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Richard Baker/San Francisco,
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Doug Blankensop/Anchorage, Alaska

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Linda Brown/Honolulu, Hawaii

Mike Disend/New York, New York

Fred & Erika Eppsteiner/Great
Neck, New York

Nelson Foster/Makawao, Hawaii

Robin Foster/Honolulu, Hawaii

Stephen Gockley/Haiku, Hawaii

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Jerry Houston/Starke, Florida

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Joanna Macy/Washington, DC

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Jim Osgood/Chicago, Illinois

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Mike Roche/Kensington, California

Gary Snyder/Nevada City, California

Barbara Spalding/Honolulu, Hawaii

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The Buddhist Peace Fellowship NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1, No. 1

March, 1979

With this first edition of its newsletter, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship slips quietly into public life. The proposal mailed last fall received endorsement from some 25% of its recipients--a substantial percentage for any bulk mailing--and thus, with a few yelps of celebration as the envelopes were opened, the Fellowship was founded.

The charter membership of 31 (see column at left) is small but strong, comprised largely of activists deeply committed to Buddhism. New memberships continue to trickle in as forwarded envelopes catch up with migratory addressees or as fresh copies of the BPF proposal are directed into the hands of interested Buddhists overlooked in the original mailing.

Responses repeatedly indicate that once the Fellowship takes initiative in tapping interest and becomes widely known in Buddhist circles it is likely to grow like kudzu.

SURVEY RESULTS

In enrolling in the Fellowship, charter members expressed broad satisfaction with the terms of the proposal submitted for their consideration by the Buddhist Peace Studies Group. Results of the survey follow, with some selected comments from the respondents, as appropriate. Action on suggested revisions to the proposal must await resolution of BPF governance issues.

(1) Do you favor expansion, deletion, or other revision of the proposed purposes of the BPF? Most of those who responded (70%) saw no need to alter the purposes proposed by the Peace Studies Group. Of those indicating a desire to modify the purposes, half called for expansion or clarification of the purposes as given, while the

Survey Results, continued

remainder suggested additional goals:

(a) an all-species, environmental augmentation of scope; (b) compassionate work for social and economic justice as a means of achieving peace; (c) support of Buddhist conscientious objectors to war service and war taxes; (d) promotion of the New Age Caucus and the economics of Small Is Beautiful; (e) support for the anti-natalist and ecology movements; (f) study of Buddhism as it exists in the People's Republic of China to see how Buddhism can be integrated with socialism; and (g) building small, local peace communities and promoting involvement in local peace and justice issues.

(2) *Do you support affiliation with the FOR?* Affiliation with the FOR was unanimously approved. A few expressed reservations along the lines that BPF should not be "a 100% echo of FOR, no matter how worthy FOR is." Others stated emphatic support of the affiliation: "I feel a strong sense of purpose in FOR, and I'm delighted that, as a Buddhist, my affiliation will seem and perhaps be more personal."

(3) *Does the suggested beginning program for the BPF meet your approval?* The program as outlined won affirmation from 94% of the respondents. Individual requests were received for change of priority, clarification, inclusion of a stand against capital punishment, establishment of a journal, and the slating of regional seminars on topics of concern.

(4) *What is your position on BPF governance? Do you favor decision-making by postal referendum, elected representative group, or other means?* The response was mixed: 30% favored postal referendum, 25% favored an elected representative group, and 35% favored some combination of the two. The remaining 10% of the responses indicated a need for further discussion of the question. (See next column.)

B P F G O V E R N A N C E

The question of the Fellowship's governance is, predictably, the one issue on which the membership is significantly divided, as the preceding survey results reveal. It also holds highest urgency for those of us here in Hawaii who have organized the Fellowship and now seek to surrender the leadership to its members in some clearly defined manner.

How to proceed? Analysis of the survey suggests compromise: 60% of the respondents saw some need for a board of elected representatives; 65% wished to have decisions made, at least in certain instances (e.g., for "major" policies), by postal referendum.

