

BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

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An Overview of Buddhism and the Buddhist Peace Movement in the U.S.

History of Buddhism in the U.S.

It was the organization of the Theosophical Society by Colonel Henry Olcott and Madame Blavatsky in New York in 1875 which first stimulated interest in Buddhism by significant numbers of Americans. Through the publications and lectures sponsored by this society, many people became familiar with such Buddhist concepts as nirvana, karma and rebirth. The World's Parliament of Religions, which was held in Chicago during the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, had greater importance for the early development of American Buddhism than any other single event. On that occasion, Anagarika Dharmapala, a Sri Lankan layman who was influential in establishing Mahabodhi Societies in America, and Soen Shaku, a Rinzai Zen master who promoted the growth of Zen in the U.S., gave impressive lectures. Paul Carus, a major publisher of books and later the author of the famous book The Gospel of the Buddha, was so impressed by the Buddhist lectures that he decided to patronize the spread of Buddhism, especially Zen, in the U.S.. He employed Daisetsu T. Suzuki, a student of Soen Shaku, to write for his publishing house. Through his extensive writings, D.T. Suzuki has probably done more than any other person to introduce Zen and Mahayana Buddhism to the West.

During the latter half of the 19th century, in Hawaii and on the West Coast of the U.S. mainland, American industrialists began looking to the Far East for cheap labor. During the 1860's and 1870's, hundreds of thousands of Chinese males were imported to build railroads and work in the gold mines of California. When the Chinese workers began to demand higher wages, the Chinese were replaced by Japanese workers from 1882 on. Virtually all of the Japanese were males of agricultural backgrounds from areas of Southern Japan where the Jodo Shin sect was very influential. Therefore

the first Japanese Buddhist priests to arrive in Hawaii in 1889 and on the U.S. mainland in 1899 to care for the spiritual needs of the growing Japanese-American population were of the Jodo Shin sect (actually the Nishi Hongwanji or West School of the Original Vow of Amida Buddha). This branch of Jodo Shinshu grew into what was for long the largest denomination of Hawaiian and American Buddhism, and it has retained its original character of consisting mostly of Americans of Japanese descent.

Following the arrival of Jodo Shinshu, several other Japanese sects soon appeared in the United States. These included the Higashi Hongwanji (East School of Jodo Shin), the Jodo sect, the Rinzai and Soto Zen sects, the Nichiren Sect and the Shingon sect.

Until World War II the only significant growth in American Buddhism was taking place in the Japanese community temples as the Japanese-American communities grew in numbers and strength. Other than the small clusters of Caucasian neophytes gathered about a scattered handful of Zen priests, Theravadin bhikkus and Tibetan lamas, there were very few non-Asians showing interest in Buddhism.

After World War II, the Japanese community temples were unable to fully recover from the forced evacuation of Japanese-American citizens from the West Coast. This phenomenon was balanced by an upsurge of interest in Buddhism among non-Asians in the U.S. It appears that many American servicemen stationed in Japan and other parts of Asia developed an interest in Buddhism. Also the lectures on Zen given by D.T. Suzuki at Columbia

(continued on page 10)



President's Column

Today from where I write it's 25° below zero outside, with a wind-chill factor of minus 70°. Inside I wear lots of woolen clothes and am warm enough. I think about warmth. As I mull over what directions the Buddhist Peace Fellowship can take, I keep coming back to thoughts of warmth, food, clothes. A Minnesota winter is harsh and relentless. It turns my thoughts practical. I think about those who are cold or hungry. I think of collecting food for food shelves, giving clothes to the free store, putting seeds in the bird feeder. And I realize it's time not only to think and talk, but to do.

I find it hard to work in isolation. I notice that many BPF members are scattered geographically and very few are part of local chapters. The more I reflected on this for this column, the more questions I got, and the less I had to say. It looks like the newsletter is a prime agent of connection. I would like to invite you, particularly those of you not part of a chapter, to add your voice to the newsletter. (Send things for the April issue, deadline March 1, to the BPF office, P.O. Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704; thereafter to Fred Eppsteiner, 114 Richland St., Rochester, NY 14609.)

We do have a chance this year, in autumn, to come together for a visit from Thich Nhat Hanh. The board is just beginning to plan for his trip, which is BPF-sponsored. He has said he would like to spend more time at fewer places. In order to honor his wish and to make his journey less wearing, the board is considering the possibility of only east coast, central, and west coast stops. This means we may have to travel a bit to see him. The board will meet in person at the end of March and will do most of the planning for his visit then.

I wish each of you a good New Year. I am grateful for this chance of serving you and welcome your responses, ideas, and comments.

In gassho,
Catherine Parker



Board Member Addresses

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BPF Board Meeting, January

The national Board met January 13 by phone conference. In attendance were: Ryo Imamura, Jenny Hoang, Catherine Parker, Steve Walker, Ruth Klein, Judith Gilbert, Kent Johnson, Wendy Tripp, Andrew Cooper, and Kenryu Tsuji.

Newsletter Kent Johnson will be resigning as newsletter publisher after the April issue. Fred will continue as editor. Steve Walker and others in Nevada City, CA will take over newsletter production after April. The Board expressed thanks to Kent for all of his hard work and excellent job.

President's Report Ryo attended the "Buddhism and Leadership for Peace" conference in Tokyo this fall. He will be writing about it for the newsletter. He also met with the Dalai Lama in October in L.A. His Holiness is cautiously considering accepting our invitation to be on the BPF International Advisory Board.

Treasurer BPF is in better financial shape than ever with \$2958.53 in the bank, memberships coming in, and a fund-raiser planned for March.

Staff Report Membership is now at 536, a growth of about 25% in the past year. As many as 15-20 new members have been joining each week. Wendy will continue to help in the office and the Board thanked her for her steady assistance.

Election of Officers New officers were elected as follows: President, Catherine Parker; Secretary, Ruth Klein; Treasurer, Steve Walker; Outreach, Kenryu Tsuji; Newsletter editor, Fred Eppsteiner; Coordinator for Thich Nhat Hanh's visit, Jenny Hoang.

Fundraising Kenryu and Steve will work together to generate fundraising ideas and projects. Three projects are currently under way: the L.A. program with Gary Snyder, the book on engaged Buddhism, and Thich Nhat Hanh's visit (which will attract new members).

New Chapters Two applications for new chapters were accepted: Western Mass. BPF, including Amherst and Northampton, and Tumamoc BPF in Tucson, AZ. Addresses may be found elsewhere in this issue.

Thich Nhat Hanh's Visit Jenny is coordinating the trip with the assistance of Andy Cooper, Arnold Kotler, Fred and Ruth. They are trying to avoid a complicated travel schedule and he will probably visit only a few locations. Possibilities are N. California, Boulder, Minneapolis, San Antonio, and Providence.

L.A. Fund-raiser This event, scheduled for March 4 at 7:30 pm, will include a shakuhachi flute, a Vietnamese Buddhist hat dance, and a poetry reading by Gary Snyder.

Et Cetera The Engaged Buddhism publication is due soon...BPF is beginning the paperwork required for non-profit status...Catherine and Fred will attend the 1985 FOR conference in March in Bangor, PA...The spring meeting of the Board will be face-to-face in late March or early April, possibly at Green Gulch Farm north of San Francisco.

