

# 600,000 Tribal People under Attack in S.E. Bangladesh

It will be years, perhaps, before we know the full dimensions of the tragedy now unfolding in southeastern Bangladesh and still longer before it is safe to say how we heard of it this spring.

But we know enough about the complex of events to call it by its proper name--genocide. Representatives of the Dacca administration have flatly informed tribal leaders in the Chittagong Hill Tracts that their 600,000 people may be "extinct" within five years. Already, 30,000 are dead; 15,000 are incarcerated in concentration camps; 60,000 have fled for their lives into India and Burma. Rape, looting, and torture are widespread.

The brutal pattern of violence suggested by these figures is matched by the government's determination to keep the world unaware of its barbarities. It has ruthlessly suppressed the political party of the region, the Jana Sanghati Samiti, exiling its highest officer to Pakistan. Meetings of more than ten people have been outlawed. Foreigners are not permitted to travel in the Chittagong Hills, and tribal people may neither leave Bangladesh nor make open contact with foreigners they chance to meet within its borders. Mail is not secure. News agencies all must receive government approval of stories before they are aired or printed. The tribal leaders are shadowed and otherwise harrassed. Even the mildest voices of protest are promptly choked off--people "disappear" or are jailed, beaten, often killed outright.

Given this repression, it was necessary for someone to take the risk of bringing the facts to the attention of peace and human rights agencies in Asia, Europe, and the United States, and that is what has happened this spring. Some day, the happier facts may be told of the hero who, with no interest in heroism, bore the cry of the Chittagong Hill Tracts people around the world.

Meanwhile, for socially concerned Buddhists, that (CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

## The Buddhist Peace Fellowship NEWSLETTER

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APOLOGIES for the long interval between this and the previous Newsletter. We hereby pledge ourselves to producing more frequent, less bulky issues. Thanks for your patience--and anyone who would like to lend a hand in the editing or publishing of future issues, please drop us a line. We can use your help.

### BPF-ASSOCIATED GROUPS CREATED IN TWO CITIES

Members in Rochester and Honolulu have recently formed BPF local groups to meet the need for study, action, and mutual support in their areas. The groups also are concerned with building awareness of the BPF in the Buddhist communities of which they are a part.

The Rochester group, the newer of the two, is involved in education on nuclear power and disarmament issues. Anyone interested in meeting with them should get in touch with Noelle Oxenhandler (707 Averill Ave., Rochester, NY 14607).

The "Hawaii Buddhist Peace Fellowship," as it has dubbed itself, coalesced early this year to participate in a coalition to leaflet workers at a new nuclear weapon storage facility at the West Loch of Pearl Harbor. In addition to regular leafletting, HBPF has supported Kampuchea relief work, assisted in the major Nuclear-Free Pacific Conference just completed in Honolulu, and taken part in the campaign to end genocide in Bangladesh.

We applaud these new developments and encourage others in metropolitan areas to emulate them. Write the office for names and addresses of BPF members in your area.

cry carries particular pain and urgency: 500,000 of the people whose lives hang in the balance are themselves Buddhists, and the persecution in progress stems in part from religious prejudice. The persecution has included imprisonment and assassination of Theravada monks, the desecration of images and shrines, and the use of monasteries as army garrisons. In addition, pilgrims have been bullied as they attempted to reach holy places, and the ban on meetings of more than ten people effectively prohibits traditional forms of religious instruction and practice among the village folk. On at least one occasion, the government forces have attacked a monastery while ceremonies were in process and swept up all present as subversives. Christian and Hindu worship has been similarly disrupted and violated.

At the root of the problem lies an age-old enmity between the Bengali Muslims, who now comprise the bulk of the Bangladesh population, and the tribal people, who differ from them racially and culturally as well as religiously. Under pressure from the Bengalis, over the centuries, tribal people retreated east through Bangladesh until, by 1900, they had no farther to go. Fortunately Britain, then ruling the subcontinent, realized the need to establish Chittagong Hill Tracts as a protected area and, at that time, acted to provide the tribal people conditions of safety and security which endured almost 50 years. Erosion of these conditions occurred during the ear of unified Pakistan (1947-71), but it was with the independence of Bangladesh that things took the present critical turn. With the removal of the West Pakistani influence, there remained no constraint upon the Bengalis' expression of the historic prejudices.

The new phase of violence is also closely tied to matters of land--its shortage in Bangladesh and its fertility in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. By their industry, the tribal people made once undesirable land flourish, and the Dacca government wants to reap the harvest. It

has recruited families from other districts, forcibly settled them on native land, and supplied them with scarce livestock and food to get them started. Evidently, only international protest now offers any hope of stopping this systematic denial of land and life to the tribal people.

Through friends at the International Fellowship of Reconciliation and at the national FOR in New York, BPF has been able to enter the fight to end genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts. In this, our first activity of international scope, BPF has found donations to help meet travel expenses for a publicity tour and has staged useful contacts around the country. Members in New York, Washington, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Honolulu have participated in the early phases of the project.

Thanks to these efforts and similar ones in Europe and Asia, many key agencies have been alerted to the Chittagong Hill tragedy, including Amnesty International, appropriate United Nations divisions, the World Conference on Religion and Peace, and the U.S. State Department. There remain a few additional contacts to make, large costs to cover, and a lasting need to keep pressure on those whose actions seem crucial in aiding the tribal people. To meet this third need, a Community of Concern for the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts will be formed, coordinating dissemination of information and sparking a letter campaign. If you are interested in contributing--letters? organizing skills? money?--please contact the BPF office. Your efforts may help save a whole people.

*Note: One member asked us to provide a guideline for donations. "How much should I send?" Perhaps the most useful response we can make is that a gift of \$21 from each member would wipe away the deficit from this spring's activity, a shortfall now being borne by IFOR. Beyond that, we will need funds to finance the ongoing campaign. Please send what you can, when you can, if you can. Checks payable to FOR will be tax deductible.*

THANK YOU.

