

MEMBERS APPROVE BPF GOVERNANCE PROPOSALS

The six proposals on BPF governance set forth in the March issue of the Newsletter have been ratified by the membership. Some 52% of the members responded, with the yeas, nays, and abstentions falling thus:

PROPOSAL:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Yes	14	14	14	13	12	13
No	1	1	0	0	0	0
Abst.	1	1	2	3	4	3

At least for the time being, these six articles provide an organizational framework and modus operandi which permits the Fellowship to unfold--and unfold democratically. The Buddhist Peace Studies Group, originator of the call for a BPF and ad hoc managers of its affairs at present, will surrender the lead to the board of directors as soon as board members can be elected.

Several members (see "Letter Box") have questioned the wisdom of establishing a national organization at this early point in the Fellowship's development, stressing instead the need to broaden our membership base. Such reservations echo concerns held even in the Peace Studies Group, but fortunately the limited governance structures we have now mandated do not commit the Fellowship to a national program per se. "Actually," as one member commented, "the board and the BPF as a whole could--probably should--maintain quite a low profile until our numbers increase about tenfold. For a start, the board may serve best by setting some goals for broadening BPF membership and then by orchestrating efforts to achieve those goals."

Next: BOARD ELECTIONS

Numerous nominations have been received for the three board positions to be filled this year, and brief personal statements are being solicited from those nominees willing to become candidates. Once assembled, these

personal statements will be circulated to the membership as background information in the casting of ballots.

If the first balloting, scheduled for September 1st, does not produce definitive results, a run-off election will be conducted. At any rate, the election process should be complete by the end of October.

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1, No. 2

July, 1979

NEW BPF MEMBERS

The Fellowship has enjoyed a 39% increase in its membership since our last publication of the Newsletter. We welcome twelve new members:

James N. Allen/Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania

Vanessa Coward/Bedford Village, New York

Linda and Val Dieguez/Huelo, Hawaii

Amy Eisenhour/Plymouth, Indiana

Michael Fallarino/Hudson, New York

Melanie Hwalek/Rochester, New York

Stephen Mitchell/Haiku, Hawaii

Richard Schieffer/Whitehall, Wisconsin

John Tarrant/Honolulu, Hawaii

Brian Unger/San Francisco, California

Laura Urgo/Garfield Heights, Ohio

Apologies to those new members whose processing of application has been slow. We regret the delay.

* Two separate Buddhist groups made noteworthy protests to the 12th General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) held in Japan last October. Representatives from the Soviet Union, Mongolia, North Korea, India, Nepal, and Japan convened an Asian Buddhist Congress for Peace in Tokyo prior to the WFB confab, challenging the WFB to abandon its ban on resolutions of a political nature and to act on behalf of Buddhists under persecution in Indochina. Later, on the premises of the WFB Conference itself, six Vietnamese monks in exile staged a fast to focus attention on the plight of Buddhists in Vietnam. The strike was ended on the recommendation of the WFB Committee on Humanitarian Services that the issue be pursued through WFB regional centers and through sympathetic national leaders.

While the ban against political resolutions stood, the WFB delegates did resolve formally to "strive in concert with other world religious and humanist organizations to work for peace and harmony with the ultimate aim of achieving a world community" and also to "abolish nuclear weapons . . . and utilize its (sic) energy for peaceful purposes." --*Young East, Kalavinka*

* The Philippine island of Leyte, site of a bloody fight to the death between Japanese forces and American-Filipino forces near the conclusion of World War II, was the setting for an international, ecumenical Zen retreat this spring. Conducted by Yamada Kōun Rōshi, abbot of the Sanbō Kyōdan in Kamakura, Japan, the retreat brought together 40 Buddhists and Roman Catholics from six countries and was dedicated to the memory of the war dead. In the opening ceremonies, Yamada Rōshi expressed his hope that the event would "make a contribution, small though it may be, to the peace of mankind."

* The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) has recently published The Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam: Fifteen Years for Reconciliation by James H. Forest, IFOR Coordinator. The most complete publication to date on the Vietnamese Buddhists' long, non-violent struggle for peace and freedom in Vietnam, it contains a concise history of the Unified Buddhist Church (UBC), biographical information on imprisoned UBC leaders, a thorough chronology of the UBC, and various documents, some photographs included. It is a moving, troubling, uplifting booklet and may become a source of some controversy in American peace circles; it is highly recommended reading for both these reasons.

To obtain a copy, please write directly to IFOR at Hof van Sonoy, 1811 LD, Alkmaar, Holland. The book will also be available soon through FOR and/or BPF.