Ruth Klein
BPF Secretary

Chapter News

Los Angeles, California

Los Angeles BPF activities this quarter were highlighted by the very auspicious visit of His Holiness The Dalai Lama in October. First, this was a great inspiration for BPF members to get in touch with each other and consequently many new members were joining; second, His Holiness' message at the meeting with BPF and at other places was loud and clear: "Practice your faith, do not criticize and do not interfere," He told the Vietnamese Buddhists at a luncheon offered in His honor. At the meeting with LABPF, when members voiced their fear over the pressure this society brings to our daily lives, He said, "Put aside a few hours a day to take care of your survival, keep the rest for yourselves and for your practice." Our [at that time BPF] President, Ryo Imamura, presented His Holiness with a statue of Kwan Yin and members showered Him with roses; in turn He gave us his new book On Loving Kindness.

Everywhere He went, He spoke of being a "reliable friend" and of making friends among all beings. He gave the impression of simplicity and purity of the Heart. Let's hope that He will accept the invitation to be on our BPF International Advisory Panel.

In Nov. some of us got involved in the case of the Vietnamese monk Thich Quang Do and his mother who was arrested and put in exile with him. He was asking the authorities to allow him to bring her back to his temple because of her old age and illness. A letter writing campaign was soon organized. On behalf of the Vietnamese community and the Sangha, I would like to thank all who have helped and given donations for the printing and the postage. To all beings from whom I felt silent support, I bow with gratitude.

Gary Snyder's poetry reading in L.A. for BPF fundraising is well on the way. Los Angeles and all of us feel blessed with his presence here in March. Advertisements and PR are getting busy. News on the fund-raiser will be in the next newsletter. Thanks also go to the Board members who support us so totally and to the chapters who sent enthusiastic encouragement.

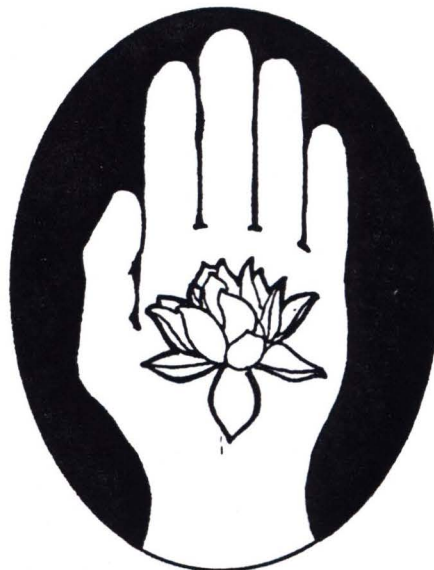
Jenny Hoang

Providence, Rhode Island

The second meeting this fall of the Providence Chapter of the BPF was held in Providence November 19. Five persons were in attendance from Cumberland and Providence. This was a particularly productive meeting and several decisions were made regarding the immediate and long-term focus of the chapter.

Saturday, December 15 was chosen as a day of working together at the Peace Pagoda being built in Leverett, MA. There is a possibility that several folks will stay over night and return the next day.

Wed., Dec. 19 is the fourth anniversary of the World Peace Vigil on Westminster Mall that has been sponsored and maintained, come rain, wind, sleet or snow, by the



Providence Mobilization for Survival every Wed. 12 noon to 1 pm. The Providence BPF fully endorses this action and asks that you join us as we sit in public at the vigil and serve a simple, free meal of apples and tea.

It was agreed that there was a need for greater study of the principles and dynamics of nonviolent social change and to that end it was decided that after the holidays, on Monday nights, study groups would be formed with the ultimate purpose of promoting a greater understanding of the principles and tactics of nonviolent social change than has so far been exhibited by organizations using these methods.

[Reprinted from Newsletter #8 of the Providence BPF.]

Australian BPF

I have just returned to Sydney from Bodhi Farm, where, among other things, I worked with Ian Gaillard and Gai Longmuir in getting our next Australian BPF newsletter together.

You might have noticed that our newsletter here appears rather infrequently. Part of our problem has been that the few members at the Farm live 600 miles north of the handful of us in Sydney.

In the past year the BPF has been involved in raising money for a Land Fund for the Bundjalung Peoples of the north coast; in April we marched (about 30 people, not all from the Zen tradition) in a Disarmament rally in Sydney; did zazen by a war memorial in the centre of the city near the French Consulate, after the third nuclear test this year in June by France in the South Pacific; and held a market-stall to raise funds for the newsletter and future projects, one of which is the printing of a series of special edition prints of poems by Gary Snyder, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Nanao Sakaki.

Gassho,
Iain Ramage

Letters

Dear Editor,

This summer I was lucky enough to stay at Plum Village in France where Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Zen teacher, holds a month-long retreat in the summer. In attendance were more than 100 people, predominantly Vietnamese who live in France, five or six Americans, and a few Nederlanders. What I would like to share is some of the issues that came up for me rather than a straight description of the retreat.

I arrived at Plum Village with much baggage of cynicism and near-despair, wondering if my long years of zen practice had been a dead end, viewing what I felt to be the collapse of many or nearly all the zen communities in the US. Although I still had underlying faith, I perceived most of the Americans who had practiced formal zen training for ten years or more, myself included, had some major failing either in their ability to deal with their personal lives or with communication/interaction skills. Most zen teachers, more poignantly, have had failings over use of power or in inappropriate relationships with their students. What I wondered was if this zen training we were trying to adopt from the very different cultures of the Far East could really address the kinds of social and emotional disease we have in our high-paced Occidental culture. Someone at Plum Village made the analogy that because of our diet and lifestyle we encounter a high rate of contracting cancer and heart disease in the West; could we not also have mental/emotional disturbances not encountered in the cultures in which Buddhism has previously been practiced? The paradigms of our culture, with Freud and capitalism, are quite different than those of Japan, Tibet, China, Burma, etc.

Consequently, how can we actually allow and induce our training to cover all aspects of our life—singularly and collectively—and, especially, to develop the aspects other traditions have not addressed? How can we arrange the details of our own lives to allow such training to be developed on our "own recognizance," rather than because the community with which we practice obliges us to do so? How can we start and nurture communities which can create a context in which we can train completely and bring awareness to all aspects of our lives—singularly and collectively? How can we engage these communities realistically in peace work and address the suffering of our brothers and sisters both locally and globally?

I am interested in working on these issues with as many people as possible. I am interested in beginning discussions thereupon. After looking at these issues while at Plum Village, I wish to form my daily life in such a way as to give myself peace, my family, neighbors and friends, and also give my city, state, nation and world peace. I invite each of you to respond to these issues.

Plum Village as an example of such a way to practice has refreshed me.

Gratefully,

Judith Gilbert
381 Oak St.
San Francisco, CA 94102

[The following letter was received in response to the letter from David Hartman which was printed in the Oct. BPF Newsletter.]

Dear David,

Seeing your letter brought to me great joy and I was moved by your struggles and convictions. A member of this sangha made the comment that your efforts were like a beacon of light in the darkness that prevails in South Africa.

As true as this is, on one level, we must be careful. As soon as we say "light" we stand in opposition to "dark" and fall into the same duality that creates racial prejudice; black vs. white and wars; us vs. them.

As you know the Buddha taught that all beings are whole and complete. And taught the way for all beings to wake up to this, to realize one's True Nature. The Buddha (literally Awakened One) pointed the way. And yet it is up to all to realize this. To wake up so as to see through this false notion of duality/separation and all of the pain and suffering it causes.