## BULLETIN BOARD

A 45-day autumn tour provided U.S. Buddhists opportunities to meet and enjoy the teaching of His Holiness the 14th DALAI LAMA. Those who were able to see him will remember loving-kindness as the great theme of his message to America. For those who did not hear the words directly: "How can we become a good student, a good follower of Buddha? We must practice well, mainly compassion, kindness, honesty, be less selfish, share other people's suffering, have more concern for others' welfare. This is the basic teaching. In order to further develop these good thoughts, we practice deep samadhi, meditation, wisdom. The wisdom side must be developed. Then the ethical side is automatically increased. Buddha always emphasized the combination of wisdom and compassion. I think, in other words, we must have a good brain as well as a good heart--we must combine these two. If we only emphasize our brain without this good heart, then sometimes man's intelligence may create more problems, more suffering. If we only emphasize heart without brain, there is hardly any difference between animals and human beings. So we must have these two in balance. As a result, we may have good material progress, and at the same time, good spiritual development. Combined, in balance, side by side, will give a real, peaceful, friendly human family." --*Namu Dai Bosa (Winter, 1979)*

The 1979 Templeton Foundation Prize for Progress in Religion was awarded last June in London to NIKKYO NIWANO, president and founder of the Rissho Kosei-kai, a major school in Japan's "New Buddhism." President Niwano was recognized particularly for his "significant achievement in building bridges for interreligious understanding and cooperation." Among his previous honors are invitation to Vatican II as the sole non-Christian observer, selection as honorary chairperson of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, and service as executive president of the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace. Peace and social action play a very prominent part in Rissho Kosei-kai programs and publications thanks to President Niwano's conviction that "religion itself exists for the sake of peace." --*Dharma World (June, 1979, and February, 1980)*

FOR has suggested that BPF produce a pamphlet outlining a BUDDHIST STANCE ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO THE DRAFT. With draft registration likely to receive funding even before this Newsletter gets to the post office and likely to occur by the end of June, the value and urgency of this project are apparent. Anyone interested in developing such a pamphlet, please contact Nelson Foster (2011 Linohau Way, Honolulu, HI 96822). The contents should probably include background on the CO laws, advice on how to establish oneself as a CO, quotations from sutras as appropriate, pertinent interpretations of the Dharma, a reading list, and people to contact for further consultation.

Honolulu members recently had the pleasure of hearing a report on the SARVODAYA SHRAMADANA movement from the mouth of its founder and sparkplug, A.T. Ariyaratne. Since 1958, Sarvodaya Shramadana (literally, "universal awakening through sharing of energy") has synthesized indigenous Buddhist values, Gandhian philosophy, and modern scientific knowledge to bring spiritual and economic rejuvenation to rural Sri Lanka. Its work now involves some 500,000 volunteers in a wide variety of endeavors, but its emphasis remains where it has always been--on cooperative labor with villagers to accomplish projects the villagers themselves have established as most critical to their welfare. Such projects employ appropriate technology and feature communal meals, meditation, study, and celebration. Sarvodaya has gained worldwide attention as an extraordinary model of for the self-development of Third World nations and now receives some financial support from Oxfam and other groups interested in work of this nature.

Among representatives to the Third World Conference on Religion and Peace were members of the BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA, whose 60 U.S. branches make it the largest Buddhist denomination in the country and probably in the West as a whole. Associated with Japan's Nishi Hwongwanji Sect, the BCA is headquartered in San Francisco under the leadership of Bishop Kenryu Tsuji. BCA's decision to participate in WCRP III is a noteworthy

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step forward for American Buddhist peace efforts. (For a full report on the Conference itself, consult *Fellowship*, October 1979.)

According to the July 1979 *Smithsonian*, a group of Japanese Buddhist priests has petitioned for permission to construct a ridge-top PEACE TEMPLE in the new Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The park, located on the outskirts of Los Angeles, will be the largest of its kind in America if all of its 100,000 acres can be procured as planned. Considerable obstacles lie ahead for the park, not the least of them being the intentions of private land developers. If you have further information regarding the peace temple proposal or the Buddhist group promoting it, please send it along to the Newsletter.

## NOTES ON LITERATURE

Al Bloom, BPF member and Professor of Religion at the University of Hawaii, is gathering resources for a volume on Buddhist social action through the ages. He would welcome references on (1) textual or doctrinal foundations of Buddhist social action, (2) clergy or laypeople notable for their activism, and (3) instances of rulers, civil institutions, and the like being significantly moved toward just and peaceful social change by Buddhist thought or practice. Information or materials may be sent to Prof. Bloom at the Department of Religion, Sakamaki Hall, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI 96822.

Buddhism and other Eastern religions, particularly Taoism, come up for notice in the second edition of an occasional journal titled *Ecophilosophy* (May, 1979). Editor George Sessions offers an overview of current ecological positions, distinguishing each on the basis of its ethical concerns and sources. Using terminology developed by Bill Devall in a paper entitled "Streams of Environmentalism," Sessions outlines four schools of anthropocentric, utilitarian "shallow ecology" and nine schools of a revolutionary "deep ecology" which rejects anthropocentrism as a perversion of fundamental unity and approaches the non-human world in thoroughly religious spirit. Buddhism is recognized as a contributing force in the development of the latter perspective, both through its influence on pioneers in deep ecology--John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Robinson Jeffers, among others--and through its recent emergence in Western religious life. *Ecophilosophy* (48 pages, mimeo) and "Streams of Environmentalism" (54 pages, mimeo) are both available through George Sessions, Philosophy Department, Sierra College, Rocklin, CA 95677. Please contribute toward costs of duplication and postage if you request copies.

Jim Forest's *The United Buddhist Church of Vietnam: Fifteen Years for Reconciliation*, discussed in the previous issue of this Newsletter, is now available to us in limited quantities at a price of \$2.50 per copy. Mainland members interested in purchasing the book should order directly from FOR Literature Service, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960. In Hawaii, members may order from Nelson Foster, 2011 Linoahau Way, Honolulu, HI 96822.