Rather than waiting for consensus on the issue and recognizing the virtues of each mode of operating, we now propose that the poll results be construed as a "mixed mandate"--a mandate for combined board and constituent control of the Fellowship. A plurality of the membership (35%) has already stated a preference for this compromise, and it seems a workable arrangement if zones of responsibility can be satisfactorily delineated.

To be specific, WE PROPOSE that (1) postal referendum be employed as often as necessary to establish BPF positions on sensitive issues, (2) a board of directors be elected to translate BPF purposes and positions into public stands or programs, (3) this board be responsible for the functioning of the BPF office, (4) three directors be elected from the general membership in 1979, with two more to be added in 1980, for a total of five directors thereafter, (5) the directors serve two-year terms, and (6) these proposals go into effect if ratified by a majority of respondents.

PLEASE VOTE on the proposals by means of the response form on page 4. The ballots will be counted on May 1st.



* BPF member Jerry Houston has written concerning the case of John Spenkelink, his fellow prisoner in Florida State Prison at Starke, Florida. Spenkelink, 29, was convicted in 1973 of killing a man and is now, of the 117 people on death row in Florida and of the 343 others similarly endangered across the country, the person most likely to be executed in the near future.

Jerry reports that prison monk Robert Phillips has begun a chant/prayer drive to stop Spenkelink's murder-by-state and asks that BPF members join voices in this effort. Also, a petition urging commutation of Spenkelink's sentence is in circulation (copies available from FOR, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960), and personal letters may be directed to Florida governor Robert Graham (State Capitol, Tallahassee, FL 32304). For more information regarding the case, see Michael Jendrejczk's "A Death Row Fight in Florida," Win, 18 January 1979.

* Elaine McInnes, a Catholic sister and Buddhist practitioner, has initiated a food supplement project to prevent protein deficiency and resultant retardation in infants of the rural Philippines. Posted in Leyte by her order since 1976, Sister Elaine has also been working with her Filipino neighbors to raise educational standards and to achieve eventual protein self-sufficiency for the immediate area.

Koko An Zendo of the Diamond Sangha is coordinating support for the food supplement project, purchasing and shipping supplements to Sister Elaine. Contributions payable to Diamond Sangha may be sent to Koko An (2119 Kaloa Way, Honolulu, HI 96822) with indication that they are in support of the protein project.

* Richard Deats, of the national FOR office, passes along the following translation of a Le Monde article of December 15, 1978, titled "Vietnam: Monks sentenced for 'having opposed the Revolution.'"

Hanoi (AFP): Monks were sentenced for "having opposed the Revolution" by the Ho Chi Minh City People's Court on December 9. Thich Nhat Thien was sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment, Thich Thong Hue to 3 years, Thich Thong Buu to 2 years; Thich Huyen Quang and Thich Thuyen An received a suspended sentence of 2 years. Two other convicted monks, Thich Quang Do and Thich Thanh The, were released.

According to VNA, these monks have been accused of "abusing their religion to sabotage the national unity, to create trouble and disrupt public security," of "abusing their religious organization to conduct activities against the Revolution." "They abused the Institute for the propagation of the Buddhist faith of the An Quang sect, incited Buddhists to oppose the government and to distort the policy of religious freedom advocated by the revolutionary authorities."

Concretely, Thich Nhat Thien was charged of being a "former informant of the French colonialist regime" and of--in April, 1975--having demanded the kidnapping of children at the Quach Thi Trang orphanage (one hundred of them died in the transport plane crash). Finally and especially, these monks plotted to illegally occupy the orphanage which should have been transferred to the government, and on March 3rd, 1977, created incidents with the revolutionary cadre who came to take charge of the orphanage.

According to VNA, "all the accused recognized their guilt;" following the sentences, Thich Tri Thu, director of the Institute for the propagation of the Buddhist faith, had "thanked the party and the government for its policy of leniency vis-a-vis the convicted," and had "called on Buddhist faithfuls to work more closely with the revolutionary authorities."