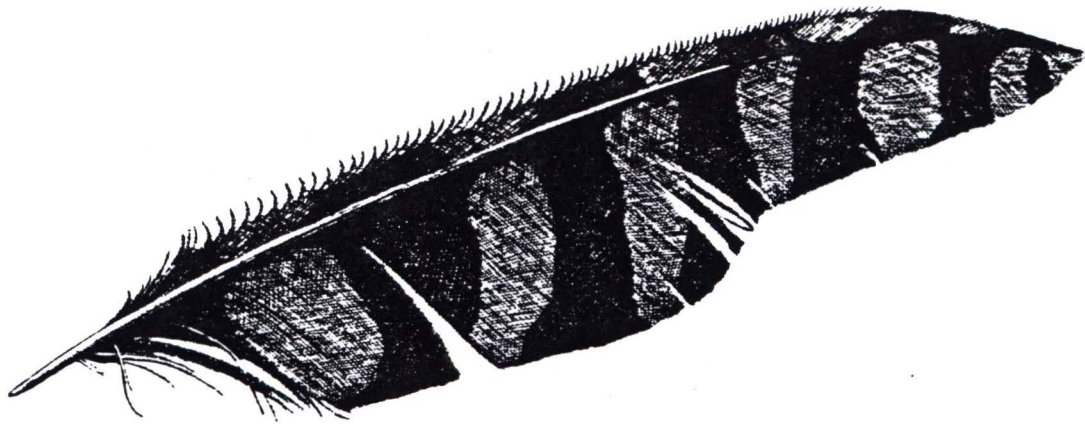
"The way stands clean and undisguised" and we must only enter, or return to the "home" we never really left. To manifest this in our daily life is to see that the whole world is nothing but one large gate by which we can enter. Every moment of our practice/life gives us this opportunity; "engaged Buddhism" at its most basic level.

I'm sure the above chatter wouldn't impress the government officials you must face but please know that you have all of my support and respect in and for your efforts.

A bow in gratitude,

Zenson Gifford
Toronto





Coyote Man, Mr. President and the Gunfighters

Mr. President was fascinated by gunfighters. Expert gunfighters were invited to his White House, three thousand of them, treated like guests in the house. Day and night they practiced fast-draw and shootouts in his presence until the dead and wounded men numbered more than a hundred a year.

The senator from the Great Basin was troubled by this, and summoning his aides, said, "I'll give a basket of turquoise and a truckload of compost to any man who can reason with Mr. President and make him give up these gunfights!" "Coyote Man is the one who can do it!" said his aides.

Pretty soon Coyote Man turned up, but he refused the turquoise, saying "If Mr. President should get angry, I might go to jail. What could I do with turquoise then? But if I do persuade him, you'll owe me a million wild ducks."

"The first problem" said the Senator, "is that the President refuses to see anybody but gunfighters." "Fine!" said Coyote Man, "I'm good with guns."

"But the kind of people the President receives," said the Senator, "all wear starched uniforms and have shaved cheeks; they glare fiercely, and speak in staccato sentences about ballistics and tactical deployment. Men like that he loves! If you go in to see him in your overalls you'd be wrong from the start."

"I'll get me the suit of a gunfighter" said Coyote Man. After a couple of days he had his outfit ready and arranged an appointment with the President. The guards had their big magnum revolvers on Coyote Man as he entered calm and soft. "Now that you got the Senator to get you an appointment, what do you think you can tell me?" said the President.

"I heard Mr. President likes gunfighting and so I have come to demonstrate my skill."

"What's so special about your skill?" asked the President? "My shooting strikes and kills at every shot, and doesn't miss at nine hundred miles," said Coyote Man.

Mr. President was pleased. "I'd like to see you shoot it out." Coyote Man said, "He who draws the revolver

plucks out emptiness, teases on with hopes of dominance. Leaves last, arrives first. Allow me to show my capacity."

The President spent a week checking out his gunfighters. A dozen died or were wounded in the trials. The survivors were instructed to appear on the lawn and Mr. President sent for Coyote Man.

"Today let's see you reach for the gun with these fine officers. What will you shoot? A long or a short barrel?"

"I'll use any type," said Coyote Man. "It happens I have three revolvers. You tell me which to use—but first I'll explain them."

"Let's hear about your three revolvers," said Mr. President.

"There is the revolver of the universe, the revolver of mankind, and the revolver of state."

"What is the revolver of the universe?" asked the President. —"The revolver of the universe? The Milky Way is its grip, the solar winds, the barrel. Its bullets are stars, it sights by the beams of pulsars. It spits out planets and bathes them, spinning, in heat and light. The ninety-two elements aim it; the secrets of fusion fire it. Wield it, and countless beings leap into life and dance through the void. Conceal it, and whole galaxies rush into nothingness. When this revolver is manifested the whole earth flourishes, the skies clear, the rivers sing, the gardens are full of squash and corn, the high plains rich with Bison. This is the revolver of the cosmos."

The President was at an utter loss. "So what is the revolver of mankind?"

"The revolver of mankind? The twelve races are the grip; the three languages, the barrel. Forged in the Pliocene, finished in the Pleistocene, decorated with civilization, it aims for knowledge and beauty. The cylinder is the rise and fall of nations, the bullets are countless men and women who have pierced through ignorance and old habits, and revealed the shining mirror of true nature. It takes its model from life itself, and

(continued on p. 12)

Engaged Buddhism Across the Atlantic

On our trip to Europe, Anne Aitken and I went by train to southern France for a visit with the Vietnamese Zen Buddhist teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh and his community, Plum Village.

The Upper Hamlet of Plum Village has a central two-story farm building that is renovated to provide an office for Sister Phuong, a key person in the community organization and social welfare program of the Village. This building also has cooking, dining, and toilet facilities and bedrooms, including one for Thich Nhat Hanh when he is here (usually he is at his retreat many miles away).

There are other old buildings nearby, some of them, like the dojo, completely renovated, others, which will serve as additional bedrooms, in process of renovation. The land is flat, except for a pretty valley, but the soil is poor, and there is no agricultural development.

The Lower Hamlet is about two miles away, and consists of several acres of bottom land, with more modern farm buildings that have been renovated as a residence for the rest of the Plum Village family. This is a small group consisting of an older Tiep Tien Brother, his younger wife and their three children, plus one additional young man. The community expects to add other permanent residents, as soon as income from farm projects can support them.

The work of the Plum Village community is in four parts. (1) The task of Sister Phuong is to carry forward the program of the Delegation of the United Church of Vietnam. It is directly concerned with the suffering of Buddhist monks and nuns and others in Vietnam—writers, artists, musicians, teachers, and their families, particularly children, who are especially vulnerable to disease and malnutrition. The Delegation is also concerned about Vietnamese refugees in Europe and elsewhere. Sister Phuong works closely with Amnesty International, Pen Club International, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and other human rights organizations, and is a genius in encouraging the development of a decentralized network of support for the work, both within and outside the European Vietnamese community.

(2) The family in the Lower Hamlet is devoted to supporting the community by growing herbs which are used in Chinese and Southeast Asian restaurants. These are cultivated in long, plastic-covered greenhouses.

(3) The plum tree orchard in the Lower Hamlet, which gives the community its name, consists of several thousand neatly pruned trees, all about four feet high, which will begin bearing in another four years or so. The community plans to sell the crops and use the money for the support of its social welfare programs, particularly child welfare in the Third World. Vietnamese refugees from all over Europe, including children, have contributed small amounts each to underwrite the cost of planting a single tree, and then pledged even smaller amounts for the upkeep of their tree. Thus, although the resident

community at Plum Village is very small, a large number of people have invested in its activities.

(4) The summer program from July 15 to August 15 is designed to provide a retreat for people whom Thich Nhat Hanh calls "social workers." These are not social workers in the professional sense, but rather people who are devoting spare time and energy to refugee children, new refugee families, and to correspondence with Vietnamese people still in camps in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong and with relatives and friends remaining in Vietnam.