* Members of the Nebraska Zen Center are assisting in the establishment of the American Indian Center of Omaha, particularly in its August 31st premiere production of FOOTPRINTS IN BLOOD, Christopher Sergel's dramatization of the trial of Standing Bear. The Nebraska Committee for the Humanities has provided partial funding for this major project, with ticket sales and contributions (\$20,000 still being sought) hoped to meet the balance of the budget and, beyond that, to turn a profit for the Indian Center. Mail your inquiries or tax-deductible contributions care of the Nebraska Zen Center, 3303 Lafayette St., Omaha, NE 68131.

Vietnamese Buddhist Leaders Nominated for Nobel Prize

Two leaders of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, Thich Quang Do and Thich Huyen Quang have been nominated for the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize.

Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams, past winners of the prize, made the nominations. Ciaran McKeown, co-founder with them of the Peace People movement, expressed his hope that the nomination would help increase public awareness of "the vast nonviolent struggle that has been going on in Vietnam for sixteen years now with far too little interest and support from those working for nonviolent change in other parts of the world. We hope as well that it will bring a wee bit of encouragement not just to these two men who stand in the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, but to thousands and thousands of others in Vietnam who continue to work peacefully for a country at peace."

In the present issue of the Newsletter, there is present an idea to elect an 'executive committee' from a list of names. A few of the listed names I know by reputation (Baker, Snyder), but that's all. Not a very good basis for deciding who to nominate or eventually vote for.

More important, it seems a bit premature at this point to be caught up in forming 'executive committees' and taking formal positions. The more fruitful method would be to constitute ourselves as an 'organizing committee or society of fellowship' to begin an exchange of ideas and to work on regional growth. This means, as a start, for people in a given area to begin getting together, knowing each other, and sharing our views with other Buddhist groups in our region. Before attempting to build a national structure, we must first establish a firm foundation. Especially with the wide geographical separation of the present membership, regional and not national development should be the basis of organization. Perhaps a more "local" group could attract more members. The national office can supply coordination, information, facilitate communication and encourage the growth of regional areas. Then it's time for a national organization.

Fred Eppsteiner
Great Neck, New York

I think a Board and formal organization are premature. Rather there should be a convocation of elected representatives to discuss form and purpose of BPF. It doesn't make much sense to me to have a national organization stating positions when the membership is so small--and hardly representative of Buddhists in America.

I would propose instead formation of a working group to develop BPF, with its primary task to reach out to other Buddhist leaders and congrega-

tions. We especially need to find more allies among the Japanese Buddhists. Does anyone know how large the population of Buddhists in America is? Or where its population centers are?

Robin Foster
Honolulu, Hawaii

I'm a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in West Germany, influenced and inspired by the tradition of anarchist pacifism (Gandhi, Kropotkin, G. Landauer) because I think that it shows a way of constructive social and political action. At the same time, I'm more and more attached to Buddhism, practicing zazen now for two years and searching for a synthesis between Buddhism (Awareness, the Eightfold Noble Path), Socialism (in its libertarian outlook and world-view) and Christianity (with its emphasis on a just society, brotherhood and intensive community).

Here in West Germany the wheel of dharma is turning, not that easy to see on the surface but there are a growing number of places where meditation and lecture camps are held and a growing number of people who are practicing zazen, Vipassana-Sattipatthana or 'Meditation in Action' (Vajrayana).

What is missing, from my point of view, is a bridge between groups who are involved in social and political actions toward a just and peaceful society and those who are achieving peace within themselves. Again the idea of a synthesis--a synthesis (within a person) of social and political engagement and practices of contemplation and Right Awareness--because when unknown demons inside of me are fighting, creating tension and hostility inside of me, how can I bring out of that state of mind positive social action?

Paul Stammeier
Fed. Rep. of Germany

RESPONSE FORM. Please use the area below to (1) send a letter to the editor, (2) suggest a topic for a future feature section, (3) list names and addresses of others you feel might be interested in joining the BPF, or (4) make any other kind of feedback you would like to make.

A number of members have indicated a willingness to distribute BPF information and membership materials in their areas. If you would be interested in doing so also, please write your name in the space below and indicate how many sets of materials you would like us to send. New materials have just been prepared.

PLEDGE REMINDER: You have pledged \$ _____ by _____. Please let us know if you would like to cancel this commitment. Remember that, though BPF is poor, your membership status is not contingent upon contribution. Also, we understand what it's like to be short of funds!

CONTRIBUTIONS? Contributions must be payable to the FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION, not to BPF, until such time as we can establish our own treasury. FOR is maintaining a separate account for us in Nyack until that time.

Fold here and staple so as to maintain privacy of response.

*Affix
stamp.*

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship
P.O. Box 805
Makawao, HI 96768

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 counter-stream 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 Soen'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?"⁶

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.

V I E T N A M E S E B U D D H I S T S S H O W T H E W A Y, 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

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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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