FOCUS AND FORMAT OF FUTURE ISSUES

Issues of the newsletter are planned for quarterly publication throughout the year, with space allotted largely to pre-announced topics of scholarly or practical nature which are relevant to BPF goals. Many members have expressed their willingness to contribute articles to the newsletter, and forthcoming issues thus promise to be considerably yeastier than the present specimen. Also, several members have indicated a willingness to edit the newsletter, and we foresee the editorship revolving in regular fashion, at least for feature topics.

THE JUNE ISSUE, "Taking Stock," will address the question of where Buddhism stands in peace work: what is the record of Buddhist engagement--

or failure to engage--in action for peace and social justice, and what problems and potential does this tradition bring to the work ahead? Please send pertinent contributions, short or long, to Nelson Foster, P.O. Box 497, Makawao, HI 96768.

We also look forward to printing letters and more notices for the "Bulletin Board" than we have at present. Please send such material to Editor, BPF Newsletter, at the BPF address given below.

Finally, the newsletter needs a name and a logo, preferably a logo appropriate for general use by the BPF. Direct any ideas you have to the newsletter's editor, please.

The BPF newsletter is produced quarterly for members of the Fellowship. Non-members may receive the newsletter by sending name and address to P.O. Box 805, Makawao, HI 96768. Donations, payable to FOR, would be appreciated. Those who are considering BPF membership should request additional information.



PLEASE RETURN THIS BALLOT BY MAY 1st TO THE BPF ADDRESS GIVEN DIRECTLY ABOVE.

1. Do you favor the proposals for BPF governance outlined on page 2?

Proposal number:	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
CIRCLE YOUR VOTE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON EACH PROPOSAL.	No	No	No	No	No	No

2. If these proposals meet ratification for the membership, nominations for the board will be in order. In the event that the proposals are ratified, are there nominations you would make for board members? Please list nominees below.

3. Would YOU accept candidacy if nominated to the board? Yes No

ALSO . . . Would you be willing to serve as membership secretary in your area? (Such service would entail maintaining a stock of BPF materials, distributing them to potential members, and answering general questions about the BPF.) Yes No

IF YOU HAVE PLEDGED AND FALLEN BEHIND and can now afford to bring your pledge up to date, please remember to send a check payable to Fellowship of Reconciliation.

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF POTENTIAL MEMBERS are always welcome.

Feature Section

TAKING STOCK: BUDDHISM, PEACE, AND SERVICE

I had hoped that the feature theme --taking stock of the Buddhist record in matters of peace and social service --would stimulate response from a number of people, from various points of view. As I can now appreciate, that was an unrealistic expectation; most BPF members are too busy to assemble an article on short notice for publication in the Newsletter.

For the present, then, we have a slimmer feature section than I had intended and one which suffers some serious imbalances. We have four male contributors, no women. The Mahayana is over-represented, while the Theravada is little mentioned, the Vajrayana not at all. And disproportionate attention is devoted to the experience of one sect in one country--of the Zen sect in Japan.

Needless to say, I regret these limitations. I am particularly sorry

that this first feature section should be marred by such a singular absence of diversity.

Still, I feel the following pages will prove valuable to us. The articles are worth reading in themselves for the light they shed on aspects of Buddhist social history. They will be useful as well, it seems to me, in prompting thought about Buddhist peace action in general, for they reveal pitfalls and potentials that the Buddhist traditions are likely to share. For example, Robert Aitken's insights on Zen's entanglements in Japan as part of an immigrant religion suggest lessons which will apply to all sects as Buddhism comes to America.