People who live in the highly-charged atmosphere of large European cities, spending their lives in the menial jobs that are the usual lot of refugees, and then devoting all their spare time to teaching children Vietnamese language and culture, visiting new refugee families, or writing many letters, are ready for a month of retreat once a year. This summer program consists of zazen, Dharma talks by Thich Nhat Hanh, interviews with him, plus a lot of work. I gather that most of the dormitory construction and new planting is done during this month. Most of the participants are Vietnamese, though a few are European.

In addition, Thich Nhat Hanh has his own bookbinding project at his retreat; the publishing house owned by the Delegation, which brings out Thich Nhat Hanh's books and the books of other Vietnamese writers, provides income for the Delegation program.

Les Patates Douces is another center connected with Thich Nhat Hanh, located in a mountainous area much nearer to Paris than Plum Village. I gather that there is a small residential group there, with a garden. In Paris, a family consisting of a mother and two grown children supervises the Les Patates Douces program, and coordinates "social work" in the city.

All of this is grounded in zazen, and the leaders are Sisters or Brothers in the Tiep Hien Order. Total time spent in zazen each day during the summer retreat is less than during Japanese Zen sesshins. However, it is regularly scheduled each day, and the added practices of "walking meditation" and moment-by-moment awareness give the training a balance and richness that is very appealing.

We spent two nights with the Plum Village community and then drove back to Paris with Thich Nhat Hanh and Sister Phuong. That night we slept at the apartment of Mme. Truong and her son and daughter, the Patates Douces family, and then next day took the train to Amsterdam for the conference.

The two experiences of being with a Vietnamese family, first at Plum Village, and then in Paris, were very heart-warming for Anne and me. All the people that we met had suffered great tribulations, loss of their homeland, loss of loved ones, escape by small boat, and in some cases prison, yet they were cheerful and generous, notably supportive of each other. We learned in a very deep way what Thich Nhat Hanh means by "Engaged Buddhism."

After France we went to Amsterdam for a conference titled "Buddhism in Action." It was held at Medatatie Centrum de Kosmos, a kind of New Age center that sponsors a variety of classes and workshops, and operates a vegetarian restaurant and an occult bookstore. About seventy-five people attended the sessions which extended from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon.



Marc Gripman

Thich Nhat Hanh and I were the main resource people, but Nico Tydeman of Kosmos and Jim Forest of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation had important roles as facilitators. All of us spoke at an introductory session Friday evening. Over the next two days both Thich Nhat Hanh and I led introductory sessions of zazen. I gave one talk on the Hua-yen and another on the Four Vows, both of them directed as best I could to the application of practice in the world. Thich Nhat Hanh gave talks that were very practical. He opened one of them with a gatha on the importance of sitting with the consciousness that one is sitting beneath the bodhi tree. "Be aware," he said, "that there is no inside nor outside, and that 'this is this way because that is that way'...Zazen is not a battle between good and evil. Simple, bare awareness of anger is the way to deal with anger. Then anger combines with other emotions and you are transformed. Be aware of that change. You cannot push yourself to be compassionate. Remember that Buddha and Mara are old friends." I believe that the full transcript of the entire conference will be published.

On to England—I spoke at two Zen groups, one of them connected with the Zen Center of Los Angeles, and the other with the Japanese Rinzai monastery Ryutakuji, and its abbot, Suzuki Sochu Roshi. I met also with the London contingent of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship in an informal gathering one afternoon. My impression is that this organization is taking root very well. So far it is aware of the importance of concerning Buddhists with the welfare of all species, but as coincidentally a "Buddhist Ecology Network" has developed in England, it is likely that this concern will be carried forth in two separate but cognate organizations. David Arnott is the key person in the BBPF, serving as secretary of the organization, and as editor of the exemplary newsletter, Down by the Riverside, and he is now concerning himself with delegating responsibilities so that the organization can become broadly based.

To conclude: During the Amsterdam conference and later I stressed the importance of a religious practice as the ground for peace work, as did Thich Nhat Hanh, and practice was also stressed by participants in the various meeting in our discussion periods. At the same time, I returned from the trip more than ever committed to Engaged Buddhism, and more hopeful that Buddhists who have been suspicious of political action can come to understand that engagement need not mean adversarial opposition.

The Buddha did not remain under the bodhi tree, and neither does Mother Theresa neglect her prayers. Prajna and Upaya, wisdom and compassion, practice and application—these are the "head and tail" of religious practice. Stagnation or burnout are the negative results of neglecting one end or the other. The mature cultivation of both head and tail brings the fulfillment we found among members of the community at Plum Village.

Robert Aitken

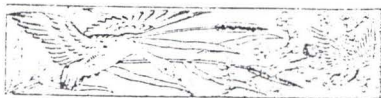
Buddhist Resources for Despairwork

To live in the nuclear age is to live on the brink of time. The arms race, the destruction of the environment, the spread of conflict and oppression...these developments render questionable, for the first time in history, the survival of the human species. They summon us to conscious, nonviolent, collective action, if disaster is to be averted. Yet, while the customary forms of social action—from leafletting to lobbying—appear more necessary than ever, they are also by themselves inadequate. For the dangers confronting us, and the horrors they portend, are of such magnitude as to numb the human psyche, building resistance to the very information we most need to convey and to face.

To overcome this psychological numbness and resistance, a new dimension of social action has emerged. Spreading through writings, conferences and workshops and known by a variety of names—“despairwork,” “interhelp” or simply the “inner” work of social change, it helps us expand our awareness of both the peril and the promise of our time. Tapping our important responses to the current crises, it helps us listen to our pain for the world and transform it into courage, compassion and commitment to act.

What is significant is that Buddhist teachings have been integral to the genesis of this work. While this is not necessarily evident to many who engage in it, the work draws inspiration from central doctrines of the Buddha and a number of the tradition’s meditational practices.

In developing despairwork, I drew on my own Buddhist practice, my doctoral studies in both Buddhist ethics and systems theory, and my experience as a participant-observer with the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, a Buddhist social change movement in Sri Lanka. Although the effectiveness of despairwork depends in no way on acknowledgement of these roots, the teachings of the Buddha have been intrinsic to its unfolding.



The Buddhist sources of despairwork are twofold. One is doctrinal or conceptual, through the interrelated teachings of *dukkha* (suffering), *anicca* (impermanence), *anatta* (no self) and *paticca samuppada* (dependent co-arising). The other is methodological or practical, through the adaptation of Buddhist meditations. Let us see how the teachings function in helping people break through denial and psychic numbing, and transform the experience of pain for our world.

Dukkha

“Suffering is.” It constitutes the First Noble Truth and one of the three marks of existence. The Buddha began not with prescriptions, theories, revelations or

comfort, but empirically with the existential fact of human pain, especially psychological pain. To find our way through the confusion and distress of our time that is where we begin, too. That is what we know most immediately and incontrovertibly.

At the outset of the workshops participants are usually invited to share a recent incident or piece of information which caused them pain for our world. In the safe setting which the group provides, these experiences surface quickly—a child’s nuclear nightmare, the pollution of a nearby river, reports of war or starvation or expiring species of animal life. As participants hear themselves and each other give voice to their social despair, it ceases to appear as a personal morbidity or an idiosyncratic aberration. Its validity and universality become apparent. And because this pain arises from a level deeper than opinions and partisan allegiances, it undercuts our tendency to engage in debate. Argument often serves as an avoidance mechanism, when faced with frightening information, but when the focus is on our feeling response, argument is irrelevant; what emerges is the commonality of our caring. Shared pain for the world becomes the ground on which we rediscover our capacity for compassion and mutual trust.

