion. Some viewed his death with disappointment, others with a sigh of relief, some with pity, anger, or sadness—all equally poignant.

Peter and his family were Korean Protestants. His funeral was the first time I was able to attend a Christian service and transcend the aversion I felt since leaving the Church 15 years ago. Peter's life and death were gifts to me: an experiential teaching in letting go of desires of how life and death should be and learning to accept life and death compassionately, however they unfold. The anger, fear, doubt, confusion, and heartache experienced with Peter is like that of all whose lives have been involved in the struggles of living with AIDS. So how could this walk be so full of laughter and joy? Like the words of Thich Nhat Hanh: "Suffering is not enough. Life is both dreadful and wonderful. To practice meditation is to be in touch with both aspects. Smiling means that we are ourselves, that we have sovereignty over ourselves, that we are not drowned in forgetfulness. How can I smile when I am filled with so much sorrow? It is natural—you need to smile to your sorrow because you are more than your sorrow." This walk was a peace offering that honored those whose lives have been affected by AIDS...all of us. It was truly a celebration of the Dharma.

I wish to thank the Los Angeles chapter of BPF for its donation to the Buddhist AIDS Project, and to Ordinary Dharma and LA Friends of Seva for sponsoring my walk.

Cyndi Smith is a member of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.



A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society
An Interview with Sulak Sivaraksa

Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand—or Siam, as he prefers the country's ancient name—is a leading figure of nonviolence and development in Asia. He is the coordinator of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, a founder of the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development, and a member of the International Advisory Board of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. He edits many publications including Seeds of Peace, *which is published in English, and he has written several books in English. His wide-ranging work includes arranging conferences of poor farmers and fishermen throughout the third world so they can discuss their common difficulties, inviting Sri Lankan monks to Thai monasteries to have a respite from the tension at home, seeking to help the Chittagong Hills Tract tribals, and working in Thailand and with BPF on many other projects. .*

In August of last year, Sulak attended the Buddhist-Christian Dialogue Conference in Berkeley, California, and while he was here, he gave two talks to Bay Area BPF groups, sharing with us something of his work. He was also interviewed for Radio for Peace, a short wave station run by the University for Peace in Costa Rica, by Susan Supriano. We thought BPF Newsletter readers would enjoy meeting Sulak through reading the transcript of Susan's interview.

Susan Supriano: Sulak, I know you work and write about Buddhism and Social Action, but I really don't know much more about your work. Can you explain more what it is that you write about and what your ideas are.

Sulak: There are three books in English. One is called *A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society*, the second one is called *Siamese Resurgence*, and the third one is called *Religion and Development.*

You may notice I use the word Siam and Siamese rather than Thai and Thailand because that is something wrong. When the country's name was changed from Siam to Thailand, it was changed by a dictator enforcing us to give up our way of life, to adopt the so-called Western way of living—Western dress, Western fashions and, worst of all, the Western development model, which means that the rich become richer and the poor remain poor or even become poorer. Worse than that, it means the natural environment being destroyed tremendously for the benefit of the very few.

So some of us who feel that, we practice Buddhism, and Buddhism means that you have to relate first to yourself, to be peaceful within yourself. At the same time you must be peaceful with your neighbor—try not to exploit your neighbors. On top of that, you must be peaceful with the natural surroundings —not to exploit other animals and other natural phenomena.

If you feel that, you must not only preach, you must practice. You have to work from the bottom up. You have to build up the local communities to build up something alternatively from what the government is trying to do. They want to promote more trade, they want to promote more consumer culture, they want to promote more militarism in the name of natural security, and we think it's all wrong. A poor country should not spend too much money on weapons, on misery. We feel that money should be spent more on livelihood, what the Buddhists call the four requisites: food, shelter, medicine, clothing. And all these we can do within our own natural surroundings. We use our own medicine rather than importing the Western medicine. We use our own farming methods, rather than chemical fertilizers. And so on. And I think that's what we are building up at the local levels. We call this "a Buddhist alternative."

Susan: When the U.S. gives money, it's usually for the military and for things not especially useful to local people. I know that tourism is the biggest industry in Thailand. I was recently there and I must say it's a very nice place to go as a tourist, very comfortable, even as a budget tourist, and such wonderful people. I hate to see what is happening. What specifically are you doing about that?

Sulak: Most tourists don't realize that when they buy local goods cheaply, most of it comes from child laborers, and a lot from people who are denied even the minimum wage. We are now building up what we call "alternative tourism," so that if the tourists are serious, they can see the reality of Bangkok and the surrounding cities. We also have a project called Life Tourism so people can see what really takes place. The U.S. in particular is a dominant part playing around in our country, particularly since the Korean War and the Vietnam War. During the Vietnam War you even had your troops stationed in our country. The bombing of Hanoi took place from just outside Bangkok. We have not yet gotten over that period.

Our elite leaders just want to follow the American lines, which may be suitable for them—their way of life, their lifestyle is very much American. McDonald's is now coming into our country, you can see Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola everywhere. This of course is endangering our people because we are capable of having our own water, making our own drinks. This is disappearing. That is why we want to bring them back in a very meaningful way, and we feel that Buddhism has a lot to offer.

We don't want to hate the oppressor. We don't want to hate those who have done something wrong to us, but we want them to understand us, we want to relate to them meaningfully. To us peace within and peace without must link. Peace is a means, and peace is an end. Everything we do, we try to do it nonviolently.

Susan: As a tourist I felt fairly aware of why things were so cheap. I thought a lot as I do in many countries where I go traveling, is it better to buy or not buy these things? Am I helping or not? How do you think a conscious tourist should act?

Sulak: The question is fairly complicated. Neither here nor there, you know? The best thing to do, again this is a Buddhist way of answering, you have to be enlightened, you have to know the whole set-up. If you go there as an ignorant one, you obviously don't really know [the situation], but with good will, that's help number one. If you're willing to change your consciousness, that's help number two. Number three, get more facts and then try to alert your people at home. The solution is not simple, because if you're not buying it doesn't help, or if you buy it doesn't really help. If you have more facts, you alert the people, sometimes you can even protest to the Thai government, and sometimes protest is not enough, you must have alternative models.

The Thai government has declared this year as the International Year of Tourism. I'm afraid to see what the result will be. The Japanese and German men, as well as those from other countries, come to Thailand as "sex tourists," they just go to enjoy the prostitutes. They go to Bangkok, they can have girls, boys, anything. It's dreadful. Anybody with conscience can start campaigning against that.

The cheap labor and material is much delicate. You have to know more facts, and you have to campaign more. That is what we are doing—public campaigning. We also seek new lifestyles by going back to the way our forefathers lived. Not that we want to turn the clock back, but we feel that a lot of the things we have been told to look down upon have much meaning. Our own traditional farming methods, particularly the Buddhists who meditate to put our mind at rest before we work. We work and play part and parcel together. Not work, you see, in one compartment and play in the other compartment. We collaborate together. We have communal farming, and we share what we get. What we have we eat and we share, and what is left over we sell.

Now with the new development model, you must do everything for sale. In a poor country the more you sell, the more you are indebted, because the price of rice is so cheap. And now the Americans are also dumping rice in Asia to compete with our rice. And yet we have to buy chemical fertilizers which are very expensive, and not good for our natural surroundings, for our soil, or for ourselves. So that's why we have to look alternatively.

Susan: Do you talk to people about this, are you organizing? Are you part of an organization yourself?

Sulak: We have a group of young people, Buddhist monks, and lay people, we work together. Farming without chemical fertilizer, farming for our own survival not for sale, this is taking place. There is meditation practice, reviving the local customs, singing songs when we work, and so on. It is not a movement but it is taking place here and there, up and down the country. To me, this is something very good. And we try to link these with other Buddhist countries—with Sri Lanka, with some part of India, eventually we hope to link with Japan. If Buddhism is to survive, it must survive meaningfully so the people can live with joy and live with hope. Although the life could be simple, it is dignified. That's what we try to do.

At the same time, we also work with those of other faiths—we work with Christians, we work with Moslems—because we regard them as our brothers and sisters. We learn from them and they learn from us, and I find this very, very healthy.

I am the president of the Thai Inter-Religious Comission for Development. That is a local group. Regionally, I am the Chairman of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, which works in Southeast Asia, South Asia, East Asia, as well as some countries in the Pacific. It's a large area, but small groups of people linking together, trying to work on different models of development.

Susan: So, is it more your approach to set up alternative models, than it is to argue with the government or with big business?

Sulak: It is both. First we have to build up the base, working with small people. The small people are very important, yet people don't pay any attention to them. Once you pay notice to them, their livelihood is very important. For instance with small fishermen, big companies are taking away a lot of fish from them. They haven't enough even to eat. So obiously they have to look for a new lifestyle, a new alternative, cultivate something for their own living. And these people could be very well articulating their own problems, their own suffering, and their own alternatives. What we try to do is to learn from them. We feel their livelihood must also build up within their own cultural surroundings. They must be proud of their own cultures. Yet most governments teach them to look down on their own cultures, and look up to the universal culture, consumer culture, the Coca-Cola syndrome, which to me could be very dangerous.

Susan: Usually people think that it is to their advantage to get paying jobs. They think that they should be indebted to these corporations and factories that come in and give them a job, that that's going to be an improvement. We can see very clearly that it's not an improvement, it's exactly the opposite. Do you have to work against that mentality?

Sulak: Luckily, when you work with the poor and the very poor, they know it, they understand it. Because most companies exploit them. The Japanese companies come to our part of the world and they don't even allow you to have labor unions. Secondly, most of the companies pollute our resources. They are not allowed to have them in Japan, so they have them in Southeast Asia. This is a new kind of culture. It is shocking to us, you see. The people realize that, and that's why they want to have something alternative from the models available.

Susan: What does development mean? Often development means exactly the opposite of the way it's commonly used. How do you define it?

Sulak: I define development to mean human development. You

must grow, physically first, and I think in the West you sometimes think of physical in terms of fitness. You are afraid of death, for instance. For us Buddhists, we don't feel that way. Physical development means that you understand your body. Then, it must go side by side with your mental development. The mind must also be developed; body and mind develop together, not separately, so that a person becomes whole. Development also means social development. You must relate to others meaningfully. If your body and your mind develop, that you don't exploit yourself, which is very difficult. Many times we exploit ourselves unknowingly, and then we exploit others, sometimes in the name of goodness, in the name of God, in the name of social justice. That is why you have to develop yourself, and you develop yourself in relationship with others. This is where men and woman could respect each other, old and young respect each other, different races respect each other, and beyond that, in a Buddhist context, development means you must develop yourself to be in harmony with the whole natural environment, because the word Dhamma in Buddhism is the same word as nature. "Dhamma Chari"—born of nature, born of Dhamma. So development for us means wholistic development.

Susan: I was thinking of the terms "developed" and "undeveloped" countries, and bringing "development" to "undeveloped" countries.

Sulak: Unfortunately, this is a Western concept. Development in Western terms means more money, more gadgets, hence more armaments, and more exploitation and devastation of natural surroundings, imbalance of nature. I think this is a bad model. And unfortunately a lot of governments in the Third World want to develop that model. And they themselves want to live like people in Tokyo, like people in New York. It's unreal, because we all can't live that way because there are not enough natural resources to sustain that kind of life. So development in the Buddhist context, according to my understanding, is that we look to the poor, look at the poor people, and then try to understand what their aspiration is, and respect them and and try to understand them. And at the same time, they themselves must be proud of their own natural surroundings, their own culture inherited from their ancestors.

I can give you an example very easily. People like those who live in Ladakh, very, very far away. The worst part of Tibet, but now it is an autonomous kingdom between India and China. Up to the 1970's, the people of Ladakh were very proud. They had no tourists coming to their country. By Western standards they were poor, but they were proud and they had a fairly happy community. But when the tourists came there, they just wanted to imitate the tourists. And now the Indians are building roads up there, so they want to imitate the Indians. Luckily there is one English lady living in Ladakh for 20 years now. She is writing a play. Some Ladakh people went to New York and came home. People asked what they liked in New York. They said the poor people in New York want to dress fashionably. They eat white bread, like the bread the Indians sell to us. The richer people, who are more mature, eat natural food, like the food our forefathers made. They wear cotton clothes, buying a lot of it from this part of the world.

This showed that development is a two-way street. The more educated, more enlightened people in this country know that development doesn't only mean material, only the stuff promoted by the consumer culture. They feel respect for nature. The spiritual dimension is very important. We have that in our traditions, and yet, we have been brainwashed by the media, advertisements, television, that we must wear jeans, Arrow shirts, drink Coca-Cola, Pepsi Cola, and so on. That is why my work is, on the one hand, helping people remember we have to go back to our roots. Development means, as I said, physical, mental, social, natural, in order that we, everyone can go towards wisdom, go towards the truth, go towards peace. So peace is also within, peace is also a means, peace is also an end. And if you develop that kind of attitude, then despite the fact that some consumers, some big industrialists, some big capitalists come to your country as oppressors, as exploiters, we don't hate them. To me that is very important.

If you hate them you start hatredness in you. It's boiling inside. You have to understand them, and in a way pity them. But you must not just remain goody-goody and let them exploit you. You must build up enough resistance, understand political analysis, how to resist them, and at the same time try not to be hateful to them. To me, this is a very, very important Buddhist contribution. That is why we publish a magazine called *Seeds of Peace* in English from Bangkok.

Not only the Buddhist message. We work through an organization called Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development. We work also with Christians, and with Moslems. We feel that the great religious traditions have one thing in common—peace as a means, peace as an end. Unfortunately sometimes in the name of your religion, in the name of your nation, you wage war. In the name of capitalism or selfishness, unknowingly, you exploit others. That's why you have to build up awareness—self awareness, social awareness, awareness of the environment. Then you become more humble, and then you understand others as your friends, not your enemies. We are all fellow sufferers in samsara, in this wandering in the cycle of life. I think our attitudes towards other people will be much more wholesome. Also we will be more respectful towards animals, as well as to trees, rivers, mountains, forests. That is very important. Then we can re-cultivate our forests, not pollute our rivers, and not pollute our minds—that's the most important of all.

Susan: Really, that's certainly true. Earlier you said that the people, the Thai people, the poor people understand what's happening with the earth, and understand about the pollution and the exploitation and what these big companies are doing. You said that you also work with the government. What kind of response do you get from official circles?

Sulak: It's difficult to generalize. Some people in official circles understand this now. Our education imitates the Western

system of education, and when you imitate, you're bound to be second rate, third rate. You can't really compete with what you imitate. So what happens? You spend 12 years in school, and four more years in higher education, and the result is that we have about 200,000 unemployed graduates. This is just one fact, and obviously some people realize that we have to change. Education in the old days, as I said, was, number one, to know yourself, number two, to know your own society, number three, to understand the natural environment. But now education means that you have to know that Washington was the first President of the United States, and Lincoln, etcetera. It may be useful, but not essential. How many states the United States has, to know the names of the people in the Cabinet, and so on, is not essential, not relevant. I think education must be for you to have a good mental attitude, for you to have a good livelihood. Good livelihood means that you depend on yourself, on your own soil. Most of our people were farmers, and they produced for their own consumption, and what was left over then was for sale. And now we have been taught to produce more and more for sale. In poor countries, the more you sell, the more you are in debt. There are no ethics in international trade yet. The richer countries can tell us what they want.

Susan: Is there enough food in Thailand? Are they exporting more rice than is good for the country?

Sulak: We are known as the Rice Bowl of Asia, yet 60% of our young people are now malnutritious because we are told to export more rice. We don't have enough rice to eat. We export vegetables, green vegetables to Hong Kong, to Singapore, and yet we people have not enough vegetables to eat. And on top of that all those vegetables are full of chemical fertilizers which are very harmful. Our ancestors never did that, never had that, and we had enough to live. That's why we have to change. And the good thing is that many people are now changing.

Many of our Buddhist monks, many of our local leaders in various communities, now realize this. So on the one hand I'm very, very glad, although on the other hand I'm very sad that the people are malnutritious. But we are now working very hard. And in this country also, there is a Thai-American Project in Santa Monica, c/o the Friends Center there—we work very closely with the Quakers—and they set up a project to send some money to help feed the children. For 50¢ you can help one Thai child for meals for the whole day. It's good also for some Americans to fast, give up one meal, and you can feed so many children. And not only to help with money, I think this also raises the consciousness of some Americans that your lifestyle is sometimes . . . , that you consume too much, at the expense of others. You know, one piece of your hamburger you eat, in my part of the world that piece of meat the whole family eats for one month. If you realize this, you can relate more understandably with others.

And of course my work is not only in my country, I also work in Southeast Asia. I'm the Peace Brigades International representative for Southeast Asia. So we try to establish peace wherever we can, and try to establish nonviolence activities, training, in quite a few countries, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and other places. In small ways, with small groups of people. We have to convince one another that peace is the means and peace is an end, and with small people we can do it. With big people, they talk. Mr. Gorbachev may mean very well, and Mr. Reagan may mean very well, but the whole apparatus makes things very difficult for them. Because the armaments industry, you know, they are very crazy people. They have tremendous lifestyles they don't want to lose. Whereas at the grassroots, or the rice-roots, people are suffering, and these people understand what is going on, and they feel that peace must be there for them, the more we can alert the consciousness of the people at the bottom. For those of us in the middle, if we try to understand the people who are suffering, it will be very beneficial for us. We will understand peace much better.

Susan: Who is it that supports you? Do you have to raise money as you go along, or are you part of a larger organization?

Sulak: Yes, part of my job is to raise money. Peace Brigades International has its headquarters in Philadelphia, but it is international. The Directorate consists of people from India, people in Latin America, American, and so on, and they try to raise money. The Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development is a local Thai non-government organization, but we also receive money from some of the Christian organizations in Europe, and also from Canada, helping us with small projects. And, as I said, the Thai-American project in Santa Monica also sends a small amount of money. But in the long run, we want to be self-reliant. That is why I started an organization called the Pridi Banomyong Institute, named after our great statesman who believed in peace, in nonviolence, in democracy, in socialism. He died three years ago, so we want to revive his name and have his vision fulfilled. A lot of Thai people support us. They send us money, but money is not the main thing. They give us ideas, they give us moral support. Anyone listening to your program, if they would like to relate to us, we would be very grateful, and we would be willing to correspond with them. As I said, money is not the main thing; the main thing is exchange of ideas.

Susan: Do you want to give an address?

Sulak: Yes, people can write to me at GPO Box 2930 in Bangkok, or they can write to the Thai-American Project, 1440 Harvard Street, Santa Monica, California 90404.

Susan: Thank you very much, Sulak. You're doing wonderful work and I wish you the best of luck and lots of support.

Ed. Note: All of Sulak Sivaraksa's books in English are distributed in the U.S. by Parallax Press, P.O. Box 7355, Berkeley, CA 94707.

Buddhism and the Protection of Nature:
An Ethical Approach to Environmental Protection
by His Holiness The Dalai Lama

Peace and survival of life on earth as we know it are threatened by human activities which lack a commitment to humanitarian values.

Destruction of nature and natural resources results from ignorance, greed, and lack of respect for the earth's living things.

This lack of respect extends even to earth's human descendants, the future generations who will inherit a vastly degraded planet if world peace does not become a reality, and destruction of the natural environment continues at the present rate.

Our ancestors viewed the earth as rich and bountiful, which it is. Many people in the past also saw nature as inexhaustibly sustainable, which we now know is the case only if we care for it.

It is not difficult to forgive destruction in the past which

resulted from ignorance. Today however, we have access to more information, and it is essential that we re-examine ethically what we have inherited, what we are responsible for, and what we will pass on to coming generations.

Clearly this is a pivotal generation. Global communication is possible, yet confrontations more often than meaningful dialogues for peace take place.

Our marvels of science and technology are matched if not outweighed by many current tragedies, including human starvation in some parts of the world, and extinction of other life forms.

