



BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

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Buddhism Challenges the Peacemaker

By Robert Aitken

Ed. note: At the remarkable Peacemaking conference in Boulder June 14-20, co-sponsored by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and the Naropa Institute, Robert Aitken, Roshi gave this opening address.

As soon as I sat down to write this paper, I realized that I had chosen a poor title. Buddhism doesn't challenge anybody or anything, of course. Buddhism apart from its followers is an abstraction. When I avoid abstraction and get personal, then I find how arrogant I can be, for the personal version of my title would read: "I as a Buddhist Challenge the Peacemaker." That won't do at all. How about: "I Challenge Myself as a Peacemaker"? That seems less presumptuous. Better yet: "I Challenge Myself." I'd like to start there.

The Zen teacher Zuigan called to himself every day, "Master!" and replied to himself, "Yes."

"Be completely aware!"

"Yes!"

"Don't be deceived by others!"

"No! No!"¹

This is where peacemaking begins. Zuigan was not practicing moral self-correction. He was not ticking off the unkind things he had done and resolving to do better tomorrow, as worthy as such a practice can be. We know from comments by other teachers that he used this dialogue with himself as a presentation before his students. "Every day." Ascending to the high seat, he would call out, "Master!" and answer himself "Yes!"

Shibayama Zenkei, Roshi quotes an earlier teacher in connection with this case, "A dragon enjoys a jewel."² My first teacher, Senzaki Nyogen Sensei, used to say, "When you are at a party, and everything is very distracting, just close your eyes for a moment, and you'll find your treasure is right there." What is this treasure-jewel? Mumon Zenji comments in verse about Zuigan's dialogue with himself:

Students of the Way do not know truth,
they only know their consciousness up to now;
this is the source of endless birth and death;
the fool calls it the original self.³

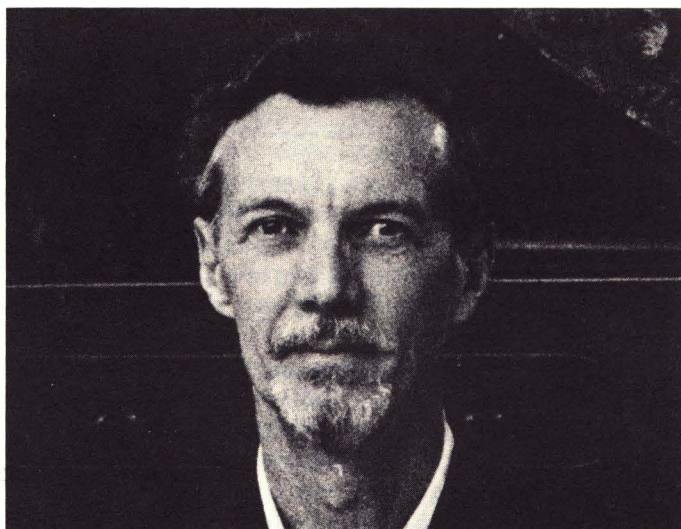


Photo by Francis Haar

The treasure is the truth, which, Mumon says, even students of the great Tao don't understand. He is addressing us all, saying in effect, "You suppose that your essence is no more than your consciousness up to now, your memory which began when you were four or five years old and continues to the present time. Thus you place yourself in a continuing sequence, and you will be reborn like a ghost who can't let go."

The original self is not exclusively a sequence. Its essence and substance are altogether insubstantial. It is vast and fathomless, charged with possibilities, and comes forth momentarily as you, me, and all beings—each a dazzling treasure-jewel.

No one is born who is not this treasure, no human being, no animal, fish, plant, or stone, but most of us are unaware of our own precious nature. Even those of us who have some inkling must remind ourselves, as Senzaki Sensei and Zuigan Osho suggest. Let's take a few minutes to do just that. Please sit up straight and lower your eyes. Follow your breath in and out, in and out. Focusing on your breath, you are consciously taking in the outside, letting go the inside. Your inspiration is

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Fred Eppsteiner, BPF Newsletter editor, and his family just moved from Rochester, New York, to Naples, Florida ("Sun, at last!"), and I have been asked to guest edit this newsletter and perhaps the next one too, as Fred, Erika, Tai, and Karuna settle into their new home. This is an especially enjoyable newsletter to put together, because there were two conferences on Buddhism and peacemaking in the past six weeks. *To Cherish All Life: A Conference on Buddhism and Nonviolence* was held at the Rochester Zen Center in May. University of Pennsylvania Professor and BPF member Ken Kraft kindly sent us a copy of his paper from that conference; and Bill Anderson, the coordinator of the Rochester BPF chapter, sent a synopsis of all the talks. *Peacemaking: How to Be It, How to Do It* took place in Boulder in June, co-sponsored by the Naropa Institute and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. On the day before the conference, the first annual BPF members meeting was held, and Paul Shippee and Bill Anderson's report appears on page 16.

Aitken Roshi's lecture, "Buddhism Challenges the Peacemaker", launched a meaningful and challenging week for nearly one hundred conference participants in Boulder. Other speakers included David Dellinger, who demonstrated over and over again his spirituality, openness, and deep commitment to peace and justice; Joanna Macy, whose powerful day-long Council of All Beings and evening Sarvodaya meeting "in" village Sri Lanka inspired and deeply touched all; Allen Ginsberg, who provoked many excellent discussions about what actually *is* going on in the world, including human rights violations in "politically correct" countries; Abbie Hoffman, who, while denying appreciation for the Buddhist notion of oneness ("It's not just us; it's us and *them*."), gave incisive, thorough analyses of world and local issues and concrete advice in how to be effective in bringing about change ("If you want nuclear disarmament, start with divestment from South Africa. . .") in a way that somehow struck me as non-dualistic; William Burroughs, who questioned that there ever was a matriarchal period in world history and used the example of some animal or other found only in Madagascar as the only truly peaceful being ("Certainly not homosap."); and Fran Peavy and Charlie Varon, performing as the Atomic Comics, who concluded the week with a sketch in which Gabriel (Fran) tells God (Charlie), "They've finally done it. They've blown up the earth." And God saying, "Did they really expect me to intervene. After two world wars, Hiroshima, and Vietnam, on what basis did they expect divine intervention?" Workshops on mediation co-led by Conference organizer and BPF Board Member Barbara Meier, peacemaking in the family led by Fred Eppsteiner, feminism and peace led by BPF member Kitty Mika, and other workshops, including walking meditation and tea meditation led by me; and talks by David Hoffman, LeRoy Moore, and David Rome, BPF member and assistant to Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, completed the mandala of a very meaningful, deeply moving, and, I think, action provoking Conference.

--Arnie Kotler

Buddhism Challenges the Peacemaker

(Continued from Page 1)

from without, your expiration is your release from yourself. Enjoy your breathing, as Thich Nhat Hanh says.

* * *

Thank you. Sitting quietly with your attention on your inspiration and expiration, you can forget everything, and your essential nature--the vast and fathomless universe, becomes clear. This is your treasure at home, just as the Buddha came forth from his profound samadhi under the Bodhi tree. On coming forth you can practice the presence of the vast and fathomless universe in your daily life. With this practice, your perception of any particular thing is like the inspiration of the Buddha on noticing the Morning Star. "Wonderful! Wonderful!" There is nothing from memory or history that stands between you and that particular thing. Teishitsu, one of Basho's immediate predecessors, has the haiku:

"Ah! I said, "Ah!"

It was all that I could say--
the cherry-flowers of Mt. Yoshino!⁴

R. H. Blyth comments that this haiku is often criticized on the grounds that the cherry-flowers could be replaced by any other superlatively beautiful thing. Then he gets more to the point and says, "'Ah!' is what is to be uttered, the only thing to be done, when we see anything for the first time."⁵

We must be lights to ourselves, but the light itself is the inspiration we find by keeping ourselves empty, receptive to the wisdom of flowers, birds, and inanimate objects, as well as other people. Wisdom is not simply a matter of introspection. "Buddha nature pervades the whole universe."⁶

What is the wisdom of the birds? Here in Colorado I imagine that you hear the robin, a kind of thrush. In Hawaii we have several kinds of introduced thrushes, all of them with beautiful songs. What is their message? Listen closely. I think they are announcing, "Here I am! Here I am!" This is the message of every newborn child, including the Buddha: "Above the heavens, below the heavens, only I, the world-honored one."

"All beings have the wisdom and virtue of the Tathagata," Shakyamuni exclaimed beneath the Bodhi tree. All beings have the treasure-jewel, *are* the treasure-jewel. This is the transformation body of the Buddha--formless, essential nature, that is now a thrush, now a stone, now a human being.

Unmon asked his students, "Where is your light?" No one could answer. So he replied for them, "The storeroom! The gate!"⁷

The storeroom and the gate are specific things. They too are our light, or can be, if we are not caught up entirely in the dimension of memory or history, our consciousness up to now. We can notice everything for the first time, whatever it is, and whatever the form of our perception--hearing, smelling, feeling.

Dogen Kigen says in the *Genjokoan*, "When one side is illuminated, the other side is dark."⁸ This means, when the thrush sings, everything else disappears, and there is only that song. When I vanish in perception of the thrush, then the unique Buddha appears, as the thrush this particular time.

When the thrush announces, "Here I am," I find moksha, emancipation from my dreary old delusory self that is preoccupied solely with past and present. The thrush is my heart. This is the Buddha body of bliss, the interpenetration of all beings, the cosmic harmony that holds the stars on course and enriches the soil of the earth and purifies its waters and atmosphere, as birth and death come and go.

All beings are in marvelous equilibrium, and this equilibrium unfolds from moment to moment in complete neutrality. If a termite, charged with cleaning up old timber, encounters a house, she eats the house. When the wolf can't find her usual prey, she eats a lamb. This too can be called original self. I can't speak for other animals, but I know that the human animal is capable of experiencing all beings and their tendencies. The wolf and the termite have their existence in my own consciousness; I find their equilibrium with all other beings intimately within my own skin. The mind is both inside and outside.

If peacemaking begins with Zuigan's appeal to himself, it comes forth with the inspiration of Teishitsu's cherry flowers, Unmon's storeroom and gate, and the robin singing here in the trees of Boulder. It finds its expression when you turn the wheel of the Dharma, that is, when you enrich and confirm universal understanding of the empty infinity of the universe, and its marvelous process of coherent unfolding.

This turning of the wheel, this confirmation of universal understanding, has been the task of our ancestors in the Dharma from the beginning. It is the task of teachers at our respective centers, and it is our task this week, here at Naropa. Being peace is our home, experiencing interpenetration is our delight, sharing this home and this inspiration is our responsibility.

It is a grave responsibility. We face the grim fact that all human beings have some insight into the many treasure-jewels and their harmony, but some use this insight for self-centered ends. The greedy person knows that everything is interdependent, and seeks to make them dependent on the *me* as the center. Greed is a power that has changed our earth drastically, and can very well destroy it. This danger has been building for a very long time, but now technology has made it acute.

How do we convey insight into the harmony of a multi-centered universe in this time of danger? Like our ancestors, our path continues to be one of peace and equilibrium, and we must be as ingenious as they were in their time and place, devising a twist, a turning word or action--something in our manner that springs forth with utter conviction.

This is an extraordinarily difficult challenge. In this very hall, if only by the nature of the lights that enable us to meet, the conventional, acquisitive conspiracy of our society pervades our lives. Unless we act outside that conspiracy, we will surely end up being used, or just contained as a nuisance. Something quietly outrageous should be our way, it seems to me--something that speaks to the heart and permits ordinary preoccupations to fall away.

I think of the man in Stevenson's story who fished all night, and then napped the next day and awakened to a vision of the Poor Thing, his future son, warming his hands by the peat fire.

"I am part of a man," the Poor Thing said; "and I was part of your fathers, and went out to fish and fight with them in the ancient days. But now is my turn not yet come; and I wait until you have a wife, and then shall I be your son, and a brave part of him, rejoicing manfully to launch the boat into the surf, skillful to direct the helm, and a man of might where the ring closes [the crucial time of drawing the ends of the fish net together] and the blows are going."

The Poor Thing tells the fisherman to go to the tomb of his ancestors, and they advise him, speaking with many voices like bees, "The way is plain before all like grooves of launching: So go forth into life and fear not, for so we did in the ancient ages."

Reaching into the cairn of his ancestors, the fisherman finds their treasure, a rusty horseshoe. "It is a good thing," the Poor Thing says, "to do what our fathers did, and to keep what they kept without question. And in my thought, one thing is as good as another, and the shoe of a horse will do."