Anicca

One of the reasons we repress despair is the fear that, if we let ourselves experience it, we will become “stuck” or mired in it. In despairwork, however, as in insight meditation, we experience that “all dhammas are anicca”: all phenomenon, thoughts and feelings are transient. It is only our denial of them that lends permanence to our feelings, and freezes us in relation to our pain for the world. Once brought into the light of conscious awareness, the impacted pain begins to loosen and flow. It holds less terror for us when we experience its dynamic quality, its ebb and flow, as we cease holding it at arm’s length and let it pass through us. As our resistance against it dissolves, we open to wider currents of knowing—currents of connection and caring.

Anatta

Our inner responses to the world’s distress are also blocked by fear that we might fall apart. Prospects of global disaster and knowledge of present destruction and suffering seem too overwhelming for the separate ego to cope with.

If we are but separate, self-existent egos, our pain for the world is hard to credit; there is no reason why we should be experiencing it. If all our drives and desires are essentially motivated by individual needs for pleasure and power; whence come our tears for our fellow-beings; for those unseen and those yet to be born? Are we sick? neurotic? Traditional mainstream Western psychology, being largely ego-based, tends to reduce such distress to private pathology, seeking its cause in personal history and personal maladjustment. This tendency, of course, encourages the repression of

despair, and increases the sense of isolation and craziness we can feel when it breaks through our defenses.

In despairwork, the sharing and validation of our pain for the world—of our co-suffering with it—gives the lie to such reductionism. In the process it reveals that our experiencing does not arise from an isolable, autonomous self so much as from our interaction with the world around us. As we sense the truth of that, experiencing how ever-flowing perceptions, feelings and knowings interweave us into the wider fabric of existence, we cease to fear that we will fall apart. Our defenses and comforts may shatter, but the self is not an object that can break.

Such inklings are close to the Buddha's teaching of *anatta* or no self. Just as the illusion of separate selfhood is seen in the Dharma as a chief obstacle to enlightenment, so also, in the context of despairwork, it constitutes a hindrance to our capacity to deal with our feelings of planetary anguish. When we move beyond that illusion, shedding the need to protect a fragile self from painful information, we move beyond denial, avoidance and numbness as well. The reverse is equally true: the acceptance of our pain for the world validates our interconnectedness and loosens the bars of egocentricity.

Paticca Samuppada

The Buddha's central doctrine of dependent co-arising (*paticca samuppada*) presents us with a view of reality where all is interconnected and interpenetrating—self and other, thought and deed, mind and form. From such a perspective the military, social and environmental dangers that threaten us in this planet-time come from no source external to the human psyche; they are reflections of it. They mirror its fears, greeds and hostilities, just as the psyche itself is conditioned by the institutional structures in which we live. Self and society are interdependent. This understanding is very close to the systems view that emerges from contemporary science, and also to the holographic model of the universe, in which the whole is reflected in each of its parts.

Despairwork is posited on a similar premise or intuition: that each of us, indissolubly and inextricably interconnected with the vaster web of life, is ultimately inseparable from the fate and experience of other beings. In our time of crisis this mutual belonging is most manifest in our inchoate feelings of pain for the world—of suffering on behalf of the whole.

In the workshops, as participants share this kind of suffering, it is valorized as an appropriate and wholesome response to current conditions and, furthermore, named and seen as proof of our interconnectedness. Breaking out of the isolation in which many have harbored their feelings, participants "come home" to their intrinsic mutuality. The sense of home-coming is so vivid that the response is often one of joy, even hilarity. Feelings of pain for the world are not

purged thereby—nor can they be, for each day's news brings fresh signals of distress—but they are taken henceforth as reminders and proof of our interexistence, which turn serves a source for resilience and creative action.

To express this wider, interdependent sense of being, a number of images tend spontaneously to emerge in the course of the work. Participants speak of being as interrelated as the cells in a body, or as neurons in a neural net. Such images are appropriate to the synergy experienced in despairwork. Synergy ("power with"), like the power of neural interactions, springs from openness and responsiveness (response-ability), in contrast to the old hierarchical notion of "power over", which is identified with armor, defenses and invulnerability. The recurrent image of neural network is very close to that of Hua Yen Buddhism. There, in the Jeweled Net of Indra, all beings are seen as nodes in a limitless web; each reflects all the others and, at each node too, intelligence and compassion can co-arise entire.

Conditioned to conceive of ourselves as separate, competitive entities, we need help to sustain and nourish this sense of interconnectedness and the synergistic power it can give us for social action. Certain practices, adopted and adapted in the course of despairwork, provide this assistance. Useful in groups, they can also serve one's ongoing personal discipline. Geared to be used in the course of the activities and encounters of our daily lives, they remind us that we do not need to withdraw from the world, or spend long hours in solitary prayer or meditation, to begin to wake up to the spiritual power within us.

In summary, the concepts from which despairwork is drawn owe a large debt to Buddhist teachings; yet the work hardly depends on Buddhist belief for its efficacy. Other traditions as well offer guidance in moving through the dark of our time and in finding, through the acknowledgement and sharing of our pain for the world, the power to redeem it. It is, perhaps, the distinctive gift of the Buddha that the insights and methods he offered are so universally applicable. Refusing to be drawn into debates on the correctness of differing views and opinions, he focused, like a physician, on one fact above all—that there is suffering. Because his teachings pre-eminently address that fact, they remain ever relevant and can nourish other traditions, other societies.



Joanna Macy

Overview of U.S. Buddhism (continued from p. 1)

University between 1950 and 1958 and the "Beat Zen" fad in the late 50's led to a reawakening of interest among intellectuals and inspired several future leaders of American Buddhism to go to Japan and other places in Asia to study Buddhism and practice meditation.

In the middle 50's and early 60's, several Zen centers were established in scattered areas of the U.S. including Chicago, San Francisco, Cambridge and Rochester. During the same period, Rissho Koseikai and Nichiren Shoshu of America, both lay-oriented sub-sects of the Nichiren sect, opened branches in Southern California.

During the 1960's and through the 1970's, Theravada, Vajrayana, Korean and Chinese Buddhism began attracting large numbers of American students and scholars. And in the 1970's and into the 1980's, the Indochinese refugees brought their own unique forms of Buddhism with them but remained largely insulated from the larger society in their ethnic groupings.

American Buddhism in the 1980's

There are many Buddhist groups and organizations in the U.S. In fact the World Fellowship of Buddhists lists 58 separate Buddhist organizations in the U.S., the largest number for any country. The Buddhist Peace Fellowship has a partial listing of 308 Buddhist groups in the U.S. Practically all existing forms of Buddhism in the world are represented as well as new eclectic and nondenominational forms of Buddhism.

As a result of the indeterminate organizational structure of most Buddhist groups, exact figures for the number of Buddhists in the U.S. are impossible to obtain. Estimates run anywhere from 300,000 to 500,000. The greatest concentration of Buddhists is on the West Coast and in Hawaii with the East Coast ranking next.

Non-Asian Buddhists tend to be in the 21-35 age range, male, single, Caucasian, from Jewish or Catholic backgrounds, college-educated, and share a sense of uprootedness.

Asian Buddhists tend to be either under 17 or over 35 with relatively few teenagers or young adults showing interest. In further contrast to the non-Asian Buddhists, they are married, born into the Buddhist tradition, less educated and very much rooted in their families and ethnic communities.