Exploration of outer space takes place at the same time as the earth's own oceans, seas, and fresh water areas grow increasingly polluted, and their life forms are still largely unknown or misunderstood.

Many of the earth's habitats, animals, plants, insects, and even micro-organisms that we know as rare may not be known at all by future generations. We have the capability, and the responsibility. We must act before it is too late.

The Buddhist Perception of Nature Project
A New Perspective for Conservation Education
By Nancy Nash

Introductory note by Sir Peter Scott, co-founder of the World Wildlife Fund: *The Buddhist Perception of Nature project is an important new educational approach to the ecological disasters resulting from man's destruction of nature, and what can and must be done to conserve it. Our current attempts to solve the problem are not enough to do the job. Conservation work, for the most part, has been mounted in response to crisis, focusing on biological problems and proposing technological solutions with varying degrees of success. Yet the unsolved and ongoing, even accelerating, destruction of nature and natural resources has clearly not yet been tackled effectively on a global scale.*

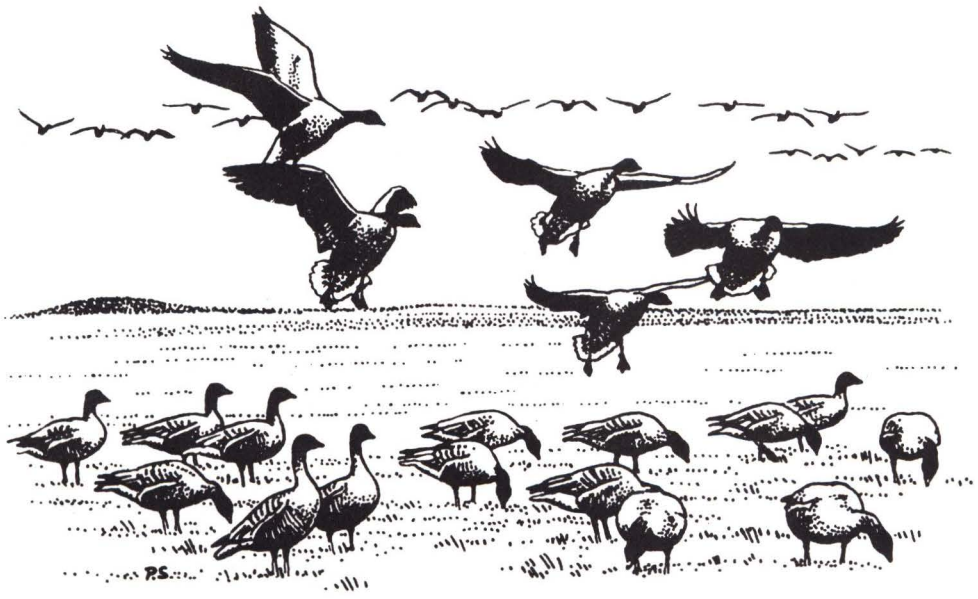
The message of conservation is valid, and vital for the well being of people now and for future generations, but it is widely ignored. Often its emphasis overlooks the various cultural, social, and perceptual factors in the problem and in the potential solutions. Many deep philosophical elements are involved, and education stands out as the most important long-term ingredient if life on earth is to continue. In the Buddhist Perception of Nature project, we have conservation education beginning in the home and reaching out into formal instruction and leadership levels. Conservation is set in a cultural matrix, with emphasis on accepted traditions and codes of conduct.

It has been my pleasure to follow the Buddhist Perception of Nature project since it was proposed by Nancy Nash in 1979 and inaugurated in 1985. In the short time since then this project has helped to formulate some of the most important Buddhist teachings regarding man's responsibilities to nature, and has increased public awareness of environmental ethics wherever it has become known. His Holiness The Dalai Lama has provided inspiration, encouragement, and support for the work throughout the project's development, and we can only hope that other religious leaders will follow his example.

BUDDHIST PERCEPTION OF NATURE, a conservation education project created to improve awareness, attitudes, and actions concerning the natural environment, took root with this compassionate quote by His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the course of an interview in 1979:

> The world grows smaller and smaller, more and more interdependent...today more than ever before life must be characterized by a sense of Universal Responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life.

Our work involves researching, assembling, and putting to use as educational tools, Buddhist teachings about man's responsibilities to the natural world and all living beings. Many of the lessons from Buddhist literature and art date back more than 2,500 years, but they are as valid today as they have ever been, and capable of reaching out in many modern forms in contem-



porary society. Buddhism in fact, was selected for this pilot project in new perspectives for environmental education because it is an ancient, enduring philosophy, embodying strongly themes of awareness and compassion for all life.

The faith is also influential in many parts of Asia that have unique and endangered species of animals, plants, and habitats, and has been demonstrated to have a direct, beneficial effect in saving some species of wildlife and threatened habitats.

The conservation effect for the most part may be described as passive protection. Animals inhabiting the grounds of temples, for example, have automatic sanctuary for Buddhist faithful; in Thailand rules for monks living in forest monasteries are so strict that their areas are naturally well cared for. Tibet, by all accounts, was, until the culture was disrupted by the Chinese takeover in 1950, a land where people and wildlife lived together in extraordinary harmony.

The environmental crisis we face today, however, needs active help, and the world's estimated 500 million Buddhists can make a major, positive impact by becoming active conservationists.

A focus on human, spiritual and cultural values in no way ignores the role of science. The role of science in conservation is essential. Scientific studies and evidence set priorities, persuade educated leaders and decision-makers, and help rectify some of the ecological disasters which have resulted from ignorance, greed, and lack of respect for the earth. Science is a cornerstone for the Buddhist Perception of Nature project. Objective scientists are among the first people to show us that the earth's capacity to support life is clearly being reduced at the time it is needed most—as rising human numbers, expectations, and consumption make increasingly heavy demands.

But science outlines the state of the earth. Religion and cultural traditions are the repositories of human values, and many people today feel it is only with aroused personal and social values that we may begin to deal with our current problems in a way which will benefit life on earth now, and in the future.

Inaugurated in 1985, project research is under the direction of the Council for Religious and Cultural Affairs and the Information Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Mahayana studies, and Wildlife Fund Thailand in association with experts from the Thai Ministry of Education and Thammasat University for Theravada tradition.

Because of the global concerns of conservation, this project from the beginning was envisioned as important, first among Buddhists, but also as an adaptable blueprint for research and achievement for similar projects involving other faiths and cultural traditions. *Buddhist Perception of Nature* aims to provide samples of the project design and educational materials to all groups, governmental and private, Buddhist and other faiths, wishing to study and use them. All of us involved with the work are therefore touched, and inspired by the interest already shown by individuals and groups from many different parts of the world, and different religions and cultural traditions, who find the project not only a viable response to the ecological problems today, but also an element in a much needed renaissance of environmental ethics.

Nancy Nash, originator and International Coordinator of the Buddhist Perception of Nature project, is an American Christian and author of more than 100 book, magazine articles, and chapters on wildlife, nature conservation, and culture. For further information about the project or for a copy of their excellent book, Tree of Life, from which these two pages are excerpted, *please contact Ms. Nash at 5 H Bowen Road, 1st Floor, Hong Kong.*

Working with the Refugee Community

The Satisfaction of an Engaged Buddhist Practice

By Johnson Thomas

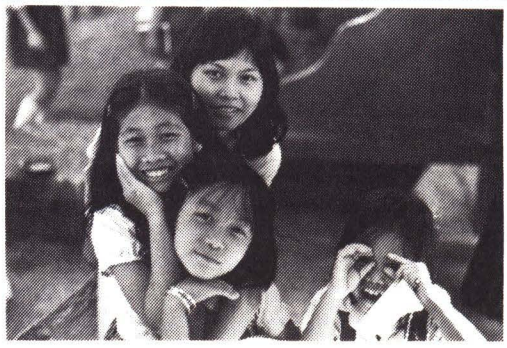


photo by Don Farber, from Taking Refuge in L.A.

This is an open letter and appeal to the materially fortunate members of America's Buddhist community, persons who feel they have benefitted greatly from the recent spread of the Buddha Dharma into the West, and who now may wish to assist newly-arrived, Asian-born Buddhists whose general welfare is not assured and whose religion and culture is being much battered and will be much battered in the future.

I write this letter and appeal because, for the last year and a half, I have had an unusual opportunity to work inside the East Asian refugee community and have learned that the reality of its life does not match the "success story" often reported by the media; that we are in fact in the middle of a "second wave" of Indochinese still fleeing their homelands more than 13 years after the war's end; that we face complex problems with the Amerasian children coming here from Vietnam (approximately 20,000 to 30,000 still remain there, but may suddenly be released to come to the U.S.); and that some of these unhappy conditions or likely trouble areas can be altered easily by direct personal involvement by American Buddhists. One hundred volunteers across the United States, working independently or in a single program, could prevent the damaging of the lives of thousands of Asian refugees.

When we look at the remarkable growth of Buddhism in the West in recent decades and the pleasant, well-appointed meditation halls and retreat centers we have built, it is easy enough not to recall the destruction of eight major Buddhist nations which helped prompt this move of the Dharma to the West; and it is easy enough not to see that the majority of "American Buddhists" generally are unable to attend our new centers.

Most probably the typical Buddhist in America is a relatively poor, Asian-born refugee who lives in crowded, often substandard housing, is under-schooled, often works at low-paying jobs, is subjected to racial conflicts and youth gang crime, is often the object of aggressive attention by evangelical Christians, and may not even be able to take advantage of Buddhist temples in his or her region.

This appears to be true in the area of northern Virginia, Washington D.C., and southern Maryland which has become home to so many Asian refugees and immigrants in recent years. Well-informed sources estimage that there are now between 80,000 and 100,000 Buddhists in this greater metropolitan region. Here 24 temples or centers have been established in the last 20 years to serve them, all but a handful of these being for Asians. This is the geographical area where I work, and—despite the 24 temples or meditation groups—where I see much unnecessary hardship and the slow wearing away of Buddhist connections and culture. Because I work primarily with teen-agers who are either Vietnamese or Amerasians from Vietnam, or Chinese whose families spent at least a generation in Vietnam, I will focus on these. From what I hear through the "refugee worker grapevine" these conditions are developing in other parts of the U.S. as well, and one could write a similar story about Cambodians, Koreans, or Lao mountain people.

The people in the initial exodus of refugees from the Indochinese region were generally well-educated, sophisticated, urban people, relatively prosperous, with marketable skills. Many of these and their children have achieved remarkable success in work and school since arriving here, earning the label of the "miracle minority." Approximately half of these early arrivals were Roman Catholics.

But by the 1980s, the nature of the refugees stream changed: the "boat people" and "land people" coming out of Vietnam have been mostly poor, uneducated country people or fishermen who have fled economic hardships and police-state persecution (particularly for those of Chinese blood). Among the land people, a good number of the Vietnamese males who entered the U.S. from Thailand as "unaccompanied minors" were deserters from the Vietnamese army occupying Cambodia. This second wave of refugees has brought people who are largely unskilled and many in fact are illiterate in their own languages. The new refugees are on the whole Buddhists or adherents to ancestor worship. Unless given very special and sympathetic assistance, these refugees will form another rather hopeless underclass and its younger members will drift with the newly-developing criminal organizations. Their medical needs are also rather special; local health authorities report as many as 3/4 of the Indochinese of middle age and up suffer from severe stress and hyperintensive ailments.

In early 1986, I came by chance upon a group of young Vietnamese engineers and scientists, of both Roman Catholic and Buddhist background, who invited me to join a new program to assist and tutor 35 newly-arrived half-American, half-Vietnamese children and their dozen or so full-blooded Vietnamese sisters and brothers. Some of these Amerasians, ranging in age from 12 to 18, had recently escaped Vietnam by boat, but the majority we were to work with left home when the government of Vietnam released some 3,000 children who were the offspring of American GI's. This took place during a brief, temporary thaw in U.S.-Vietnam relations.

The Amerasians had been allowed to leave with their mothers and any other children in the family, and now, after brief stays in Thailand or the Philippines, they were being settled in a large

housing development in Maryland, where several families were allowed to occupy a tiny, single-family unit. The children were engaging, attractive, obviously very intelligent, and both friendly and shy at once. But helping them seemed an immense task: they spoke only Vietnamese and most were illiterate; from their physical immaturity, it was obvious many had suffered years of malnourishment; along with their radiant smiles went a quickness to anger, and they fought constantly among themselves; and many showed signs of physical and emotional abuse. In Vietnam, where they were known as "the children of dust," they had been denied schooling and other amenities of the state. A few lucky ones had grown up on farms with their grandparents, while others survived in the cities as vendors of peanuts and as scavengers for food. Several, because of the fair complexions or blonde hair, had been arrested and placed in concentration camps as early as age three! The statistics on Amerasians were most discouraging: studies had found them to be the single most poorly-adjusted youth minority in the U. S.

It was obvious to the group of volunteer tutors that, in addition to intensive training in basic English and math, the children needed to feel welcome and to receive affection from us. We wanted them to know they were being assisted become of their own worth as people and that, while their new American culture was of great value, so was the world of Vietnamese culture, family life, and language they had brought with them. We were facing the hard reality of Mormon activists and missionaries in the housing project, who came daily with material gifts and offers of conversion. Evangelical Christians had gained much success in converting the seemingly passive Cambodians in the neighborhood, and we felt this had done the Cambodian families much subtle damage. The Vietnamese and Amerasians came in time to understand the danger, and politely barred the missionaries from their apartments.

With half a dozen Vietnamese and Caucasian volunteers, we began a night school in space donated by Catholic charities for the children to learn conversational and written English, mathematics, and some written Vietnamese. We formed a soccer team, taught them softball, and began a series of picnics and camping trips. A program for traditional Vietnamese songs and dance was developed (the children's first autumn harvest music show drew more than 600 people from the Vietnamese community); initial trips to Buddhist temples were arranged, a learn-to-swim class was planned, and we found a martial arts teacher to give weekly classes in t'ai chi ch'uan for the aggressive teenage boys.

We are happy with some results. The children entered public schools in southern Maryland, and as of January 1987, 1/3 of them were on the honor roll. They regularly win the poster and art contests in their schools, and one Amerasian girl, who nine months before spoke virtually no English, has been honored as the top student in her junior high school. More importantly, we have witnessed strong personality changes: the bickering, fighting, and restlessness have disappeared; withdrawn children have become outgoing; serious personality problms have eased; children who initially resisted our offers of tutoring now actively seek it. Though many of the local youths outside the age-group limits we set for our program have been arrested for petty crime, our students stay free of these groups and try to encourage new Amerasian arrivals to join in our special assistance program.

Recently we expanded our program to the Vietnamese and Chinese communities in northern Virginia and now have more than 65 children in the night school program. A small grant from an educational foundation will allow us to begin a more ambitious program this summer, in which we will hire part-time a dozen or more Vietnamese college students to join the tutoring sessions to help the children. We feel we can continue to expand these services until it makes a marked difference in the newer portions of the local refugee community.

In our absorption in the needs, problems, and success of the children who have volunteered to accept our help, we try not to forget our original good-hearted (though desperate) motivation. We sincerely hope we are not creating simply another kind of materialism or an infatuation with success. We hope the children will not believe that straight A's, a championship soccer team, or even membership in a prestigious profession is really the Good Life.

I hope in fact we are showing them that patience, generosity, non-aggression, and rejoicing in the simple pleasures of life are of much more importance to their welfare and happiness than the horrendous material values that saturate their new lives in America. Because we live in a society without a substantial monastic Sangha to create that beneficial presence which has brought grace to the Asian nations for thousands of years, it may be that the lay practitioner in the West will develop a special sense of responsibility toward living the Dharma.

Helping the Buddhist refugees is only one of the more obvious ways of responding to the Buddha Way. We feel our informal, very personal, and always changing program for children could work with any minority group or age level anywhere in North America. We know, immediately at hand, of some 200 Asian children who need such assistance—we cannot include them at this time because of the lack of reliable volunteers. We know that if we began to search just in this metropolitan area, we would find at least ten times that number. in need of help.

Should you wish to express the Dharma with this type of social service, you do not need guidelines from us or an outline of our program. (We have not found the need to write these down.) Penetrating a foreign refugee community is not as difficult as it first seems. A single translator of an idealistic persuasion can get you started, and a trip to your regional social service office will get you enough addresses to begin. But performing such work without ego will be one of the more remarkable experiences of your life. Even just trying will bring many surprises. I have found it invaluable.

Johnson Thomas is a co-founder of the Washington, D.C. BPF and a practitioner of Ch'an Buddhism. He is national coordinator for BPF's Chittagong Hills media project to try to draw worldwide attention to the government sanctioned rape and slaughter of Buddhist and others tribespeople in Bangladesh.

To a Great Human Rights Activist, Dr. Andrei Sakharov

Dear Andrei,
You're Russian
I'm Vietnamese
Two different peoples
Two different worlds
Yet, we're in the same boat.
You live under a terrorist dictatorship.
I languish in a brutal, fascist state.
You're always on pins and needles,
So am I.
You're hauled to KGB court,
I'm being locked up.
You're deprived of human rights,
I'm treated like a beast.
You refuse to bend the neck
Struggling instead for democracy and human rights
I don't want to live in shame and submission
Fighting instead for freedom of religion.
Your path goes through hell and high water,
Mine is on the edge of a precipice.
You confront all species of wolves, bears, tigers, and leopards,
I encounter only snakes, pythons, buzzards, and hawks.

They threaten us with their angry stares, fangs, and gaping mouths
Ready to swoop on and devour us.
But we do not flinch.
They are forced to take it on the chin
And send us into internal exile.
Now
You stay in Gorki, USSR, serenely
Looking at the world through a veil of dawn snow.
I live in Vu Doai, Vietnam, reflectively
Catching a glimpse of the universe through a screen of morning dew.

Dear Andrei,

Although we're in the same boat,
We're thousands of miles apart.
From this side of the earth
Tonight
In the dim Light of stars
Through a gentle breeze,
I send you my "prayers for peace and happiness."

This poem, translated from the Vietnamese, is by Ven. Thich Quang Do, one of the monks included in BPF's petition to the government of Vietnam. He was Secretary General of the Unified Buddhist Church, and he has been in forced exile from Ho Chi Minh City since 1982.

Campaign for Buddhists and Writers Detained in Vietnam—An Update

By Stephen Denney

On December 12, 1987, Vietnamese refugees and American peace activists gathered together in San Francisco to demonstrate their concern for imprisoned religious leaders, intellectuals, and others detained for their beliefs in Vietnam. The demonstration was organized by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and a coalition of Vietnamese refugee groups in the Bay Area.

For the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, the demonstration was a continuation of a campaign which began in the Spring of 1987 for the release of several prominent Buddhist monks and writers detained in Vietnam. We reported their cases in detail in the last issue of this newsletter. We are very grateful for the response we have received. We have collected so far over 3,500 signatures appealing for their release. We are especially encouraged by signatures collected by peace groups in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

Within Vietnam, there have also been encouraging changes. Several thousand prisoners, mostly government and military personnel of the former regime in South Vietnam, were released on the occassion of the Vietnamese New Year (Tet). Vietnam also has a new prime minister, Vo Van Kiet, who is regarded as belonging to the more pragmatic (as opposed to hardliner) faction of the Vietnamese leadership.

Unfortunately, the situation remains the same for most of the prisoners for whose release we have appealed. From Sister Cao Ngoc Phuong in France, we received the welcome news that two of the monks, **Thich Nguyen Giac** and **Thich Nguyen The**, have been released. On the other hand, the writer **Duong Hung Cuong**, age 54, died following a cerebral hemorrhage in Chi Hoa prison in Ho Chi Minh City on the night of Jan. 20 or 21 (a fate shared by some other prominent prisoners of conscience in Vietnam). We also received the following information:

Thich Quang Do and Thich Huyen Quang, the two most prominent Buddhist leaders, remain under internal exile. Thich Quang Do is still exiled in Vu Doai, Vu Thu, Thai Binh province, a remote corner of northern Vietnam, described as the coldest spot in the country, with no running water or electricity. (*See poem by him on this page.*) Thich Huyen Quang is no longer confined to his temple but remains under a form of house arrest in the suburbs of the town of Quang Ngai.