The Poor Thing then tells the fisherman to go to the town market and sit there with the horseshoe in order to find a wife who will in time bear a son and embody the Poor Thing, who is as yet only a wraith, "like smoke in the light of the moon." Accordingly, the fisherman returns to town and seats himself in the market, but he has only a rusty horseshoe in his creel.

Four important themes of the story are established at the outset: (1) The fisherman has a vision that is altogether convincing. (2) It links him to his ancestors. (3) It persuades him with its own logic, which cuts through ordinary convention. (4) It leads him to take the action which will persuade others.

While he is sitting with the fish sellers, the Earl's daughter comes along on her way to prayers at the kirk, and she finds him with his horseshoe.

"What is that?" quoth she.

"It is the shoe of a horse," said the man.

"And what is the use of it?" quoth the Earl's daughter.

"It is of no use," said the man.

"I may not believe that," said she, "else why should you carry it?"

"I do so," said he, "because it was so my fathers did in the ancient ages; and I have neither a better reason nor a worse."

Now the Earl's daughter could not find it in her mind to believe him. "Come," quoth she, "sell me this, for I am sure it is a thing of price."

"Nay," said the man, "the thing is not for sale."

"What!" cried the Earl's daughter. "Then what do you here in the town's market, with the thing in your creel, and naught beside?"

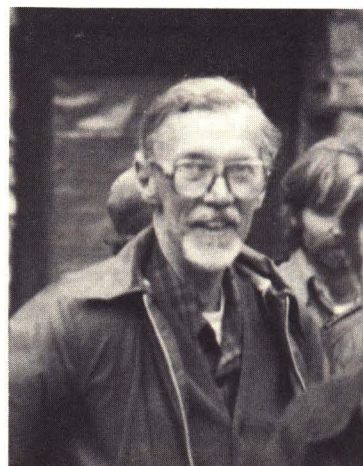
"I sit here," says the man, "to get me a wife."

"There is no sense to any of these answers," thought the Earl's daughter; "and I could find it in my heart to weep."

By came the Earl upon that, and she called him and told him all. And when he had heard, he was of his daughter's mind that this should be a thing of price; and charged the man to set a price upon the thing or else be hanged upon the gallows, and that was near at hand so that the man could see it.

"The way of life is straight like the grooves of launching," quoth the man. "And if I am to be hanged, let me be hanged."

"Why!" cried the Earl, "will you set your neck against the shoe of a horse, and it rusty?"



Aitken Roshi at Tassajara BPF Meeting 1983

Photo by Therese Fitzgerald

"In my thought," said the man, "one thing is as good as another in this world; and the shoe of a horse will do."

"This can never be," thought the Earl, and he stood and looked at the man, and bit his beard.

And the man looked up at him and smiled, "It was so my fathers did in the ancient ages," quoth he to the Earl, "and I have neither a better reason nor a worse."

"There is no sense in any of this," thought the Earl, "and I must be growing old." So he had his daughter on one side, and says he: "Many suitors have you denied, my child. But here is a very strange matter that a man should cling so to the shoe of a horse, and it rusty; and that he should offer it like a thing on sale, and yet not sell it; and that he should sit there seeking a wife. If I come not to the bottom of this thing, I shall have no more pleasure in bread; and I can see no way, but either I should hang or you should marry him."

"By my troth, but he is bitter ugly," said the Earl's daughter. "How if the gallows be so near at hand?"

"It was not so," said the Earl, "that my fathers did in the ancient ages. I am like the man, and can give you neither a better reason nor a worse. But do you, prithee, speak with him again."

So the Earl's daughter spoke to the man. "If you were not so bitter ugly," quoth she, "my father the Earl would have us marry."

"Bitter ugly am I," said the man, "and you as fair as May. Bitter ugly I am, and what of that? It was so my fathers . . ."

"In the name of God," said the Earl's daughter, "leave your fathers be!"

"If I had done that," said the man, "you had never been chaffering with me here in the market, nor your father watching with the end of his eyes."

"But come," quoth the Earl's daughter, "this is a very strange thing, that you would have me wed for the shoe of a horse, and it rusty."

"In my thought," quoth the man, "One thing is as good.."

"O, spare me that," said the Earl's daughter, "and tell me why I should marry."

"Listen and look," said the man.

And the wind blew through the Poor Thing like an infant crying, so that her heart was melted; and her eyes were unsealed, and she was aware of the thing as it were a babe unmothered, and she took it to her arms, and it melted in her arms like the air.

"Come," said the man, "behold a vision of our children, the busy hearth, and the white heads. And let that suffice, for it is all God offers."

"I have no delight in it," said she, but with that she sighed

"The ways of light are straight like the grooves of launching," said the man, and he took her by the hand.

"And what shall we do with the horseshoe?" she asked.

"I will give it to your father," said the man, "and he can make a kirk and a mill of it for me."

And it came to pass that the Poor Thing was born, but memory of these matters slept with him, and he know not that which he had done. But he was a part of the eldest son; rejoicing manfully to launch the boat into the surf, skillful to direct the helm, and a man of might where the ring closes and the blows are going.⁹

We learn from this story what we already know, that persuasion comes with sharing a vision of what can be, of what is waiting to be. The fisherman holds fast to his vision in the face of laws of the market and the threat of hanging. The Earl is a man of the world, but he is also a man of tradition. An appeal to tradition speaks to him, and he is convinced in spite of himself. His daughter is a woman of the world, but like most people she is vulnerable to the vision of what is waiting to be. At a moment of ripeness, she is advised, "Listen and look," and she finds a vision of her future life. She has no delight in it, and we can understand this, for we too know the regret of leaving our youth. Her sigh marks her transition to a loving concern for others.

Like the fisherman I have a vision of a family, but it is more than just a human family and a single hearth. Mine is a vision of all people, animals, plants, stones, and clouds reflecting each other, interpenetrating each other--interbeing. At the same time, each comes forth individually: "Here I am!" This is the vision my ancestors in the Dharma beheld: the Tao of the universe. Though it is ancient, I am like the Earl, and am in touch with it. You in your various Buddhist streams are in touch with it as well.

More than in touch with it: at this conference I am preaching to the converted. I don't have to talk about the foreign and domestic policies of the United States. My task is to remind myself and you of our ancestral way, the female way as well as the male way, insofar as these two may be differentiated. Stevenson wrote 90 years ago in a style that was old-fashioned even in his own time, and he used the term "fathers" in a manner that is certainly outmoded today. This is important to note, but more important: this very hall is the cairn of our mothers and fathers of long ago. The treasure they offer is the thing of no price, our breathing, our awareness, and our love.

My task is also to discuss with you the place and posture we might take in the town market to convey the ancient way. How can we best persuade? My vision is formulated in terms of the Net of Indra. You might have a Theravada or a Vajrayana model in mind. But as Buddhists, as students of religion, Buddhist, Christian, or Judaic, or as humanists concerned with peace and social justice, we long for compassion in the world.

How shall we show the bowl, the cross, the star, the horse-shoe? I turn to my ancestors for guidance:

Ungan asked Dogo, "How does Kanzeon Bosatsu use all those many hands and eyes? Dogo said, "Like someone in the middle of the night reaching back for a pillow."¹⁰

Kanzeon Bosatsu is the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, the incarnation of mercy and compassion. She is shown in many mudras--one of them with eleven heads and a thousand arms. Each head is looking in a different direction, and each hand holds a tool: a pen, a shovel, a spatula, a vajra.

How does Kanzeon use all those eyes? She has not merely two eyes, but twenty-two, seeing in all directions. She is aware--in touch with herself and her treasure, and open to the world. Her very name reflects this: the one who perceives sounds. We all perceive sounds, but as an archetypal perceiver, she sees, hears, smells, feels all things as for the first time, finding their being to be her own, their suffering to be her own.

How does Kanzeon use all those hands? Very naturally, Dogo says, as naturally as you reach behind your head for your pillow when you are asleep. She is as uncontrived as the fisherman chaffering with the Earl's daughter, but she is prepared and skilled, with a tool for each occasion, and she takes appropriate action. Kanzeon conveys her vision by embodying it. With understanding based on clear perception, she does the necessary.

The fisherman conveyed his vision by embodying it. He has neither a better reason nor a worse, which is to say, he has no reason at all. Faithful to his vision, he will carry it to the gallows if necessary--not fanatically, but with light heart and good cheer. This is the faith that transforms arrogance and

Again I acknowledge the patriarchal slant of the story.greed. Written today, it could be a female Poor Thing searching for a distinguished father to marry the bitterly ugly woman who is to be her mother. We have moved beyond the sexism of the 19th century, and we've also moved beyond the social and political inhibitions of Buddhists in even more recent years. We are, in our own way, in our time, seeking out and realizing the primordial family.

As a peacemaker I am challenged by my ancestors to turn the wheel of the Dharma as Kanzeon, empowered by my vision of the net of interbeing with my human sisters and brothers, my sister animals, and my brother stones and trees. The market where I sit with my friends is my dojo in Honolulu, but here is a dojo too, the Honduran border can be a dojo, the inner-city mission can be a dojo, and so can farms or the wilderness. But wherever I sit, I want to say, "Listen and look!" and to say it effectively I must be wise and skilled and uncontrived like Kanzeon, faithful to my vision like Stevenson's fisherman, and intimately in touch with my ancestors and with what is waiting to be like the Poor Thing.

This is my ideal, but how shall I conspire with my friends and family members to bring it about? How can we, in our chapters at home, ripen the moment for saying, effectively, "Listen and look!"

Robert Aitken, Roshi is a founder, former Board member, and an International Advisory Board Member of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, and is the Director and head teacher at the Diamond Sangha in Honolulu and Maui. Notes for this article are on page 11.

The Bodhisattva in the Twentieth Century: Developing A Doctrinal Base for Engaged Buddhism

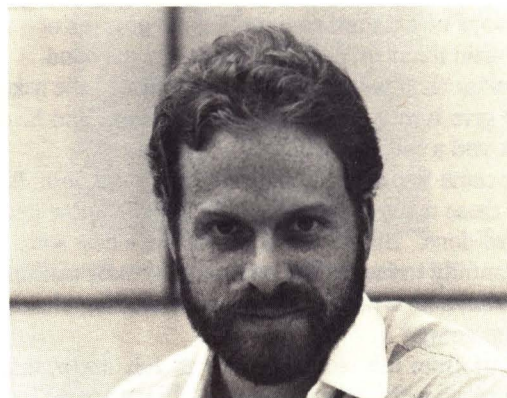
By Kenneth Kraft

Ed. Note: This article is adapted from a paper given by Prof. Kraft at the conference on Buddhism and Nonviolence held at the Rochester Zen Center in May. A summary of all the papers from that conference follows.

Have you seen the T-shirt with the guy wringing his hands and saying, "Nuclear war?! Oh no! There goes my career!?" In the early days of many American Buddhist communities, the caption might have been: "Nuclear war?! Oh no! There goes my practice!" Things are changing. Now there are many Western Buddhists who not only admit, "Nuclear war is bad for our practice," but who also seek appropriate responses to the situation. And they are expressing concern for other social issues as well, from environmental pollution to political oppression. A new term, "Engaged Buddhism," is being used to designate this involvement of Buddhism and Buddhists in social, political, and economic affairs. Engaged Buddhists are attempting to develop the means to actualize Buddhism's traditional ideals of wisdom and compassion in today's world.

What does the term "Engaged Buddhism" mean? Like the fledgling movement to which it refers, the term itself is currently in the process of definition. Let's begin by examining Engaged Buddhism's theoretical underpinnings, synthesizing material from a variety of sources. Step One is a reassessment of the Buddhist tradition--its past performance as a historical institution, its inherent resources, and its future potential.