Although the number of Buddhists continues to grow rapidly, Buddhists have wielded very little power or influence in American society. The main reason for this phenomenon is that American Buddhists have rarely attempted to form a common organization, much less try to establish contact or engage in some form of cooperative effort. There has been little communication between Asian and Caucasian groups, between Japanese and Chinese groups, between Nichiren and Jodo groups, and even between Zen and Zen groups. The few attempts that have been made to get different Buddhist groups together have usually ended in misunderstandings and power struggles.

Buddhist Peacemaking in the U.S.

Peacemaking efforts by Buddhists have been largely initiated and conducted by individuals. It is sad that most of the Buddhist priests and laity consider "peace" beyond one's own peace of mind to be a dangerous and Communist-inspired issue and prefer not to discuss it.

Asian Buddhists are insecure as ethnic minorities and are always trying to prove their loyalty to the government. They consider their temples to be mausoleums for the family remains and social centers for their ethnic group. Their discomfort with both Caucasians and other Asian ethnic groups runs very deep.

Non-Asian Buddhists tend to be young and "floating", escaping from their past associations and searching for new directions. They have little time and energy to devote to interests outside of their immediate needs.

Despite the inherent difficulties in organizing a Buddhist peace movement, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship has been successful in bringing together American Buddhists from many traditions to respond with wisdom and compassion to the sufferings around the world caused by political, social and ecological ignorance. Founded in 1978, BPF also has affiliate chapters in England and Australia and is in close contact with many European and Asian Buddhists who are committed to world peace.

BPF members can often be seen conducting meditation vigils in front of military installations and government facilities, mobilizing the "peace vote", writing letters of concern to congressmen and other public officials, distributing written materials on "engaged Buddhism" to the public, training Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike in ways to convert despair into empowerment and compassionate action, establishing meditation halls in prisons, and actively opposing political oppression and human rights violations around the world.

Another Buddhist organization which is widely known and respected for its efforts for peace is Nipponzan Myohoji, another subsect of the Nichiren sect. Its monks and nuns are often seen chanting and beating their drums at peace demonstrations around the U.S. and also in Europe.

Some of the larger, more established Buddhist organizations have initiated noteworthy projects of social significance in recent years. A few that come to mind are the Indochinese refugee resettlement program headed by the Sino-American Buddhist Association, the Cambodian relief fund of the Buddhist Churches of America (Jodo Shin), and the animal protection campaign by the Buddhists Concerned for Animals which is headquartered at the San Francisco Zen Center. It should be noted that many of the more active participants in these activist projects are BPF members.

Ryo Imamura

[Editor's note: This paper was delivered on December 4, 1984, at the Second International Symposium on Buddhism and Leadership For Peace held at Tokyo, Japan.]



Nichidatsu Fujii

This January, Nichidatsu Fujii died. He was born on August 6, 1885, in a small Japanese village. At the age of 19, he became a Nichiren Buddhist monk—although he studied with other schools of Buddhism as well, including Jodo and Zen. In 1916, he began the work which grew into Nipponzan Myohoji (the Japan Buddha Sangha).

Fujii took the precept of non-killing to be fundamental, and looked to find it in the promise of the Buddha contained in the Lotus Sutra: "I will leave this good medicine here. Take it, and fear not that it might not cure the illness." To Fujii, the illness was an age in decay, a world on the verge of destruction. The medicine was contained in the Odaimoku, "Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo," which he chanted while beating a hand drum.

This meant more than just simple recitation, or a magical formula for peace. The practice is to "reveal the Buddha realm of one's mind." The object of worship is within. In a time of crisis, Fujii believed that this practice must be made public; to abandon one's self to create a spiritual civilization. "To lay down this body of ours to relieve people is to become the Buddha." By walking through the world, and erecting stupas dedicated to peace the Sangha took this teaching to the front edge of where people are struggling.

In 1933, this work took him to Mahatma Gandhi. "I was surprised when I saw pictures of Gandhiji on the salt march or spinning yarn. Could such a movement defeat the organized structure of a modern state and create another world? A world of nonviolence? I resolved immediately to go to India." Fujii found a deep relationship with Gandhi, and his prayers became part of the ashram at Wardha.

After the second world war, Fujii began the work of erecting stupas that would embody his prayers for peace.

He recalled that stupas were once at the center of Buddhist culture, and wanted them to serve as a visible foundation for a modern world. There are now over 60 peace pagodas throughout the world, including one under construction in Massachusetts.

Although Fujii had long been close to Theravada Buddhists in Sri Lanka, and was influential among Asian Buddhist peace workers, his work among Americans only recently began. In 1967, the Sangha joined the Continental Walk and their drums became a familiar sound on many walks and at peace events. It was with Native Americans, however, that he found a deep affinity.

Fujii saw the spirituality of the Indian people as something that could be at the center of nonviolent change. "We have found them to be those with whom we can unite through our religious beliefs of peace. The sufferings of these people during the past 180 years, and their sufferings today, are a lesson we must all learn so that humankind may live peacefully. This is sacrifice."

Monks and nuns joined Native people on various walks, and in areas of struggle where their prayers (and presence) could offer support. A Buddhist temple was established at D-Q University—an Indian controlled school near Davis, California where Dennis Banks was chancellor. Banks travelled with the Sangha in Japan and India, and pointed to them as an example of what respect and religious work could mean.

In 1981 Fujii challenged religious workers to recognize that "the time has come. The time has come when we can no longer contain the urge to do anything but rush out of our houses. The time has come to look up to heaven, prostrate ourselves to earth, voice our grief, and share it with everyone." That challenge remains.

Arnold Erickson



FOR National Council

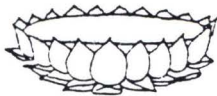
Immediate Past BPF president Ryo Imamura will be running for the FOR National Council in the Spring as the nominee of BPF. If he is elected, he will be the first non-Judeo-Christian member to serve on the FOR National Council in its 70 year history. If you are an FOR member, be sure to cast your ballot in the upcoming elections.



BPF Board Elections

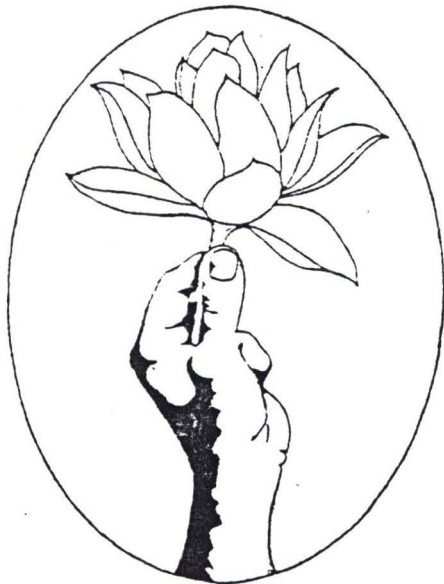
After a lengthy process of information-gathering, nominations, several declinations, more nominations, enough acceptances, and finally polling the membership, three BPF members were newly elected to the BPF National Board—Ruth Klein, Kenryu Tsuji and Steve Walker. They will join incumbents Fred Eppsteiner, Jenny Hoang and Catherine Parker in forming the 1985 BPF National Board.

The other two candidates—Alfred Bloom and Richard Clarke—also received sizeable numbers of votes and came very close to being elected. About 30% of the total membership participated in the voting.



Sulak Sivaraksa Freed

We are very happy to report that the charges by the Thai government against Sulak Sivaraksa, progressive Thai Buddhist teacher and member of the BPF International Advisory Board, have been dropped. The latest action was taken as the direct result of effective measures by the Thai people and appeals from the international community.