Thich Tue Sy and the nun **Thich Nu Tri Hai** both remain detained in Phan Dang Luu jail in Ho Chi Minh City. Thich Tue Sy, in poor health, "is like a skeleton with long hair and a long beard." He is allowed no visitors. Thich Nu Tri Hai, who almost died in August, is in better health, but still weak. Also detained in Phan Dang Luu jail is the famous writer **Doan Quoc Sy**, who the authorities have threatened in the past to bring to trial along with a number of other writers.

Thich Duc Nhuan, the First Secretary of the Buddhist Council of Elders, was transferred from Phan Dang Luu prison to Chi Hoa prison. His health is described as precarious,

December demonstration inSan Francisco
Photo by Therese Fitzgerald

suffering from a stomach ulcer and chronic rhinopharingitis.

Thich Tri Sieu, Nguyen Thi Nhia, Thich Thien Chon are all detained in Chi Hoa prison. In the same prison is the writer **Hoang Hai Thuy** and the singer **Khuat Duy Trac**. They are allowed food parcels but no visitors.

We have received no recent information on the monk and popular teacher **Thich Thong Buu**, who as far as we know remains under house arrest in Dong Xuan, Phu Khanh province.

From Sister Phuong we have also learned of another nun arrested, **Thich Nhu Hoan**, who is presently detained in Bo La reeducation camp in Thuan Hai province. "..Besides taking care of the orphans, this nun had visited large families with not enough to eat in the shantytowns in Ho Chi Minh City to give immediate relief to tide them over. Several families who had complained of the arbitrary arrest on the part of the local police of their mother or father this nun had been the only person who dared approach the local police to speak on their behalf. Always smiling and gentle, gracious and eloquent, she managed to persuade many high ranking officers to understand and release the innocent detainees. So it was decided to make an end to these unacceptable interventions by the nun. They came to the orphanage-*cum*-pagoda, Hoang Lien, at 1220 W Do Thanh Nhan, Quan 4, Ho Chi Minh City to arrest the nun, giving no explanation why. For two months she was imprisoned in Phan Dang Luu then in Chi Hoa and then sent to the camp Bo La. The orphans have been dispersed, taken in by various philanthropic families who live near the temple, but the temple has been confiscated by the authorities."

If you have not yet signed one of our petitions and would like to, please write to us at the BPF national office or phone (415) 548-3735.

Stephen Denney is a member of the Indochina Human Rights Committee. He is coordinator of BPF's efforts to help free thesemonks, nuns, and writers.

Appeal from Cambodian Buddhist Society

Dear Friends,

We are happy to share with you some wonderful and exciting news, and respectfully we are asking for your help. The Cambodian community in Providence, Rhode Island, has long desired to have a Cambodian temple. Under the loving guidance of the Venerable Maha Ghosananda, we have envisioned building the temple in a place of beauty and serenity. It was our fervent prayer that somehow we would be able to do this.

We know that to raise the needed money is a big challenge. But we are determined and have faith that we will find the way to do it. We will spend years raising funds to build the temple and monks' residence. We envision our temple to be used for meditation retreats for the worldwide ministry of Maha Ghosananda. We came to love this land when we helped the Peace Pagoda prepare for its inauguration. The forest and trees, the fresh mountain air, and the gentle quiet filled our hearts with a precious peace. We know that the temple will be a special and holy place for us and for all people who visit.

Just as when we lived in Cambodia, the temple is the center for learning and unity. It is also a place for:

• A hospital where faith healing is practiced and where folk medicines made from roots and herbs are administered. In Cambodia, some people were cured by these methods when other advanced methods failed.

• A library and museum for cultural artifacts and educational materials, where translations of the holy books of Buddhism are being made. American visitors who want to learn about Buddhism can have access to these materials.

• A school where children who are being pulled toward Western culture can be instructed in their rich Khmer heritage and learn how to read and write using the Khmer alphabet, a place where the children can have a chance to appreciate their cultural identity. • A Pali High School • An Insight Meditation Center • A sponsoring and clearing house for the monks from refugee camps in Thailand • A kitchen where people bring food to offer to the monks • The repository for the cremated remains of the faithful • A goodwill center where donations are received and given to the needy, both here and in Thai camps • A place which is the spirit of cleanliness, where persons are pure both in appearance and internally (This is represented in the white robes worn by the nuns and novices) — A place of worship. • The Cambodian Temple is a peace pagoda for the whole world • The Venerable Maha Ghosananda, our spiritual leader, says: "The temple is everything."

We are presently acquiring this land and a building in Rhode Island. The property covers 86 acres with a river crossing it and 4 buildings included. The total price is $585,000. This center would also be ideal for the much needed Khmer Studies Institute as well as a conference center. Please help. Even children can help by contributing $1.70 for one meter of land.

With palms together in gratitude,
Khmer Buddhist Society of New England, 178 Hanover Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02907

What Do You Do After You Hug a Russian?

Comments on the Significance of the INF Treaty by Fran Macy

Fran Macy's interest in Soviet-American relations began in 1948, when as a college student he went on a study tour of the USSR. Surmising that his entire adulthood would be dominated by the ideological and political power struggle between communism and capitalism, he completed a master's program in Soviet Studies at Harvard. He then worked for 12 years in various kinds of cultural exchanges and communications, and visited the Soviet Union twice in 1961 and 1962.

As Executive Director of the Association for Humanistic Psychology he started an exchange program with Soviet psychologists, eventually working full time on the Soviet-American connection with AHP. He is now an advisor to many organizations interested in making contact and developing relationship with their counterparts in the Soviet Union. He goes to the USSR several times each year. He is husband of Joanna Macy, member of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship International Advisory Board. Fran Macy will be leading a group of Buddhist meditators to the USSR in July, including Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, Wes Nisker, and Adi Bemak. For further information about that tour, please contact Adi Bemak at (413) 253-9372. Full details are on page .

On March 18, 1988, Fran agreed to be interviewed by Arnie Kotler for the Buddhist Peace Fellowship Newsletter. *Since he spoke so thoroughly and clearly, his words are presented here in the format of an article.*

What are some of the distinctive aspects of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces treaty? One is that it removes entirely from Europe and from Asia two weapons systems, two types of weapons that carry nuclear warheads. So it's not a reduction, it's an elimination of two weapons systems. The major one is what is called intermediate rockets, that have a range of 300 to 600 miles and the second weapon system are the shorter range from 100 to 300 miles.

Some people ask the question, "Does this take all nuclear weapons out of Europe?" The answer is no. There are thousands of tactical weapons that can be used against a tank, an airfield, and they're used under a hundred miles. In addition, of course, this doesn't influence the naval forces on both sides through the Baltic and North Sea, and the Atlantic and Mediterranean surrounding Europe, where there are nuclear-armed vessels, submarine vessels. Furthermore, there are nuclear weapons on airplanes based in Europe, in England. The British call the British Isles now the "largest American aircraft carrier." It is literally dotted with air bases, American and British, where nuclear weapons can be delivered.

Why then are people so excited about signing this treaty that eliminates a relatively low number of nuclear weapons, and only two types out of many types of weapons systems? Europe is still bristling with arms at a very dangerous price to live and to love. I think the excitement is appropriate for a number of reasons. One, it's taken six years for this administration to reach any kind of agreement with the Soviet Union in the military area. Every other administration, in recent years, has been actively negotiating with the Soviets, and producing some resultant agreements— nuclear test agreements, strategic defense agreements, agreements against defensive weapons, and the SALT treaty. So, there was of course an enormous reluctance on the part of this administration to engage in any kind of discussions with the Soviets for it's first four years. During that time there was an enormous increase in the budget for arms, nuclear and non-nuclear. Not much publicity has been given to the enormous growth of the Navy during this period. I don't have the figures, but many more ships have been recommissioned, and more started in construction. And there is a great long pipeline on these things to produce them or reactivate them. So that even though the military budget hasn't increased last year or the prospective one for this year, as much as in previous years, the momentum is great.

Verification Requires Collaboration

The treaty has symbolic value on the one side as a sign that this administration is ready to do business with the Soviets. But it also has much more than symbolic value. I think its greatest significance, and one that we ought to be supporting and admiring as people supporting peace, is that it sets up a verification mechanism, that requires collaboration, intervention, and trust, and will create trust. The system of verification for compliance with the treaty terms provides for teams of Americans to be stationed in the Soviet Union for 13 years and then to be renegotiated, and Soviet teams to be stationed in the United States for a similar period. These teams are to be stationed at at least one major site for producing weapons that are to be eliminated. They are to have free access to it. They are to have access on short prior request to a range of other facilities that are capable to producing these weapons or parts of these weapons.

This requires collaboration. Americans are going to be working with Soviets and vice versa, in each other's countries, and it involves intervention in that they will be going into factories that hitherto have been some of the most classified sites for people of any nation, let alone people representing the enemy government. Thirdly, they involve trust because they don't provide for access to every plant in the country. On the other hand, they permit people to look at things they have never looked at before and that involves trust. I think there is a strong chance that it will help develop trust.

To me the absence of trust is more dangerous than the presence of weapons. I don't think the danger of war correlates directly to the presence of weapons. It correlates much more to

the attitudes, including suspicions, assumptions, and feelings that one party has for another and for himself. Barbara Tuchman does some wonderful analyses of history along these lines. The danger of accidental war is as great with one-tenth the weapons as it is with the present amount of weapons, if the level of distrust remains as high as it is right now. The danger of accidentally escalating war could be greatly lowered if we had the same number of weapons, if we had other mechanisms and attitudes that would promote our communicating and understanding one another, rather than try to out-bluff each other.

It's worth reminding ourselves that these weapons are not built to use—because they would be suicidal for any country to use, if the other country responded or not, in terms of radiation and weather patterns. So the bombs that we would explode in the Soviet Union would come back to us and poison our soil, and our soul, and radiate our citizens as that weather traveled around and perhaps the rest of the world as well.

Learning to Trust

Therefore, it seems to me that those of us concerned with peace should be supporting this treaty as a part of a process toward building trust, building modes of collaboration. We can't just say, "Let's trust each other." We need to work together. We need to find ways to function more effectively together, because our modes have been to try to frustrate each other and to scare each other. I was starting to say the weapons aren't built to use because they are suicidal. The corollary of that is, what is their use? Their use is to scare each other, so that we are investing this enormous amount of money and brain power and scarce materials to scare each other and to give confidence to our allies. This is an inherently unstable way of living. Whatever happens to the level of armaments, if we can find substitutes to mutual fear, we will find a more secure world. That takes practice, and this treaty will give us some practice. The negotiating of it has given us some practice and the setting up of these teams for verification will be giving us some practice. The moving on that this will permit to reducing and verifying production of strategic weapons, long-distance weapons, and perhaps above all, conventional weapon systems—this is a time for us all to maintain the momentum that this permits us to have.

Stepping back another step is to say how did this come about, what are the changes and how can we support changes that are positive as citizens of the world. I think the changes have been greater on the Soviet side than on the American side, in terms of government policy. This treaty is based on a proposal that Reagan made in the early 80s, I believe in 1981. He made the proposal, in my opinion, in total hypocrisy, on the assumption (back to the importance of assumptions) that the Soviets would not accept it. His proposal was the zero plan of no intermediate weapons based in Europe. Why did he propose that? Because Europeans were demonstrating in the streets and fields and air bases to protest and try to stop the placement of extremely accurate, extremely quick-delivery (six minutes) intermediate nuclear weapons installed in Europe pursuant to an agreement that had been made by Carter before Reagan. To Reagan's astonishment at the second summit meeting, Gorbachev accepted this proposal, some five or six years later, or maybe before that. The first American reaction was no—to the proposal we had put forward. Then the Europeans became very concerned that this would leave the shorter range nuclear weapons (100 to 300 miles), so Gorbachev said all right, we'll drop those too—and in that sense comes the term "double zero." The American were shocked at this, but adjusted to it.

So in each of these cases there was a very significant change in Soviet policy. Likewise on verification. Now the Soviets accepted so much more verification at least in principle, than they had previously agreed to, that the Americans found themselves saying, wait, we're not ready to go that far. And ever since the Nuclear Age, America has been saying that Soviets won't allow enough verification so we can't prove they are complying, we don't trust them to fulfill their agreements, we assume that they violate their agreement, so there must be foolproof verification. And the Soviets suddenly agreed to more than we were ready to accept. So those are major shifts on the Soviet side that are very important. I think behind them, if we step back yet another step, is one of the most hopeful shifts in the Soviet Union. That shift on the policy or strategy, almost ideology level, which had taken place in this country earlier, actually under Nixon and under Carter, and that is some of the philosophical bases as to what constitutes adequate defense. During the Nixon administration the notion of sufficiency emerged and lay behind the negotiation behind the SALT and some of the other treaties. One of the major changes with the Reagan administration was to say that we needed to have a preponderance of nuclear weapons over the Soviets.

We were saying we were catching up with respect to the intermediate missile in Europe, and the Soviets had larger numbers there. And the Soviets have said themselves that perhaps they had overreacted to what was an American preponderance. This notion of parity or supremacy that depends on numbers, gets on very shaky grounds, because there are so many different kinds of weapons, and they are difficult to equate. But our discussions over the years have focused on this, and it's one reason they haven't been very productive.

What is hopeful now is that the Soviet Union seems to have moved to a policy of sufficiency, not just in nuclear, but in all weapons. We have accused them, and I think with some reason, of having been very devoted to trying to achieve preponderance in certain areas. And I think that is a Russian historical tendency—to be caught short and then to mobilize and mobilize and mobilize and acquire overwhelming preponderance of whatever it is, people, tanks, horses, guns, artillery—and in this way they drove Napolean and Hitler out of their country. So they have strong historical roots for doing this, at enormous human cost of deaths and deprivation.

Sensible, Efficient Defense

In February of last year, just a year ago, Gorbachev said in a major speech "We shall not make a single step in excess of the demands of sensible, efficient defense." This was considered very significant. I don't think many Americans have caught this, nor certainly has our administration publicly treated this seriously, though they may have more privately. Even their generals are now talking about military sufficiency. If this replaces a philosophy of preponderance, it could make security in Europe much greater. If they have indeed adopted this philosophy, they could indeed reduce enormously the level of conventional weapons in Europe which scare people in Europe more than nuclear weapons.

I think there are important forces at work outside the governments, among the population in each country, that each of us can probably be a more active part of, as a kind of 'yeast' in the body politic—a 'yeast' that will promote a more rational, more realistic, more trusting, more collaborative relationship. There are many aspects to Soviet American relationships in addition to disarmament treaties that can help to build this collaboration, trust, and realism that I think we need to get security and assume our responsibility as industrial powers for the rest of the world.

We Share a Lot with Them

Clearly the American public's moral outrage had a lot to do with the final disengagement of the United States from the war in Vietnam. There is a good deal of evidence that public opinion, public concern, public outrage in the Soviet Union contributed to the willingness of the Soviets to withdraw their 115-120,000 troops from Afghanistan. And Afghanistan is an area where we are almost at war with each other. Soviet troops are involved and American arms are being fired by Afghans. Fortunately, as far as we know, there are no so-called American trainers or advisors in Afghanistan, but it could easily have escalated to that.

So there is a tendency for those of us who don't have government positions to feel that our protests are all futile, but that just isn't true. Both governments have sensitivities to public support. Ours might be much more so because we have some mechanisms for expressing that support, but the Soviets are allowing much more of that feedback to become public. For example there was a letter published in the Ukraine, in a Soviet newspaper in the Ukraine, from a mother who objected to the way the newspaper covered the war in Afghanistan, saying you are romanticizing it and you are saying our young men are doing their heroic and international duty, and that is baloney. We know that the VIPs in the Soviet Union don't send their sons to Afghanistan. It's only the sons of we simple people that go there. And this was published. That's pretty rare criticism of the ruling elite in the Soviet Union. You can assume this is the tip of an iceberg that gets published, and there is a lot of strong feeling there. There is universal conscription in the Soviet Union, and there is no conscientious objector status. Virtually every young man goes, so that means a lot of families were worried about having a maimed or dead child.

Another feeling was that the veterans were not respected. There are monuments all over the Soviet Union to heroic Russian military ventures, to the homeland, and there are none to people who have been to Afghanistan. Veterans have been protesting this, letters written, and petitions drawn up to honor their contribution there. So they are undergoing something that we have been through recently and is still a very painful memory, and on our body politic and on our souls we can relate to them very well, to the suffering and confusion and outrage that our governments send us off to fight their battles for them. So this is one of many ways in which we share a lot, we share many of the pains.

What beyond disarmament, in our relationships with the Soviet Union, can help to make this a safer world? One is simply to realize the suffering that we share with them, in this area of military engagement. Another is in the family. The Soviets share with us one of the highest divorce rates in the world. In their European cities it is about 50%. They are going through what so many Americans go through—deciding whether to live together, where their children should live if they separate, how can you be a father to a child when he or she is somewhere else, or a mother (in rare cases in the Soviet Union), what about relationships between new spouses and previous children. All of these difficult things that are really painful in everyday life, they share with us.

Another area of sharing with them that we have is the diversion of material demands and attractions. They're in a different place from us in that we're a surplus economy. We have more goods than we need, of course. And we don't have enough jobs, so we need to artificially stimulate demand for goods that people don't need in order to create jobs for people who do need jobs. Their economy is different. It's a scarcity economy. There is very little unemployment, there is underemployment, but there are shortages of many goods and services. They could therefore convert from a militarized economy which theirs is to a much greater extent than ours. So their young people tend to be very attracted to flashy consumer goods, put great demands for them, and don't seem to show the ideals that were experienced by the older generation who were coming out of, if in fact they did not participate in World War II and were concerned about a better world, and putting their

world back together again including suffering occupation of a territory which included 80% of their population. It would be comparable to our being occupied from the East Coast to the Mississippi River, and having that destroyed, not only occupied. In Stalingrad, there is one building (it is barely standing, crumbling and full of holes) that was standing after the war.

American Attitudes

Americans have a funny mix of attitudes toward the Soviet Union, most of which are not very realistic or consistent. It is particularly acute with the Reagan administration. On the one hand, we say we're afraid of them and they're a threat to us because they have exceeded us in the production of certain kinds of arms, and they are a threat around the world, because they are so strong, and so forth. On the other hand, we express discontent because their system doesn't work, it's bankrupt, they can't even feed their people, they have to buy our food, and what a pathetic failure the Soviet experiment has been.

Neither of those is really accurate. One of our fallacies is that we compare ourselves with them, whereas they compare themselves with how they were before, so that even young people, especially parents, have memories of a time of enormous deprivation that we can hardly imagine. Things are a lot better, and they feel they are making progress. The skyline of every Soviet city is dotted by huge cranes, with which they put up prefabricated buildings quite quickly. At the same time they have a shortage of housing. So I think there is a challenge to Americans to empathize more accurately with what it's like to have that Russian history behind you, or Ukrainian history, what it's like to live in that vast land mass, that occupies one-sixth of the planet's surface. There are eleven time zones across it. We can empathize with that better than most Europeans can. There are wide open spaces there and the sense of having almost unlimited resources—trees and rivers and water.

I have traveled by train into Siberia and have been down in Central Asia where there are great desert lands. So their psychology has a lot to do with their geography. There are many ways that we can empathize with them if we take the trouble to learn more about them.