Engaged Buddhists concede that traditional Buddhism in the Asian cultural context has generally been politically passive. Its strengths were in the realms of the individual and the universal, not the social. On the specific issue of peace, the record is mixed. Buddhists did not fight holy wars--there were no Buddhist Crusades or Inquisitions--and the religion did exert a pacifying effect in India and China during certain eras. Yet Buddhists fought each other in Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, and Japan. In China, Buddhism acquiesced to belligerent regimes, and in Japan Buddhism repeatedly allied itself with militarism. But, as Nelson Foster argues, "The Mahayana tradition of political inactivity is a result of the restrictive social environment which Buddhism encountered in China and Japan. It is not inherent to the Buddha way."¹ The Pali canon provides evidence to indicate that Shakyamuni Buddha saw individual serenity and social concord as inseparable, and he left guidelines for the development of just social institutions.² Nagarjuna, the second century Indian founder of Madhyamika, also discussed the application of Buddhist principles in the social realm. According to Robert Thurman, Nagarjuna provides "the broad outlines of an individualist, transcendentalist, pacifist, universalist, socialist society."³ Buddhist popular literature is equally congenial. In the Jataka tales, "the Buddha is shown not as withdrawing from the world, but as acting with compassion and wisdom for the benefit of all living beings."⁴



Kenneth Kraft

A second step in developing Engaged Buddhism's doctrinal base is the explicit justification of involvement in the social, political, and economic realms. Before tracing the lines of this argument, let me quote the conclusion of Burmese statesman U Thant: "I have not found the slightest difficulty or contradiction between my Buddhist faith and my duties as Secretary-General of the United Nations."⁵

One approach to the issue of engagement starts with the Buddhist vision of interdependence, the oneness of all existence (and non-existence). The classic image is of Indra's Net, in which multi-faceted jewels reflect each other infinitely. A related Mahayana claim is that "Nothing obstructs anything else." Or as Roshi Philip Kapleau once joked, "All is one, and one is all, and vice versa." For Buddhists, interdependence is not just a doctrinal tenet, but something that can be experienced directly and deeply. Several repercussions of this worldview--and experience are of special import for Buddhist activists. If we are not separate from others on a fundamental level, it follows that the suffering of others is also our suffering, that the violence of others is also our violence. In the words of Christopher Titmuss:

People are beginning to see that personal pain and global pain are not two separate factors, but very much inter-related. Some people experience inside of themselves what they conceive of as being the pain of the world, but in a way it's the pain of themselves. There are others who experience inside of themselves what they conceive of as being purely personal pain. In a way, it's the pain of the world.⁶

This somber conclusion has a brighter flip-side: the intimate link between personal peace and world peace. If everything is interdependent, then one individual's peace of mind significantly contributes to peace everywhere. When the Dalai Lama says that "peace is the responsibility of everyone," he is simply expressing this Buddhist insight.

Another justification for involvement in the social realm is that individual enlightenment cannot be genuine, profound, or complete without a corresponding degree of social awareness. This approach, of course, echoes the time-honored depiction of the bodhisattva, who places the salvation of all other beings before his own. The Japanese have a beautiful expression, *jiri-rita-enman*, or "self-benefit and other-benefit, perfectly fulfilled." In the late 1960's and early '70's, many meditators were preoccupied with their own enlightenment, building a necessary base, not ready to take on larger concerns. Now these same practitioners sense that their spiritual striving requires some meaningful relation to the surrounding social context.

One further justification for Buddhist involvement in politics is that we are all involved in politics anyway. According to Jim Perkins, "Politics is just our relationships with other people in large numbers. We cannot avoid participating."⁷ As individuals, our daily lives involve "political" decisions: not only which candidates we support, oppose, or ignore, but where we choose to live, how we spend our money, and so on. I never imagined that buying a light bulb or a banana might have political implications until I learned that General Electric manufactures MX missile components near where I live, and that bananas are grown by Filipino peasants reduced to near-servitude by U.S. companies. Our group actions, including those of our Buddhist centers, are also political. From this standpoint, there can be no such thing as a "disengaged Buddhism".

These and other arguments lead to the conclusion that a Buddhist's task is not to avoid politics, but to become more politically conscious, responsive, and responsible. In Nelson Foster's assertive reformulation: "Political action may be a natural result of Buddhist practice, a spontaneous response of wisdom and compassion to the social and ecological problems we face."⁸

A central tenet in the theoretical underpinnings of Engaged Buddhism is that individual transformation is the heart of Buddhist social activism, its *sine qua non*. If a Buddhist social movement is pursued only from the social/political standpoint, without this transformative element, it may fail to achieve real results and may even perpetuate the ills it aims to cure. Thus Joanna Macy speaks of "the inner work of social change."⁹ Ultimately, Buddhist social action must come out of enlightenment, or *prajña*. In the broadest sense, enlightenment simply means awareness, inherent in us all, and there is nothing mystical about its application: stopping on the street to pick up litter is an "engaged" act that comes from awareness. In another sense, *prajña* insight enables one to deal with "opponents" non-dualistically, to avoid getting stuck in a particular position, and to transcend issues even as one struggles with them, to be involved *and* detached. Engaged Buddhism thus seeks a genuine integration of the contemplative and the active. In Robert Aitken's words:

The Buddha did not remain under the bodhi tree, and neither does Mother Theresa neglect her prayers. *Prajña* and *upaya*, wisdom and compassion--these are the "head and tail" of religious practice. Stagnation or burnout are the negative results of neglecting one end or the other.¹⁰

One further tenet of Engaged Buddhism that needs to be identified is its lack of attachment to ideology, a stance as essential as any of the preceding points. The first precept of the Tiep Hien Order, formulated by Thich Nhat Hanh, is not to be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. "Buddhist systems of thought must be guiding means and not absolute truth."¹¹ Engaged Buddhists are even willing to dispense with the label "Buddhism" if it becomes a source of attachment or a hindrance to understanding. Nor is it necessary for an individual to sign on as a "Buddhist" to partake of the tradition's resources. This non-attachment to ideology is certainly one of the most distinctive and refreshing aspects of Engaged Buddhism. It is close in spirit to the "irreverent reverence" of Zen, and a far cry from the fundamentalism that rages through many belief-systems. What better antidote than this for today's ideological gridlock, which causes such widespread suffering in the world?

Amidst these areas of broad agreement, one also finds issues that may require further clarification. A simple example: does Engaged Buddhism claim that all Buddhists should become socially involved? Must everyone leap off the mat and rush into the streets? No, Engaged Buddhism is rather an attempt to establish the legitimacy of public involvement for Buddhists who wish to move in that direction. A more complex issue is the proper role of Buddhist groups. Should Sanghas become politically engaged? Different guidelines may be applicable in different situations. Another question that may arise is: how can a Buddhist take sides? Wouldn't it be more correct to remain impartial? A helpful tool here is the doctrine of the Twofold Truth, conventional and ultimate. Taking sides on the conventional level does not necessarily mean that the ultimate has been violated or abandoned. Rather, Buddhist activists strive to take sides with lightness and flexibility, and a natural empathy for other points of view.

A final example of an ongoing issue is whether Buddhism demands absolute pacifism. Absolute pacifism is initially attractive because it seems to cut through many complexities and tough decisions, but strong arguments can be made on both sides of the question. Though the first precept of Buddhism is "to cherish all life," the Mahayana interpretation of that precept is not absolutistic. For instance, if a rabid dog is chasing children down the street, the dog must be shot for the community's welfare. The question then becomes: where does one draw the line? Buddhism never developed a theoretical standard like the Christian "just war" doctrine. In European history, the Pope was the one who pronounced a war just or unjust, but Buddhism does not have anyone so infallible. Asian Buddhism generally sanctions wars of self-defense against a foreign invader; today Taiwanese monks routinely serve in the army (disrobing temporarily), prepared to fight the mainland Chinese if necessary. If the Buddhist nonviolent movement in the West opts to reject all rationales for war, even national self-defense, it will need to offer some viable alternatives. Here Dr. Gene Sharp's work on methods of nonviolent struggle and "civilian-based defense" should be of great value.¹²

What are some of Engaged Buddhism's current weaknesses or trouble spots? What needs to be done to move the movement forward?

Further exploration and dissemination of key Buddhist tenets would shore up Engaged Buddhism's doctrinal base. For example, a better understanding of the Twofold Truth doctrine would help clarify some common areas of confusion, such as meditation's role as a response to the world. According to the Twofold Truth theory, meditation is *simultaneously* a partial response (conventional level) and a complete response that transcends activity and inactivity (ultimate level).

Buddhist social and political theory, heretofore neglected, is another area in which further work needs to be done. Ken Jones lays a base by stressing the social dimension of karma:

It is only some kind of *social* action that can be an effective and relevant response to the weight of *social* karma which oppresses humanity and which we all share.¹³

The concept of interdependence may have timely repercussions for a Buddhist social/political theory. In our global village, events are no longer domestic or international, but "intermestic". The seminal concept of a "Buddhist economics" was introduced by E. F. Schumacher in his book *Small is Beautiful*.¹⁴ And the Dalai Lama has even expressed a willingness to explore the common ground between Buddhism and Marxism; originally, both systems sought the greatest good for the greatest number.¹⁵

Though the realm of Engaged Buddhist practice is beyond our consideration here, we may note in passing that many potentially relevant Buddhist techniques have yet to be applied. To cite just one example: *The Vimalakirti Sutra*, which predates the common era, offers a compelling formula for conflict-resolution in its description of bodhisattvas:

During the long reign of weapons,
They meditate on love,
Introducing to nonviolence
Hundreds of millions of living beings.
In the middle of great battles
They remain impartial to both sides
For bodhisattvas of great strength
Delight in reconciliation of conflict.¹⁶

Buddhists will continue to develop new forms of nonviolent activism, such as public meditation vigils, that integrate Buddhist and Western approaches. If medieval Japanese masters could devise one-line invocations as routes to salvation, contemporary Buddhists should be able to come up with a few catchy slogans, like, "Live simply, so that others may simply live," or "Think globally, act locally," phrases now circulating in kindred groups. A bit of ringing rhetoric might even have its place--"And so my fellow engaged Buddhists, ask not what all beings can do for you . . ." Engaged Buddhism is also going to need a sacred text or two, something like a *Path of Compassion Sutra* or a "Declaration of Interdependence." Such a work would lead us from the current ideology of mutual assured destruction to a new vision of mutual assured awakening.

It will also be essential to maintain the spirit of *prajña* throughout all activities of the movement. In the attempt to reach larger audiences, in the creation of new forms of practice, the non-dual insight into True Nature is too easily diluted, especially when grass-roots leaders have not had the benefit of

long and rigorous Buddhist training. If the *prajña* is lost, so is Buddhism.

Originally, I hesitated to refer to Engaged Buddhism as a "movement"--the label seemed too substantial to describe a handful of meditators with a letterhead. But then I began to sense how much *movement* is actually taking place. Even in the past few weeks, the pace seems to have accelerated: the Rochester and Boulder conferences have stimulated a new level of networking back and forth across the country. Though the membership tally of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship is small today, its growth curve is impressive. Someone calculated that if the BPF continues to grow at last year's rate, the entire population of the U.S. will belong in thirty years.¹⁷

Engaged Buddhism in the West is a genuine grass-roots phenomenon. Initiative comes from local groups and individuals. The absence of a single dominant leader gives many people a chance to lead. The current president of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Ruth Klein, describes herself as well-known to her "family and friends," adding, "I have never before been president of anything."¹⁸ A ready-made metaphor for a Buddhist grass-roots movement is found in the *Lotus Sutra*, which describes "bodhisattvas welling up out of the earth."¹⁹

Historically, Buddhism's ability to change and adapt has been one of its greatest sources of strength. Today we are witnessing and/or participating in another turn in the Buddhist tradition. At the least, the appearance of Engaged Buddhism is an important part of Buddhism's indigenization in the West. Is this an event on the scale of a sub-division within a lineage or is it something much grander, like the emergence of Ch'an (Zen) in China or even the historic shift from Theravada to Mahayana? Such evaluations can be left to Buddhologists of future generations, if there are any.

Buddhism's contribution to the West may also turn out to be historically significant in a wider sense. Intellectually, Buddhism is offering the West nothing less than a new model of the universe. In place of the prevailing mechanistic view of the world as the sum of separate parts, Buddhism reveals a dynamically organic universe in which everything affects everything else. From this vision of oneness, the principle of nonviolence arises naturally, because to hurt another means to hurt oneself. A Buddhist-inspired paradigm shift in the West would have profound repercussions.

Buddhism has a handy concept called *upaya*, "skillful means" or "skill in means": the teaching of truth by methods appropriate to the particular time and place. This notion is applicable to Engaged Buddhism in several respects. First, individual Buddhists now approach social activism as a skillful means for deepening their practice. Second, the peace issue seems to be a skillful means for introducing Buddhism to the West. Whenever Buddhism has entered a new culture in the past, it has had to hitch itself to a larger wagon, at least temporarily. What better *upaya* for Buddhism today than nonviolence? Third, Buddhism itself may turn out to be a skillful means for helping humanity out of its present predicament.

(Continued on page 11.)

A Buddhist Metaphysics of Peace

Papers from the Rochester Conference on Buddhism and Nonviolence

By Bill Anderson and Audrey Fernandez

On the May 23-25, the Zen Center of Rochester, celebrated its twentieth anniversary by hosting a Conference on Buddhism and Nonviolence. The conference provided a forum for exploring traditional Buddhist approaches to nonviolence and their application today, by bringing together Buddhist scholars, a Tibetan Buddhist teacher, and a leading authority on nonviolent action. The result was stimulating and inspiring for the nearly 300 people who attended the various lectures.