Readers interested in examining William LaFleur's work on the Buddhahood of rocks and grasses will find it readily available in the Fall, 1978, issue of *CoEvolution Quarterly* (a special issue titled "Journal for the Protection of All Beings"). Check your library. *History of Religion* (13: 2-3), cited previously in our note on Gary Snyder's "Toward a Planetary Peace Movement," provides a fuller discussion of the subject but is undoubtedly less accessible than *CoEvolution Quarterly*.

Members intrigued by Daizen Victoria's analysis of "Militarist Zen" in the preceding issue of the Newsletter will want to search out his "Japanese Corporate Zen" in the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (Vol. 12, No. 1, 1980). In this article, from which ours was excerpted, Daizen argues that current liaisons between Zen temples and Japanese corporations are new manifestations of an old problem. He reviews Zen's traditional socio-political role in Japan to cast light on the contemporary phenomenon. He also exposes the

pernicious confusion between the liberation from ideas of right-and-wrong and the abdication of social responsibility.

We reprint with pleasure the notice at right from the *Windham (NY) Journal* of January 17, 1980. The reading, timed to coincide with a national day of concern for events in Latin America, represents the continuing work of BPF members Platov and Fallarino to raise political, social, and religious awareness in their area--and to spread the word about the BPF itself. We are grateful for their efforts.

Thanks to member Jim Larick, we received a copy of the *Lincoln (Neb.) Journal's* warm review of "Footprints in Blood." (See previous Newsletter.) Drama writer Dick Piersol remarks not only the moral authority of the saga but also the devotion and heterogenous backgrounds of those responsible for the production. He seems fascinated in particular by the participation of our friend Daizen Victoria, whom he describes as "a Buddhist monk who was born within eyesight of Fort Omaha." Much of the play is set at Fort Omaha, for it was there that Chief Standing Bear won a historic legal victory for native American rights. But what a Buddhist monk is doing mixed up in all of this escapes Mr. Piersol . . . .

## Poetry Reading Successful

A poetry reading was held Sunday under the auspices of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship at the residence of Mariquita Platov in East Jewett. The nationwide fellowship came into existence last May.

M.S. Platov and Michael Fallarino of Hudson read from both modern and ancient works of Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese and American poets to a receptive audience. Prominent in these works was an intimate connection with nature, a concern for Mother Earth which make Buddhist poets environmentalists as well as peacemakers.

## FROM THE MAIL

Dear friends:

I was delighted to see the Newsletter of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (Vol. 1, No. 2). Congratulations of a fine effort.

Of course, if members of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship should care to submit material for consideration for possible publication in *Fellowship*, I would be happy to receive it.

The Buddhist witness is an important one for the peace community and deserves wider dissemination.

Richard Chartier  
Editor, *Fellowship*

Dear Sirs:

A Buddhist for the last seven years of my life, I also belong to the Southampton branch of a British organization called "Women for Life," which is the anti-abortion section of the women's rights movement. It is significant that I learned of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship through my involvement in "Women for Life"

and not through the Buddhist Society.

Buddhists in England, bless them, strike me as being very respectable, you know, both immigrants and English converts. Meditation, tea, lectures, and books. Rightly so, of course, but when literally thousands of Roman Catholic "sconcers" from Liverpool converge on London to stand in pouring rain to protest against abortion, I feel Buddhists have a responsibility in a social way, not just to ourselves and our own meditation. I hope the Fellowship will have teeth. Even if you don't exactly bite, you can snap!

Tibetans say, precious human body, precious jewel or gem. Rebirth, the fundamental fact; human rebirth, the ideal state for Enlightenment. It is very sad that, in the International Year of the Child, no mention has been made of the Unborn Child and his rights, the right to live.

"May all beings be happy and at their ease . . . born or to be born . . . may they be joyous and live in safety." [Metta Sutta]

Lisa Beckett  
Southampton, England



## Feature Section

### COMMON GROUND IN THE DHARMA for Buddhist Peace Action

The following articles, compiled and edited by BPF member Michael Roche, draw together strands from several schools of Buddhist thought and practice, in an effort to establish bases for unified Buddhist action for peace.

We are grateful to the articles'

distinguished authors and to Michael for their generosity in producing this feature section.

Other members who, like Mike, would be interested in coordinating articles for a future feature section are encouraged to volunteer their services.

### SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES IN PURE LAND BUDDHISM by Alfred Bloom, University of Hawaii

The Pure Land tradition is perhaps the most popular approach to Buddhism in the world today, being very important in the Far East and among ethnic and non-ethnic Buddhists in the West. The reason for this is its expansive concept of Compassion, the social dimensions of which Professor Bloom discusses in the following article. Professor Bloom is the author of the pioneering study of Pure Land Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace and is active in Buddhist affairs in the West as editor of Kalavinka, Voice of the Dharma.

--MR

It is a common view that Buddhism generally and Pure Land Buddhism in particular are quite limited in social awareness. They are either described as "world-rejecting" or "otherworldly" and as rather passive in the face of social challenge. In order to put these descriptions into proper perspective, we must observe that, in some instances in China and Japan, the social involvement of Buddhism was purposely restricted by political forces, which were aware of the social potential of Buddhism. On the other hand, there were leaders such as Ashoka in India and later Shotoku Taishi in Japan, who recognized the positive contributions of Buddhism to a healthy society.

Thus the limited social perspectives we observe in Buddhism may be more a matter of history and social situation

than an implicit lack of awareness within Buddhism. We can point to socially aware priests, such as Gyogi Bosatsu and Dosho in Japan during the Nara period, who worked in the interest of the people with various welfare projects. In later periods of Japanese history, Eisai, a Zen master, and Hakuin Zenji both displayed sharp social insight. The fiery prophet Nichiren, usually captioned a nationalist, was also very socially concerned for the destiny of his people. In modern times, we can point to a variety of socially aware Buddhist leaders. Consequently, we may say that there is a broad basis of principle, insight, and symbols in Mahayana Buddhism for developing a social outlook capable of offering guidance in modern problems.