This is what I see as my work these days, seeing what we have in common, and also in what ways we are different. Our histories are profoundly different. I react negatively toward Americans who go to the Soviet Union and come back and say, "My God! They're just like us. Isn't that wonderful!" They are not just like us. They are profoundly different. Their history almost couldn't be more different. It's a history, for one thing, of invasions. When is the last time we've been invaded? There are perhaps three examples since we became a nation, whereas their history is peppered with invasions, including the United States, after the Revolution. I think it's a mistake to look at just what's similar between us. In fact part of the interest is what's different.

Empathy with the Russians

I formulate my goals these days as trying to develop the capacity for empathy, Soviets for Americans, but mainly, since I'm an American, Americans for Soviets. And that's different than sympathy. I don't want people's sympathy; that makes me feel as though I'm pathetic. I'd much rather have their empathy, I'd rather have their feeling with me. The word compassion is so strong in Buddhism and the notion, so it's the feeling *with*. As a psychologist I don't think you can do that 100%, but you can certainly listen, and attune, and increase thereby your ability for compassion and feeling with another person, another people. I think it's terribly important for us to do that in terms of the Soviets, and it's important in terms of world safety, but it's also important as an enormous reservoir of richness.

One of the ways to develop this empathy is to experience things together and then to share how we experience those things. I had the privilege of leading an Interhelp group to the Soviet Union last July where we did four Despair and Empowerment workshops in Moscow. It was very powerful to sit in small groups and express our deepest pain, our deepest love for the world side by side with Soviets, taking turns with them, expressing what matters most to us. We spoke much of our children and their futures, about our lands, what we appreciated about each other's countries and about our own.

Stemming from this experience the two of us who were leading that group, Adi Bemak and I, thought how wonderful it would be to come back and meditate with Soviets and to share the experience of meditation to reach a deeper level together. After we returned, Joseph Goldstein and Sharon Salzberg expressed an interest in going there and doing some teaching. I went back to the Soviet Union in October and arranged with two groups to do meditation retreats. So we're now putting together a group to join Joseph and Sharon, about 20 of us, to go to three or four cities in July. We will be in silence together and share orally together, what some of our experiences are.

I think it's useful for us to realize that we can all be Bodhisattvas with respect to this prime relationship in the world between two superpowers and more deeply between two people of enormous energy and rich culture, blessed with extraordinary geography, resources and space, that puts us in a privileged position in the world, that we can enjoy, but for which we shoulder responsibility. Russians can be appealed to on this level. They tend not to be selfish people, concerned only with their own consumption and personal lives. They are quickly attracted to problems of philosophy and morality, and express often on the spiritual level.

Last night a group of Russians visited our house in Berkeley, and within about 30 minutes, we were talking about God and what is spiritual life and spiritual connection. One of the rewards of relating to Soviets—to Russians, I would say, who make up only 50% of the population—is that they are ready to share themselves at the spiritual level. It's to be rejoiced in.

Nourishing Seeds on the Other Side
An Interview with Annabel Laity

How might we, as Buddhists, look at the treaty recently signed by President Reagan and Premier Gorbachev in Washington in December? We asked Annabel Laity, a practicing Buddhist, world traveller, and member of the British BPF presently living in France, these questions:

Do you agree with the description of the signing of the agreement between Washington and Moscow last December as "an historic event"?

The description is certainly accurate. It is the first time that the two countries have disarmed since the Second World War. It is the first time in history that they have both accepted to allow the process of "verification" by the one on the territory of the other. It is the first time that the Kremlin has accepted the principle of asymmetrical reduction (i.e. the Americans are to disarm 400 weapons and Russia 1,600 weapons).

Why then is there so little positive response from peace groups in Western Europe or North America?

It seems to me that members of these organizations have come to see themselves as separate from their governments. They seem to have formed a mental picture something like this: "We are working for peace and our government is not working for peace; we are going in this direction and our government is going in the other direction." I do not think it is correct to see oneself and one's government as separate. Such a view does not correspond to the way things are and is a barrier to realizing peace. How can we best describe this fact? Here is an example: The French Prime Minister, François Mitterand, recently said, "As long as there is a threat to the integrity and independence of France, whether that threat is nuclear, conventional, or chemical warfare, France will keep her nuclear deterrent." I may think, "I do not agree with that policy at all; I am going in one direction and my government is going in another."

At this point, I ask myself to think again, "Well, how many times have I, wanting to protect myself, threatened another being with a deterrent?" For example, when I first began teaching and was on probation [a trial period prior to tenure], I did not have much of a "deterrent" to my name, but what I had I was determined to keep in order to pass that trial period and have a permanent post. So I was making children conform to a certain pattern, not because I thought it was a worthwhile pattern, but because I had to establish my reputation as a "good teacher." M. Mitterand is in a similar position. There is the feeling "Preserve the integrity of France!" and he has identified himself with France and the people of France, and he speaks according to that pattern. M. Mitterand and I are reacting psychologically in the same way. And that goes for any member of any government, and so I and my government are the same.

That is one level of looking. It is the psychological level. Then there is another level, which is our objective world, the world which we exteriorize. We both have the same environment, we both live on this planet, we are both on the same boat, we are both under the threat of a massive nuclear arsenal. Without consciously having asked to be born, we find ourselves here in this situation. On the other hand I am now contributing and I have contributed, just as have our world leaders, to the way the world is.

Looking deeply at this oneness, we can ask ourselves who is it that is sitting at the negotiating table to make peace treaties? If the negotiations fail, who fails? If it succeeds, who succeeds? I too am sitting there in my daily life, whenever I am in relationship with others. If I am sitting at the dinner table in my own home, I am also sitting with the government leaders at the negotiating table. If I am talking to create discord at the dinner table, I am taking a step away from a peaceful solution at the negotiating table. If I say a beautiful word, I am making a peace treaty. Who can measure a psychological moment? Who can say that this thought, this feeling, this work, this action begins in my village and ends in my village? Science has not yet found how to measure the limits of thoughts, feelings, words, and actions.

What do you see as the background which has led to the signing of this agreement?

There must be so many things. I can only mention what first comes to mind. The first thing I think of is the respect that Mr. Reagan has felt for Mr. Gorbachev. I have read that when Mr. Reagan was talking without notes to a group of high-school students in Jacksonville, Florida, he said that from the time he first met Mr. Gorbachev, he felt respect for the Russian political leader. Although generals of opposing sides often express respect for their adversary's strength but continue nevertheless making war against each other, I do not think that Mr. Reagan was talking in this sense. What he meant when he said this was that he felt he had come face to face with a human being in Mr. Gorbachev, whereas before when meeting Russian leaders he had been face to face with the concept of an ideologically evil regime. In seeing another human being Mr. Reagan was no longer judging from preconceived ideas.

Another factor is the widened awareness of the horror of war, and nuclear war in particular, in North America, Russia, and Europe. This awareness in America and Western Europe is very much due to the attempts of those in different peace movement to make the facts known to their fellow countrymen about the effects of nuclear war and to open our hearts to the suffering of poverty and hunger in the world to which we can devote our material and spiritual resources rather than to the manufacture of deadly weapons. In Russia this awareness stems

more from the memory of the last world war. The Russian people know the terrible price of war from experience. So there really is an aspiration on all sides to be free from the constant threat of massive slaughter.

Thirdly there have been meditations, vigils, prayers, and prayerful actions and prison sentences meted out to those who have taken part in these actions. In the United States in particular these prison sentences have been very heavy in some cases. The readiness for self-sacrifice of those who protest with great dignity and conviction moves many hearts and because such action is not partisan in intention, its merits are boundless. There is a movement in the U.S. called the Plowshares movement. The members have campaigned for peace by entering nuclear weapons' factories and pouring their blood on the weapons. This sort of action can receive up to a 20 year prison sentence.

What action do you think is appropriate for the peace movement now that this agreement has been signed?

Nourishing seeds over there. That is nourishing seeds in all that we see to be opposed to our way of thinking. The whole world is our garden. The Kremlin and the White House are both our gardens and we can be volunteer gardeners in those places. We can weed, water, and spread compost in those places. If we do not care for seeds on the other side there will not be plants, fruit, and flowers. So we can keep our hearts and perceptions open to spotting where the seeds are being sown and nourishing them. We can respond openly, show our appreciation and give our support to the governments too. One meditation master has said that the peace movement has learned to write letters of protest, and it can also learn to write letters of love. We may think that the only good soil for growing seeds is over here, in the peace movement, because that is our familiar ground. But there is also good soil in the unfamiliar and the unexpected.

The Soviet authorities have for some time used their weapons' factories to produce consumer goods between armaments programs (that is the seed). Now these factories which have been up to now making intermediate range missiles, will, in the light of the December agreement, be converted to make bicycles, washing machines, and toy cars permanently (that is the seedling). The peace movement in Western Europe has given much thought to avoiding unemployment when armament factories are no longer needed because of disarmament. That thought is the watering which let the seed grow to a seedling in the Republic of Udmurt in the USSR. (This republic has a strong reputation for its armament industry and its most important arms factory will be open to inspection by the U.S. authorities). We do not always need to sow the seeds ourselves, they are sometimes already there, sown for example by our governments, but we need to water them to help them germinate. It is said that there are two ways of educating: one is to encourage what is worthwhile, the other is to punish what is not worthwhile. As volunteer gardeners we are not in a position to punish, but we are in a position to encourage by the articles we write, by the talks we give, and by the letters we send. In this way we care for the gardens of the White House and the Kremlin.

Another thing which may be appropriate is not to resist, violently or nonviolently—not to resist our leaders, not to resist ourselves. The word "resist" has two basic meanings. One meaning is to stand in the way of or oppose. If this sort of resistance burns in a peaceworker, it burns up all his or her energy and sooner or later he or she will have to leave the peace movement. The daily life of a peaceworker should not be a life of resisting. If we resist pain, it gets worse. If we resist anger, it gets stronger. We can be a resistance movement which does not resist. The other meaning of resist is its more basic meaning—*re*, meaning "again," *sisto* meaning "stand repeatedly." So "resist" means to stand in many places again and again and again. To stand in the Senate, the House, the monastery, the embassy, or the weapons' factory. We can stand in any place, however unexpected and unfamiliar, and discover seeds.

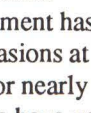
A contemporary Buddhist meditation master has said that when he was visited by the director of an armaments program, he did not tell the man to give up his job. Instead he taught him meditation, and because the master saw the sensitivity of the director as a seed, he gave some good compost, sunlight, and warmth for that seed to develop on the other side.

Do you think the euphoria over the signing of the December agreement was naïve?

If the word "euphoria" has a taint of irrationality and irresponsibility, then I would prefer the word "rejoicing." Rejoicing is not at all out of place. As a peaceworker I could wholeheartedly join that rejoicing. I want to nourish seeds over here also. I do not want my heart to sink every time I pass the Houses of Parliament in London, but rather to rejoice at the good things that can and do sometimes happen there.. We can nourish seeds in our children too. Child psychologists have found to their dismay that there are many children who do not expect to live to be 30 years old, because they think that life on this planet will have been destroyed by nuclear weapons before then. So we need to say to our children that the world in which we live always has some ray of light which may come from any quarter. We know how impressionable children are, so we need to be very sure to pass on all the good news as well as the bad with great sensitivity. Our being happy in our success in reducing armaments, however small that reduction may be, needs to be fostered in our children. We can celebrate this event for our children's as well as for our own sake.

This is not to say that the peace movement has till now been joyless. I have been present at joyful occasions at nuclear bases in the UK; but the rejoicing has always, or nearly always, come from our own, the peacemakers' side. We have yet to rejoice in something our government has done.

Messrs. Reagan and Gorbachev feel they have cause for rejoicing, and we should rejoice along with them to encourage ourselves, because we are our government, and we are responsible for the treaty of December 8, 1987, as much as our political leaders.



BPF Delegation's Report from Nicaragua

submitted by Barbara Meier

From August 4-24, 1987, 21 people participated in a fact-finding delegation to Honduras and Nicaragua, co-sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Buddhist Peace Fellowship, and Witness for Peace. There were 10 women and 11 men, ages 23-75 from 13 different states, including a Jesuit priest, a retired missionary, 3 Quakers, an Episcopalian, 2 other Catholics, several "unaffiliated" and 5 Buddhists.

The goal of the trip was to open ourselves to experiences that would inform and inspire us so that upon returning home we could work effectively to educate others regarding US foreign policy in Central America. We wanted to investigate and report on Contra activity and its local impact, to share the lives and jeopardy of the Nicaraguan people and to stand with them in their suffering. We planned to offer our help in constructive projects and to engage in acts of nonviolence wherever needed and appropriate.

The group of 21 convened in Mexico City at a Friends' hostel for three days of intensive training in nonviolence to develop group cohesiveness, mutual understanding, and to learn how to function creatively in potentially dangerous or trying circumstances. The highlight of our time in Mexico City was a day-long visit to Los Reyes, a Christian base community, where we participated in their People's Mass and Biblical Reflection, shared meals in their homes and spent several hours communicating our respective visions of spirituality and social justice.We were especially touched seeing how a community can bond through faith and work together to improve their lives.

After Mexico City, we flew to Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, for 5 densely scheduled days of interviews with political, religious, and business people representing a wide range of viewpoints on the war in Nicaragua. We began each day with half an hour of Buddhist meditation followed by half an hour of Christian reflection. We met each evening to debrief and process the day's events.

During this time, the five Central American Presidents signed Esquipulas II (the "Arias Peace Plan"), an historic moment in the development of dignity, autonomy, and unprecedented cooperation among the nations of Central America. This newly-forged peace accord created an auspicious climate of hopefulness and pride among the people we met and was a topic of discussion throughout our visit.

Our first days' appointments, arranged by our host, Luke Shrock-Hurst of the Mennonite Center in Honduras, were with Luna Mejia of COHEP, the Honduran Council for Private Enterprise. ("It's my personal view that it's a shame Reagan didn't also invade Nicaragua when he went into Granada."); Juan Ramon Duran, a young, perceptive journalist; Professor Matias Funez, a sociologist and economist at the University and Oscar Puerto, vice-president of CODEH, the Honduran Human Rights Commission. At CODEH we were told of the death squads, disappearances (132 since 1981, most in 1981 and 1982), kidnappings, terrorism and murders of campesinos, celebrants of the Word, union leaders and those considered subversive by the Army. 1987 was described as the year of the "unknown cadaver" since many of the bodies appearing almost daily are found decapitated. People are currently being killed with machetes instead of bullets in order to be passed off as common crimes rather than politically-targeted assassinations. There have been six attempted bombings against the CODEH people themselves.

Our second day was spent in the countryside in Danli near the Nicaraguan border where we met with members of the Commission of Displaced and Honduran Coffee Growers. They represented over 5,000 relocated families forced to leave their homes and farms due to heavy fighting. Speaking of their pre-war lives, Israel Portillo said, "We weren't rich but at least we lived a peaceful life. Here we sleep on the floor like animals and our little ones are skinny with swollen bellies." Coffee-grower leader Francisco Rubio was outspoken, "This is a war that doesn't belong to us. Nicaragua has lots of lakes, land, bigger mountains; everyone can kill each other there and leave us in peace. When the dollars end, the Contras will end." Simon Perez said, "We are friends of yours but not your vassals. If you continue to send money, more Central Americans will die. In this war neither gringos nor Russians die; the Indians of Central America die." We spent the rest of the day at Las Guasimas, a Nicaraguan refugee camp for over 6,000 people, most of them family members of the FDN or Contras. Row after row of over-crowded barracks housing, patrolled gates and fences and dirty barefoot children, many of them orphans, were painful manifestations of the reality of War, the suffering of the innocent.

The following day, a Sunday, was also spent in the countryside at Palmerola Honduran and U.S. Air Force Base. We arrived for church services and lunch and were hosted and briefed by Lieutenant Colonel Tony Whitter. Despite the obviously lavish and concentrated American investment in this vast military facility in the middle of third world poverty (video rentals for servicemen's VCRs), we were repeatedly told that U.S. troops were unarmed non-combatants and were there simply to receive training.

In the afternoon we met with Padre Angel Castro of the Porroguia de Imaculadade Conception in nearby Comayagua. We were impressed by the gentle strength of this deeply religious and committed priest. "Our fate is played with by outsiders—no one from outside can tell us where our destiny is. Liberation Theology is not new theology; it is what arises from our guts as a people, from our own understanding of the gospel as for the poor—consumerism is impossible for us as a religion."

We then stayed until sundown and talked with members of the reclaimed peasant settlement, Neptali Comyagua Discua. This is a group of 375 men, women and children campesinos who, through nonviolent collective organization, began living on and cultivating land unused by an absentee landowner. They were originally ordered out by troops sent by the National Agrarian Institute but when they were perceived as being willing to die in order to remain, the Institute helped them obtain a legal Act of Possession so they could work the land

and strive to sustain themselves. They have now lived there for seven years and through their cooperative farming, have elevated their standard of living, built houses, a school and have obtained potable water.

Our remaining interviews in Tegucigalpa were with Guatama Fonseca, a former Minister of Labor and a writer critical of the repressive government in Honduras; with representatives of UNHCR, the United Nations High Commission on Refugees and from CONARE, the National Refugee Commission; with Leo Valladares, consultant to the Minister of Foreign Relations and Dr. Juan Almendares, former Dean of the University and member of the Coordinating Committee of Popular Organizations. Fonseca was a favorite of the group for his wit, integrity and courage in the face of potential personal danger: "Liberty is not given to me. It is something I do everyday with my actions. And I am convinced I am right about that. The real shame is not to make known the truth, not to defend what is right in my eyes."

Our last day in Honduras we met with Maria Azucena Ferrey, a lawyer and member of the Directorate of the National Democratic Force or the Contras. She bemoaned (in Sandino's words, ironically) the failure of the Sandinista Government to keep its promises, "I prefer to die as a rebel than to live as a slave."

We then went to the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa, outside a heavily guarded fortress, inside a bastion of impenetrable bureaucracy. We were given evasive answers to our urgent questions regarding human rights in Honduras that amounted to "That isn't my department." Colonel Sonny Sloan of the Military Section of the Embassy, professing his ignorance, as to what was actually going on at Palmerola said, "They've got their job to do and I've got mine. It doesn't bother me."

Before leaving we met for lunch with Joe Eldridge, a Methodist worker and writer living in Honduras. He offered us valuable insights, an overview of Central American history and a contextual synthesis to the contradictory information we had received. In a moment of lightness he gave his opinion that for a cause to succeed, it needed mystique. "How can you have mystique if the Number One Contra is Ronald Reagan?"

We were happy to leave the claustrophobia and depression of Honduras; people on the street seemed generally repressed and unfriendly (not on the U.S. payroll) regardless of their position on Nicaragua, to the right or to the left politically, felt that the U.S. military presence in Honduras was responsible for the continuation of the suffering and of the war. Hondurans want their country back, want Nicaraguans to fight their own war in Nicaragua and feel U.S. support of the Contras is inappropriate.

We were met at the Augusto Cesar Sandino Airport in Managua ("Welcome to Nicaragua Libre") by Julietta Martinez and Sue Dillehunt, two of the four Witness for Peace long-termers who were to host us during our stay in Nicaragua. Serena Cosgrove had met up with us in Honduras and we were yet to meet Gary Hicks in Jinotega.

We took our first morning off to go for a swim in Lake Managua and that afternoon met with Aida Oliver, Analyst of U.S. Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It had been a busy and tiring week due to the Esquipulas Ii signing, but Ms. Oliver was alert and optimistic: "Historically we've learned a lesson; the will of the Central American people won against the will of Reagan! The U.S. press said Reagan tried to prevent this agreement; but for one of the first times, Central Americans united and put forth their voice. Now the Central American people have a responsibility to fulfill this agreement."