At the recent BPF conference in Boulder, Robert Aitken, Roshi spoke of the need to formulate a Buddhist metaphysics of peace and peacework. This conference provided a beginning for this work, and it is our hope that these summaries of the various lectures will give some ideas of the range and possibilities of the Buddhist basis for peacework. All of these talks will be published as a book by the State University of New York Press next year. For more details please write to the Zen Center, 7 Arnold Park, Rochester, New York 14607.

**Luis Gomez, Department of Far Eastern Languages,
University of Michigan, "Nonviolence and the
Morality of Abstention"**

Professor Gomez traced the historical development of *ahimsa* in Buddhism, from a self-righteous obsession with personal pollution to the later emphasis on compassion. Buddhism's earlier emphasis on the purity of self changed into an understanding that individual purity contributes to purity in the world, that peace of mind is the same as peace in the world. This is part of what might be called an ecology of mind. He also pointed out that the Buddhist practice of nonviolence has compassion as its primary objective. In the Mahayana tradition one's efforts continue until all beings are liberated. This Mahayana idea of the "higher" good leads to questions of whether compassion is simply the avoidance of pain, or whether some pain may be required for the happiness of all beings. These questions also arise in the administration of justice. Professor Gomez also asserted that Buddhist nonviolence is more than simple restraint from killing or causing pain. *Ahimsa* includes not lying, not stealing, and not hurting others with words. This last may be the most difficult to practice. Finally, after presenting many theoretical and historical bases for Buddhist nonviolence, Professor Gomez stressed that all aspects of Buddhist nonviolence have been and are strongly connected with practices of meditation. Understanding of the self, and attainment of "no-self," in Buddhist practice are the basis of compassion and nonviolence. In Buddhism nonviolence is a way of life--it is rooted in practice.

**Kenneth Inada, Department of Philosophy, State
University of New York at Buffalo, "The Anatomy
of Nonviolence: A Buddhist Analysis"**

Professor Inada asserted that the potential Buddhist contribution to our current difficult situation is large, but that Buddhism is relatively unknown in the West. One task for Buddhists, then, is better publicity. He quoted frequently from a book by an Italian philosopher, Sergio Cotta, entitled *Why Violence: A Philosophical Interpretation*. Cotta points out that in this century our view of violence has changed from considering it a necessary evil to exultation. Cotta suggests that violence is eliminated and neutralized by charity, and that charity is the expression of a vital human need. This is very close to the Buddhist conception of the compassion of the Bodhisattva. He then went on to explain that a philosophical analysis of nonviolence can help change our unbalanced views of violence. Violence and nonviolence are not exactly opposites. Violence needs nonviolence for its existence, but the converse is not true--this is an important dialectic. Violence only makes it clear that peace and tranquility are the normal course of human existence.

**Donald Swearer, Department of Religion,
Swarthmore College, "Nonviolence in Theravada
Buddhism, Past and Present"**

Professor Swearer began by pointing out that Buddhism has no privileged claim with regard to nonviolence. Buddhists, both monks and laity, have taken part in or promoted armed conflict. Recognizing this, we must not become self-righteous with respect to other religious traditions. In fact, a self-righteous sense makes being nonviolent virtually impossible. On the other hand, Buddhists have an obligation to explore their own tradition for ways to realize peace in their own lives and in the world community. Professor Swearer discussed the resources in the Theravada tradition by describing five Buddhist moral exemplars of nonviolence. Like Gandhi, these people changed the world by what they did--by the fact that they exemplified nonviolence in their own lives. Although it is important to develop nonviolent strategies based on Buddhist principles, people living nonviolently will inspire others to live nonviolently more directly than any number of conferences and discussions about nonviolence. Two virtues are important for any philosophy of nonviolence: restraint and generosity. Restraint is the subordination of one's self-interest out of respect for, or in deference to, the interests of others. Generosity is the active pursuit of the total well-being of others. Both of these virtues are roots of Theravadin Buddhist practice.

Professor Swearer told stories of five Buddhist exemplars: King Asoka; Jotika, a merchant who instructs King Ajatasattu; two venerated lay supporters of the monastic order, Anathapindika and Visakha; and the contemporary Thai Buddhist monk Bhikkhu Buddhadasa.

Venerable Tara Tulku Rinpoche, Abbot, Tibetan Monastery in Bodh Gaya, India

The Venerable Tara Tulku Rinpoche spoke of anger, and how anger and violence do not leave one feeling happy, and of how all beings want to be happy. Rinpoche said that when one understands how anger works in oneself it is easier to be compassionate toward others who attack you in anger. For this reason, it is important to understand ourselves, so that we can act with compassion for all other beings. Finally, he led everyone in a Tibetan chanting meditation on the Buddha.

Helen Hardacre, Department of Religion, Princeton University, "Perspectives on Peace in Three Japanese Buddhist Organizations"

Professor Hardacre illustrated the engaged Buddhist activities of three Japanese Buddhist movements. One is Nipponzan Myohoji, a branch of the Nichiren sect of Japanese Buddhism. This is a small organization that has organized symbolic events, such as the 1976 march across America on behalf of nuclear disarmament and the peace pagodas mentioned in the last *BPF Newsletter*. The second organization discussed by Professor Hardacre is Soka Gakkai, a large lay organization that has worked in government for many years. They have worked with the United Nations, and in Japan they promoted the peace constitution, and they have called for the complete abolition of nuclear arms. The third organization, Rissho Kosei-kai, has concentrated on famine relief. They have also practiced charity on a large scale with the goal of making people happy.

Dr. Gene Sharp, Program on Nonviolent Sanctions, Harvard University, "Nonviolent Principles and Societal Responsibilities"

Dr. Sharp spoke of the possibilities of nonviolent struggle as an alternative to violence as the best way to protect yourself from aggression. Many people assume that the only choice is between violence and submission, but nonviolent struggle has had a long history--the most recent example is the revolution in the Philippines. In fact, governments can only rule with the consent of the people, as the Philippine example clearly shows. Furthermore, as Dr. Sharp pointed out, nonviolent resistance and struggle is widely practiced by children and animals, and in many cases it is effective. One of the goals of his work at Harvard is to make people more aware of this history of nonviolence.

Dr. Sharp stated that the nature of violence in politics poses significant risks to socially accepted "good" principles. But people will not choose to be helpless and powerless in a dangerous world. Violence as a defense against aggression is considered preferable to passive submission. People will compromise their nonviolent principles before choosing help-

lessness; and this has led to the ideas of the "just" war. However, given the long history of nonviolent struggle, Dr. Sharp believes that we can widen the choices of response to aggression available to citizens in all countries. What's needed is an exploration of the effectiveness of nonviolent actions with respect to various social goals, such as civilian defense. We need to elucidate the situations in which nonviolent action is more effective than violence in reaching desired goals, to develop the ethics of nonviolence. When asked about the effectiveness of nonviolent struggle Dr. Sharp referred to examples from European experiences in the first half of this century, and then quoted from Kenneth Boulding: "That which exists is possible."

Professor Robert Thurman, Department of Religion, Amherst College, "A Prince of Peace as a Buddhist Institution: The Dalai Lamas in World Politics"

In a lively presentation, Professor Thurman read and commented on the Dalai Lama's prayer for Tibet. The Buddhist strategy of nonviolence is based on several principles: that everyone's mission in life is enlightenment; that this enlightenment can only come when we are completely defenseless (In this sense, the Dalai Lama is grateful for the Chinese invasion of Tibet since the Tibetans have learned a great deal about suffering and compassion); that since beginningless time beings have created their own problems, and they can solve these problems; and that compassion is the most powerful force in the universe. One reason many people choose violence is that they think that violence is more powerful than nonviolence. The work of Gene Sharp can help change this view, and if we understand the power of compassion, we will not be so quick to choose violence to resolve conflicts. Professor Thurman criticized "Western temporal chauvinism," the idea that nothing thought of before 1960 is useful. This pride keeps us from learning anything from others or from the past. The Asian sangha has long experience and great understanding of how human society works, and we can learn from it that connections between Dharma and state are not the same as connections between church and state. Professor Thurman brought up the idea that the West needs more support for a monastic tradition. Acceptance of a monastic life--a life given completely to meditation--with no benefits expected in return, is a litmus test for liberty in a society. The freedom of the individual to choose a monastic life is more important than social interests.

The Conference concluded with a panel discussion. All of these papers, the discussion which followed, and the discussion which many of us will continue, will help us develop, as Aitken Roshi suggested, a Buddhist metaphysics of peace and peacework.

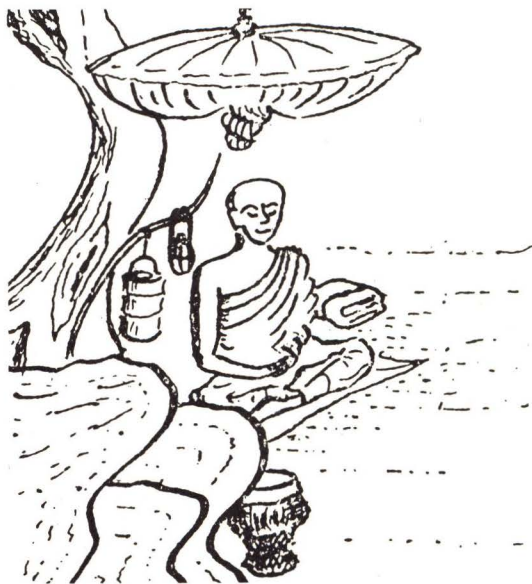
Bill Anderson and Audrey Fernandez are students at the Rochester Zen Center. Bill is the coordinator of the Rochester Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

20th Century Bodhisattva

(Continued from Page 8)

We have been looking at Engaged Buddhism dispassionately. "Peace" and "nonviolence" seem like nice, gentle ideas. It appears that we are still conducting business as usual. But of course these impressions belie a far more potent reality. Peace and nonviolence are ideas that transform people and nations. Peacework demands risks and sacrifices and passion. Nonviolence, in a culture as violent as ours, amounts to cultural revolution.²⁰ In such a revolution, the revolutionaries are bodhisattvas, armed with wisdom and compassion.

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Footnotes

Buddhism Challenges the Peacemaker By Robert Aitken

¹Jui-yen Shih-yen, fl. 900. Cf. Koun Yamada, trans., *Gateless Gate* (Los Angeles: Center Publications, 1979), pp. 67-71.

²Zenkei Shibayama, trans., *Zen Comments on the Mumonkan* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 94.

³Cf. Yamada, *Gateless Gate*, pp. 67-68.

⁴Teishitsu (d. 1673). See R. H. Blyth, trans., *Haiku*, 4 vols. (Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1949-1952), II, p. 333.

⁵Blyth, *ibid.*

⁶"Buddha nature pervades . . ." This is the first line of the sutra dedication in English composed by Nakagawa Soen Roshi in 1957, used in the Diamond Sangha and at the Zen Center of Los Angeles.

⁷Yün-men Wen-yen (862/4-949). Cf. Thomas and J.C. Cleary, trans., *The Blue Cliff Record*, 3 vols. (Boulder: Shambhala, 1977, out of print), III, pp. 554-558.

⁸Kazuaki Tanahashi et al, trans., *Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dogen* (San Francisco: North Point, 1985), p. 70.

⁹Robert Louis Stevenson, *Fables*, (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1896), pp. 74-84.

¹⁰Yün-yen T'an-sheng (780?-841); Tao-wu Yüan-chih (769-835). Cf. Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record*, III, pp. 571-577.

The Bodhisattva in the 20th Century By Kenneth Kraft

¹Nelson Foster, "Toward a Buddhist Vision and Practice of Social Change," *Blind Donkey* (Hawaii: Diamond Sangha), 9:1, Nov. 1985, p. 18.

²See Richard Hayes, "Peace and Justice are Inseparable," *BPF Newsletter*, 7:1, Winter 1985, p. 13.

³Robert A. F. Thurman, "Guidelines for Buddhist Social Activism Based on Nagarjuna's *Jewel Garland of Royal Counsels*, in Fred Eppsteiner and Denis Maloney, ed. *The Path of Compassion* (Berkeley: Buddhist Peace Fellowship, 1985), p. 53.

⁴Rafe Martin, "Thoughts on the Jatakas," in Eppsteiner, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁵U.S. Lumbini Committee, "Lumbini" brochure (n.d.), p. 2.

⁶Christopher Titmuss, "Sitting for Peace," in Eppsteiner, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

⁷"An Interview with Jim Perkins," *BPF Newsletter*, 8:1-2, Spring 1986, p. 7.

⁸Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁹Joanna Macy, "Buddhist Resources for Despairwork," *BPF Newsletter*, 7:1, p. 8.