Responses to the feature articles are especially welcome. Please address them to the Newsletter editor at the BPF address (P.O. Box 805, Makawao, HI 96768). --Nelson Foster

AN UGLY CHAPTER: MILITARIST ZEN, by Daizen Victoria

Daizen Victoria is an American Soto Zen monk whose fourteen-year residence in Japan provided him ample time for research and personal involvement in the Japanese peace movement. The following article is excerpted from his unpublished manuscript "Contemporary Japanese Zen: Selflessness in the Corporate State," which traces a long, symbiotic relationship between the Zen sect and the Japanese state. Daizen argues that present Zen support of the corporate state is but an extension of its earlier support for the ideals of selfless swordsmanship and total devotion to the feudal lord and for the imperial military adventures of the 20th century. We thank Daizen for offering use of this selection as he seeks publication of the whole. --NF

From the 13th century on, for some six hundred years, Japanese Zen placed

heavy emphasis for members of the samurai class on the virtue of loyal and faithful service to the feudal lord. At the same time, its temple schools instilled in the common people respect for the Confucian ideal of a hierarchically structured society in which everyone had a rigidly defined place and function. In terms of social morality, at least, Confucianism had become Zen dogma.

With the coming of the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and the elimination of the feudal system, however, devotion to one's lord became an anachronism. The temple school system, too, was abolished by the new government, and in its place a state-supported public school system was established. As a result, Zen and the other traditional Buddhist sects, which had, in general, played similar roles vis-a-vis feudal

authority, were thrown into confusion. The emergence of Shinto as a state religion and the repressive governmental measures directed towards Buddhism served to worsen the situation.

It did not take long, however, for traditional Japanese Buddhism, particularly Zen, to adjust to the new environment. Though there were no longer lords, the new oligarchs of Japan needed the devotion of their subjects as much, if not more, than did the old feudal rulers. No longer was it sufficient for the military class alone to be instilled with absolute loyalty to their superiors. Now, the whole nation had to be made to respond with unquestioning obedience, especially as Japan had embarked on a policy of foreign conquest and expansion.

Not all Zen priests supported their new socio-political role, of course, and a few, influenced by newly introduced socialist and anarchist ideas, objected to it quite vigorously. One of them, a Soto Zen monk by the name of Uchiyama Gudō (1874-1911), even dared oppose the revitalized emperor system itself. He did this in a pamphlet entitled Nyūgoku Kinen (In Commemoration of Those Imprisoned). The result of this publication, however, was not only his ouster from the Soto sect but also his own imprisonment. Subsequently, while still imprisoned, he was charged with involvement in an anarchist plot to kill the emperor, and in 1911, together with eleven alleged co-conspirators, he was executed.

Unlike Uchiyama, however, most Zen priests became adept at promoting the cause of devotion and loyalty to the new central government and to its military policies. At the time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), for example, Shaku Sōen (1859-1919), abbot of the Rinzai Zen-affiliated monasteries of Engaku-ji and Kenchō-ji in Kamakura, made an extended visit to the United States. During one of his lectures given at that time and recorded in his book Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot, he said: "In the present hostilities, in-

to which Japan has entered with great reluctance, she pursues no egotistic purpose, but seeks the subjugation of evils hostile to civilization, peace, and enlightenment." In describing the purpose of his visit to a battlefield during this conflict, he went on to say: ". . . I also wished to inspire, if I could, our valiant soldiers with the ennobling thoughts of the Buddha, so as to enable them to die on the battlefield with the confidence that the task in which they are engaged is great and noble."

Given the preceding sentiments, it is not surprising to learn that Shaku Sōen refused to sign a joint peace appeal with the famous Russian pacifist and author Leo Tolstoy, who had written to the abbot on the basis of the Buddhist precept against the taking of life. Sōen replied, however, that as a loyal subject of the Japanese Empire he would never sign such a declaration.

In this connection, it is worthy of note that D.T. Suzuki, Shaku Sōen's pupil, well-known for his pioneer work in introducing Zen to the West, was also a strong supporter of Japan's military actions on the Asian mainland. In one of his early writings, "A Treatise on New Religion," Suzuki discussed the relationship of religion to the state, asserting that "The first duty of religion is to seek to preserve the existence of the state."

As Japanese militarism grew ever stronger in the 1920's and 30's, the emphasis on the efficacy of Zen training in actual combat also became more pronounced. Ichikawa Hakugen, himself a Rinzai Zen priest and professor emeritus of Kyoto's Hanazono University, has written about this development in a number of books and articles including Bukkyō-sha no sensō-sekinin (The War Responsibility of Buddhists) and Nihon Fashizumu ka no shūkyō (Religion in Fascist Japan). Zen master Iida Toin, for example, is recorded by Prof. Ichikawa as having

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said: "We should be well aware of how much power Zen gave to Bushidō (the Way of the Warrior). It is truly a cause for rejoicing that, of late, the Zen sect is popular among military men. No matter how much we may do zazen, if it is of no value to present events, then it would be better not to do it."