The following day we met with Dr. Nicolar Bolanas of COSEP, an umbrella organization for private enterprise in Nicaragua. While not an inspired speaker, Dr. Bolanas was adamantly anti-Sandinista and in speaking in defense of Contra action, proclaimed, "If you have a bad tooth in your mouth that can cause an infection in your whole body, you would want to remove it easily with good tools. But if you have to get it out, you'll do it with a drill and saw if that's all you have. That may be the case with Nicaragua in Central America."

We met later that day with Roger Vallasquea of CEPAD, the Evangelical Committee for Aid to Development, who admitted, "It's true that everything is worse now than before; the difference is that now everyone shares the difficulties." He went on to describe, "There are three things evangelical churches should do in Nicaragua. First, we must understand history and the forces shaping this new world from a theological viewpoint. Second, we must accompany the historical projects born locally in whatever is life-giving and community building. The church in Nicaragua needs to be present, not absent. Third, the church should give models of community life to the worst times, which could be a U.S. invasion possibly as President Reagan's last act to become immortal."

At this point we began a nine day journey into the compo, or countryside, that was for most of us, the heart of the delegation: an illuminating, life-changing exposure to the realities of the poor in rural Nicaragua. We took a bus northeast to Jinotega for two nights where we met with Harvey Wells, Minister of Education in Jinotega Province, who was working to develop sorely-needed health care in the area. Since the Revolution, a previous Somoza torture center has been converted into a health center and a former jail is now a food warehouse. Although in El Cua the main cause of death is the war, there are many serious diseases to be dealt with: respiratory diseases, mountain leprosy, TB, malaria, hepatitis, amoebas and diarrhea are all related to the environment and therefore treatable and/or preventable. There are also now war-related stress diseases and social problems such as alcoholism, wife beating and severe depression among the women.

Our next stop was El Cedro, an asentimiento (cooperative), that had been attacked by the Contras and rebuilt be the residents three different times. We met with Pablo Ramoz Blanco who spoke of the devastation of the attacks, in the first of which he lost three of his children, ages 13, 15, and 8. The Contras burned down the houses, the supply store, the school ("They know it's not to their benefit to have a school so kids can't be fooled the way we were for 45 years"), the health center, the coffee warehouse; they destroyed everything and stole 80 head of cattle. There is a sign on the wall listing the names of forty-three people, many of them children, killed

during the attacks. It says: "Companeros (co-worker, friend), when you feel demoralized, read this. Our brothers and sisters fallen in combat teach us how to die." Despite his overwhelming personal losses, Pablo was able to say with sincerity and valor, "As Sandino never gave up, we never will; we are Sandino's children."

In El Cedro, Karen Brandow, one of the translators for the delegation, had the following conversation:

"What's your name?"
"Mario."
"How old are you?"
"Twelve."
"Are you a soldier or do you just have a shirt like the soldiers?"
"I am a soldier."
"Do you have your own rifle?"
"Yes."
"Have you been to training yet?"
"No, not yet, they haven't taken me yet."
"When will you go?"
"Probably Monday."
"And where will you go?"
"To the mountains."
"What does your mother say?"
"Nothing."
"Isn't she sad?"
"Yes."
"And your father?"
"He's dead."
"Did he die in combat?"
"Yes, when they attacked the cooperative."
"And aren't you afraid?"
"No."

We continued in the truck up the steep, winding dirt road through coffee farms, hillside corn fields and rich jungle, through numerous streams and rivers with no bridges to San Jose de Bocay, the edge of the war zone and the scene of much Contra activity. On the way we passed the carcasses of jeeps and trucks twisted and burned by mines or ambushes set by the Contras. Nearby the wreckage were crosses to indicate the human losses, many of whom were, more often than not, specifically targeted health workers, educators, agrarian reform workers: "The best and the brightest." Anyone perceived as a community leader necessarily places themselves in the Contras' eyes as a potential, even guaranteed, target for extermination.

We arrived in San Jose de Boca—essentially one long main dirt road of approximately 300 rough-hewn wood houses—one month after the latest attack of July 16, 1987. Five hundred Contras invaded and suffered fifty casualties whereas the town lost nine militia, three children and one pregnant woman. "Once again, David beat Goliath. Another instance of the Contras forgetting the civilian population and the Army come together to defend themselves." Here we broke into twos and stayed with family households for four nights, sleeping on dirt floors, eating their diet of rice, beans and tortillas, and listening to their stories of fear, loss and courage. Bonding with individuals, if only briefly, through genuine contact, made the war in Nicaragua vividly real for us; we were able to personally taste its physical and psychological effects which far surpassed our previous intellectual understanding.

Over and over we were told how families had to hide under their beds or run from their homes in the middle of the night during attacks. We were shown bullet holes in kitchen tables, cracks and holes in walls where mortars had hit. We heard from almost everyone how one of their loved ones had been killed, in one way or another in the war. Mercedes Rivera Carasco, Serena's Nicaraguan "mother" had lost her eldest son when he was captured and killed by the Contras, her youngest son, a soldier in the army, was killed in combat and her brother was just killed in the last attack. The townspeople were grieving, depressed, pushed to the limits of endurance by the war and its devastating effects on the economy: the shortages, deprivations, lack of medical supplies. Incredibly, their pride and independence allows them to persevere in the face of this U.S. backed and funded policy to "wear them down" with "Patria Libre o Morir!" (Free Homeland or Death!).

While in Bocay, we worked digging a bomb shelter for the local school and we met with Dr. Miguel Garcia Lopez, the doctor from the military M*A*S*H-type hospital; with Omar Granadas Cortez, director of the school district; and with Eulgio Moran Corejo, representative of UNAG, an organization for agricultural workers and campesinos.

We also visited another asentimiento, the Heros and Martyrs Collective, north of Bocay. This marginal settlement had been attacked four separate times and appeared even more depressed and impoverished than anywhere we had been previously. Here there were no toys whatsoever for the children; they amused themselves with a game similar to bowling using live upright bullets as pins. While walking on the dirt road looking at the charred ruins of homes, we met a young mother who had just lost one of her children, a four-year-old daughter, in the most recent attack. It is impossible to describe her look of resigned grief and our feelings of helplessness.

It was in Bocay that Ben Linder was killed. Dr. Lopez, who did the post-mortem work-up on his body, testified the bullet, fired point blank from one meter, execution-style, had entered his skull and gone out the other side. We had heard in El Cua that Ben knew he had been targeted by the Contras for his work helping the Nicaraguan people but he decided to continue despite the risks. On our return trip to Managua we stopped in Matagalpa at Ben's grave. His gravestone reads, "The Light He Lit Will Shine Forever." Rather than being a deterrent to us as North Americans, we experienced his work and his willingness to risk his life as an inspiration to "take the next step."

Upon returning to Managua we learned the painfully sobering news that an agrarian reform truck had been ambushed by the Contras forty-five minutes outside of Jinotega that morning after our departure. Kathy Thomas, another Witness for Peace long-termer, riding in a truck going the opposite direction, was unharmed in the attack, but her Nicaraguan hostess was one of the five people targeted and killed.

Before leaving Nicaragua we met with Police Chief Comandante Doris Tijierno, a long-time member of the FSLN who

described her role as a woman of the Revolution. We also went to the U.S. Embassy in Managua where staff person Paul Gilmore in his "background briefing" made the incomprehensibly contradictory statement, "We (the U.S.) are supporting the Contras because we believe the future of Nicaragua is for the Nicaraguans to decide."

At eh delegation's final debriefing we concluded, based on our previous three weeks of experiencing many different perspectives and opinions and having had actual first-hand observations in the war zone, that the United States funding of the Contra War in Nicaragua was morally and legally wrong. The Contras do not, in fact, represent the Nicaraguan people, but are a minority faction engaged in a terrorist persecution of the civilian population; the Sandinista Army exists to defend the Nicaraguan people. It was our firm conviction that all military aid from the U.S. Government to the Contras should stop immediately and that no further aid should be granted by Congress. We highly recommend support of Esquipulas II and Central America's right to self-determination. Aid in the form of education, medicine and suspension of the trade embargo is recommended in the name of reconciliation and peace.

Ed. note: As we go to press, the truce and ceasefire agreed upon by both sides place this report in a new light, and give us extraordinary optimism concerning the situation in Nicaragua. Many thanks to members of the U.S. House of Representatives who had the courage to withhold military aid from the Contras, which both sides of the Nicaraguan war agree motivated them to seek an accord.

Rightlivelihood

by Michael Phillips

A recent rabbinic council was asked to rule on the request of a woman wishing to divorce her husband, dying of incurable Alzheimer's disease, for the technical purpose of preserving their remaining joint financial assets. The ruling was "no."

Rabbinic councils and talmudic scholars are concerned with the application of religious teachings to everyday life. One question many readers might ask is, "Who cares whether rabbis are able to reconcile 2,000-year-old teachings with contemporary life?"

I don't propose to answer that. My question is tangential, and is the subject of this essay: whether specific new religious teachings are needed for the contemporary world, not just revised interpretations.

The rabbis would argue that there is nothing new about this problem, incurable illness and financial disaster have always been with us. They may be right. On the other hand, the social systems of family and community support are drastically different in urban America than in any prior period or other geographic location. The poor woman ("poor" meaning deserving of compassion) who wanted a divorce may have nothing around her that resembles a family or an active community, and her dwindling resources may be much more vital for survival than they were in a rural or ghetto community.

The subject of Alzheimer's, rabbis, and modern families is merely an introduction to warm you up to the topic of a more universal religious teaching called rightlivelihood. Most religions include the concept of rightlivelihood, as pointed out by Aldous Huxley in his *Perennial Philosophy.*

Historic meaning

The concept, as summarized by Huxley, is that a morally proper life includes work which is rewarding (a) because it serves other people, (b) because it deepens the person through continual learning experience, and (c) that it does both of these with as little "harm to others" as possible. Buddhists would add that it should encourage moment-to-moment awareness. Other religious teachings suggest that it be a "path with heart."

Make sense? Even if it doesn't, let's move on because these concepts are in fact too weak and too imprecise to be useful to ordinary people in ordinary livelihoods.

Relating this vague concept to contemporary life, right off the bat, I would say that 95% of all jobs come close to total failure on each of the main points. Salaried jobs are usually rotten, to put it mildly, and most others aren't much better.

The relevant religious question is not, "What is rightlivelihood?" but "How do we measure the failure of most jobs to have any rightlivelihood at all?"

A zero job

I propose here to measure the degree of rightlivelihood failure for any job. Let us take the worst job imaginable and give it a zero. This would be an 800 number telephone operator, who sits at a computer, in a warehouse in Iowa, taking orders for Time magazine subscriptions from customers who heard the "get a free Walkman with your new subscription" ad on TV.

This job falls down completely on each of the three dimensions that are proposed herein for contemporary rightlivelihood measurement. The three D's:

The three dimensions of measurement

The first is **Pace Control**, the second is **Consequences**, and the last is **Vulnerability**.

[Please allow a slight diversion on the way to understanding the pace control dimension]: The way we handle *time* is very relevant to how we lead our moral and ethical lives. If we schedule everything tightly and crowd appointments very close together, we leave little time for the unexpected intense conversation of a desperate friend or time to free a butterfly from a plastic barb. A life filled with hectic movement would not meet even modest humane measurements.

The human in religious terms requires a personalized sense of time. The slave must accept the time of the master, the prisoner of his jailer. The religious response to these circumstances throughout the history of religious zealots being enslaved and put in jail, is to focus on the slave's and the prisoner's *internal* time schedule. We have been taught that the uncontrollable slave/jail circumstances can be sued to free the internal clock. Once freed, the internal clock permits the slave/prisoner to contemplate moral issues to achieve satori, grace, and nirvana. (Picture Jesus, the mythic image of a jailed slave, forgiving his tormentors.)

Enough! The point of all this discussion about time and the pace control dimension to to point out that our time, our pace becomes less and less ours in many working situations, particularly where we interact with machines.

Pace controlled by machines

When I write this on a computer, my pace is directed by the machine, my sensibilities are kinesthetically directed by the keyboard-screen interactions. Picture a nine-year-old trying to do the same thing. They couldn't do it because they have not trained their muscles, their motor energy (which makes them want to jump up and run to open a package in the mail) nor their emotional temperament to do it.

Two obvious machines that dictate our pace and focus are a

chainsaw and an airplane. Imagine using either one while in a genuinely intense mood of sorrow. You'll cut off a leg or neglect to tell the airport control tower that you are making a right turn on takeoff. These machines dictate our pace, our focus and timing. So do other machines to different degrees. A bulldozer driver who is kinesthetically clumsy and ferocious cannot be directly sensitive to small plants the machine backs over which a hand shovel operator might notice.

Insofar as we work with machines that take away our own personal sense of time, our fundamental humanness, to the extent that they dictate our timing, and to the extent that they shape (read "direct" if you really understand this issue) the pace and focus of our daily lives, to that extent they determine how much of a failure our work is on the Pace Control dimension.

Using a scale of 0 to 10 for this dimension alone, the job of a dentist, crane operator, airline pilot, and truck driver would get close to zero, while a university administrator, trial lawyer, Tupperware salesperson, or a minister might get closer to 10.

Consequences Are Downstream

The second dimension is Consequence. As in: "What are the consequences of this work?" Do people downstream get poisoned by our factory's discharges, do soldiers use our product to kill noncombatant villagers, do we perpetuate the eviction of elderly widows from their homes?

Most wise people, and even some ordinary folks, recognize that we cannot know the consequences of our actions. "Doing good" can unpredictably result in bad outcomes. A generous gift of a house to a poor person results in their welfare check being cut off. Helping a woman get the job promotion she desperately wanted makes her cocky enough to divorce her husband and leave their children for a handsome man in her new department.

So if we can't know consequences, what can we know? We can know consequences as far as we can see downstream in our lives. If we can see several stages of future consequences, the effluent going into the river, the fish downstream dying, and the people eating the fish getting sick, then we can see pretty far. And we might be able to act with some knowledge of our consequences.

Compare our ability to view with our own eyes the consequences in a situation: —where we are in top management reviewing technical reports on effluent and interrogating the expert, —versus a lower level job that we leave at 5:00 pm where our bosses tell us that "the effluent is clean, the company experts know there is nothing to worry about."

The ability to see down the stream of consequences further gets a higher mark on this dimension of rightlivelihood. It is assumed that being able to see longer range consequences is in itself a sufficiently positive measure because it gives the moral individual greater OPPORTUNITY to change behavior. A very moral person, locked in a metaphorical corporate closet, who can't see the consequences of their own actions can make far more harmful decisions than a morally weak person who can see quite far down the stream of consequences.

Looking carefully at typical jobs, at the companies and institutions in which they are mired, we can readily find a simple rule of thumb.

Consequence and management structure

An employee's ability to see the consequences of their own actions increases in direct proportion to (1) the openness of the institution, (2) the availability of reports on what management is doing, (3) the degree of decentralization in management, and (4) the closeness of the institution to its final customers, community, and suppliers.

The ability to see consequences decreases in circumstances of *secrecy*, where there is a lack of financial and management information, *highly centralized*, pyramidal hierarchies of management (such as the military or CIA), and *isolation* from other workers, customers, and related peers involved in the final use of the institution, product, or service.

High scoring jobs in the consequence dimension would be top managers who work directly with customers, dentists (on this dimension they score high because they see the Consequences of their work), residential care nurses, and accountants who have their own businesses. Jobs with close to zero scores in Consequence would be a low level machine operator manufacturing an unrecognizable part in a secret project, a clerk who spends full time checking signatures of check endorsements against signature cards, and a truck driver carrying unknown cargo for a large company.

Companies with job rotation, a practice that increases employees' knowledge and experience, do well on this dimension, as do companies where a broad base of employees are involved in decision making, and where many people deal directly with customers.

You're fired!

The third dimension is the easiest to understand, but not so obvious at first glance. Vulnerability. Job vulnerability.

Why? Because when a moral person sees something going wrong in their work environment, acid pouring down the drain, that person has to have the freedom to act positively or stop doing what they are doing *at their own discretion.* If what they are doing is polluting the river, then they need the right to argue with management to stop doing it, the option to do more research, and even to report it to the local press *without being fired or punished.*

Vulnerability is a dimension that measures how much freedom to exercise moral choice exists in any institutional circumstance. If the employee can raise strong objections to working conditions and retain their job and their own dignity, it is obviously desirable from a rightlivelihood vantage point. If they can be fired for even the slightest question-raising, then it scores poorly. Nearly 50% of all workers in the U.S. can be fired on the whim of their boss, and many more can see their wages and opportunities for promotion frozen for the slightest criticism.

I recall a farm worker who was told to set the gauge on a pesticide dispensing implement much higher than was reasonable, and after protesting about it to the field manager was told to "forget about it and get back to work." Knowing he would be fired for even mentioning it again, he didn't.

Unions are a big help in this respect, as is Civil Service. This dimension does well in companies with grievance and internal appeals procedures.

Grim picture

All in all, having looked at these three tangible measurements of rightlivelihood in contemporary society, the reader can understand why most work comes off poorly. As we said in the beginning, 5% of all work *might* do all right, might allow the possibility of being considered for rightlivelihood.

Few jobs would score 10 in each of the three dimensions to get a total of 30, but some would. Most self-employed occupations that involve direct contact with customers and little machinery would do well: masseuses, midwives, and stand-up comedians. Their great advantage is the very direct feedback in their businesses. They can readily see many of the consequences of their actions as well as retain the morally valuable discretion to change or stop any behavior they wish to.

Good scores would also go to jobs in companies and institutions that stay small, that are completely open in every way (financially and otherwise), that rotate employees, give them significant decision making power, and have good job protection rights.

By adding this three-dimensional measurement to the concept of rightlivelihood, an old and wonderful religious idea becomes meaningful in contemporary life.

Michael Phillips is the author of Honest Business, Marketing Without Advertising, *and* The Seven Laws of Money. *This article is reprinted with permission from* Mental Snacks: Readings for Thinkers on Airplanes *($12 postpaid from Clear Glass Publishing, 62 Stanton Street, San Francisco, CA 94114).*

Appreciating Conflict
by Gene Knudsen-Hoffman

I think that conflict is the "hidden wound" of today. Wherever I have worked and lived it has been the "secret sore," unacknowledged, draining our energies. Conflict is considered today in the way "mental illness" was thirty years ago, as shameful, somehow indicating that we are unstable and untrustworthy. Sixty years ago we hid "Mongoloids," children suffering from Down's Syndrome. Today they are called "exceptional," and we delight in their progress. Thirty years ago few of us would acknowledge we were seeing a psychiatrist. Today it is quite fashionable to have a counselor and a therapy group.

Conflict means simply that people see things differently and both feel they are right. This often causes anger. Anger is a message that we feel something is threatening us and we are helpless. The conflict is not the threat; but how we handle it can endanger us. It can be energizing or debilitating.

Conflict can be a significant teacher; through it we may come to reconciliation. The fields for reconciliation are vast, and few of them are seeded. Reconciliation is the bringing together of that which has been sundered or set apart. But how do we bring separated people together?

First we need to acknowledge that there is often a deep fear of exposing differences and admitting to conflict. The admission of differences and conflict shakes our comfortable assumptions. How often do we stay with the hurtful familiar instead of daring the unfamiliar? A common response to feeling hurt, rejected, or ignored is to continue in an uncomfortable denial, doggedly proceeding with resolution, stuffing feelings, seeking to make things right by being "nice." Often we who work for peace are so disturbed to find ourselves angry that we refuse to acknowledge it and instead try to appease. It doesn't work.

When we attempt to reduce our anxiety by quickly offering forgiveness, we deny the unresolved issues. They remain and continue to poison the relationship. Sometimes we try confrontation, which is a healthier move, but if we don't take into account the condition of our opponent, if we don't take into account their fears and anxieties, if we don't speak carefully to their condition, then reconciliation does not take place. Our opponent can easily feel his or her share of the truth rejected. And the buried conflict lingers on.