We must caution, however, that Buddhism, similar to other religions, does not offer direct solutions to problems but rather provides a spiritual framework and form of personal cultivation which enable the individual to become more sensitive to problems and to probe more deeply for their solutions. The major issue of our times, running through all problems, is one of values and the meaning of human existence. With respect to these issues, Buddhism generally and Pure Land teaching in particular offer insight and a vision.

Space does not permit an exhaustive study of the principles involved in

the Pure Land social perspective. We shall mention a few that have particular merit, and we shall call especial attention to the Japanese teachers Honen and Shinran, founders of major traditions of Pure Land teaching.

The fundamental basis of Pure Land teaching is the story of Dharmakara Bodhisattva in the Major Pure Land Sutra. According to the story, an ancient king became concerned for the welfare of all beings as he viewed the enormity of suffering in the world. He aspired to create a world where all sufferings would be abolished and beings could attain their full potential--enlightenment. He abdicated his kingship and became a monk, undertaking to acquire the purification and merit that would establish the ideal world. To this end, he surveyed all worlds and made 48 Vows comprising the ideal conditions for all possible worlds--thus the ultimate world of salvation. He contemplated for five kalpas and achieved his goal, becoming Amitabha (Amida) Buddha in the Western Pure Land. We are told in the sutra that it is now ten kalpas since he became Buddha.

What is socially significant in this story is that the king resigns his position, seeing that political power alone is not sufficient to bring meaning and salvation to all beings. Further, the Bodhisattva in the story, in contrast to the Shakyamuni of other traditions, who was moved to spiritual discipline simply to transcend his own possible sufferings, was inspired on seeing the sufferings of others and generated a desire to achieve their release. This is the pattern of the Bodhisattva of Mahayana Buddhism and provides perhaps its most complete and well-known example. The self-sacrificing altruism of Mahayana is clearly depicted, and a social awareness is implicit in the struggle toward establishing the ideal conditions of life for all beings.

Another aspect of the symbolism of the Pure Land teaching lies in the nature of the Original Vows made by the Bodhisattva. The philosophical dimensions of Buddhism focussed on the principles of interdependence and mutual interpenetration of all beings. These abstract and mystical principles are difficult for popular understanding; the Vows, however, exhibit these principles in concrete form. According to the Vows, when the Bodhisattva attains Buddhahood, if all beings do not share the same status with him, he will refuse to accept enlightenment. The Vows teach that salvation is not merely universal in being open to all but that it is indivisible. No one truly gains salvation who does not work to share it with others. There is here a recognition of what we know in the political field as the indivisibility of freedom. It also implies egalitarianism and identity in destiny which is important for vital social thinking.

Generally, the Pure Land is viewed as an otherworldly state like a heaven and is taught for people of modest intelligence who cannot divest themselves of their penchants for the delights of sense. Consequently, the Pure Land idea has frequently been considered a lesser ideal in Buddhism, and perhaps it has been that on the most popular levels; however, implicit in the concept is the recognition of the importance of the environment in the attainment of ideals. The Pure Land represents the ideal context for realizing enlightenment, since one is brought into immediate relation with the Buddha of that Land. The activities of the Bodhisattva in establishing ideal conditions provides a pointer for modern people in working for improved conditions for people so that they might have more opportunity and capacity to realize their potentials. It can also be applied to ecological thinking, the striving for a more healthy physical environment as the context of society. The sutra is concerned with moral conditions as it describes the effects of



the five forms of wickedness: killing, stealing, adultery, lying, and the use of intoxicants. These reflect the five precepts of lay Buddhism, and the descriptions offered show an awareness of social problems in that ancient time when the sutra was composed. It declares that, with the help of the Buddha, these evils are abandoned, and people attain good.

Suggestions of social perspective beyond the sutra occur in the thought of Honen and Shinran in Japan. They appeared in a time of social turmoil and change and attempted to console and challenge the people of their time to a deeper vision of life's potential. Honen taught the practice of Nembutsu, reciting Amida Buddha's name, as the central way to salvation. Though apparently a simple practice for salvation in another world, it becomes clear on reading the Senchakushu, Honen's main work, that there is social criticism implicit; Honen demonstrates that the reason Amida designated the recitation of his name as the chief way to salvation was that it did not require a person to be rich, educated, well-travelled, wise, expert in discipline, or particularly moral. He broke through the monopoly of aristocratic Heian Buddhism, threatening the hold of the Tendai and Shingon or Nara schools on the society. For this reason, his teaching was prohibited and persecuted as subversive and inimical to Buddhism. His exile along with his disciples caused the spread of Pure Land teaching among the masses, offering hope to the spiritually and materially dispossessed.

In the case of Shinran, a more this-worldly interpretation of Pure Land resulted from his teaching that faith was a gift of Amida Buddha and that salvation was no longer a future concern but a present certainty. Freed from anxieties toward the future and experiencing the ultimacy of Amida Buddha as the sole source of

DHARMA COMMON GROUND, by Michael Fallarino

In contributing this poetic meditation on common ground in the Dharma, Mike describes himself simply as "a BPF member, a practicing Zennist, and a poet working out of Hudson, New York." --MR

Common ground in the dharma. Common ground dharma. These words seem to go together. But what is dharma, ultimately? The root of the word: to support or sustain. What sustains us? Maybe it really can't be talked about. We try anyway.

Love helps. Love is a common and a ground. Love fuses and breaks down barriers. Diversity within the dharma is necessary for growth, but it must be tempered by love. Love is a jewelled network in the dharma. Ground/common/dharma.

Dharma common ground. The dharma IS common ground, ultimately. It's a Law, but it's a place, too. And that place is mind. Poet Robert Creeley proposes that the ultimate sense of place is to be found in the body/mind. So dwell therein in a body/mind pattern.