¹⁰Robert Aitken, "Engaged Buddhism Across the Atlantic," *BPF Newsletter*, 7:1, p. 7.

¹¹Fred Eppsteiner, "In the Crucible," in Eppsteiner, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

¹²Gene Sharp, *Making Europe Unconquerable: The Potential of Civilian-Based Deterrence and Defense* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1986).

¹³Ken Jones, *Buddhism and Social Action* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1981), p. 18.

¹⁴E.F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered* (London: Blond and Briggs, 1973).

¹⁵Middlebury alumni magazine, Autumn 1984, p. 15.

¹⁶Robert A. F. Thurman, trans., *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), p. 70 (first line modified).

¹⁷*BPF Newsletter*, 8:1-2, p. 16.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 17, and conversation May 1986.

¹⁹Leon Hurvitz, trans., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 225.

²⁰Sandra Boston in Annie Cheatham and Mary Clare Powell, *This Way Daybreak Comes: Women's Values and the Future* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1986), p. 205.

Tribal Buddhists in Bangladesh: The Suffering Continues *By Nelson Foster*

Editor's Note: Near the northeast corner of the Bay of Bengal, where Bangladesh meets India and Burma, lie the Chittagong Hill Tracts, 13,000 square kilometers of rugged high country. This is the home of more than half a million tribespeople, ethnically and culturally distinct in Bangladesh, having maintained a tradition of Theravada Buddhism since the 15th century in what has become a predominantly Muslim area. For half a century, until 1947, the Hill Tracts area was protected and largely autonomous under British colonial administration.

Bangladesh as a whole has a high and increasing population density, and a large number of landless rural workers. Thus it became government policy to settle landless families in the Hill Tracts area, often giving them money, seeds, and other facilities. The tribal populations felt increasingly exploited and menaced as more and more new settlers were brought in. Then in 1963, a hydro-electric dam was built there which submerged 350,000 acres of farm land, and displaced more than 100,000 tribespeople while supplying them with virtually no electricity, jobs, or other benefits. An effort led by a member of Bangladesh Parliament to ask the government to respect the Chittagong Hill Tract Regulation of 1900 was answered by charges of secessionism, massive bloody reprisals, and the burning of hundreds of villages. According to

reports, immigrants from the plains, assisted by the Armed Forces of Bangladesh, have sought to drive the people of the Hill Tracts off their land. They are already outnumbered in their home, where they constituted 90% of the population in 1947, and the persecution is accelerating. It is reported that tens of thousands have been killed and that rape, torture, and relocation to so-called collective farms are commonplace. Under the leadership of the Chakma, the largest of the 13 ethnic groups comprising the Chittagong Hill Tracts tribespeople, some hill people have organized the Shanti Bahini or "Peace Force" to resist oppression. They began as irregular groups to protect the villages, but they have developed into a full-fledged guerilla force. A cycle of violence and counter-violence pervades the area, and the entire population of tribal peoples is threatened with extinction.

In the past six years, the BPF Newsletter and the British BPF magazine Down by the Riverside have published a number of articles on this desperate situation. Since 1980, a BPF board member or former member has maintained contact with tribal representatives and human rights organizations working to resolve the conflict. The current liaison person is Nelson Foster, a BPF founder from Honolulu, who recently filed this report.



Under my bed is an eight-inch stack of papers recording in painfully clear detail the unending agonies of the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. All but a few of those documents have been typed, duplicated, and mailed by one person, a Chakma man living in England and devoting his life to the liberation of the tribal people. We met for the first time last September, in a dingy basement room in London that serves as a library for the human rights organization Survival International. Like the Chakma monk who first brought BPF's attention to the plight of the hill tribes, my correspondent is small, perhaps five feet tall, thin, and dark. Whether from his preference for anonymity or his 18 years in England, he dresses in the British style and was, on this occasion, easily the best dressed man in the room.

With us were David Arnott, indefatigable organizer of the British BPF, and one of his members, an elder Quaker whose path has lately inclined toward Buddhism. He, too, must go unnamed because a decades-long vocation in human service has led finally into the field of international mediation, and even an out-of-the-way mention in a publication like ours could complicate the delicate negotiation he is now conducting.

Though the four of us had never met, the spirit was instantly friendly. In 1958, our Quaker friend had visited the Hill Tracts in his capacity as an advisor on social affairs to the government of Pakistan, which then included Bangladesh, and

the conversation began with his recollection of one of the first and most damaging blows to the hill tribes--confiscation of the Chakmas' fertile homelands for construction of the Kaptai Dam. He had been--and still was--as appalled by this act as he was delighted by the Chakmas themselves. "Never," he said, "have I seen a people I was more immediately attracted to." However appealing, the hill tribes also know the arts of war, and a guerilla army, the Shanti Bahini, is practicing them now on Bangladeshi forces. Our Chakma friend proudly noted that the hill people have successfully resisted invasion over the centuries, not just by other tribes but by the Portuguese and the British as well. Clearly they are not going to give up now.

The cool, businesslike letters under my bed did not prepare me for the man who wrote them. Ardent and unyielding, he was more the impassioned statesman than the mild-mannered graduate student I had assumed him to be. Often silent, quick to smile, he is also--once begun--quick and forceful in expressing his views, the words coming so fast at moments that their meaning is carried more by sheer intention than by syntax.

After eight years conducting essentially a one-man campaign, beginning without any human rights contacts or accreditation from his people, he has recently begun to find strong support. When the Buddhist Peace Fellowship became

interested in 1980, he told me, it was only the second organization to show concern. Now, with the facts of the case better established, mainstream human rights groups like Amnesty International have joined the effort, and U.N. bodies have begun collecting information on the Hill Tracts conflict. Perhaps as a reflection of this success, he had recently been appointed the only representative in the West of the tribal political wing, the Jana Samhati Samiti or United People's Party.

But justice and peace for the Hill people seem a long way off. The pressures of public awareness are slowly growing, due to the work of Survival International, Amnesty, and other groups, but the Bangladesh government has so far remained utterly intransigent, denying all evidence of its wrongdoing. Though a couple of international aid projects have been abandoned in response to tribal concerns, there has been little progress lately in this regard and none with major donors like Japan, the United States, and the Asian Development Bank. If the black majority in South Africa has had trouble bringing economic pressure to bear on Pretoria, it seems doubtful a tiny tribal minority in Bangladesh will soon persuade the powers in Dacca to change their ways.

Nevertheless, the Jana Samhati Samiti and the Shanti Bahini are stoutly demanding a return to the full internal autonomy that their people enjoyed under British rule--a demand their foes are very unlikely to accept. Under the circumstances, our friend the mediator suggested, it seems important for the Jana Samhati Samiti to open lines of communication to the Bangladesh government through which a negotiated solution might eventually be found. Here the conversation grew difficult. Past attempts at dialogue with Dacca have not gone very well, and our friend flatly rejected the idea that the government would ever come to the negotiating table except in final desperation. His position left little room for compromise; nothing short of internal autonomy is acceptable.

I left our meeting sobered by the realization that these entrenched positions make a mediated settlement unlikely and are sure to prolong the bloodshed. I think there is hope that private channels of communication will be established to save time, and lives, later on, and I think BPF should urge both the hill people and the government to negotiate. In the meantime, though, those of us committed to nonviolence can best assist by increasing the public and economic pressure on Bangladesh.

I returned with some new suggestions about how that can effectively be done. **First**, those papers under my bed were copied at commercial rates. To help our friend spread the word farther, David Arnott and others in the British BPF have started a fund to purchase a copying machine. BPF chapters and members can contribute to that fund in care of:

John Phillips
77, Walton Road
Wavendon
Milton Keynes MK 178LY
England

Second, we can build a modest CHT support network in the United States with the particular goal of influencing decisions about aid to Bangladesh. BPF made some early efforts to contact key senators, but they soon were abandoned. More recently, the Chakma representative has corresponded with Ted Kennedy and is optimistic--groundlessly, I fear--that Kennedy is now working on the problem. It will take more than a lone voice from England to move Kennedy or any other major political forces into action. If you might be interested in participating in a support network, write me at 2257 Makanani Drive, Honolulu, HI 96817. **Third**, the Bangladesh International Action Group is planning a conference in Amsterdam this October, to gather information on the Hill Tracts problem and devise strategies to increase public awareness. The organizers have put out an invitation to attend and a call for funding help. Can BPF respond? Can someone attend?

Surely compassion means that something must be done to help the hill people save themselves and preserve what is, by common description, a sane and lovely way of life. It is hard not to be impressed by the justice of their cause or the indomitable spirit with which they struggle on.

One more detail about my Chakma friend: To conserve scarce funds, he had arisen at 4:30 that morning and caught the train to London at a reduced fare. If he was tired as a result, it didn't show when we met at noon or at any time in the next ten hours. Two meetings and a dinner later, he refused repeated offers of hospitality and insisted on making the three-hour train ride home so that he could get up the next day and resume his work.

Nelson Foster is a co-founder, along with Aitken Roshi, of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, and is a peace activist and Zen teacher in Honolulu.

Big Mountain: Apartheid on Our Soil by Ruth Klein

For most of the late 1970's I lived in the "Four Corners" area in the Southwest, among traditional Native American people. During this time my love/understanding for the land deepened greatly as I was taught to walk in balance on Mother Earth. It is a sad truth that those of us who spend our lives walking on concrete often lose our basic connection, a connection of heart and spirit, to this earth, to the elements of nature, to an understanding deep within our bodies of the harmony of land and life. The traditional Dineh (Navajo) and Hopi Indians are people whose lives are rooted in, and dedicated to, living in balance. According to ancient Native American tradition, it is their job to serve as guardian protectors of the land upon which they have lived for hundreds of years--and they are being torn from this land.

In 1974 Congress passed Public Law (PL) 93-531, supposedly intended to resolve a land dispute between Navajo and Hopi people living in a Joint Use Area (JUA) in northeastern Arizona. In fact, this dispute was fabricated in order to open the land to coal and uranium mining interests. The law orders the fencing of the JUA, to divide it in half; relocating the Hopi and Navajo to their side of the fence; a 90 percent reduction of livestock herds--upon which these traditional herders depend for sustenance; and a halt to all building improvements.

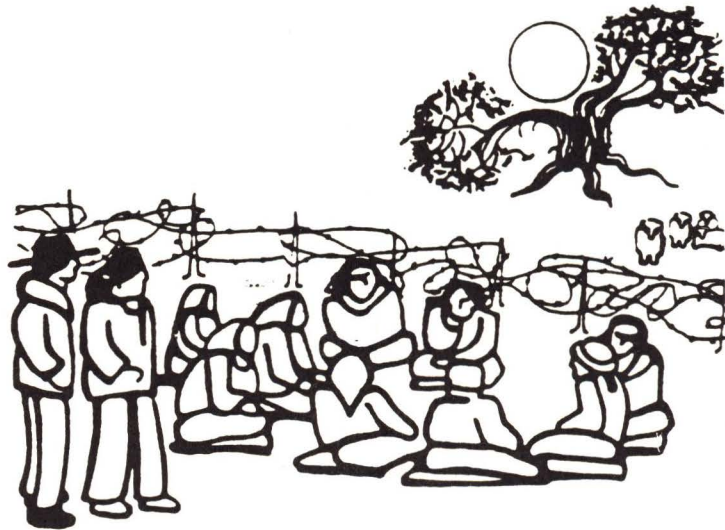
Original estimates were that 3,300 Navajos and Hopis would be relocated. At present, estimates range from 10,000-15,000. Cost estimates have risen from \$37 million to \$1.5-2 billion, when hidden costs such as health care and water development are taken into account. It has been said that the Hopi Tribal Council supported this bill. The tribal councils, however, are puppet bodies which were established by the U.S. government years ago, to enable the government to "legally" interact with the traditional peoples. They represent, at best, 10 percent of the Hopi people.

According to Lew Gurwitz, legal counsel for the Big Mountain Legal Defense/Offense Committee (BMLDOC), "PL 93-531 runs contrary to the intent of the 1948 United Nations convention on Genocide, the language of which precludes the forced relocation of any identifiable racial, ethnic, or religious group under conditions which bring the destruction of the group as such." Dr. Thayer Scudder, a professor of anthropology at Caltech and an expert on the problems faced by relocated peoples, said that "It's hard to imagine anything worse (than relocation) short of killing the people . . ." The suffering has been immense and the loss overwhelming; approximately 25 percent of those relocated since 1974 have died.