Prof. Ichikawa also discusses one of the most famous exponents of what was to become known as Kōdō-zen (Imperial Way Zen), namely Rinzai Zen master Yamazaki Ekishū, abbot of Buttsū-ji (temple). This master described the relationship of Zen to the emperor as follows: "With awareness of our daily actions, we investigate the 'self.' In the great concentrated meditative state (i.e., samadhi) of Zen, we become united with the emperor. In each of

our actions we live, moment to moment, with the greatest respect (for the emperor). When we personify (this spirit) in our daily life, we become master of every situation in accordance with our sacrificial duty. This is living Zen."

It was in this spirit that Master Yamazaki taught the military men under his guidance. One of these, a young captain by the name of Matsumoto Goro (1900-37), was destined to become immortalized as the very incarnation of the Japanese military spirit. It was claimed that, though mortally wounded in combat in Manchuria in 1937, he not only turned toward the east and saluted in the direction of the Imperial Pa-

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TOWARD A PLANETARY PEACE MOVEMENT, by Gary Snyder

A widely acclaimed poet, Gary Snyder has been a practicing Buddhist since the Fifties. In Japan and the U.S., he has spoken, written, and acted on his deep concerns for other lives and other life forms. --NF

The traditional peace movements come out of the peace churches of Christianity with strongly Hussite and Anabaptist leanings. Their orientation was influenced by struggles with the Duchies of Germany and the Vatican. Similar histories underlie the English strains of pacifism--the Diggers, Ranters, and finally Quakers. They are opposed to war in the name of the Kingdom of God, an alternative to the secular state. Their traditional leanings have not included a commitment to other life forms.

I have great respect for the Christian peace movement and in no way wish to criticize it as such, but the time has come I think for the peace movement to encompass the non-human, to break out of human chauvinism, and to recognize that the destruction of biological diver-

sity and habitat is but another aspect of the same problem-set that causes wars. Who but the Buddhists could be leaders in this? The Hindus are not cosmopolitan or ecumenical enough yet to get into this on a planetary scale, though of course we have felt the excellent influence of the Gandhian movement, and neither the Moslems nor the Jews, I'm afraid, are likely leaders in a planetary peace movement. That leaves no one, really, but the Buddhists.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Strange as it may seem to the contemporary Buddhist, the Buddhahood of rocks and grasses (i.e., of "non-sentient" beings) was a long time getting established in Buddhist doctrine. As Gary's words imply, though, it is firmly placed there now--has been since about the 12th century. Those interested in the process of this "Mahayana extension of the umbrella of salvation" should consult William LaFleur's "Saigyō and the Buddhist Value of Nature" (History of Religions, v. 13, no. 2 and 3).

lace but actually died standing up, as if ready to give his next order.

Not only were Captain Matsumoto's utter devotion to the emperor and fearlessness in the face of death thought to be the results of his Zen training, but his ability to die while still standing was believed to be an expression of his deep spiritual attainment. This latter belief stemmed from the traditional Zen teaching that enlightened persons could choose their own posture at death.

After his death, Captain Matsumoto's heroism was written about and eulogized throughout Japan, particularly in the schools. His posthumous book, Daigi (Great Loyalty), became the object of intense study, and he became the ideal for all youth to emulate. At the same time, Zen masters occupied themselves more and more with giving military men training. A large meditation hall was built in the heart of Tokyo and used exclusively to train military men to the very end of the war. What Japan lacked in material military power she hoped to make up for with spiritual military power.