Coyote Man (continued from p. 5)

trusts in the four seasons. Its secret power is the delight of the mind. Once grasped it brings harmony and peace to the planet; like a thunderbolt it destroys exploiters, and dictators crumble like sand. This is the revolver of mankind."

The President said in a low voice, "What is the revolver of the State?"

"The revolver of the State! It's used by men in starched uniforms with shaved chins who glare fiercely and speak in staccato sentences about ballistics and tactical deployment. On top it blows out brains and splinters neckbones; underneath it splits out livers and lungs. Those who use this revolver are no different from fighting cocks—any morning they may be dead or in jail. They are of no use in the councils of mankind. Now you occupy the office of Mr. President, and yet you show this fondness for gunfighters. I think it is rather unworthy of you."

Mr. President took Coyote Man to the dining room and the waiter brought lunch. But Mr. President just paced around the room. "Hey!" said Coyote Man, "Eat your lunch! The affair of the gunfighters is over and finished!"

After that Mr. President didn't come out of the Oval Room for three months. All his gunfighters secretly took off their uniforms and sneaked away, back to the businesses and offices in various towns around the land from which they had come.

(With a deep bow of gratitude to Chuang-Tzu)

Gary Snyder

[This is based on Chuang-Tzu's parable "A Discourse on Swords," 3rd century B.C.]



From the BPF Office

Born into a world that already contained atomic weapons and vast communication networks of TV & radio, I grew up in Montana with a sense of the beauty and fragility of this marvelous web of life. Taking up the practice of Zen in my late teens, with deep faith that easing suffering and bringing peace is embedded in the details of one's daily life, I have attempted to practice within the context of the circumstances of my life as an American, as a single parent, and as a woman. In accepting & taking on the staff position of BPF I will keep the trust that Patrick McMahon, my sterling predecessor, and all of you place in me to take very good care of the details of the office. I personally benefit & derive satisfaction from the opportunity to tangibly engage in and explore with people of many traditions & backgrounds the effort to respond directly to suffering from a Buddhist perspective.

I look forward to being in touch with you.

Judith Gilbert

Peace & Justice are Inseparable

Buddhism is a way of life founded on the principle of nonviolence and many Buddhist practices are designed to promote sensitivity and responsiveness to sentient beings around us. In addition to directions on individual self-cultivation and discipline, Gautama Buddha also left guidelines for the development of just social institutions. He appears in many dialogues in the Pali Canon to have been as interested in justice and social welfare as in personal integrity and inner peace. In fact, there is evidence to indicate that Gautama Buddha saw individual serenity and social concord as inseparable aspects of the single goal of universal peace. This article will focus on three central issues: the improvement of society through the improvement of individuals; the development of just social institutions; and the responsibility of the Sangha to promote a more healthy society.

In "The Sigala Homily," dialogue 31 in Dialogues of the Buddha, a householder's son named Sigala vows just before his father's death to pay respects daily to the six cardinal directions. Encouraging young Sigala to keep his vow, the Buddha suggests that the worship of the six directions can be transformed from a mere ritual into a complete way of life for the layman. This transformation is achieved by letting each of the six directions be represented by a basic social relationship. East, south, west, north, down and up are represented by the relationships of the individual with his or her parents, teachers, spouse, friends, employees and religious leaders. So, in addition to bowing towards the east every morning in ritual fashion, Sigala is encouraged to honour the east all day long by honouring his parents who symbolize the east. And the best way to honour his parents is by keeping his own conduct morally pure, thereby protecting the family's reputation. In a similar way, Sigala is to honour the south by honouring his teachers through being attentive and eager to learn and by applying what he has learned from them to the best of his ability. The specific details that the Buddha outlines on how best to show respect to parents, teachers, spouse, friends, employees and religious leaders are too numerous to recount here, but the general idea is evidently to enter into each of our social relationships with the highest level of integrity and care for and sensitivity towards the other individuals that we encounter during the day. In each of our relationships, the Buddha tells Sigala, we should take special care to avoid acting out of favouritism, hostility, stupidity and fear, for actions founded on these four motivations can produce results that are destructive both to social and to individual well-being. And so in the Buddha's advice to Sigala the idea emerges that social peace is to be developed partly through the simple conscientiousness of each individual in society as he or she goes about the daily routine.

The second aspect of universal peace is discussed in dialogue 26 of the Dialogues. Here the basic argument is

that every social evil is rooted in the failure of those who have governmental power to ensure that disadvantaged members of society receive adequate food, shelter, education and medical treatment. Social harmony depends on justice in the form of a fair distribution of basic material needs. Achieving this fair distribution is partly the responsibility of individuals, who should learn to be content with material simplicity, but it is mostly the responsibility of government to form institutions that can implement such a fair distribution. Since personal tranquillity is greatly facilitated by a socially harmonious environment, the seeker of tranquillity best helps himself by helping the society in which he lives to develop just institutions.

The above point is made even more forcibly in the conversation with Lohicca, recorded in dialogue 12 of the Dialogues. Here the Buddha argues that if a king were to acquire wealth and then not share it with those in need, he would be a malicious king and would fall far short of carrying out his natural regal duties. Similarly, if a wise person should fail to share his wisdom, he too would be malicious and would fall short of carrying out the natural duties of a sage. To be in a position to help someone in need but to refuse to help is morally equivalent to hindering, just as to be in a position to save a drowning man but to refuse to do so is morally equivalent to murder. Thus a person who has gained from the benefits of personal religious discipline and practice has a natural duty to share the fruits of that discipline by freely offering instruction, by reflecting on the most moral courses of action for governments to pursue in given situations and then by making the results of those reflections available to governmental powers so as to encourage governments always to implement morally sound policies.

The single most important criterion of moral soundness is contained in the Buddha's frequently repeated encouragement to his followers to "lay the club and sword aside, and spurning rough behavior, to dwell full of mercy, to be compassionate and kind to all creatures that have life." It is not by any means always easy to know in particular situations which course of action will be most merciful to all creatures that have life. Discerning the most moral course in a concrete situation requires considerable reflection. It seems clear, however, that the founder of the Sangha held the wish that the individual members of the Sangha strive first for self-cultivation so as to reach a maximum level of maturity in judgement, then to reflect on the particular social situations in which they might find themselves, and then to share the fruits of that reflection with society at large. Finally, it would appear that our chief social duty as a Sangha is to follow the Buddha's lead in acting as a living example, for all others to see, of the fulfillment that comes of being a person of peace.

Richard Hayes
Zen Buddhist Temple—Toronto

Legislative Alert

LIMBERING UP FOR THE 99th CONGRESS: Traditionally Congress does not really settle down to business until mid February. The president submits his overall budget requests for Fiscal Year 1986 on Feb. 4, and Congress subsequently recesses from Feb. 8-16. Congress will then stay in session until Easter, in April. During January and February, party caucuses will be held to assign members to committees and subcommittees, and to elect their chairmen.

Since Congress did not work in November and December, it is important to let Congress-people know of your concerns now, and that you will be monitoring their votes. Communication at this early stage is critical to the long-term legislative process by helping to lay the groundwork for later lobbying on specific issues as they come up for votes. (As someone remarked, it takes 15 letters to get their attention, 15 letters to get understanding, and 15 more to get action on an issue. This is no time for writer's cramp!)

ACTION: As Congresspeople will be working in their home districts during recess, this is a good time to ask them to 1) freeze (at last year's level) or reduce military spending. This would also demonstrate their sincerity about reducing the deficit; 2) oppose any cuts for programs serving low-income people or so-called freezes on such programs if not adjusted for inflation.