When I have these first intimations of differences, discontent, or resentment, I need to honor them. I mustn't discard them as mean, petty, or shameful. I feel these are messages telling me that something is wrong and that I must look at it. I believe my first responsibility is to seek to change myself, to deepen my understanding, to examine my motives. Sometimes a shift in my perception can accomplish the healing.

An aware approach to this dynamic is called "care-fronting." When we have those first intimations of differences, discontent, or resentment, we need to honor them. We must not discard them as mean, petty, or shameful. They are messages telling us that something is wrong and we must look at what it is. Our first responsibility is to be patient with ourselves, to deepen our understanding, to examine our motives. Sometimes a shift in our perceptions can accomplish the healing.

If this isn't enough, we can take it to the person with whom we are in conflict and seek to settle it through "care-fronting," telling the other person what is going on with me as carefully as I can. If this does not resolve the difficulties and the anger

continues, it is time to ask someone to mediate the differences. A person who cares for both parties enables people in conflict to be more responsible for what they say. It reduces reaction which can enable them to speak with much less accusation. The use of a mediator helps us look at unpleasant, possibly unwelcome perceptions without feeling compelled to act on them. The mediator's presence can enable each to listen with less fear blocking the communication.

If the conflict cannot be resolved by these means, the next step could be to have the mediator meet separately with each conflicting party, listening to each, and then interpreting each to the other. Thich Nhat Hanh offers us this process:

"Reconciliation is to understand both sides, to go to one side and describe the suffering being endured by the other side, then to go to the other side and describe the suffering endured by the first side."

Of course the desirable outcome is to have both people acknowledge their differences, come to new resolution of them, and emerge more loving than before. If this does not happen, they probably must separate and work individually to forgive, and understand the other and themselves.

I believe the time is here when peacemakers need to focus on Reconciliation. We are surrounded by conflicts in our lives and in the world. I find many of our efforts to resolve them adversarial, which means they set a person or a group against another person or another group.

Let us look at Central America. It seems to me most "peace actions" there have been against the U.S. policy and against the Contras. I wonder if there is something we could have done besides oppose? (Peace Brigades and Witness for Peace did much to stand with the Nicaraguans in their suffering, and guide people to safe places.) Perhaps focusing on building the new society in the USA instead of attacking the old one would begin a transformation. Perhaps we need to *be* the changes we want to see in others. This is much harder than asking others to change, but it might reduce the fear which often leads peacemakers, in the words of Henry Nouwen:

> to attack the forces of death directly and to underestimate their powers.... Then the same fear that leads warmakers to war starts to affect the peacemakers; the strategy of war and the strategy of peace...become the same, and peacemaking has lost its heart.

I would like to share with you some of the thought of Adam Curle, the President of the British BPF, who is a Quaker and long-time mediator in third world countries. The ideas here are taken from his stunning booklet, "True Justice." He drew his inspiration from this quotation from the book of James 3:18: "True justice is the harvest reaped by peacemakers from seeds sown in the spirit of peace."

> I begin with a concept of human nature based on the belief that there is within each of us a divine element. I mean by peacemaker anyone who is trying to reduce disharmony and restore love, and this God within is ever available, awaiting our call to help us restore the harmony. The deeper level of our mind is blocked by a rubble of prejudices, fears, memories of hurt, confusion, humiliation, likes and dislikes. And above all by misinformation about [the divine presence].

Adam Curle sees three present obstacles to peace, which are the various stages of our development. One is the quiescent stage, where the oppressed are unaware. Next is the revolutionary stage, where people are aware of their oppression and want to throw it off. Last is the conflict of equals—conflicts between neighbors, businessmen, nations. "Today," he says, "we are in the stage of revolutions."

How do we approach these conflicts? Believing that "reconciliation" is the only true basis for peace, Adam Curle recommends that we act "from awareness of the good in others [so] we will promote the expression of the good." This of course springs from remembering the divinity which exists within each human being. In the mediation sessions we must practice, "the absolute necessity: attentive listening." We must be "inwardly still and as receptive as possible [so we can] hear exactly what is said. If we can listen in this way, "we not only 'hear' the other person, but communicate with him or her through our true nature." And "we must remember that this 'true nature' exists in members of the other side, those we oppose." As Paolo Friere wrote of unjust people:

> They, too, are maimed by what they are doing. They, too, must be rescued.... The primary purpose of the peacemaker is to liberate the victims, and to free the oppressors from the degradation in which they are trapped as well.... Peacemakers [need to] affirm that they are on the side of all who are in any way suffering, that they have unconditional sympathy with all who are caught in the trap of war, whether as civilians, soldiers, or political leaders. The only enemy a peacemaker may know is the belief that human problems can be solved through violence. In no other way can the concept of reconciliation be kept at the center of the process of peacemaking.

Here I shall leave Adam Curle and consider protest and resistance versus reconciliation. I believe protest and resistance are important—but they are not reconciliation. They may be preludes to it. Protest is a way of announcing an injustice is being committed. Protest says, "Look! Help! This must change!" It can be an act of courage which stands bravely against the violence of unjust deeds. Resistance, like protest, is a way of saying "no." It is a call to awareness; it can be a first step toward nonviolent action. All through history saying no to an unjust power has been an act of supreme courage. Many have died for it. Both these may open ways to reconciliation.

The question before us is: "Do we soften the heart of our opposition by protest and resistance?" My response is: rarely. Softening the heart of our adversary seems to require other actions. I believe that to soften the hearts of those opposed to us, we must approach them with loving concern and an effort to see things from their point of view. In this way, perhaps, we may invite the healing presence within them into the world. Of course we may fail, but Gandhi taught us that it is not ours to

determine the fruits of our actions. It is ours to trust that we may have planted some seeds on fertile ground, but we do not know when, if ever, they will be harvested. "No matter how small a thing you do," Gandhi reminds us, "it is very important that you do it."

Many of us have dealt with hard hearts—often our own. Many of us have despaired of ever changing them. I want to share the attitude of John Woolman, the Quaker abolitionist who lived in the 19th century. Daisy Newman writes that, "unlike his predecessors in the Anti-slavery movement, Woolman did not condemn the slaveholders. He spoke to his hosts out of such tenderness and deep humility that they could not take offense, for it was clear that he sympathized as much with them as with the slaves."

One last thought I want to share. There is a Buddhist saying: "If you feel anger and aggression against someone, give that person a gift." What kind of gifts might we bring to the Contras, or Oliver North? Is there some kind of service we might perform for our adversaries which would acknowledge our connection instead of our separation? Is there something we could do which would show them the humanity we wish they would show others? Understanding? Respect for their divine potential? Inviting their concern for others because we express our concern for them? Listening? Perhaps these are gifts we can give—even to an enemy.

To feel connected, encouraged, of value, with meaning—these are gifts we can give one another. These can help restore our sanity and our hope. This is the substance of reconciliation.

None of this will come to pass if we do not put reconciliation into practice, moment by moment, day by day. If we choose to be reconcilers, then we must choose to study and practice this work. And then we might be given the gift of transformation we are all longing for.

Gene Knudsen-Hoffman is an author and a peacemaker. She has been active for many years with the Fellowship of Reconciliation and many other groups. Her newest books are Ways Out *and* Nonviolent Base Communities in the USA.

Zen Reconciliation

San Francisco Zen Center recently established the following grievance policy. It is reprinted here in full, with permission:

Preamble

We want our life at Zen Center to embody peace and harmony. Our process of resolving grievances and conflicts depends on each person's bringing forth the resolution to thoroughly explore the problem and restore true peace. We ask each person to resolve disputes and disagreements when they come up, using all available informal resources. Not allowing conflict to fester will further the health of our community and nurture our practice. We recommend as background reading Thich Nhat Hanh's "Seven Steps to Reconciliation." [see *BPF Newsletter*, Winter 1986-1987]

Basic Principles

1. All staff, administrators, and practice leaders will be trained in basic listening and mediation skills.
2. Grievances should be addressed at the lowest possible level.
3. Everyone involved should be heard.
4. Promptness.
5. All parties should conduct themselves in the spirit of reconciliation.

Procedures

A person having a grievance may seek a resolution in one of two ways: "informal process" and "formal process."

Matters Covered

The formal grievance procedure shall apply to Zen Center administrative decisions and matters that cannot be resolved

informally. The informal procedure shall apply to interpersonal conflicts.

Informal Procedure

We encourage people to use informal procedures in the ways that are already in use. The following procedure is a description of what often happens at Zen Center now. This shall be the first recourse for all grievances and conflicts:

The person with the grievance shall meet with the person(s) involved. Either party can request a person of their choice and acceptable to the other party to act as a mediator for the meeting. In addition to the mediator, each party may have a support person present at the meeting.

In some situations, it may be useful to have a larger group. This is the decision of all parties involved. We strongly recommend that people read the attached article and consider the steps of reconciliation as an alternative process.

FORMAL PROCESS

Convenor

The Executive Committee will designate a convenor. The convenor will be identified publicly as soon as appointed. The duties of the convenor will be to make sure that all grievances are addressed at the appropriate administrative level and to activate the formal grievance process. If the convenor has a question about whether a particular matter should be decided by a formal Grievance Committee, the Executive Committee will determine whether the matter is appropriate for it to handle. If not, it shall promptly refer the matter to the appropriate body for consideration and action.

Grievance Committee

The Executive Committee and the convenor will appoint a Grievance Committee of at least 3 people without conflict of interest and acceptable to both parties. The length of term would be for the duration of the particular grievance process. All members would have to be present for a decision to be made. The Grievance Committee meets privately and treats all information that comes up in the formal process as confidential.

Formal Grievance Process

1. The basis of the formal grievance process is to promote peace and harmony. It is intended as a process of reconciliation, not of litigation. We ask that all participants abide by the principles of reconciliation and right speech.

2. The formal grievance procedure shall apply to Zen Center administrative decisions and matters that cannot be resolved informally. Before initiating the grievance process, the person must have tried to resolve the problem through the informal process and have used all available administrative resources. This is to insure that the formal grievance process does not, through its very existence, undermine the authority of staff and administrators and make their jobs more difficult.

3. If the difficulty is still not resolved, the person with the grievance shall notify the person(s) involved that they are initiating the formal grievance process, and then submit a request to the convener of the Grievance Committee. All parties agree to abide by the decision of the Committee.

4. The request to the convenor of the Grievance Committee to initiate the formal Grievance Procedure must be in written form, with a copy sent to the other person(s) involved. Once the request is received, the convenor will set the time for a meeting, preferably within one week.

5. Each party, with support person if desired, is invited to hear the full presentation made to the committee by both parties. Presentations, either oral or written, should include a statement of the problem and a summary of what has been done to try to resolve the problem.

6. The Grievance Committee shall select a secretary to document the proceedings in minutes, which will be held confidentially in the office of the President.

7. Both parties and support persons shall withdraw, and the Grievance Committee will review the presentations, discuss the problem, and decide on what actions must be taken. The recommendation must be decided no later than 2 weeks from the initial presentation.

8. The Grievance Committee shall make its recommendation in writing to the parties involved, including an agreed-upon time frame and a schedule for the implementation of the resolution, if necessary. The decision of the Grievance Committee is binding.

9. The President is responsible for tracking the implementation of the Grievance Committee's decision among all parties involved.

BPF NEWS

Minutes of BPF Board Meetings

October 25, 1987 and February 13, 1988 by conference telephone. Attended by Board members Ruth Klein, Barbara Meier, Jamie Baraz, Andy Cooper and Donna Thomson. Executive Director Therese Fitzgerald was also present. Newsletter editor Arnie Kotler was present for the portion of the meeting dealing with the newsletter.

Executive Director's Report: The National BPF now has its own office on the third floor of a beautiful, old brick building in Berkeley. The office is well-equipped for its new level of activity. Gayle Levy has joined Therese as a part-time assistant, and Steve Denney, Margo Tyndall, Margaret Howe and Carole Melkonian continue to volunteer their time and energy.

A letter of invitation to subscribe to the newsletter, and join in BPF efforts, went out to 600 Buddhist centers this past winter. Very light response.

Discussion of the role of Executive Director. Responsibilities are expanding. More than just office manager. Debate how Executive Director should balance ongoing projects, such as Hungry Families in Vietnam, with executive and clerical duties.

Treasurer's Report: BPF has 1150 paying members. Executive Director and assistant working 20 hours per week.

Board Elections: Nominees will submit statements, and a list will go out to all BPF members in August to elect replacements for retiring Board Members.

American Buddhist Congress: Arnold Kotler and Allan Badiner represented BPF at the Constitutional Convention of the ABC. BPF will become members, even though joining is a little expensive for us.

Nicaragua Report: See pages 26-29.

Hungry Families in Vietnam: There are now 50 families being sponsored, mostly by BPF members.

Tibet: Ruth is in touch with the Office of Tibet in New York. BPF will co-sponsor (with Humanitas and the Bay Area Friends of Tibet) a Conference on the Dalai Lama's 5-Point Peace Plan in Berkeley in September 1988.

International Fellowship of Reconciliation: Jim Perkins and Paula Green will attend the IFOR Annual meeting in Assisi, representing BPF.

Vietnam Petition Project: Nearly 4,000 signators now. Ruth hand delivered to Officer in charge of Human Rights in Office of Secretary General of the UN in December. Therese will mail to Hanoi in April.

Elders Meeting: All past Board Members and others who have had active roles in BPF during its first 10 years will meet together at Green Gulch Farm June 10-11, 1988, to review the first 10 years and envision the future. Robert Aitken and Joanna Macy can attend. Gary Snyder and Ryo Imamura will come as much as they can. Nelson Foster isn't sure yet. Invitations and an agenda will be mailed in late April, when all is confirmed.

BPF National Meeting: Third Annual Members Meeting will be held in Berkeley (site to be confirmed) Sunday June 12. The Members Meeting will probably be in the afternoon, following a Chapter Representatives brunch meeting in the morning.

Newsletter: Arnie will continue to edit and produce the newsletter, but if anyone else help, it would be most appreciated. It is increasingly difficult for him to do the work of Parallax Press and the BPF Newsletter.

Path of Compassion, Revised Edition: Beautiful 4-color cover of Chinese Kuan-Yin, designed by Barbara Pope as a contribution to BPF. (Thanks!) Six new articles, and new organization. Book will be printed in April and available in time for Christopher Titmuss/Joanna Macy Dialogue in Berkeley, May 5.

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Chapter and Regional News

Marin County BPF

Our February 23 meeting was held in Mill Valley by a nice fireplace with children playing in the back hall. We began with 15 minutes of sitting and then talked around the circle, sharing thoughts on peace and earth fellowship. Some of the topics that came up were: planting trees, collecting bulbs and plants in the wild for resale, applied Dharma retreats such as the IMW/BPF retreat on integrating meditation and social action, working with children as a gate to enlightenment, teenage and parent participation in supporting a community garden project in Mexico, business as practice in paper recycling, acupuncture clinic in Nicaragua.

Most of the meeting was spent discussing the April 16 Mindfulness Day at Green Gulch. The general theme is taking care of the earth. We gathered these possible ideas for the day: tea meditation and sharing in small circles, use of mindfulness bell, walking and/or sitting in the garden, restoration work projects, singing the homages, precepts ceremony, incorporating children, keeping things simple and quiet, some talk at the beginning by several of us about why we are doing this, providing materials for people to carry out further social action or join BPF as a result of coming to this event.

—Mayumi, Wendy, Kathy, Lee, and Stephanie

Boulder/Denver BPF

The structure of our group is unstructured: we do not have meetings (because people do not like them.) We do not undertake projects (because people do not have time to participate.) After years of squirming, the chapter is beginning to go with the flow of doing what people want to do. Individuals participate in the activities that interest them which have included: a meditation/protest outside the gates of Rocky Flats, a local nuclear weapons manufacturing plant; the presentations of slide shows by Gary Hicks, who is raising money for a health center to be built in rural Nicaragua close to the Honduran border. A few of us went to the local World Instant of Cooperation on December 31, 1987. Then we went out for breakfast. (Food and BPF have always been intimately linked in Colorado.)

Each month about six to ten people meet in the home of Barbara Meier in Boulder for a "Day of Mindfulness" conducted in the practice tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. Different people attend each month, leading to the feeling of a small community of practitioners forming around the Days. In Denver, an Affinity Group of about seven people meets once a month for eating, sitting, self-education (such as slide shows) and discussion. The Affinity Group has just decided to sponsor a hungry family in Vietnam through the national BPF office, with each of us donating $3.00 a month. We put out a small newsletter of activities and upcoming events in the local area, both BPF-sponsored activities and those of general peace interest. Sometimes we reprint articles of interest from other sources. About 25 people have donated $5.00 each to receive our newsletter. Given the looseness of our "group with no meetings," the Newsletter has been surprisingly effective in maintaining a sense of forward motion and keeping in touch with people who do care about BPF, but may be very busy. We have a warm mail correspondence with Sister Dharmapali of the new Buddhist Nun's Temple (Chua Chan-Nhu Temple) in Lakewood, and she and two other nuns come to one of our Affinity Group meetings. One of our members went to a *Women and Buddhism Day* held at the Temple in November.

From May 13-15 we are sponsoring a retreat with BPF Board Member and Vipassana instructor Jamie Baraz on mindfulness and social action. Two other teachers have indicated a willingness to lead future retreats with this theme. Finally, a correction to the chapter notes from the Annual meeting reported in the last Newsletter: The Boulder Vajradhatu and Denver Zen students began to get together in early 1985, not 1984. —Sam Rose

Rochester BPF

Our last meeting was held on March 13 at the Zen Center on Arnold Park. Only four people attended, but we had a worthwhile discussion nonetheless. Two items of note were decided. First, in view of the request from the National BPF encouraging local chapters to help send a member to the retreat and conference in June, the four attending members approved providing $200.00 from RBPF funds to help subsidize local members who feel that with some small assistance they would be able to attend the conference. Second, we decided that each meeting should have a focus, such as a presentation on some aspects of engaged Buddhist activities. Administrative business will be handled at separate meetings.

We've been using the following format at our meetings: Invocation, Sitting meditation (15 minutes), Short reading of Buddhist scripture, Announcements (15 minutes), Business (20 minutes), Presentation and discussion (40 minutes), Metta meditation, Closing. At our next meeting on April 17, we will have have a presentation on conflict resolution that is offered by the Conciliation Task Force of the Judicial Process Commission.

Seattle BPF

The Seattle chapter of the BPF has followed a course of development similar to those described by other chapters in the last issue of the *BPF Newsletter*. We first met during the winter of 1983. The Peace Blockade to Stop Trident actions in August left several of us motivated to become more consistently involved in social action. At the time of the Stop Trident actions, Robert Aitken had suggested that we become a Seattle BPF chapter. Although at that time we didn't get much further

than a few meetings, we did sponsor a community vigil to celebrate World Peace Day. For several years after that we didn't meet.

When Susan Baldwin returned from the *Peacemaking: How to Do It, How to Be It Conference* in Boulder in June 1986, she was enthusiastic about resuscitating our BPF chapter. On a hot afternoon in August, about ten of us gathered in her backyard to talk about who we are and what we might do as BPF members. Already at this meeting there was a wide range of definitions of social action, with some members expressing a desire to do a white train action, some wanting to do an ongoing community service project and others just wanting to talk. We did agree, however, to meet the first Sunday of each month and we have ever since.

Only five people returned for the second meeting and we shifted our focus from what to do, to who we are. We got to know each other a little better and reflected together on neighborhood as well as international conditions. We saw that we needed to do this (find out where we were) in order to move more naturally, or even at all, into taking group action. We decided to talk together about a range of issues but to take action only as individuals until we reached consensus. Several members vigiled on the tracks at Bangor. Some met for a Trident update with Jim Douglass at the Nipponzan Myohoji Temple on Bainbridge Island. This winter four of us participated in a CISPES-sponsored walkathon. All the while there's been a continual flow of new people through our meetings and a core of a few regulars, mostly from the Zen, Tibetan, Vipassana and Jodo Shinshu traditions.