It is now apparent that forced relocation of the remaining thousands of Navajo people will not be enforced by the July 7 deadline of PL 93-531. There is still much that can be done:

- We can write letters to Congress asking for a repeal of PL 93-531, mentioning support for the moratorium on relocation--introduced in the Senate by Alan Cranston (bill number S 25-45), and to the House by Rep. Richardson of New Mexico (bill number HR 48-72).
- We can send material aid (food, clothing, tools, money, etc.) by registered mail to: Big Mountain Survival Camp, c/o Kee Shay, P.O. Box 203, Oraibi, AZ 86039.
- We can educate ourselves and others. An excellent film, *Broken Rainbow*, can be rented from Earthworks, Box 2245, Malibu, CA 90265, and *In Defense of Sacred Land*, a slide show, is available from Big Mountain Legal Defense/Offense Committee, 2501 North 4th Street Suite 18, Flagstaff, AZ 86001
- We can send financial contributions (contributions made out to the Capp Foundation are tax-deductible) to: BMLDOC in Flagstaff, address above.
- Please write to BMLDOC for more information, or to locate a support group near you. *Big Mountain News* is available for \$5-\$10 from Big Mountain Support Group, 1412 Cypress St., Berkeley, CA 94703.

Ruth Klein is President of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.



*"In our traditional tongue there is no word for relocation.
To move away means to disappear and never be seen again."
--Pauline Whitesinger*

Letters

Dear Friends,

Although I am not Buddhist, I am a BPF Newsletter subscriber, and I would like to suggest that the Buddhist Peace Fellowship launch a letter-writing campaign on behalf of imprisoned Buddhists in Vietnam. I realize that there are many important causes BPF members are working on, but the situation of Buddhists in Vietnam is especially bad, and they need the support of Buddhists abroad. Almost every prominent Buddhist leader in Vietnam has either died or been imprisoned since 1975. The situation seems to have worsened since 1982, when the government sponsored the creation of the "Vietnam Buddhist Church" and forced other Buddhist organizations and sects to join this organization.

There are many sources for this information, including a recent report from *Down By the Riverside*, the magazine of the British Buddhist Peace Fellowship; an Amnesty International "Urgent Action" notice dated April 30, 1986; and a recent press release from the Vietnamese Buddhist Peace Delegation on the arrests of prominent Buddhist leaders, including Thich Duch Nhuan, General Secretary of the Supreme Council of the Sangha of the Unified Buddhist Church in Vietnam (An Quang Pagoda) who is reported to have ulcers and asthma, and to have vomited blood during interrogation. The Amnesty International notice says the imprisoned monk Thich Tue Sy may have been brought to trial last December and sentenced to death.

In his 1978 article in *Fellowship*, Jim Forest tells about the death in prison of the prominent monk, Thich Thien Minh. Thich Thien Minh was also arrested before 1975, by the South Vietnamese administration of Nguyen Van Thieu, and sentenced to a lengthy prison term. However, he was released nine months later because of an international campaign launched on his behalf. In April of 1977 he was again arrested, along with the seven other leading monks of the Unified Buddhist Church. Although some individuals and groups, including Amnesty International and the Fellowship of Reconciliation did work on their behalf, there was no massive, sustained effort as before. No demonstrations or vigils were held on behalf of Thich Thien Minh and these other Buddhist leaders. So with Thich Duc Nhuan now seriously ill and in prison and Thich Tue Sy allegedly sentenced to death, we may ask, will they suffer the same fate as Thich Thien Minh?

It is very frustrating to me to read about these arrests, and know there is little I can do on my own, and there is no organized sustained campaign on behalf of these monks. I think the initiative for such a campaign should be taken up by Buddhist and peace groups abroad because these would be most effective in appealing to the Vietnamese government for the release of imprisoned monks and nuns. Since the Buddhist Peace Fellowship is the major Buddhist peace group in this country, I hope you will play a central role in such an effort.

I would suggest that petitions be circulated at large gatherings, vigils be held at the Vietnamese Mission to the United Nations and other places, an effort be made to meet with

Vietnamese officials at the UN, and that prominent peace activists be asked to write letters on behalf of these Buddhist leaders. I hope you will seriously consider these suggestions, as well as other strategies that might be developed to speed their release, and help improve the overall situation of Buddhists in Vietnam.

Sincerely,
Stephen Denney
Burlingame, California

Dear Fred,

I wanted to tell you how impressed I was with the latest (Spring '86) BPF Newsletter. It's wonderful to see it growing into such a fine publication and also astonishing to see what one can now do with a Laserwriter.

Friendly greetings,
Jim Forest
Alkmaar, Holland

Dear Arnie and Therese,

The Spring newsletter just came! I want to tell you how beautiful, how substantial, how fine I find it. I especially appreciate the BPF news and the concreteness of the articles.

Metta,
Joanna Macy
Pendle Hill, Pennsylvania

Dear BPF,

During a sesshin in Anchorage last November, Katagiri Roshi told us that members of the Minnesota Zen Center were discussing handing out candles to people to light for peace. Every Sunday. I was inspired by this idea and I made a handout to give to my friends and neighbors. I handed it out at the Peace Prayer Ceremony as well. The text follows: "Peace Candle. At a recent meditation workshop, Katagiri Roshi said that Minnesota Zen Center members were discussing handing out candles to be lighted every Sunday as a symbol of peace. I decided to pass the idea along. You don't have to join anything. You don't have to sign anything. You don't have to attend meetings or make donations. Just light a candle. A candle in the window can be an outward and visible sign of deep inner longing for peace, a personal commitment to be peaceful, and a hope that peace may yet prevail on earth and in our hearts. What good will it do to light a candle? Don't worry about that. Just do it. Do it for yourself, your family, your neighbors. It is of no use to speak of peace among nations if we cannot create peace within ourselves and be at peace with our family, our neighbors, our friends, and our co-workers."

In peace,
Judith Ashley Haggard
Anchorage, Alaska

BPF News

First International Buddhist Peace Fellowship Conference held in Boulder

By Bill Anderson and Paul Shippee

On the afternoon and evening of Friday, June 13, 1986, the first International meeting of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship was held in the Karma Dzong Tibetan shrine room in Boulder, Colorado. Forty BPF members from almost all of the chapters, including the British BPF sat in a circle of cushions, and Ruth Klein, BPF's president, chaired (cushioned?). The agenda was ambitious: self-introductions by all; a history of and musings about BPF, led by Aitken Roshi; reports from each Chapter present; a discussion of actions taken and planned; and a discussion of possible future directions of the BPF.

We began with a short sitting, after which attendees told their names, where they are from, and what brought them to the conference. As the Rocky Mountain summer thunder and lightning storm grew louder and louder, we decreased the size of the circle until we were nearly sitting on one another's knees. In this atmosphere, considered auspicious by Tibetans and Native Americans according to several members, Aitken Roshi told a little about the history of the BPF. The BPF began ten years ago, when Aitken Roshi, Nelson Foster, and Stephen Gockley, sitting on Roshi's porch in Maui, decided to form some sort of social action group to express their concerns about the exploitation of native Hawaiians, the growing militarization of Hawaii, the effects of industrial agriculture, and the dangers of nuclear war. They first formed as the Maui chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and after a year and a half, reorganized as the BPF (under the umbrella of FOR) to acknowledge their identity and unique contribution as Buddhists. The original Buddhist Peace Fellowship had three main themes: (1) to research the traditional teachings of Buddhism to find a scriptural rationale for peace work; (2) to examine ways to live individually, and in communities, peacefully, nonviolently, and in harmony; and (3) to "show the bowl" as Buddhist activists, working on the question of what kind of action to take. Aitken Roshi expressed that he feels these are still good themes. He also expressed the importance of the structure of the organization, with the board as facilitators to help with networking, but with actions and decisions resting with autonomous local chapters.

Roshi then expressed his sense of the importance of articulating a Buddhist metaphysics of peace, or a theology of peace, including the doctrines of *anatman*, *dukkha*, transience, ephemerality, mutual interdependence, the three bodies of the Buddha, and the Buddhist pantheon, including Kanzeon, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, and Tara. He also recognized the importance of critiquing Buddhism as a religion of peace, and critiquing society from a Buddhist point of view. Peaceful behavior begins in the family, and then spreads to the



A few of the Conference Attendees

community. This raises the questions of right livelihood.

How to "show the bowl?" "I don't know, really." Aitken Roshi and his wife are tax resisters, and have 43% of their taxes held in escrow until the U.S. government permits them to say what they want their tax money spent on. He also spoke of a recent newspaper article describing 3000 Finnish women who are refusing to have children until their country gives up nuclear weapons. These methods directly engage the issues in ways that foster community communication. But we need even more skillful ways, *upaya*.

Many important questions were raised. Two of the most discussed were: (1) What is community practice? and (2) Many people say that practice is enough social action. Joe Gorin, BPF Board Member from Western Massachusetts, pointed out that distinguishing between spiritual practice and social action can actually discourage social action. If only sitting is "real practice", then distributing leaflets or serving in a food kitchen is simply a distraction from practice. We need to realize that this distinction is wrong, and that practice requires both activities.

Following a break, we reconvened for reports from each of the chapters present. Joe Gorin talked about some of Western Mass's projects and their plans for July 4th Interdependence Day (see Chapter Reports), and other activities. Terry Anderson told about the newly formed Cambridge/Boston chapter's work with the Women's Lunch Place and Shelter, Inc. Lyndon Comstock talked about the ecumenical composition of the New York City BPF, and Bill Anderson reported on the ebbs and flows of the Rochester chapter since its founding in 1983. They plan to hold a nonviolent education workshop, and participate in some peace marches as a chapter. Jacquie Bell talked about the Boulder/Denver chapter's activities, and captured everyone's

interest when she told about Days of Mindfulness every Sunday in her own family of four. During walking meditation, the children are encouraged to whisper when they want to talk. Jamie Baraz told about the Bay Area's search for a project to connect with, having met with the Daily Bread Project, Sanctuary, a school for Cambodian refugees, and other groups. Aitken Roshi told something of the history of the Oahu BPF, including efforts leafleting at Pearl Harbor in a way that was pleasant and sympathetic to the workers, a Deep Ecology Conference, Days of Mindfulness, and work with the native Hawaiian movement. Mary Lightfoot, an Australian living in Bodh Gaya, talked about the British BPF, with which she is associated. They publish an excellent newsletter, *Down by the Riverside*, have held workshops for peace activists, and work actively on various social, political, and animal rights issues. Mary also talked about the Australian BPF, whose members are involved in many areas of social concern, such as the destruction of subtropical rainforest. They will be sponsoring a visit by Thich Nhat Hanh in the Fall. Glenn Bradley gave a report about the potential revival of the inactive Los Angeles chapter, and Greg Krech talked about the formation of a Washington, D.C. chapter. The experience of most of us present was not just receiving information about the problems, and good work of each group, but one of mutually satisfying encouragement that so many of us are in so many places trying to do something, in the spirit and presence of practice.

The last presentation before dinner was by Gene Knudsen-Hoffman, the head of the FOR's Santa Barbara chapter, and a BPF member. Drawing from a 40-year-old manual written by Douglas Steere, a Quaker, Gene proposed guidelines for "nonviolent base communities", emphasizing a life-changing commitment as a necessary ingredient for real peace work. Taking inspiration from thirteenth century Franciscan communities, Gandhi, and the recent nonviolent revolution in the Philippines, she suggested that groups of 5-12 people meet every week or two to engage in building discipline, commitment, and intimacy. These "cells for peace", she suggested, are the necessary foundation for a widely based American social awakening. "They will be started in local communities by men and women who are unwilling to wait any longer for others to be transformed, but will transform themselves."

Following dinner, we talked about specific actions some of us are taking. Joe Gorin is organizing a Buddhist delegation to go to Nicaragua in August 1987, to be co-sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Please see the classified ad on the last page of this issue for details and where to contact Joe.

Lyndon Comstock is organizing an FDIC-insured commercial bank for socially responsible lending, in New York City, which will specialize in lending to businesses involved in community economic development. He described this neglected market segment as including neighborhood housing, manufacturing, and small institutions which promote local control over providing basic community needs. The bank will be the first in the U.S. to make an effort to attract deposits and equity capital from individuals and institutions sympathetic to the bank's social policies. Please contact Lyndon at 253 Henry Street, #4, Brooklyn, New York 11201.

Arnie Kotler told of the progress of Parallax Press, a publishing company he started last Fall, with the help of Thich Nhat Hanh. The first books will be *Being Peace*, Nhat Hanh's recent lectures which will be published in October; *The Path of Compassion*, BPF's collection of writings on engaged Buddhism, which will be revised by Nelson Foster and co-published with BPF in February 1987; and *The Return of Lady Brace*, a novel by Nancy Wilson Ross with a Buddhist monk as a main character. For further information, or to order a copy of *Being Peace* (\$8), please contact Arnie at 1620 Ocean View, Kensington, California 94707.