Zen priests were not only busy on the home front. They also served in the military itself as both soldiers and chaplains. Often they toured the

front lines to inspire the men. One of them, Zen master Yamada Mumon, now president of Rinzai Zen-affiliated Hanazono University, is quoted by Prof. Ichikawa as having said the following during one such visit: "This is a sacred war to drive out the European and American aggressors from Asia. Please fight without any regard for your lives."

The abbot of Hosshin-ji (temple), Harada Sogaku (1870-1961), spoke in the same spirit. Prof. Ichikawa quotes him as saying: "Forgetting (the difference between) self and others in every situation, you should always become completely one with your work. (When ordered to) march--tramp, tramp; (when ordered to) fire--bang, bang; this is the clear expression of the highest Bodhi-wisdom, the unity of Zen and war"

Needless to say, despite all the words of encouragement given by Zen masters and the spiritual martial powers derived from Zen meditation and training, Japan lost the war. Samadhi power was, in the end, no match for nuclear power. Seemingly, with Japan's military bankruptcy, the unity of Zen and the martial skills had come to an end, after a history of some seven hundred years.

THREE LESSONS FROM SHAKU SŌEN, by Robert Aitken

Robert Aitken's involvement in both Buddhism and pacifism dates from his internment in Japan during World War II. For the past five years, he has been an independent teacher in the Harada-Yasutani stream of Zen. --NF

Shaku Sōen Zenji, abbot of Enkaku Zen Monastery in Kamakura, Japan, addressed the World's Parliament of Religions at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 on the subject, "Arbitration Instead of War," declaring, "We are not born to fight one against

another. We are born to enlighten our wisdom and cultivate our virtues according to the guidance of truth. And happily we see the movement toward the abolition of war and the establishment of a peace-making society. But how will truth be realized? Simply by the help of the religion of truth. The religion of truth is the fountain of benevolence and mercy."

He continued, "We must not make any

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distinction between race and race, between civilization and civilization, between creed and creed, and faith and faith All beings on the universe are in the bosom of truth. We are all sisters and brothers; we are sons and daughters of truth, and let us understand one another and be true sons and daughters of truth. Truth be praised."¹

However, eleven years later, when Japan declared war against Russia, Shaku Sōen wrote: "War is an evil, and a great one indeed. But war against evils must be unflinchingly prosecuted until we reach the final aim. In the present hostilities, into which Japan has entered with great reluctance, she seeks no egoistic purpose, but seeks the subjugation of evils hostile to civilization, peace, and enlightenment."²

Thus Shaku Sōen could distinguish between civilization and civilization and subordinate his concern for peace to the economic and political compulsions of his nation-state. He accompanied troops to Manchuria, saying, "I came here with a double purpose. I wished to have my faith tested by going through the greatest horrors of life, but I also wished to inspire, if I could, our valiant soldiers with the ennobling thoughts of the Buddha, so as to enable them to die on the battlefield with the confidence that the task in which they are engaged is great and noble."³

These quotations must be set in context in order to understand their contradiction. The World's Parliament of Religions was the first and greatest in scope of all ecumenical gatherings. Its message was understanding and peace among people, whatever their differences, and Shaku Sōen, finding within his own tradition strong support for the purposes of the Parliament, felt free to express this support quite specifically. A decade later, however, the political climate of Japan was fervent, if not jingoistic, and he obviously considered it his duty as a religious leader to encourage those at

the forefront of the conflict to give themselves to the fight wholeheartedly so that, even in dying, they would be free of doubt and internal conflict.

Examining Shaku Sōen's religious tradition, we find that from the very beginning the function of Japanese Buddhism was to support the nation-state and its institutions. The Seventeen Article Constitution of Shōtoku Taishi, promulgated in 604 AD, insists upon reverence to the Three Treasures of Buddhism and on the practice of moral virtues, but it also teaches the Confucian hierarchy of lord over vassal, with the emperor over all: "When you receive the imperial commands, fail not to carry them out scrupulously. Let there be a want of care in this matter, and ruin is the natural consequence."⁴