Common dharma ground. There is no set definition for dharma. But to define is to limit. And there is no need to define or limit the dharma. Let us actively work together from wherever we stand. This is common ground in the dharma.

Japanese zen poet Shinkichi Takahashi:

Of course I may be quite wrong,  
Which in any case is unavoidable.

The question "To be or not to be"  
Just isn't fair. I stand on  
richer ground.

salvation, Shinran's tradition is notable for being the least superstitious and the least involved in the shamanic folk religious features of Japanese tradition. In addition, Shinran established an ideal of religion which was completely inward and spiritual, thus rejecting authoritarianism and status concerns. He declared that he had no disciples and refused to excommunicate others. He referred to his associates as brothers, rejecting even the term "disciple"; there were no disciples in the usual oriental sense for Shinran. He never demanded or coerced his followers to do his bidding but urged them: "It is up to you to decide (Men mem no onhakarai nari)."

We can do no better perhaps than to close with Shinran's description of Great Faith, which has enormous social implications if taken seriously: "As I contemplate the ocean-like Great Faith, I see that it does not choose between the noble and the mean, the priest and the layman, nor does it discriminate between man and woman, old and young. The amount of sin committed is not questioned, and the length of

practice is not discussed. It is neither 'practice' nor 'good', neither 'abrupt' nor 'gradual', neither 'meditative' nor 'non-meditative', neither 'right meditation' nor 'wrong meditation', neither 'contemplative' nor 'non-contemplative', neither 'while living' nor 'at the end of life', neither 'many utterances' nor 'one thought'. Faith is the inconceivable, indescribable, and ineffable Serene Faith. It is like the agada which destroys all poisons. The medicine of the Tathagata's Vow destroys the poisons of wisdom and ignorance."

Although these ideals and perspectives may not have attained complete expression in the Asian social and political scene, they are imminent in the tradition and can be interpreted in the light of our current conditions. In any case, the Pure Land tradition embodies a humane idealism which views all beings as embraced by an earnest and absolute compassion which neither discriminates nor rejects but rather inspires all to seek the welfare of others as the goal of their own Buddhahood.

#### DOING BUDDHA WORK, by Francis Dojun Cook, UC at Riverside

The following article is a kind of meditation based on the work of Dogen Zenji, the great Japanese Zen master and founder of the largest contemporary sect of Zen. It shows the integral connection between Zen, often characterized as the "Religion of the Samurai," and Buddhist social thought in general. Francis Dojun Cook is an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Riverside and a student of Maezumi Poshi of the Zen Center of Los Angeles. --MR

When Mahayana Buddhism arose in India at about the beginning of the Western Christian era, its followers saw themselves as introducing several significant elements into Buddhism. One was, of course, the teaching of

emptiness (sunyata), the metaphysical and experiential cornerstone of Mahayana. Another was the new emphasis on compassion as the active expression of the insight gained in meditation. Third was the new ideal of the Bodhisattva as the perfect human type.

In its deep concern for living a life of compassionate activity, Mahayana is essentially dynamic in its orientation towards the world. This means that the emphasis is on a more-or-less normal life in the world, on involvement with family, occupation, and the life of the community, rather than on the life of seclusion as hermit or monk. It is here, in the world, as husband, wife, parent, and worker, that the individual pursues the Maha-

yana ideal of trying to eliminate suffering among living beings and, guided by the insight developed in meditation, guiding them to liberation from greed, hatred, and delusion.

The Bodhisattva is not motivated primarily to seek his or her own liberation, because the Bodhisattva has come to see the internal self-contradiction of striving for self-liberation when liberation is, by definition, the extinction of self-concern. No one who seeks his own liberation from suffering while being unconcerned with the welfare of others will ever attain it. The Bodhisattva attains the only real liberation when he forgets his own and strives to help others acquire it, according to the scripture named Lankavatara.

Perhaps the most radical declaration of this goal was made by the Zen master Dogen, in an essay in Shobogenzo entitled Hotsu bodai shin ("Arousing the enlightened mind"). In this essay the Bodhisattva's vow is no longer simply to liberate all sentient beings; the vow is to encourage all other beings to arouse an aspiration to liberate all others. Thus, the Bodhisattva vow is universalized in a most interesting way, for the vow is to promote compassion and caring, not self-liberation. Says Dogen, "Benefitting living beings means causing living beings to arouse the thought of liberating all others even before each is himself liberated. We cannot become Buddhas in any other way than through the power of causing this thought to arise in others."

It needs to be understood and constantly remembered among Mahayana Buddhists--Eastern or Western--that the goal of the Mahayana is not self-enlightenment or liberation from turmoil and pain but rather is to do whatever is within one's power to liberate beings and free them from all suffering. Mahayana is the way of compassion and vigorous activity. Of

course, a person who is enslaved to passion and delusion is not able to do this, and so meditation and increasing degrees of understanding are necessary prerequisites to effective work. A great commitment and seriousness (but not solemnity) are required by anyone who wishes to follow the Mahayana Way.

What forms does the Mahayana way of compassion and help take? Suffering is certainly widespread. It is found not only among human beings but is terribly prevalent among animals, and in this latter part of the 20th century, even the soil, water, air, and plants suffer. It is important to keep this in mind, because Mahayana compassion and the task of eliminating this suffering are transhuman in scope, extending to all life and to those things we do not normally think of as living. If all things suffer, then all are needful of help. A partial compassion, extending to humans only, or to a particular subgroup of humans, is not really compassion but mere sentimentality or tribal self-protection. A partial compassion is weak and compromised, for we either care or do not.

Consequently, perfect Buddhist compassion must be extended in all directions, to all who need it. We must really try to help even those who are not very likeable, to those who are different from ourselves or of whom most people disapprove. We must try to help the stupid and mean, the unloving, the greedy, those who want only to exploit and dominate, and those who may never thank us or even acknowledge our compassion. Being compassionate has nothing to do with whether we like those who suffer.