Ruth Klein reported on the Big Mountain land dispute in Arizona and the forced relocation of Hopi and Navajo people to provide access to uranium and coal. See her article in this issue.

Joanna Macy reported on the escalating conflict and political tension among Buddhists and Hindus in Sri Lanka. She described the negative impact on the social rebuilding efforts of the 28-year-old Sarvodaya movement. British BPF member David Arnott, and two BPF International Advisory Board members, Christopher Titmuss and Sulak Sivaraksha, have travelled to Sri Lanka individually to bear witness to the seriousness of the situation.

Tom Bell mentioned a project he is working on aimed at creating a national debate on the issue of selling weapons to third world countries. Tom is visiting with executives of arms manufacturing companies. The idea came from Thich Nhat Hanh during his Fall 1985 visit to Boulder.

David Dellinger, a well-known peace and social justice activist who attended the BPF meeting as a guest of Tom and Jacquie Bell, told about his seasoned experience with affinity groups. He has belonged to one near his home for many years, and he emphasized the necessary combination of personal sharing and social action. David indicated that it is important to report not only what you have done during the "business" part of a meeting but also to tell what you feel about it. When we share our fears and feelings on a regular basis within such a close group, then social actions and demonstrations become more cohesive, and on-the-spot decisions more accurate. We need to get to know one another in a more deeply personal way so that the "inside" and the "outside" of our beings are both exposed. In this way, we begin to respect the continuity and connectedness that is already present, and our goals of nonviolent social action become more possible. The personal is the political, he suggested, and in this way social action begins to include a necessary spiritual dimension.

By all accounts, this first face-to-face international BPF meeting was a great success, a great source of energy for those who attended. One theme of the meeting, and also of the peacemaking conference which followed, was the need and desire to get to know each other better. The idea of "cells for peace" or "affinity groups", forming widely among local communities, elicited a lot of interest and support. The Boulder/Denver BPF has already begun organizing along these lines. If you have experience or ideas about this, please send in letters or articles.

Paul Shippee is a co-founder of the Boulder/Denver BPF, and Bill Anderson is the coordinator of the Rochester BPF.

Board Minutes

*Summary of
Buddhist Peace Fellowship
Board of Directors Meetings*

March 30, 1986 Conference Call

Attended by Jamie Baraz, Joe Gorin, Ruth Klein, Barbara Meier

June 12-14, 1986 Meeting in Boulder, Colorado

Attended by Jamie Baraz, Joe Gorin, Ruth Klein, Barbara Meier, Donna Thomson. Also present: Therese Fitzgerald and Arnold Kotler.

International Advisory Board: We welcome new members Joanna Macy, Ane Pema Chodron, and Christina Feldman. Suggestions for additional new members are welcomed.

Board of Directors: We are happy to announce that Donna Thomson and Andy Cooper have accepted invitations to join the board.

Office Director: Welcome to Therese Fitzgerald, our new office director.

BPF International Conference: Renamed "international" to welcome members from throughout the world. Board very happy with the June 13 meeting in Boulder and would like to do it again next year.

Chapters: Chapters are being invited to participate more fully in the newsletter by sending in information describing their activities. The Board granted chapter status to Nevada County, California BPF. There are two requests for chapter status that are pending: Ottawa, Canada, and Alaska. Groups in Kyoto, Washington, DC, and Seattle have expressed interest in forming chapters. The Los Angeles and Minneapolis chapters are presently inactive. Chapter guidelines are being revised by Ruth, Barbara, and Jamie. Barbara is the board contact for chapters and outreach.

Organization: There will be no board elections this year. Last year board members' terms were increased from two to three years, so everyone elected this year or last year will remain on the Board through 1987. Ruth was asked to stay on for another year as President.

A national organization usually has a separate board which oversees policy and direction and a staff and officers which take care of day-to-day business. Presently BPF has only a quarter-time office director, and the board, scattered throughout the country, handles many daily responsibilities. Conclusion: BPF needs an office, a computer, and a full-time, or at least half-time, office person.

Newsletter: There continues to be a positive response to the content and format of the newsletter. More attention is being paid to getting it out on time. Production costs have been decreased by using desktop publishing technology. Beginning with Fall 1986 issue, we will accept a limited amount of advertising.

Path of Compassion: The debt has been paid and there are fewer than 500 copies remaining. Nelson Foster has begun work editing a revised second edition, which will be co-published with Parallax Press in February 1987.

Thich Nhat Hanh: BPF will sponsor Nhat Hanh's visit to North America from late March through early June, 1987.

Nicaragua Delegation: A joint BPF-FOR delegation for August 1987 has been approved by both BPF and FOR.

Nonprofit Status: The board hired attorney David Tussman to assist us in become a nonprofit corporation. Approval is expected by mid-summer.

FOR Meeting: FOR will be having its annual conference from July 30 to August 3.

Religious Peace Fellowships: Ruth attended a meeting in May of the many religious peace fellowships affiliated with FOR. One recommendation was that chapters offer workshops for nonviolence training.

Lumbini Project: Ruth accepted an invitation to serve on the Lumbini Project Board of Advisors. We will make our membership list available to them on a one-time basis.

*In the Sangha,
Joe Gorin, Secretary*

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Springfield, VA 22152

President's Column

By Ruth Klein

During a recent peace conference, I had an unexpected opportunity to engage in conversation with a man, whom I'll call Bob, who finds employment as an expeditionist, which means he goes to the world's trouble spots and fights for causes he believes in. He recently returned from Afghanistan, and has been in southern Africa many times. My initial reaction, upon hearing about him, was to casually remark to friends, "Why don't we invite him to dinner . . . and kill him?" My comment was met with surprise, and then uneasy laughter. As I listened to my own flip remark, I was aware of discomfort, curiosity, and certainly a lack of experience. I've not spent much, in fact any, time with people who have chosen a path so apparently different from mine. Who was this man?

Ever since the International BPF meeting in Boulder, the words "communicate" and "community" have been scrambling around my brain. Looking them up in Webster's, I found: *communicate*: to make known, to give or receive information, to be connected, to receive Holy Communion; *community*: a group of people living together as a smaller social unit within a larger one, society in general, fellowship, a group of animal and plant species living together and having close interactions. On the same page are the words commune, communism, and companion. These words all derive from the Latin *commune*, "that which is common."

Intrigued by our obvious differences, and wondering if we had anything in common, I invited Bob to join me for lunch.

I told him I appreciated his willingness to talk with me, a member of a Buddhist peace group, and asked how he'd gotten interested in becoming an expeditionist. Bob spoke of the meticulous nature of the work, the need for total awareness and alertness. He described himself as being addicted to excitement. As we spoke, he began to describe a scene he remembered, the color of the earth, the gray/brown mist settled into the valleys, the vegetation, the quiet. . . and the beauty of the bursts of fire. I asked if he ever painted, and he said yes, he did, but not often enough. He commented that he had found the scene beautiful, but it probably would make me want to throw up. I said that as he described it, I also found it beautiful, but allowed that if my imagination took it all a few steps further, and I imagined bloody, torn apart bodies, that yes, that was disturbing.

Bob shared the outrage he'd felt when, living on a game preserve in Africa, he'd seen innocent animals cruelly trapped and butchered in the park. He spoke of his willingness to kill in order to protect helpless, abused beings. I shared some of my experience of being with my father last fall as he was dying, and of how it was to be with him as he died. Expressing his sympathy, Bob asked how I was doing now, and said he knew it could take a long time to heal the sadness. I was touched by his caring, and sensed that here was another human being who knew pain.

During the recent BPF meeting, Paul Shippee said, "I realize that my talking to someone is social action." This absolutely simple, unadorned statement was so simple that it

Chapter News

BOULDER/DENVER

Uppermost in our minds has been hosting the International BPF Conference, held in Boulder on June 13. It was a pleasure meeting members from other chapters and sharing our impressions of BPF, past projects, and hopes for future ones. We recently met over a potluck supper to discuss members' ideas. We are going to look into sponsoring a refugee family, as suggested by the Western Massachusetts chapter. We are also considering participating in Oxfam America's Fast for a World Harvest in November by hosting a "Hunger Banquet" or some other fund raising and informational event. In the fall, we plan to organize a workshop for area peaceworkers on the Buddhist perspective in peacework, incorporating some of our Day of Mindfulness practices. Days of Mindfulness will continue once a month through the summer on a more informal basis.

Based on some of the suggestions by Gene Knudsen-Hoffman and David Dellinger on affinity groups, our chapter has begun a reorganization. Our plan is that BPF members in the area will meet in groups of 4-12 people, hopefully once a week. The groups themselves, probably called affinity groups, will decide individually what interests they would like to pursue, and every two months, we will meet as a whole to share what has happened during the interval. For further information, please contact Jacquie Bell at 303-499-3786, or Sheryl Stalcup at 303-238-3376.

NEW YORK CITY

When the New York BPF chapter began meeting in February 1984, our first order of business was to decide what to do. Owing to the excellent organizing efforts of several people, there was a turnout of 30-35 people at the first meeting. In going around the room, we found that our suggestions for the direction of the chapter had similar flavors: participation in or sponsorship of different types of demonstrations or social action, discussion groups, information distribution. We adjourned without coming to any conclusion. At subsequent meetings, the group shrank, and a consensus emerged to participate in several demonstrations. We joined in, as a group, with a "Nuclear Freeze Walk" in the city, which we preceded with a brief public sitting; and we conducted a day-long public

(Continued on next page)

President, *Continued*

was quoted several times during the following week. I'm thankful to Bob for his willingness to talk with me, to engage in this most basic of social actions, so that we could experience what we have/are in common. A wonderful ground, this being common. Communication, community, communion, common. Common.

sitting across from the UN on Hiroshima Day 1984. However, the ten of us who did these things began to feel some concern that we were acting too much from a sense of obligation, as if we didn't know what else to do as a Buddhist Peace Fellowship. In the Fall of 1984, we shifted our focus to conducting study groups. We began with Ken Jones' *Buddhism and Social Action* as a text. Although people seemed to like the discussions, our career as a study group proved as short-lived as our career as an organizing committee. By March 1985, our meetings had as few as three people, and we had to decide whether to disband.

It is important to understand that BPF membership is relatively undemanding. One has to pay nominal dues and generally subscribe to BPF's statement of purpose. Further, BPF has no central organization which coordinates activities nationwide or determines philosophical positions for BPF. Individual chapters are largely on their own, with little guidance from or, up to now, communication with the national board or other chapters. This then was the buddhapedharma without credentials. With no special sanction or direction from above, we had not succeeded as an ongoing organizing group, and we hadn't even been able to keep up a study group. What did keep us going was our appreciation of each other. We have common interests, yet we come from differing backgrounds, including different Buddhist practices. Our inability to justify our existence as a group turned out to be in itself our common basis for being together, a rather Buddhist process. One could say we have taken refuge together, in each other. We meet because of our appreciation of the Buddha's teachings, because we have some willingness to look at things as they are and let them be, and because we have become friends.

In the past year, attendance has climbed to 10-15 people, and occasionally 20. Our meeting format now includes a sitting period, a Buddhist reading, a discussion period, and announcements. We have been studying material from *The Path of Compassion*, especially Thich Nhat Hanh's writings. We sometimes participate as BPF members in peace or social action demonstrations, activities, or meetings, and we help sponsor a destitute family in Vietnam by fasting one day or one meal a week and sending the money we would have spent. Looking ahead, we hope to try some new formats for being together, in addition to monthly meetings. One suggestion has been to have Days of Mindfulness. In summary, we have begun to discover the importance of approaching social action from a meditative perspective, as a form of practice. Which means that our goal is to live, and to help others live, without preconceptions, fully in the present moment. No one at our first meeting would have disagreed with this, but we allowed ourselves to be swayed from that ground because we had not sunk roots into it, had not developed any experience of this type of "meditation in action". Today we are still just learning, but the influence of this perspective and our experience is giving strength to our activities. Having reached, somewhat mysteriously, a consensus, or attunement, we now feel ready to make a greater effort to let people in our area know of our existence, to invite more people to join us in practicing together, both formal meditation and meditation in action.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

The focus of our meetings shifts between deepening the understanding of who we are as individuals within the group, and working together on a project to strengthen the unity of the group as a whole. We are studying one Tiep Hien precept each month, reflecting on and discussing its presence in our daily lives. Through readings, general discussions, and even a visualization exercise, we have experimented with ways to tap into and further develop our practice together. The "Spirit of Service Conference", sponsored by Seva in September, is the main project we are considering becoming involved in. Our next Day of Mindfulness will be in September. A new "sister" chapter is forming in Sonoma County, holding meditation weekly and a chapter meeting the 4th Tuesday of every month. For information about the new chapter, phone (707) 664-8598



Mass BPF Chapters celebrate Interdependence Day

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

We have been having stimulating discussion at our local meetings concerning the proposed project of addressing the rainforest issue in Central America. We are at the stage of finding out all of the interconnections--the web of our involvement; avoiding a "they are doing it, we're going to save it" approach. Some of the explorations involve looking at the food we eat (under what conditions is it grown and brought to us); examining our local land situations (many farmers are selling out to developers), and looking at whom we might naively target: the poorer folk who eat Big Macs (the rainforests are in part being cut to provide grazing land for cattle which are killed and shipped to the U.S. Burger King is a known buyer of the meat. This contributes to the situation of landless natives who cannot grow or buy food for themselves.) We are inviting local farmers and long-term activists to our meetings to help with this gathering of understanding. We have also decided to participate in Seva work by collecting equipment from hospitals that won't be reused here but will be of benefit in Nepal in operations to correct blindness. One feisty member wants to discuss the interconnectedness between blindness in Nepal and the devastation of the rainforests in Central America! So it's local and it's global, and that is what we are exploring at our meetings.