We were very fortunate last spring to receive a visit from Thich Nhat Hanh and Sister Phuong. This was one instance where we could all agree on an action to take. We sponsored their talk in Seattle after the Doe Bay retreat. Several of us were able to attend the retreat and came from it with a heightened sense of the importance of simplicity and lovingkindness. All action is social action. The quality of our action, the heart and mind from which it moves, is the heart of right action.

After this the regulars in the group seemed to let go of some of the concern about "taking action" and looked more into opening up communications with the larger and varied Buddhist community in Seattle. Our idea was not so much to involve new members, though this might occur, but more to create a wider dialogue and some familiarity with the full sangha here. The many needs of the refugee Buddhist community here is one form of work that would seem natural for us to take up. Other meeting topics have included the situation in Tibet, Sri Lanka, and the Cambodian community in Seattle.

So far our BPF meetings have provided us with a way to be aware of local actions to join in with, a way to be more in touch with the local and worldwide Buddhist community, and a place to look at the confusion and aggression in our personal lives. We are still working on what specific contribution our group might make toward the project of being peace in this world.

We are now an official chapter. We meet the first Sunday of each month from 4—6 p.m.

—Abby Terris

Sonoma County BPF

After careful thought and with deep regret we have made the decision to terminate our leadership of the Sonoma County BPF. We will continue to be deeply committed to the goals of BPF as well as active members. However, we have learned that in order for us to effectively work toward these goals, we need the context of a cohesive group rather than the more loose-knit form which the Sonoma County Chapter has assumed. We cherish the many new friendships which have developed during the past 1 1/2 years and we sincerely hope that these friendships will continue to grow. If anyone wishes to consider leading the BPF please contact us and we will be happy to help in whatever way we can.

Since 9 people committed to supporting the Vietnamese family for a year, Lavonna has agreed to continue that project. Some people have chosen to pay her for the whole year at once, some for a 1/2 year, and some monthly.

When we read this letter to Myphon her reaction was one of sadness—followed by a suggestion that we just meet to sit together. We liked the idea and have decided to use the last Tuesday of the month for group sitting from 7:00—8:00 p.m. At the end of the sitting, there is time for networking, since many of us are involved in political/environmental activities of interest to us all.

—Mary Porter-Chase and Shirley Ann Masser

East Bay BPF

Our new format is working very well. We have found a way to work together that meets the needs of more active members and still keeps a door open for interested others. The steering committee, made up of core members, oversees six smaller affinity groups, each focused on one project. It meets every six weeks to share ideas, information and support, and to hear from the chairs of affinity groups their updates on their projects. Although these are unpublicized meetings, they are open to anyone who wants to join us. The smaller groups meet as needed.

At the monthly "Day of Mindfulness", we give brief reports, and have information available on BPF. Although the days are always fluctuating in numbers (from 8-30 people are present), they seem to have a stability and strength that continue to draw new people, even as we question the response to them. We are looking for new ways to draw in the peace community, such as inviting Quakers to share their wisdom and experience in nonviolence with us.

On March 20, we "took Buddhism to the streets" and held a vigil at the Concord Naval Weapons Station, the sight of continuous protests by the Nuremburg Action Group for almost one year. Prior to this, we joined the San Francisco BPF in their vigil at CNWS. While seeming to be a simple way to bring to awareness our country's contribution of death and destruction in Central America to ourselves and others, it instead provided a very complex engaging of Buddhism. The situation has intensified considerably in recent days. The people of the tiny

neighboring town are now protesting the protesters, calling them/us communists, instruments of Satan, etc. Their lives are being threatened by us not only because of what we represent to them, but also because the Navy threatens to take over their town to stop the protests. They see us, not the Navy, as the enemy. They yelled at us, and blared Christian songs as we were chanting. Offering the practice of mindfulness, forgiveness and interconnectedness in this context was a challenge. It immediately raises questions and issues at the heart of practice and politics—right views, being responsible to the effects of our actions (even when we think it is 'right action'), equanimity, fear, lovingkindness, the list goes on and on. I was deeply moved by this experience and felt profound potential for deep understanding there. This seems to be a place where "liberation Buddhism" can be experienced and tested, a spirituality rising out of the cauldron of train tracks and faces, signs and slogans, anger and love, munitions and forgiveness, bodies and souls.

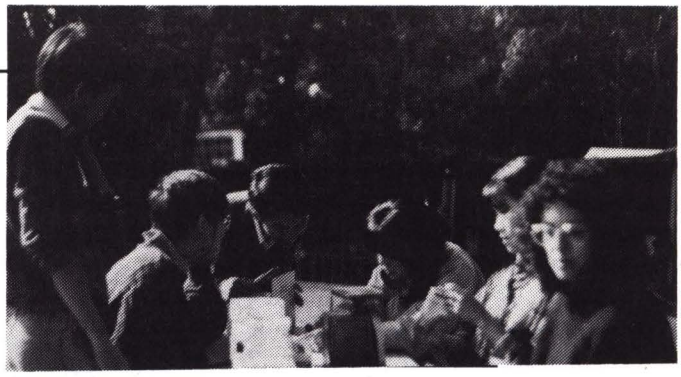
Our chapter has officially joined the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant. (Our "covenant" follows this report.) We participate in monthly meetings, work in the office and have set aside funds for "urgent action wires" to be sent when an individual is in danger of being sent back to his/her country. We are very excited by our commitment and will be deepening our involvement as we are able. There are other covenants around the country to join if other chapters are interested.

The two projects focusing on Vietnam are going very well. The Hungry Families Project now sponsors fifty families in Vietnam, providing them with a means to improve a little the quality of their lives. The dedicated members of that committee, headed by Therese Fitzgerald, work very hard to continue this. The Vietnamese Prisoners Project has acquired 3500 signatures and continues its campaign through the tireless determination of Steve Denney. Our chapter co-sponsored a very successful Human Rights Day Demonstration with the local Vietnamese community in December. About 500 people were present. (A more extensive report on this committee's work is on page 18)

Our thanks to Barbara Meier, who joined us at our last meeting and shared her slides and experience of her trip to Nicaragua—a very moving and stimulating evening.

—A postscript as we go to press — We had our vigil in April at the Concord Naval Weapons Station. It was quite different from what we experienced the first time, yet it was profound for all. We arrived to a very quiet scene with no counter protesters, except a very occasional heckler shouting from a car, and spent 2 1/2 hours walking, sitting, chanting, and doing forgiveness and lovingkindness meditation. It was a deep, rich time with a sense of wisdom, compassion and life resonating within—only to pour out again into the world, into each other, into the navy base, the people of neighboring community, into the people of Central America, and into the sunlight, with the threads of Indra's Net aglow with vitality. We hope to hold these vigils monthly. There will be one on Monday morning, June 13. All who are in the Bay Area for the retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh and/or the BPF National Meeting are most welcome to join. Call Carole Melkonian (415/644-3038) for details.

—Margaret Howe



Wrapping Packages for Hungry Families

Photo by Therese Fitzgerald

East Bay Sanctuary Covenant

May all beings be happy.
May all be joyous and live in safety.
Let no one deceive another, nor despise another, as weak as they may be.
Let no one by anger or by hate wish evil for another.
As a mother, in peril of her own life, watches and protects her only child,
Thus with a limitless spirit must one cherish all living beings. .

—The Buddha

The Bay Area has become a place of uncertain refuge for men, women and children who are fleeing for their lives from the vicious and devastating conflict in Central America. Many of these refugees have chosen to leave their country only after witnessing the murder of close friends and relatives.

The United Nations has declared these people legitimate refugees of war; by every moral and legal standard, they ought to be received as such by the government of the United States. The 1951 United Nations Convention and the 1967 Protocol Agreements on Refugees—both signed by the U.S.—established the rights of refugees not to be sent back to their countries of origin. Thus far, however, our government has been unwilling to meet its obligations under these agreements. The refugees among us are consequently threatened with the prospect of deportation back to El Salvador and Guatemala, where they face the likelihood of severe reprisals, perhaps including death.

The plight of these refugees clearly reminds us of the Jews who fled Nazi Germany, and the slaves who fled north in our own country. It also reminds us of Buddhists now living in Tibet, China, and Southeast Asia who are being forced into exile or risk persecution for upholding their religious practices.

It is within the Buddhist tradition to help prevent suffering in all lives—to see all of life as being integrally connected, interwoven like a vast net. Therefore, we, the members of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, join in covenant with our Christian and Jewish brothers and sisters to provide sanctuary—support, protection, and advocacy to Central American refugees who request safe haven out of fear of persecution upon return to their homeland. We do this out of concern for the welfare of these refugees, regardless of their official immigrant status. We acknowledge that legal consequences may result from our action. We enter this covenant as an act of our *interbeing*.

Drawing by Jesse Rudnick

Enjoying Generosity

by Sarah Bockhorst, Robin Clymer, Jesse Rudnick, Thea Anderson, Aron Fischer, and Noah Fischer

In the early winter of 1987, we (six 10-year old kids who live at Green Gulch Farm Zen Center) had an idea. We wanted to do something to help kids who aren't as lucky as we are. So we thought of a way to tie in the place where we live and do something for other kids—making wreaths!

These wreaths were no ordinary wreaths. They were made of dry flowers grown in the gardens of Green Gulch and made of love. Our idea was to meet together ever Thursday and each make one or two wreaths. It took us about one or two hours apiece to make each wreath. It was tedious work, but after much practice we got good at it. And as we improved, it became actually fun.

When we finished the wreaths we put them on display and explained what our idea in doing this project was. People liked the wreaths and they bought them. As Christmas grew nearer we were even taking custom orders, mostly from teachers in our school and from Sunday visitors to Green Gulch. We kept all the money we made in a box and then donated it to several organizations that help kids who are in tough situations. We tried to make special visits to the places we were donating so that we could meet the kids, see where they lived, and take a little time off from school, too!

The first week we raised $123.15, which we donated to the Koret Family House in San Francisco. This house is near U.C. Medical Center, and it offers a homey place for families of children who are ill. When we were little, Meg Porter took care of us at Green Gulch, now she takes care of the Family House. This is how we knew about the Family House.

The second week we made $150.00 which we donated to the Children's Garden, a shelter here in Marin County for children. We went, all together, and visited the school at the Children's Garden. Maureen, the Director, showed us around. The rooms for kindergarten were more colorful than the first grade rooms in our own school. We had fun and later we came back and met the kids from the shelter at their Christmas show. The kids were happy when they got their presents. We made a wreath and gave it to their school.

For our third week we donated $100.00 to the Shelter Hill Study Hall Project run by our third grade teacher, Mrs. Ibanez. This study hall helps kids do their homework when their parents are not home, otherwise the kids would be alone at home. We went to see the study hall and talked to Mrs. Ibanez, gave her a wreath, played with the kids and helped them a little with their homework. This study hall is really near to our school . . . it is the first bus stop going home from school. They will use our money to buy special materials for the study hall.

Next we worked for two weeks to raise $200.00 to give to the Buddhist Peace Fellowship to help one family in Vietnam for one year. Our money will go to buy rice and maybe one or two fish so that the children in the family can stay healthy. Thich Nhat Hanh came to Green Gulch Farm and told us about families in Vietnam, and so we wanted to use some of our wreath money to help a family in Vietnam.

On our last week of wreath-making, we raised $117.50 to donate to the Cancer Support Community in San Francisco. This group has people working to help all kinds of people who are sick with cancer. The helpers all have had cancer so they know what they are talking about. They will use our money to help start a class for kids with cancer or for kids whose parents are sick with cancer.

After our project was finished, we decided that we liked it enough to do it next year. There are too many generous places to donate to and the amount of money we made seemed small so we want to keep going on.

A Walk for all Life

By Paula Green and Jim Perkins

About 70 people arrived in Groton, Connecticut, on Labor Day, September 7, 1987, 32 days and 330 miles after the Walk's departure from the Peace Pagoda in Leverett, Massachusetts, on Hiroshima Day. There were many thoughts and emotions as we gazed on the colossal Trident submarine being built there, but we all knew that its purpose is not defense, but domination, and its result is physical and spiritual impoverishment, and that its potential is omnicidal.

The purpose of the walk was to make connections, to consider the problems of nuclear weapons, nuclear power, third world intervention, poverty, homelessness, and environmental preservation; to think about issues of peace and justice personally, politically, spiritually; to seek a holistic understanding, and to advocate healthy change.

In one sense the walk was a kind of moving laboratory/ classroom with changing curriculum and location. We were all students and also teachers. People brand new to the peace movement walked and conversed with old timers like 76 year old Hazen Ordway who has been part of the Catholic Worker movement since 1935. Sanctuary and Witness for Peace People, Plowshares activists, advocated for the poor and homeless, opponents of nuclear power, Puerto Rican and Haitian nationalists exchanged views. Those whose energy built and drove the hand and bicycle carts which carried our food and gear, people who some European peace activists identified as "Green fundamentalists," who walked with us for some days, learned about systematic oppression, the co-optive force of social institutions, and the need for concerted political organization and action. They taught us about personal complicity, our heedless use of sytrofoam cups, disposable paper, and gasoline, and the imperative to conform our lives in the here and now to the realities of nature.

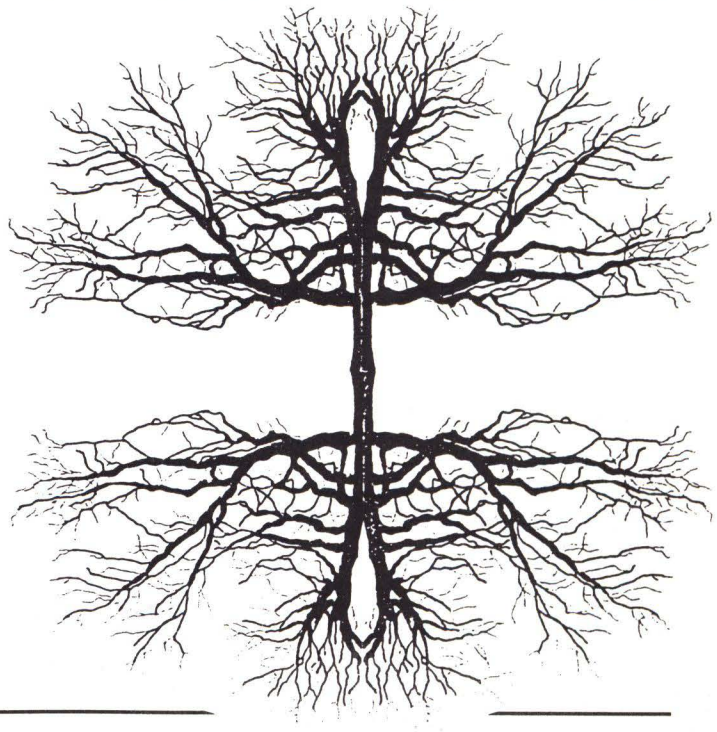
Another fundamental focus of exchange was between the political and the spiritual. We ate and slept in churches. We visited the Trappists in Spencer, Massachusetts, and a Zen Center in Providence. Some outstanding spiritual teachers spent time with us, notably, Ram Dass, Christopher Titmuss, a meditation teacher from England, and some native Americans from the Narragansett tribe of Southern Rhode Island. We read regularly from Thich Nhat Hanh's book, *A Guide toWalking Meditation*. We concentrated on paying attention to our own thoughts and feelings and those of others. It was a short walk from the steamy ghetto of Roxbury to the very wealthy seaside enclave of Cohasset. We burned with the evident injustice of it. Ram Dass spoke to us there of the many forms of suffering, some of which are related to wealth and privilege and which affect the folks of Cohasset. He suggested that we see with eyes of compassion, recognizing the origins of violence and injustice in our fear and isolation. And remembering the importance of acting out of love and understanding.

The decision to seek hospitality in churches was a fortuitous one for several reasons. In addition to giving us warm, dry, and comfortable accomodations, our presence encouraged local clergy and church members to mix with us at meals and to participate with us in our evening educational and communal programs. The sharings were often rich for peacewalkers and hosts alike. In many cases, ministers and church committees were challenged by our request for hospitality, giving them opportunity within themselves and with their congregations to face their own relationship to peace and justice work. In this way, involvement with the walk spread beyond the walkers and their personal networks to the hundreds of hosts who gave with great generosity and always with kind words of support and encouragement.

It is difficult to measure the impact of such an event as A Walk For All Life. We vigiled and demonstrated, usually in concert with a local resistance community at GTE, Avco, Draper Labs, Dow, Textron, Pilgrim, and General Dynamics at Quonset Point and Groton. We participated in People's Hearings in Framingham and Roxbury. We visited people in their homes in several villages and cities, experimenting with a powerful form, the Listening Project. We gave out thousands of leaflets, and impacted countless others who drove by or otherwise encountered us.

We know that we, ourselves changed. At our closing circle in Groton many spoke of a deepening understanding and commitment. We felt ourselves like a stream of light and a ray of hope. We are part of the process of change so necessary in this culture; each walker knows that s/he will never be the same. There are many vehicles for change and education. A Walk For All Life, any peace walk, is a fine opportunity for learning, growth, transformation, and outreach.

Paula Green and Jim Perkins, co-founders of A Walk for All Life, live, work, and organize in Western Massachusetts. They are members of BPF, yogis at the Insight Meditation Society, and peace and justice activists in New England and nationally.



Violence and Nonviolence at Concord Naval Weapons Station by Maylie Scott

"One truth seems clear. Once the train moves past our human blockade, if it does, other human beings in other parts of the world will be killed and maimed. We are not worth more. They are not worth less." —Brian Willson

On September 1, 1987, Brian Willson was struck by a munitions train in front of the Concord, California, Naval Weapons Station, I was shocked, but as is the case with so much shocking news, I did not connect personally with it. A week later I read an article about Brian's life in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, by Michael Kroll, a friend of his who was at the scene of the trauma. He described Brian's expression as he sat on the tracks, legs crossed, at the moment it became clear that the train would not stop. It was the same "puzzled" expression his friend had noted on a photograph of Brian taken years ago in Vietnam as he watched body-bags being unloaded from a truck. I realized that Brian is someone who is willing to go beyond habitual postures of protest and outrage and even beyond the usual limitations of personal self-protection, to fling himself into the totally unknown. The power of his commitment and his selflessness has been a cornerstone for all of us at the Nuremberg Actions.

Nuremberg Actions takes its name from the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal. Round-the-clock vigiling at the Concord Naval Weapons Station began on September 1, in response to Brian's injury. Ten "permanent residents" spent the winter there, in tents and make-shift accomodations. Every night at least two people sleep on boards placed across the tracks. Most of their food is donated by supporters. The Action is totally committed to nonviolent protest.

How do we manifest peace in a violent place? The Naval Base is the chief site on the West Coast for the storage of nuclear weapons. In addition, it is the port from where weapons for the wars in Central America are sent. Trains and trucks leaving the base carry demolition bombs, machine gun ammunition, shrapnel-producing fuse extenders, and white phosphorus rockets, en route to Central America.

The Base is located just east of the Concord Earthquake Fault. Aqueducts carrying water to one million East Bay residents run right by the bunkers that store nuclear weapons. There is a history of accidents related to the base. In 1944, an explosion killed 373 people, causing damage as far away as San Francisco. The train that struck Brian was traveling 16 miles per hour in a 5 mile-per-hour zone.

Shortly after reading the *San Francisco Chronicle* article, I was invited by a friend to accompany her to the Concord Weapons Station. Anna is a social worker, a wife, and mother of a young daughter, and she fills and more-than-fills her life with commitment to the Nuremberg Action. Her unflagging patience and effort is not unusual amongst the core of diverse and very committed members. The enactment of Sangha seems to come naturally. I have gone there one day each week since then.