The work of the Mahayana Bodhisattva certainly can and must take social-activist forms, and there is much in Buddhist history, up to the self-immolation of Vietnamese monks in recent times, to validate this form of compassion. To help in important community causes not only benefits those who

suffer but also helps to educate and raise the consciousness of those who victimize. It is, consequently, a minimal requirement that we do not remain silent in the face of oppression, intolerance, exploitation, and the infliction of pain and death. To remain silent is to indirectly but effectively support intolerable conditions. What we do not say or do counts as much as what we actively say and do.

Let us not be deluded about this. If we do not protest arms build-up, confrontational politics, and war as a way of dealing with disagreements, we are supporting these things, for silence is taken as assent. If we remain silent in the face of racism, sexism, jingoistic nationalism, degradation of the environment, and the like, we are supporting them. We need to be aware--as Buddhism uses the term--that what we say, eat, wear, and otherwise consume can encourage and perpetuate disease, death, inhumane treatment of humans and animals, exploitation, and oppression. We become allies to pain and death when we ourselves succumb to greed, desire pleasure and comfort, become impatient with inconvenience, become lazy, or lose our awareness. The latter is particularly important, because constant awareness is the essence of the Buddha Way.

The reason we must extend help wherever it is needed is that there can be no partial liberation. If, as Mahayana Buddhism teaches, all beings are interrelated and interdependent, then if one corner of life is oppressed by hunger, disease, humiliation, discrimination, or political subjugation, then none of us is truly free. Certainly the individual can never consider himself liberated while his neighbors are not. On the other hand, each success in eliminating suffering and bondage liberates us all that much more. We rise or fall as one body, for none of us is alone.

Thus, we must do whatever we can in liberating and helping, though some

forms of this work are not traditionally Buddhist methods. Nowadays, the ballot can be very effective, as can pressure on elected officials. We need to be aware that the reluctance to vote is just as political an act as voting, a subtler way of casting our votes for greed, ignorance, and hate. We can also sign petitions and let our wishes be known. Another effective method of helping is to donate money or time, for activist groups cannot function without this form of help. Recent successes in the battle to save the whales resulted from many small cash donations and the willingness of many to donate time. Particularly important is refusing to remain silent when we encounter verbal violence. The liberation of women, homosexuals, and various racial and religious groups will be achieved when no one any longer tolerates misinformation, lies, slurs, degrading "jokes", and other forms of verbal violence. We can also help by being aware of what we buy and use, for the great corporations only give us what we want, and the dollar they use for exploitation and manipulation comes from our pockets.

All of this calls for commitment, energy, and, above all, awareness. Appropriate and effective action is only possible when it is supported and clarified by a mind which is freed as much as possible from egotism, pride, and delusion. The source of the Bodhisattva's success is insight, which is derived from meditation. Indeed, Mahayana compassion is defined as the active expression of prajna-insight. One of the best ways to help is to clarify our own minds. We can also help easily and effectively by refusing to be a party to the inflicting of suffering through our silence. We can help by maintaining a firm conviction in the reality of our Buddha nature--the perfect union of insight and compassion--and striving to actualize it. We may, of course, refuse to do these things, but then, we will not be Mahayana Buddhists either.

A TIBETAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE CULTIVATION  
OF PEACE, by Robert W. Clark

The Tibetan tradition of Buddhism is sometimes considered to be a very esoteric and somewhat eccentric form of Buddhism. Robert Clark's article, presenting a "Tibetan" view of the cultivation of peace in its broad sense, is based upon his translation of Tsong Kha pa's Phun Tsogs dGe Legs Ma (The Perfection of Virtue). Though this work was written in the 14th century, it has a clarity and directness reminiscent of the progenitors of the Mahayana. Robert Clark is the Associate Director of the Tibetan Scientific and Cultural Society, P.O. Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704.

The Tibetan Buddhist sees the cosmos as populated by innumerable sentient beings. These beings are of virtually infinite variety but are understood to fall into six categories according to their individual patterns of behavior through the course of their former lifetimes (i.e., their karma).

Though vastly different in most every way, all beings have two things in common. First, every living being possesses a mind. The nature of the mind does not differ from one being to another. From the smallest, most unfortunate being to the greatest and most powerful, the mind is in essence the same. This mind is not different from the mind of the Buddha and is thus capable of attaining that very state of ultimate perfection.

Second, on a psychological level, all beings possess one thing in common: the desire for peace. Peace in this sense is the absence of misery and the presence of happiness.

But to attain this peace, each being has a different method. Animals, for instance, tend to seek their

peace by grasping for what they want and fighting any who oppose them. Humans and other beings, though they might employ many elaborate artifices, mostly follow this same pattern.

This type of method, universal though it may be, is not so effective. When we grasp for what we want, we do not always get it. When we do get it, we are not satisfied. When we overcome one enemy, two more arise. It is because of this that the Buddha characterized the whole of cosmic existence as the ocean of misery and gave the 84,000 teachings of the "Dharma" as a method to attain the perfection of peace.

The Dharma, having been taught by Sakyamuni, is spread throughout the realms of existence by the Buddha's sons, the celestial Bodhisattvas such as Maitreya and Manjusri. In this world, the Dharma in all of its vastness and depth has been interpreted and transmitted by the great teachers such as Nagarjuna and Asanga and has been further organized, clarified, and tailored to our needs by the great masters such as Atisa, Tsongkapa, and the many present-day teachers of ancient Buddhist tradition. Moved by compassion for the world in its timeless and tragic search for the ever elusive sense of peace, they teach a gradual path to Buddhahood whereby every being, no matter what his circumstances or viewpoint, can attain the ultimate peace and extend this peace to others.

Because it involves all of our basic emotional, psychological, philosophical, and physical assumptions on their most fundamental level, this path is difficult and complex. Therefore it is first necessary to rely on a spiritual friend--a teacher who from

his own experience of this path is qualified to show it to others. However, if our confidence in him is lacking, he is powerless to help us overcome our own deep-seated mental and emotional blocks.