Theodore de Bary, in his Buddhist Tradition, stresses that the counterstream of prajña and peace was also present in early Japanese Buddhism in the form of the Sutra of the Golden Light, which "played a more important role than any other in establishing Buddhism as the religion of Japan," with an influence "undiminished for centuries": "Know ye, Deva Kings, that the 84,000 rulers of the 84,000 cities, towns, and villages of the world shall each enjoy happiness of every sort in his own land; that they shall all possess freedom of action, and obtain all manner of precious things in abundance; that they shall never again invade each other's territories; that they shall receive recompense in accordance with their deeds of previous existences; that they shall no longer yield to the evil desire of taking the land of others; that they shall learn that the smaller their desires the greater the blessing; that they shall emancipate themselves from the suffering of warfare and bondage"

"In this way, the nations of the world shall live in peace and prosperity; the peoples shall flourish,

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the earth shall be made fertile, the climate temperate, and the seasons shall follow in the proper order."⁵

The Sutra of the Golden Light is clearly a precedent for Shaku Sōen's words before the World's Parliament of Religions, while Shōtoku Taishi's Constitution provides the base for his support of Emperor Meiji's declaration of war against Russia. But why did he revert to the latter, lesser source in 1904?

I think the answer lies partly in the status of Buddhism as a foreign guest in Japan. Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616 AD), founder of the Tokugawa shogunate, is said to have written: "My body and the body of others were born in the Empire of the Gods. Therefore, to accept the teaching of other countries, such as Confucian, Buddhist, or Taoist doctrines--and to apply one's whole and undivided attention to them, would be in short to desert one's own master and transfer one's loyalty to another. Is not this to forget the origin of one's being?"⁵

Charles Eliot comments on this passage, "Ieyasu's statement should be intelligible to a Western statesman."⁷ And indeed, East or West, nation-states have assumed bottom-line authority over organized religions, banning Buddhism altogether for periods in China, breaking up the Jōdō-Shin sect when it grew large and confiscating monastery lands in Japan, suppressing Catholicism in England, forbidding polygamy among Mormons in the United States. Examples appear in every century, East and West.

What do we learn from all this, as American Buddhists? I see three lessons. First, it seems generally true that Expatriate Buddhism, the religion of immigrant Japanese and their descendants, has followed the ancient standards of loyalty to government and its institutions which Ieyasu set down; it has transferred rather unquestioning allegiance from Japanese emperor to American president. Expatriate Buddhism is main-stream American in

cultural outlook, and such fundamental conservatism actually challenges the Way of the Buddha. Treating our Bodhi-sattva vows seriously, we must respond to America's stockpiling of nuclear weapons; its materialism, its profligate consumption of energy, its destruction of forests and animals, and its depersonalization of life.

Second, Buddhists of Western birth too are "guests" in the United States. Even those of us born and raised in WASP households are somehow socially "beyond the pale", often vaguely suspect, sometimes tarred with the same brush as Scientology, the Children of God, the Unification Church, and Ananda Marga. Buddhists in Japan responded to the danger of bad public relations by setting to one side the full impli-

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NEXT FEATURE

The feature section of September's Newsletter will be edited by BPF member Michael Roche and will be devoted to the theme of "Common Ground in the Dharma." Mike comments, "It seems pretty obvious that a prerequisite for united action by Buddhists is to realize where our common ground lies. There are many, varied approaches to Dharma encompassing many different traditions, and sometimes Americans in particular seize on these differences in our attempts to define ourselves personally as 'Western Buddhists.' This is understandable because Buddhism is relatively new in the West, but it should not become divisive. We should identify common ground amidst the apparent diversity from the outset; then we will be better equipped to proceed."

Please send contributions on this theme directly to Mike at 254 Cambridge St., Kensington, CA 94708.

cations of their vows, either isolating themselves behind monastery walls or joining wholeheartedly in the compulsions of the larger society. We can learn from this negative example to maintain our integrity as Buddhists, seeking good public relations as far as integrity permits but standing fast and saying NO! to our country's rush toward nuclear war and biological holocaust.