Every day begins with a "circle" of all the protesters present. Circles may be called to discuss strategies, to express feelings, or at any time to relieve stress or simply to find out who is there. All trains are blockaded. (There used to be two a week. Lately there have only been one every week or two.) Munitions trucks are logged and some, if there are enough blockaders, are stopped. Nonviolent principles are binding: nonviolence towards the Naval Base, towards the local (sometimes hostile) neighbors, towards one another, and towards ourselves. There is a lot of talk, informally as well as in circles. Everyone learns from each other's effort and example. The lesson that effective joint action depends on the degree of knowledge we have of our own anger and violence, as well as compassion, has been well learned.

I encourage all of you to come. The site is an antidote to our uncomfortable sense of immunity. The ritual of the trains passage across Highway 4 documents our unwilling involvement with death. When a munitions train is expected, protestors form two circles, one for supporters and one for blockaders. Each group plans their strategy. The blockaders sit on the tracks. Sheriffs warn everyone away, then remove the blockaders and put them into a bus. Sometimes they are removed gently, sometimes hurtfully. The actions are recorded on two video cameras, one belonging to the Base and the other to Nuremberg Actions. Next, Marines in camouflage suits, riot helmets, and sticks jog out and stand, face to face, a few feet away from the line of supporters. These days the train comes at the legal speed of 5 miles an hour. The cars are painted white and each one has a small, diamond-shaped sign on its side that says "Explosive." As the train rolls by, we all stand still. Some supporters speak to the Marines. Some are silent. We watch each others' expressions. We have come hoping that our activity, our presence, will make some difference. Beneath this hope is the need to witness, and to honor our grief, our anger, and our guilt, with some communal expression.

Maylie Scott is the President of the Berkeley Zen Center.

On Sunday, March 20, the first day of Spring, the East Bay Buddhist Peace Fellowship held a morning of mindfulness at the protest site. 20 of us sat in meditation along the tracks, and also chanted the Heart Sutra and the Enmei Juku Kannon Gyo. We did walking meditation around the tracks. Everyone felt great calm and solidarity.

On Monday, June 13, the day after the BPF National meeting in Berkeley, the East Bay BPF will hold another morning of mindfulness outside the Concord Naval Weapons Station. All BPF members and friends are welcome to attend. Bring a meditation cushion and a blanket. For further information, please call Carole Melkonian (415/644-3038) or the BPF National Office.

May the Phoenix Arise
by Paula Green

On a hilltop in Leverett, Massachusetts, adjacent to the gleaming dome of the Peace Pagoda, stood a beautiful Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Temple, built in 1986-87 with the hands of Western volunteers and Japanese carpenters, and dedicated on October 4, 1987. In November, one month after dedication , the Temple lay smoldering in ashes and soot, victim of a massive fire of unknown reason and cause.

Precious Buddhist artifacts, offered as gifts from spiritual communities around the world, mix in the rubble with charred wooden beams, shattered glass and bits of roof tile. The front entrance is all that remains of this House of Prayer, standing alone as a doorway to nothingness, an entry to utter silence.

Looking through this doorway, one can experience despair, anger, frustration, and other negative states of mind. Why did this happen? Why was this expression of spiritual devotion destroyed? It is so easy, so seemingly "natural," to view this loss with a mind of reactivity. But these mind states, the Buddha taught, only create further suffering, both within ourselves and in the larger world.

And so, we must look again. If we look through this doorway to ashes with a Mind of Wisdom, we may instead develop a response of compassion, a spirit of generosity, a sense of hope and renewal. This choice is ours. This loss is an opportunity for us as people of good will and consciousness to say NO to the mind of negativity or anger. We may learn from the Buddha, who said: "In this world, hate never yet dispelled hate. Only love dispels hate. This the the law, ancient and inexhaustible."

For the monks and nuns of Nipponzan Myohoji, this is a time of intense spiritual self-examination and reflection. There is much acknowledgment that the Temple, conceived in prayer by love, should be rebuilt, to rise again as a place of worship and prayer for the causes of world peace and justice.

For us as a community, there is much that we can do. Our messages of support, both emotional and financial, are experienced by members of the order with deep gratitude. Many individuals, as well as peace and religious groups, are offering to participate in the rebuilding process, which may begin as soon as the spring of 1988. In community, in many forms, we may return to the monks and nuns of Nipponzan Myohoji what they have modeled for us here in Western Massachusetts: commitment, dedication to causes beyond the self, compassion, sacrifice, and great generosity. By our behavior, we recognize our interdependence, we share common concern as neighbors and friends.

The history of the world, from Biblical times forth, is filled with stories of the Destruction of the Temple (Cathedral, Church, Mosque, House of Worship). It is also filled with stories of courage, good will determination and triumph. In our lives, as in the world, the Phoenix repeatedly arises from the ashes. May we as a community respond to this fire like the Phoenix, and may each of us experience the joy of generosity in our own hearts.

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Announcements

BPF National Members Meeting

June 12, 1988 in Berkeley

On Sunday, June 12, BPF will hold its 3rd Annual Meeting to discuss BPF's activities and aspirations. As we go to press, the location in Berkeley, California, is not yet certain. We hope all BPF members will be able to come. There is no charge. For further information, including location, please contact the BPF National Office, (415) 548-3735.

The Path of Compassion

Revised Edition is NowAvailable

The revised second edition of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship's anthology of writings on socially engaged Buddhism is available. With a beautiful new cover designed by Barbara Pope, new essays, and a new organization, this book is an excellent introduction to Buddhism engaged in society. Contributors include H.H. the Dalai Lama, Joanna Macy, Thich Nhat Hanh, Maha Ghosananda, Gary Snyder, Robert Aitken, Charlene Spretnak, Walpola Rahula, Jack Kornfield & Robert Thurman. 250 pages. Send $14 to BPF, Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Mindfulness & Social Action Retreat in Colorado

May 13-15, 1988

The retreat, led by BPF Board Member Jamie Baraz, will consist of traditional Vipassana meditation practices, group discussions, and exercises devoted towards integrating practice and engagement on a variety of levels from personal to global. For further information contact Lloyd Burton, 1630 Magnolia, Denver, CO 80220. (303) 399-6769.

Re-Visioning and Transforming the Future

Retreat for Artists in Providence, June 29-July 4, 1988

Artists will experience the silence and heart-opening of a meditation retreat, coupled with collaborative workshops in different artistic disciplines such as dance, drama, music, visual arts, and ritual-making. To be held at the Providence Zen Center. For further information write to Bernadette Hackett, 745 Pleasant Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860.

Integrating Meditation and Social Action

One Day Community Retreat, May 15, Berkeley

A follow-up to the weekend retreat with Christopher Titmuss, others are welcome to come as well. Meditation, discussion, and movement. Meeting as a learning community we will begin to model for ourselves new possibilities for engaged spirituality and spiritually-based social action. Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2750 Marin Avenue, Berkeley. For further information contact Barbara Green at (415) 845-9388.

Soviet Union Visit
July 6-22, 1988

Sharon Salzberg, Joseph Goldstein, Fran Macy, Adi Bemak, Wes Nisker, and others will visit Leningrad, Odessa, Tbilisi, and Moscow this summer. Even though this is a private visit, it seems likely that Joseph and Sharon will conduct brief meditation retreats in some of the cities they visit. Cost for all travel and visas from NY is about $2,750. For information, contact Adi Bemak, (413) 253-9372.

Conference on the Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet

UC Campus, Berkeley, California, Sept. 23-25, 1988

Co-sponsored by Humanitas International, BPF, Bay Area Friends of Tibet, and others. Featured speakers: John Avedon, Rinchen Dharlo, Tenzin Tethong, and Michael van Walt. For further information, please contact Ed Lazar, Humanitas, Box 818, Menlo Park, CA 94026, (415) 324-9077.

American Buddhist Society Counseling Center

This community-based center will offer programs and counseling services, for individuals, couples, and families, with a sensitivity to the interdependence of the cultural, social, and familial dimensions of human life. In addition, they will support original research and offer ongoing training. Areas of special focus include: substance abuse and its attendant problems, the special needs of recent Buddhist immigrants to America, and counseling services for the terminally ill and their families. For further information, contact American Buddhist Society, 4907 Shafter Avenue, Oakland, CA 94609, (415) 653-3872.

Show Us Goddess, The Way of Being Peace

When Hiroshima was bombed on August 6, 1945, the Sasaki family was spared. Or so it seemed. Sadako Sasaki was only two at the time, and until she was 12, she grew stronger and healthy—playful, exuberant, willful, a dreamer, a believer in good luck. Then one day at school she felt strange and dizzy, a feeling she kept secret for weeks, until when running at school, everything seemed to whirl around her and she fell to the ground.

Sadako had leukemia, "the atom bomb disease." While she was in the hospital, her closest friend came to visit and told her of the Japanese tradition that if she folded a thousand paper cranes, she would be healed. With great courage, grace, and hope, Sadako began folding.

Though she was only able to fold 644 cranes before she died, Sadako had a profound impact on the people around her. Friends and classmates completed her thousand cranes and raised money to build a statue to honor Sadako and all the children who died from the effects of the atom bomb. Today in the Peace Park in Hiroshima, there is a statue of Sadako standing on top of a granite pedestal, holding a golden crane on her outstretched arms. Inscribed at the base of the statue is a wish:

This is our cry,
this is our prayer;
peace in the world.

Plans are under way to tell the story of Sadako on film. The Producer, George Levenson, asked Mayumi Oda to create a print that would serve as a reminder of the wish for peace and give people a way to help fund this important film. Mayumi was inspired to create this print: "Show Us Goddess, The Way of Being Peace."

There are 65 numbered and signed silk-screened prints. They can be ordered for $450 each from The Sadako Project, Blackstone Productions, P.O. Box 2999, Santa Cruz, CA 95063, phone (408) 426-3921.

Letters

Dear Editor,

Congratulations to you and all involved for another excellent issue of the newsletter. It is good to know that whatever struggles we may encounter in practicing engaged Buddhism, we have so good a forum in which to talk with one another about it.

One of the fine articles I read was Sandy Boucher's report on the "Celebration of Women in Buddhist Practice" (Fall 1987). There was, however, one point—one phrase, rally—that troubled me. I want to say something about it because it relates to a couple of issues that I think are important ones for us to consider. Sandy says that the conference drew women from "the three major forms of Buddhism," meaning Vipassana, Zen, and Tibetan. But I wonder what this might mean. By which criteria have we decided that these are the three major forms? To say that they are historically the most influential is highly debatable, but I suspect that was not Sandy's point anyway. I don't believe it is fair to say they are the most popular forms—not in Asia, and not in North America, where the Buddhist Churches of America (Jodo Shin Shu) is perhaps the oldest and largest Buddhist organization. I can think of really only two ways in which we can say they are the major forms, and both are problematic. One is that they are probably the major forms for first-generation (mostly white) Buddhists in North America. But to say this reflects an ethnocentric bias, one BPF has had a hard time not stumbling over. Facilitating the working together of Buddhists across cultural boundaries is one of the most complex and challenging issues BPF faces, but it is an important one. So far our efforts have met with mixed success. A sense of the cultural embeddedness of our assumptions about what constitutes Buddhist practice is, I believe, important for moving forward here.

The other sense in which we might say that these are the three major forms of Buddhism is in speaking of them as the main meditation traditions. This is an arguable point, but not one I wish to argue here. What I think is more important here is that when we look to find the core or essence of Buddhism solely in its meditative traditions, we are limiting our sense of Buddhism to the standards and perspectives of a monastic "high culture" that is male-dominated, institutionally based, and generally ascetically inclined. Just as feminists have been uncovering much that has been ignored, disqualified, and devalued within the Western tradition to find alternatives to its male-dominated spirituality, perhaps we Buddhists (women and men) can do the same. Buddhism is a big thing, much bigger than just its monasticism, and a lot of it has taken place outside the monasteries in folk forms and among women and laymen. Granting that such folk forms may sometimes be of a distinctly local character, they may still be able to teach us a lot. Perhaps most importantly, they may help us in North America find our own vernacular forms that exist less in the coolness of contemplation than in the heat of personal interaction and in the magic

of the sensuous world and the swirl of imagination. For we need it all, and in no particular order.

Well, enough of this for now. Once again, thanks to Sandy for the fine article, and to all contributors for the excellent issue.

One heart,
Andy Cooper
San Francisco, CA

Dear Editor,

In early November, I made my third visit to Lumbini. The Project construction is well under way. The new Pilgrims' accommodation, nearly two miles away from the site, is rapidly nearing completion. Although it appears to be comfortable, spacious, and well designed, it will unfortunately replace the accommodation which is presently available adjacent to the two monasteries. The present accommodation is very basic, but payment is by donation while the new accommodation will have a fixed charge. The new location also has the problem of access to the temple and Ashoka column site.

Besides the new accommodation, construction has begun on the cultural center-museum complex, and also on the luxury hotel. No new temples or monasteries are being constructed, although the Chinese government will very soon begin work on a complex of traditional Chinese and Tibetan temples. The existing Tibetan and Theravada monasteries will be demolished within three years, "definitely," according to the site director. The abbots of both monasteries are beginning to feel defeated, and are neglecting necessary maintenance. No plans have yet been agreed to for relocating them. Letters of support and encouragement would be helpful and appreciated. The abbot of the Theravada monastery also suggests writing to the Prime Ministers of adjacent countries asking for their support in saving the two temples, as well as to the Lumbini Committee.

In speaking to people in the West about Lumbini, I have frequently denied the response that things go so slowly in Asia that this project may never happen. I can assure people that with this attitude, the project will happen, and it is happening very quickly, at this moment. Time for questioning and making changes is very quickly running out. I urge anyone with any interest to contact the Lumbini Committee as quickly as possible, and let them know that not all Buddhists feel this project is totally acceptable and appropriate. I feel that changes in the plan, particularly saving the two monasteries, can still be made if enough of us voice our concerns.

Many thanks for your interest and help in informing people about what is happening in Lumbini. I look forward to continued correspondence.

Sincerely,
Norm Feldman
Bodh Gaya

Norman Feldman is author of the informative article "Questions about the Lumbini Project," in the Fall 1987 BPF Newsletter.

Dear BPF,

I was very interested in the discussion about the Lumbini project in the Fall 1987 issue of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship Newsletter. (By the way, I am impressed with the newsletter and look forward to each issue.) Since living in Nepal for several years in the early 1970s where I was a Peace Corps director, I have followed the Lumbini project with great interest. However, I did not have any recent information so was very glad to read the article by Norman Feldman. I visited Lumbini several times while in Nepal, particularly in 1968-69. That was before any of the development really began, and it could be reached by jeep only during the dry season.

I simply want to support and underscore two points of concern. First, I share completely the apprehension about the Nepalese Government involvement. I am aware of the pressures on the government to develop hard currency income-producing enterprises through tourist development, and it would be tragic if that economic interest resulted in a tacky, or even tasteful attraction available only to affluent tourists.

Another concern I had when I first saw the sketches for the proposed development relates to Zone III, the so-called New Lumbini Village. Such a center for commerce, accomodations, and local administrative needs is undoubtedly needed. However, given the inevitable sprawl of development which will surround this village, wouldn't it be better to have it completely detached and at some more distance from Zone I and Zone II? Then the Lumbini site could be preserved as a sanctuary of nature and pilgrimage.

I am grateful to be reconnected to this project through the Buddhist Peace Fellowship Newsletter and wish you the very best in your efforts, particularly in regard to assuring that the International Buddhist Community has a voice in decisions about Lumbini.

Peace,
Edgar Metzler
National Coordinator
New Call to Peacemaking
Elkhart, Indiana

Dear Friends in Dhamma,

Regularly our group is practicing peaceful non-violent sitting blockades in front of the U.S. military camp with stationed Pershings I and II in Mutlangen. Last year during Libya conflict, two Pershing II rockets were placed in firing-ready position. Many of us sitting and "hinderancing" the U.S. traffic, the vehicle maneuvers.

Now I've already got my law cause. Many of us get punishment for 20 days—either in payment or in prison. We are ready to live in prisons. Anyhow, what's the difference to a meditation cell?

In prison for peace, practice in prison!

Inge Sterk
Überlingen, Germany

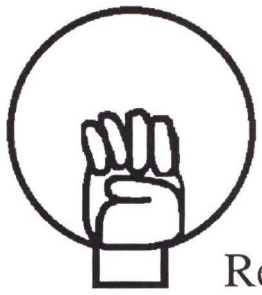
Calling together women from
across the U.S. and Canada for . . .

A Celebration of Women
in Buddhist Practice

August 11-14, 1988
Lone Mountain
Conference Center,
SanFrancisco

At the present time, a Western form of Buddhism is emerging which will reflect our culture and its values. This conference will provide an opportunity for community and exchange among women engaged in the many expressions of Buddhist practice, **as we participate in defining the shape of Buddhism in America.**

For information/ registration, please contact:
CWBP: Conference '88
Star Route Box 302
Sausalito, CA 94966-0302
(415) 389-9736



Congress on
Religion & Politics:

Theologies of Peace and Justice
Univ. of Chicago
May 27-30, 1988

For conference information contact: Religion & Politics, c/o J. Hughes, 5627 S. Drexel, Chicago IL 312-752-3562

Classifieds

PUBLICATIONS

GREETING CARDS BY MAYUMI ODA. 6 blank cards, each with a different Buddhist goddess, silk screened, finely textured paper. $3 per card or 6 for $15, to Editions Gaea, Star Route Box 310, Sausalito, CA 94965.

5 NEW BOOKS BY THICH NHAT HANH: The Sun My Heart ($9.50), Heart Sutra ($6), Breathing Sutra ($6). Also Being Peace ($8.50), Miracle of Mindfulness ($8), Guide to Walking Meditation ($6), Zen Poems ($6). Plus $2 per order for handling. Parallax Press, P.O. Box 7355, Berkeley, CA 94707.

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.

THE ACORN: Gandhian journal, with articles by Nhat Hanh, Fujii Nichidatsu, etc. $5 per year, to: *The Acorn*, Philosophy Dept., Eastern Illinois Univ., Charleston, IL 61920.

CATALOG OF WITNESS & STUDY DELEGATIONS TO CENTRAL AMERICA, and other humanitarian service opportunities. Send $2 to Cent. Am. Info. Ctr., PO Box 50211, San Diego, CA 92105. (619) 583-2925.

TAPES

AUDIO CASSETTE 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

THICH NHAT HANH tapes: *Looking Deeply,* and *Commentaries on the Heart Sutra.* Two 60-minute cassettes each, in handsome binder, $15 each set, from Parallax Press, PO Box 7355, Berkeley, CA 94707.

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

LIVELIHOOD/STUDY/TRAVEL

RESIDENT DIRECTOR(S) needed for rustic Quaker-Buddhist retreat center, Temenos. Full-time Summer, part-time Winter. No electricity, no phone. Monthly stipend. In Western Mass, 30 minutes from Northampton. Write Temenos Search Committee, c/o Kaul-Connolly, 72 Dryads Green, Northampton, MA 01060.

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR and Development Assoc. needed by Fellowship of Reconciliation. Director responsible for fundraising and membership strategy. Must be willing to travel 14 wks/year. Experience helpful. Associate to work under supervision of Director. Familiarity with grant writing and direct mail essential. Minorities and women encouraged to apply. Send resume to Fran Levin, FOR, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960.

STUDY TIBETAN IN LHASA at University of Tibet. June 2-July 17. $2480 includes RT airfare from San Francisco. Contact China Advocates, 1635 Irving Street, San Francisco, CA 94122. (415) 665-4505.

GOING TO PLUM VILLAGE this Summer. Would like to find another woman to travel with. Please write Desiree A. McPheron, 2728 Mtn View Ave, Longmont, CO 80501.

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.

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

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