Human existence, from among the six types of life, is the only one conducive to the practice of the Dharma, as its misery is not so intense as to totally distract us from spiritual effort nor so absent that sensual pleasure totally distracts us. Of all life forms, the human is most rare and difficult to attain. It has been attained this once, but like a bubble of water or a drop of dew, it will not last but will disappear without notice or appeal. Once lost, it is all but impossible to regain. The unwholesome pursuits of this world must therefore be seen as pointless and every effort expended towards making this present opportunity meaningful.

After death, we have no power to determine our next life-form--animal, human, hell being, etc. Therefore in this life we must prepare for the future by taking advantage of the refuge offered by the Buddha, the Dharma he taught, and the Sangha, those who actually practice this teaching and can help us with it. Understanding relativity--the cause and effect nature of all processes of this and future lives--we must cultivate the causes of peace and abandon the causes of misery.

We must learn and constantly apply the antidotes to the defilements which come from the unwholesome activities of this and former lifetimes. The 'Truth of Misery' must be contemplated if we are to become interested in liberation from this 'ocean of misery'. The 'Truth of Cause' must be contemplated if we are to understand the source of our bondage and misery in the world and the way to reverse it.

The very heart of the path is the Bodhi-mind. This is the unshakeable

resolve to help all sentient beings attain perfect peace before accepting that state for oneself. This is the basis of all the practices of the path and is the central heart-vow of the practitioner.

The practice of charity fulfills the hopes of living beings, cuts away the knot of one's own stinginess, overcomes discouragement, generates confidence, and is the basis of good repute.

Morality removes the defilements of unwholesome actions, relieves the miseries of afflictive passions, and is a shining beacon which attracts all beings without threat or force.

Patience is the greatest possession of the powerful, the armor which cannot be breached by afflictive passions, hatred, or angry words.

Strong, unwavering diligence accomplishes all learning and realization, makes all endeavors meaningful, and brings all work to the desired conclusion.

Meditation is the mastery of one's own mind. When practicing, one becomes firm as a great mountain. Upon arising, all wholesome activities are pursued, and the great joy of mental and physical fitness arises.

Through wisdom, reality is seen as it actually is, the root of bondage to the world is severed, the import of the scriptures is realized, and the darkness of delusion is dispelled.

Through one-pointed meditation, one overcomes the afflictive passions and gains control of one's mind. But not until one joins the power and stability of this meditative accomplishment with the sharp sword of analytical wisdom can one cut through all the inner and outer obstacles to the actual insight into reality.

At this point, one is finally able

to set forth upon the vast ocean of the Tantras, and by following faithfully the directions of a skillful pilot, a spiritual master who has himself reached the other shore, one can ultimately reach the goal of peace.

In this way, it is seen that Buddhism, in this expression of the Tantra tradition, views peace not as something which comes easily or naturally to the world but, indeed, as

the very antithesis of the worldly process. To remain in the world's grasp is to be driven relentlessly from rebirth to rebirth by the forces of one's own afflictive passions: greed, hatred, delusion, etc. To attain peace for oneself and for all other beings is to partake in some way of the gradual path referred to above and, in one's own way, to pull out all conflict and misery by its roots.

#### THERAVADA BUDDHISM AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM:

Some Remarks on the Scriptural Basis, by Michael Roche

The following article concerns the legacy of social thought present in the earliest Buddhist scriptures, the common heritage of all Buddhists. Michael Roche is a student of Sakya Tridzen Rinpoche, currently studying with Lama Kunga Rinpoche in Berkeley.

Although Theravada Buddhism is not a large factor in Western Buddhism numerically speaking, its social tradition from Ashoka, the first Dharma-inspired king, to the contemporary Sinhalese monks who are endeavoring to synthesize Buddhadharma and Marxism, is part of the legacy of all Buddhists. Moreover, all major Mahayana schools accept the validity of the Theravada scriptures, although usually with the reservation that they are most relevant in the fundamental appreciation of ethics and morality.

Ethics (sila), while sometimes seen as a preliminary basis for enlightenment only and therefore denigrated as of lesser importance in the overall Buddhist program of awakening, is at the very center of any consideration of social activism. Thus, the Theravada scriptures and particularly what they have to say about ethics, both individual and social, are of paramount importance to all Buddhists. In this essay, I would like to present some of the basic social teachings to be found in the Pali

scriptures that are relevant to all Buddhists.

The Agganna Sutta (D.N. 27) discusses the overall evolution of human society, not in terms of the traditional Hindu caste myths but in an edifying, mythological style that explains the continual degeneration of human social relations in terms of humankind's growing egotism and materialism. Originally humans were seen to be individually autonomous, but their unregulated desires brought misfortune after misfortune upon them: the arising of classes in society, private property, violence, all continuing unabated to the time of Shakyamuni and the present. This idea of social degeneration is present, of course, in Mahayana Buddhism, most notably in the idea of Mappo, an important concept in East Asian Buddhism. Thus in their mythico-eschatological basis, both Mahayanists and Theravadins address a similar situation of massive social suffering precipitated by widespread and profound ignorance. This is the social situation which Shakyamuni addresses in the Suttas, and his prescriptions are uniformly opposed to violence and egotism in their many forms.

Perhaps the ethical teaching of the early Buddhist scriptures best known to all Buddhists is the Noble Eight-fold Path, among the first teachings

given by Shakyamuni Buddha, and the practical corollary of the Four Noble Truths. In the Satyavikanga Sutta, an explanation of the Eightfold Path, the Buddha states that no fewer than three of these truths enjoin non-violence: Right Intention requires non-violence and harmlessness; Right Action demands abstention from taking life, and Right Livelihood involves occupations that do not depend on the taking of life or foster the taking of life.

Similarly, the most basic precepts of Buddhist morality, the five layman's vows which are administered to this day throughout the Far East and in the West are first propounded in the Pali Suttas. Foremost among these precepts is the admonition not to kill. Mahayanists, as well as Theravadins, agree that morality (sila) is the basis from which the climb to enlightenment is attempted. Seen in this light, the spirit of non-violence, even when it is not mentioned specifically, informs all Buddhist thought and is a sine qua non for action in the world.