Third, whether we are socially secure or not, we must make sure that the prajña and peace of our great tradition and of our minds are not overcome by the demands of society. In studying the sociology of Buddhism in China and Japan, it is clear that the vow to save all beings was sometimes construed as an existential expression somehow limited by the monastery walls or even to private devotions. Surely the time has come for us to acknowledge that the unity and love we experience in our practice extends to all people and all creatures of this earth. The Sutra of the Golden Light may be our guide in understanding that you and I are ultimately the "rulers" who practice harmony and enjoy peace

with all beings, as we turn the Wheel of the Dharma in the dojo, in the marketplace, and in political forums.

NOTES

1. Shaku Sōen. "Arbitration Instead of War." The World's Parliament of Religions; ed. John Henry Barrows. Chicago: The Parliament Publishing Co., 1893, p. 1285.
2. Shaku Sōen. Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot; trans. D.T. Suzuki. New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1971, p.201.
3. Ibid., p. 203.
4. Theodore de Bary, ed. The Buddhist Tradition: In India, China, and Japan. New York: The Modern Library, 1969, p. 260.
5. Ibid., p. 271.
6. Adapted from Charles Eliot. Japanese Buddhism. London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1935, p. 193.
7. Ibid., p. 194.

VIETNAMESE BUDDHISTS SHOW THE WAY, by Nelson Foster

Perhaps the greatest chapter in the entire annals of engaged Buddhism and certainly the greatest chapter in recent times is that of Vietnam's Unified Buddhist Church (UBC). Founded in 1964, the UBC has labored vigorously and non-violently for peace and for a just, democratic society in Vietnam. Its fifteen-year, proud and painful history, now available in print thanks to Jim Forest of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (see p.2), may provide inspiration and focus for the development of the BPF.

In a sense, the most profound inspiration I take from the UBC is emotional: the great sorrow and love which rise within as one reads or re-

calls the UBC record. If antecedents mean anything to us, surely we will revere the memory of these people and the self-sacrifices they made in their lives as teachers, nurses, writers, war resisters, social workers, priests and in their deaths as prisoners or as "human torches" before impromptu, streetcorner altars for peace and justice. By their example, they suggest our own capacity for heroic compassion.

Other points in the UBC heritage provide a deep, practical inspiration. One important point: Vietnam's Mahayana and Theravada schools joined, submerging historic differences, to create the UBC. That this unprecedented alliance occurred--and thrived--makes

plain the possibility of similar alliances in other countries. Let's hope that an American union of Buddhists may be born from within, without the experience of war and persecution that stands as the background to the UBC's creation.

A second important point: the UBC's Constitution holds that peace is "the essence of the Buddha's doctrine" and "the ultimate aim of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam." It further states that the UBC "does not seek its own development at the expense of other communities but, quite the contrary, links its own development with that of the nation and humanity." Quite a lucid commitment to peace and service! I wonder if American Buddhism, which often appears to grow from interests in "self-improvement," will soon or ever rise to meet this standard.

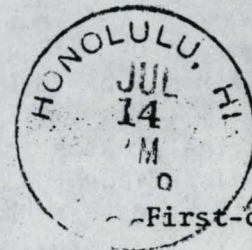
A third important point: the UBC sought wherever possible to join its efforts with those of Vietnam's Roman Catholics. The depth of this ecumenical spirit was communicated in Nhat

Chi Mai's 1967 self-immolation before figures of Avalokitesvara and the Virgin Mary. Here, too, is a standard we will find challenging..

There is a great deal more to study in the UBC example than the few points I have raised, but it suffices to say that our Vietnamese sisters and brothers not only may inspire us to personal growth and to a deepening sense of group purpose but also may provide a key to raising concern for peace and justice in the American sangha as a whole. The UBC's present seems every bit as difficult as its past, possibly more difficult, and that seems a legitimate--and provocative--problem to drop in the laps of American Buddhists.

Studying the Vietnamese example, the wish ignites to answer the UBC's current needs; that wish ignited, perhaps we may go forward not only to aid the people of the UBC but also to help the Vietnamese Catholics, Vietnamese of other persuasions, the ruined land, suffering beings wherever we encounter them.

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