JULY 4: MASS. BPF CELEBRATES "INTERDEPENDENCE DAY"

By Paula Green and Jim Perkins

Amidst the red, white, and blue hoopla of Independence Day, members of the Massachusetts BPF celebrated a day of Interdependence on July 4 to provide a corrective to the separation caused by nationalism and the many injustices concealed under the guise of patriotism. The event was co-sponsored by Eastern and Western Mass. BPF chapters; the Noonday Farm, a Catholic Worker community; and the Buddhist Peace Pagoda community, Nipponzan Myohoji. We owe a debt of gratitude to both of these communities for their ongoing faithfulness and exemplary commitment to issues of peace and lives of justice.

More than 60 of us gathered on the green in front of the Unitarian Church in Concord Center and we walked to the drumming and chanting of the Nipponzan Myohoji monks, nuns and lay followers. Their rhythm silenced most chatter, and created a very concentrated atmosphere. Kato Shonin led the way to the North Bridge in Concord, where the first battle of the Revolutionary War was fought, and at the grave of the British soldiers, he lit a handful of incense, offering one stick himself, and passing the rest out for each of us to offer. A four-year-old child and his father happened upon the grave site as we gathered there, and the boy asked the man, "What are they doing?"

"They are praying for peace," replied the father.

"Why?"

"Because people are fighting everywhere."

"Why?"

"I don't know," came the father's resigned response.

Then the little boy looked at Kato Shonin perfectly still at prayer in front of these monuments to war and death. "Why doesn't he have any hair?"

"He shaves his head. It is part of his religious custom."

"Is he real?" queried the child. At this moment, the monk turned gracefully, and smiled and bowed to the little boy.

Then we crossed the bridge, bowed, and chanted "Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo" to Daniel Chester French's famous Minuteman statue, and went on down the gravel path to a little meadow shaded by a great willow, where we sang and danced for an hour or more, and gave out our leaflets explaining our Interdependence Day. From there we walked to Walden Pond, an hour's walk, and formed a circle in front of Henry David Thoreau's cabin site. Many people spoke about Thoreau, and what he meant to them. A recent emigré from Poland spoke about writing his Master's thesis on Thoreau, a radical political act while the influence of Solidarity was at its height. Kato Shonin said that Thoreau was the first to translate the *Lotus Sutra* into English (from the French). Joe Gorin noted that while most of America celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Statue of Liberty, we chose to celebrate the 141st anniversary of Thoreau's moving into a cabin. We marveled that what he wrote there was known and acknowledged by Tolstoi, who influenced Gandhi, who influenced Nichidatsu Fujii, whose followers were gathered among here at Walden Pond. And so ended the ceremonial aspects of our day. We then celebrated our Interdependence with an elegant communal pot luck picnic, a swim, and lively conversation among new friends and old.

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What was accomplished by celebrating a Day of Interdependence? We affirmed our community of protest (literally, positive witness) and conspiracy (breathing together). We created an alternative way of marking July 4. We provided a larger context for our peace work with a cohesive and solid community of support and inspiration. We acted as Buddhists engaged in the world, and encouraged by our success, created the potential for more acts of peace fellowship. We joined the *Old Testament* righteousness of judgment, the *New Testament* gospel of love, and the Buddhist path of mindfulness. We practiced right speech and right action, and took our practice from the meditation hall into the streets. By our witness on this July 4, we hope that the ripples of peace widened in our own hearts, in Concord, at Walden Pond, and beyond.

The Path of Compassion: Contemporary Writings on Engaged Buddhism

The Path of Compassion, BPF's collection of writings on the engagement of Buddhism and Buddhists in the social, political, and economic affairs of society. Included are articles by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on political action and social progress, Thich Nhat Hanh on mindfulness in activity, Robert Aitken Roshi on ecology, and Gary Snyder on planetary culture. Robert Thurman writes on historical events and contemporary guidelines for Buddhist social action, Joanna Macy on empowerment in the face of the threat of nuclear war, and Jack Kornfield on compassion and social action. Other selections describe the relevance of the Buddhist Jataka Tales to modern life, a Vietnamese nun's response to the war and conflict in Southeast Asia, and an American Buddhist woman's response to rape.

SALE FOR NEWSLETTER READERS

The Path of Compassion is the Buddhist Peace Fellowship's first book. In less than a year, we have sold enough copies to repay all loans for publishing it and can now offer the book at a discount to BPF Newsletter readers. Regular price is \$9.95. BPF discount price is \$8 per copy or two copies for \$15. Please send check or money order (U.S. funds) to the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, plus \$1.05 for the first copy and 25¢ for each additional copy for postage and handling. For orders larger than 12 copies, please get in touch with the BPF office.

Buddhist Peace Fellowship
P.O. Box 4650
Berkeley, California 94703



A Three-Day Conference, Sept. 12-14, 1986

This conference will bring together Native American and Buddhist teachings. Each teacher will present talks and also engage participants in practices derived from their traditions. The schedule will include Native American dancing, chanting, story-telling, Buddhist meditation and movement, visualization, stress reduction and relaxation work, and yoga.

TWYLAH NITCH - A Seneca elder, Wolf-Clan mother and keeper of the traditional dance.

RUTH DENISON - Founder of the Desert Vipassana Meditation Center and a regular teacher at the Insight Meditation Society.

JON KABAT-ZINN - Director of the Stress Reduction and Relaxation program at the University of Mass.; Assistant Professor of Medicine and long-time student and teacher of yoga.

DHYANI YWAHOO - A Cherokee woman, 27th lineage holder of the Cherokee Nation; founder of the Sunray Meditation Society.

Costs: 3 days: \$110 non-mem., \$75 mem. (incl. meals and accommodations)

2 days: \$75 non-mem., \$40 mem. (includes meals and accommodations)

1 day: \$40 non-mem., \$25 mem. (includes meals)

Child care: \$10/day

Registration
requires a
\$10 deposit.

For more information contact:
PROVIDENCE ZEN CENTER
528 POUND ROAD
CUMBERLAND, RI 02864
401-769-6464

Spirit of Service Conference

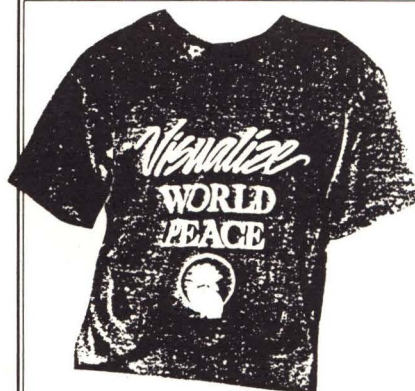
The Seva Foundation invites BPF members and friends to attend **The Spirit of Service**, a conference to explore and reaffirm compassionate action in our lives. Sung and unsung heroes of service will come together to share personal reflections on the business of serving others--joys and tribulations, victories and defeats, motivations and doubts. There will be representatives from the wide spectrum of service: health care, ecology, politics, soup kitchens, media, nuclear issues, the arts, the spiritual community, service institutions, shelters for the homeless, third world concerns, hospice care, and others.

Saturday and Sunday, September 13-14, 1986
Chabot College, Hayward, California.
Hosted by Ram Dass

Conference Fee \$40 (After 8/1/86: \$50). Mail registration and payment to Seva Foundation/Spirit of Service, 1301 Henry Street, Berkeley, CA 94709. (Telephone: 415-525-4272). If you are sincerely interested in attending and are unable to afford the full cost of the conference, sliding scale fees and some scholarships may be available. Please write.

Windows on the USSR: A nationwide teach-in, November 6-12

The US-USSR Reconciliation Program of the Fellowship of Reconciliation is calling upon local communities, groups, and congregations to observe a week devoted to opening *Windows on the USSR*, a week of celebration and information which will create greater understanding of the Soviet culture, history and society, an opportunity to explore the diversity, the richness, the complexities, and ambiguities that are the Soviet Union. Each of our communities has hidden resources for such an event. Possibilities include showing a Soviet film or video, and leading a discussion afterward on our perceptions of the USSR; encouraging libraries and schools to display Soviet crafts, books, and posters; holding readings for children of fairy tales from various regions of the USSR; having a panel discussion. **For further information:** Please contact the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Santa Barbara Chapter, 312 East Sola Street, Santa Barbara, California 93101.



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— make checks payable to: Boulder/Denver BPF P.O. Box 448, Boulder, CO 80306

BPF Classifieds

Please submit classified announcements for the Fall Newsletter by September 10, c/o National Office. Free for BPF Members.

Publications and Tapes

THE ACORN, A GANDHIAN REVIEW: a new publication that deals with present problems of humanity from the spiritual perspective of the solidarity of life. First issue includes articles by Nhat Hanh, Fujii Nichidatsu, and Ham Sok Hon. Biannual; \$5 per year. For free copy write to: *The Acorn*, Philosophy Department, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL 61920.

NOT MIXING UP BUDDHISM: Essays on Women and Buddhist Practice, Edited by the Kahawai Collective. An important new collection of essays fundamental to the issues of women's spirituality, by Susan Murcott, Joanna Macy, Deborah Hopkinson, Robert Aitken Roshi, Joko Beck, and others, with cover drawing by Mayumi Oda. \$9 + \$1 postage, to White Pine Press, 76 Center Street, Fredonia, New York 14063.

CONFERENCE TAPES AVAILABLE: Audio Cassette Tapes from Boulder *Strategies for Peacemaking Conference*. Aitken Roshi, David Dellinger, Allen Ginsberg, Abby Hoffman, Fran and Charlie, Joanna Macy, David Rome, and others. Order from Sounds True, 1825 Pearl Street, Boulder, CO 80302. Phone: 303-449-6229.

IMS LECTURE TAPES: Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfield, Christina Feldman, Christopher Titmuss, Sharon Salzberg, and others. For complete catalog, write to Dharma Seed Tape Library, 1041 Federal Street, Belchertown, MA 01007

Travel

NICARAGUA: Anyone interested or potentially interested in joining a Buddhist delegation to Nicaragua in August 1987, please send a letter of interest to: Joe Gorin, 106 Jackson Hill Road, Leverett, MA 01054. The trip will be co-sponsored by BPF and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. It will take about two weeks, and will include: 2 days of training in US; several days in Managua; interviews with govt and opposition leaders, members of the press and clergy; time in combat zone meeting, staying, and working with local Nicaraguans whose lives have been most affected by the war. Approx. cost \$700 covers round trip airfare (probably from LA, Houston, or Miami, depending upon where the greatest number of delegation members come from) and all transportation costs, all meals, and housing.

Jobs

STAFF OPENING: The National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee will be hiring people to fill full or part time staff positions to begin Fall 1986. Work in national office on Long Island, NY. Office skills, commitment to war tax resistance, and experience organizing around social change or peace and justice issues required. Approx. \$150/week plus benefits. Send resume to NWTRCC, P.O. Box 2236, E. Patchogue, NY 11772. (516) 654-8227.

Miscellaneous

GRANT NEEDED: I have been a Dharma student for 9 years, and a founding member of the Boston Area BPF. I am 31. This summer I am returning to school to pursue a master's degree in Early Childhood Ed., with the aim of acquiring certification to teach kindergarten or lower elementary grades. I am *critically short of funds*. If you are in a position to assist me in meeting the very high costs of attending graduate school, I would deeply appreciate hearing from you. Michael I. Samett, 17 Egerton Road, Arlington, MA 02174, (617) 641-3107. Thank you.

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, or Large.

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

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

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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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