This important factor is amplified in the Buddha's private teachings as applied to social institutions. There are two principal suttas that deal at length with Shakyamuni Buddha's advice to rulers: the Kutadanta Sutta (D.N. 5) and the Cakkavatti Sihanada Suttanta (D. 26). In the Kutadanta Sutta, the Buddha is asked by a Brahman about social responsibilities, and the Buddha responds with an edifying parable about Great King Realm and his wise advisor. When the King expresses his intention to forcibly suppress the lawless elements in the Kingdom, his advisor responds with the following discourse on social policy: "It might be that Your Majesty would think that the standard of the brigands could be suppressed by means of executions, imprisonments, confiscations, threats or banishment. However, this revolt of the brigands will not be suppressed perfectly in that way. Those who survive the killings will afterwards ha-

EMPTINESS AS COMMON GROUND, by  
Mariquita Platov

The following reflection on the seminal concept of Emptiness as a focal point for Buddhist unity in action is presented by Mariquita Platov, a BPF member from Tannersville, New York. --MR

"Emptiness" suggests itself as an inclusive name for a "common ground" on which to base the BPF. All Buddhist groups, I should think, must have experience of this conditionless condition in which the attempt is made to empty the mind of content. It is a state of selflessness in which the divisive assertions of the ego are least likely to appear, hence a state most conducive to consensus among practitioners.

Suppose some disagreement such as the recent one which arose in the peace movement over the SALT Treaty should result in conflicting individual decisions as to the right course of action. The return to meditation and emptiness after the decisions were made should tend to restore our original, vital unity if anything could.

Experience of emptiness shapes the Buddhist's daily life. As long as one sits in meditation one is practicing detachment from desire. The worst ills of society spring from Manas, the culmination of insatiable desire which knows no security outside of armaments.

Experience of emptiness sharpens the mind, developing one's capacity to make wise judgments which accord with the Buddha nature we all share, the kind of discrimination so crucially required of the peacemaker.



harass the King's country. However, depending on the following policy this revolt of the brigands will be suppressed perfectly: Now let His Majesty the King grant seed and fodder to those in his country who take up agriculture and cattle breeding. Let His Majesty grant capital to those in his country who undertake commerce. Let His Majesty dispense wages and food to those in his country who undertake the royal service. Those people, being intent on their own work, will not harass the King's country and at the same time there will be a great accumulation for the King. Through the country remaining secure and without oppression or subversion I think men will live with open houses, glad and rejoicing, making their children dance." (D.N. 5, 75ff.) This short abstract gives a fair idea of the spirit of advice given by the Buddha to rulers on other occasions in the Suttas.

The Cakkavatti Sihanada Suttanta deals with social institutions and ethics in a broad mythological and eschatological way reminiscent of the Agganna Sutta. It relates the duties of a Universal Monarch (Chakravartin Raja), a very old concept in Indian thought, and society's degeneration to the final days. Again, the causes of social disintegration are egotism and human greed, leading to a deterioration of the entire environment, including human stature and lifespan. People's short lifespans will be punctuated by internecine, seven-day "sword periods" which will significantly reduce the population.

When the process of degeneration has almost obliterated an enervated and debased humanity from the world, it will occur to some in the population not to kill but to withdraw from the "sword periods." Afterwards they will emerge with renewed resolution: "Then this, brethren, will occur to those beings: Now only because we have gotten into evil ways, have we had this heavy loss of kith and kin. Let us therefore now do good. What can we do that is good?

Let us now abstain from taking life.... Because of their getting into this good way, they will increase again both as to their span of life and their comeliness...." This process proceeds continuously as virtue is reborn in the world and flourishes and the cycle is reversed. "At that period, brethren, there will arise in the world an Exalted One named Metteya, Arahant, Fully Awakened, abounding in wisdom and goodness, happy, with knowledge of the worlds, unsurpassed as a guide to mortals willing to be led, a teacher for gods and men, an Exalted One, a Buddha even as I am now." (D.N. 26, 73-76.)

The full import of the mythological aspect of these texts presents no less of a problem to modern Buddhists than similar problems in Biblical interpretation present to our Christian contemporaries. Several concepts of an ethical nature are, however, palpably clear. Shakyamuni Buddha, while he primarily presented an ageless Dharma for completely ending human suffering, finally and on an ultimate level, in his compassion also addressed problems of more immediate and mundane concern. His utterances in dealing with these problems are fully consonant with his better-known pronouncements on the attainment of final salvation. Human suffering begins with ignorance and egotism, which leads to violence and social fragmentation. The Buddha counseled those in power to attenuate the consequent suffering for fulfilling their own duties (both social and religious) as rulers. These duties include active intervention to provide for and maintain the welfare of all those in their realms; to provide material as well as spiritual sustenance. Above all, we see in the Buddha's pronouncements on social ethics, from the primary ethical teachings of the Eightfold Path and the five laymen's vows through his advice to rulers and up to the mythological-eschatological presentations of the Agganna and the Cakkavatti, there is a consistent admonition not to kill.

Finally we are left with the haunting eschatological pronouncements of those texts which are heavily mythological in character. Their images of human degeneration and the hope of a coming Buddha stand as a cipher to most Western Buddhists. The description of the escalation of human violence, culminating in the "Seven Day Sword Period" and its aftermath, carries with it an almost Biblical sense of apocalypse, a sense that can only be heightened

for the contemporary reader cognizant of the present possibility of thermo-nuclear war. For those students of the Dharma who wish to consider these texts from more than a strictly ethical viewpoint, this final, most general dimension of these scriptures remains an enigma, an enigma that may perhaps be more satisfactorily resolved in the course of further Buddhist study and practice.

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We hope the "computer" did not overlook anyone. Welcome.

BPF Office and Newsletter  
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