THE ARMS CONTROL PROCESS: Preparations for lobbying on major issues are already underway. The top three priorities among arms control organizations for 1985 are:

1) Stopping production of the MX missile. As it now stands, no new missiles can be built until both houses vote next March to authorize and appropriate funds, viz., \$1.5 billion for the production of 21 missiles. Opponents of the MX have to win only one of these four votes to stop production.

2) Preventing an arms race in space by extending the 5-month moratorium (ending Mar. 1) on anti-satellite weapons testing, and reducing to the lowest possible level the funding for the Strategic Defense Initiative--the so-called Star Wars Program.

3) Promoting a Comprehensive Test Ban. Other issues under fire will be the prevention of binary nerve gas production, promoting efforts to negotiate and ratify arms control agreements on space weapons, strategic arms, and intermediate range nuclear weapons, and preserving existing treaties and their provisions, such as the ABM Treaty and the SALT limits.

ACTION: Urge your Congresspeople to ensure that priorities within the military be set to enhance nuclear "stability" by supporting the above priorities and to continue to resist the president's bid to begin production of binary gas weapons.

LETTER-WRITING AID: Write to The Council For a Livable World (100 Maryland Ave. N.E., Wash. D.C., 20002) for their 1985 Arms Control and Military Budget Schedule for Congress, listing the dates of key events in the legislative calendar. (Or call: (202) 543-4100).

CENTRAL AMERICA -- The Agenda for March: Aspects of U.S. policy in the region will be debated and voted upon by Congress after the administration submits its FY 1986 Foreign Aid Bill covering military and economic aid requests for Central America. Issues will include debate on elections for the Constituent Assembly taking place in El Salvador (the results will maintain or destroy Congress-supported Duarte's image of being in control, rather than the military, and hence will affect funding levels); controversy over the new aid requests for the region; and the likely renewal of large-scale military maneuvers in the region.

NICARAGUA: Feb. 28 is the earliest date on which the President can request Congress to reconsider and overturn the prohibition on further covert aid for military operations against Nicaragua. Several months ago, President Reagan announced a media campaign to win over the American public for his policies. Now, following the pull-out from World Court jurisdiction and the breaking off of bilateral discussions with Nicaragua, Reagan has implied that Iran, Libya, and the PLO have been aiding the Nicaraguan government and suggested that Central America may now be subject to terrorism like that of the Middle East. Nicaragua claims that only trade is being negotiated with Iran--the exchange of sugar for oil. His speech followed signals from high-ranking members of the Republican controlled Senate that renewal of Reagan's covert aid policy is unlikely when the current ban is reconsidered in early March.

ACTION: 1) Urge Congress to maintain the ban on aid to the Contras, and to press the administration to accept World Court jurisdiction on the mining of Nicaragua's harbors. 2) Oppose the regional military escalation threatening Nicaragua; Challenge the use of military aid for Costa Rica and Guatemala (which has received no aid since 1977); 3) Oppose further military buildup in Honduras by cutting Military Construction Authorization and Appropriations Bills and by cutting back or altogether eliminating military exercises and training maneuvers.

NEW! SOUTH AFRICA HOTLINE (202) 546-0408: The Anti-Apartheid Action Hotline is a service of the Washington Office on Africa, funded by the Lutheran World Ministry. This office is the research and legislative arm of the Free South Africa Movement, a nationwide direct action campaign coordinated by TransAfrica, the Black American Lobby for Africa and the Caribbean.

Until their campaign of demonstrations and arrests in protest of the racist regime began in late November, TransAfrica was getting no response from the administration. Condemnation by South African Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Bishop Desmond Tutu of "constructive engagement" elicited Reagan's denouncement of apartheid, but no change in his policy of collaboration with the South African government. However, 35 conservative Republicans have stated their support for divestment and sanctions. Upcoming legislation will reintroduce: 1) no new corporate investment in South Africa; 2) no U.S. bank loans to the Government or its agencies; 3) no importation of Krugers into the U.S. Other legislation will control exports to the South African military and police and ban all computer sales.

ACTION: 1) Insist that Capitol Hill's anti-apartheid rhetoric be translated into legislation to immediately end U.S. complicity in the terrorism of apartheid. For more information on other legislation, on South Africa, and on citizen support of anti-apartheid actions, contact the Washington Office on Africa (202) 546-7961.

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- Los Angeles BPF
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Smarden, Nr. Ashford, Kent
England

Engaged Buddhism Book

The BPF book on engaged Buddhism, The Path of Compassion, has been expanded and should be in print by April. See the next newsletter for price and ordering information.

Join Buddhist Peace Fellowship!

The BPF cannot survive without your support! Please join, subscribe, and if possible donate to our work. See below for membership information.

Contribute to BPF Newsletter

The BPF *Newsletter* welcomes contributions—chapter news, news notes, letters, articles and graphics. Please be concise and keep longer articles under 800 words. News items should be one or two paragraphs and ready to print. Manuscripts should be *typed and double-spaced*. If you are submitting a poem or article, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Send to BPF Newsletter, Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704.

This issue was edited by Fred Eppsteiner and produced by Kent Johnson, Steve Walker, Michael Brackney and Sara Oechsli.

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

To join, please read and complete this card, both sides.

I affirm the principles of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and want to be a member. My signature attests to my commitment.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Though no contribution is required for membership, BPF relies on members' support and suggests a minimum annual donation of \$10.00 U.S. residents, \$15.00 overseas. Please make checks payable to BPF. (Unless, for U.S. residents, you wish to make your contribution deductible for income tax purposes: then make the check payable to "FOR" and note "Donation to BPF" elsewhere on the check.)

I am enclosing a contribution of \$_____ to support BPF's work.

I don't wish to be a member, but I would like to receive the Newsletter. I'm enclosing \$10.00 for a one-year subscription.

Name _____ **Phone** () _____

Street or P.O. Box _____

City, State, Country, Zip _____

Buddhist Affiliation (if any) _____

BPF urges its members to join the BPF chapters in their area, and to join the Fellowship of Reconciliation in their home country.

If you have friends who would like to know about BPF, please send us their names and addresses, and we will send them an information packet.

- I would like more information on the Fellowship of Reconciliation
- I would like more information on local BPF chapters.

An American Dream

They often talk about "the American dream," I know that everyone dreams while sleeping and has dreams while awake. Vietnamese dream, Arabs dream too. There are dreams of horror, dreams of grandeur, dreams of crime and dreams of peace.

Looking from the Buddhist point of view, dreams are illusions; looking from the same Buddhist point of view, dreams work when one is aware of their nature and when one is mindful of the state of mind one is coming from. A dream can bring anger, hatred, greed, and ignorance; the same dream can bring enlightenment, freedom and peace.

A young nun had been very sick; her medical bills piled up and she had no insurance. We worked on asking the L.A. County to help a little and we negotiated with doctors' offices and doctors' lawyers to pay a small part every month. My friend the nun could have gotten more sick because of that than because of the disease that had made her ill in the first place; but she kept her calm and her spirit high, she fought for her rights.

While struggling for her and by her side, I noticed how seriously she played and how playfully she lived! It brought about a sense of profound admiration for human potentialities in me that made me bow in gratitude, being one among all and one with all.

She often came to my place, would cook a delicious vegetarian meal for us and would talk to me about her teacher in Vietnam and her new life in the States. The last time she was visiting, she left a poem from the Master. I felt an urge to share, an undescrivable spurt to expand. Here it is (by Thich Thanh Tu, translated from Vietnamese by Jenny Hoang):

This body rented from a dream
 A glimpse of the Way in dreams
 Gone soon will be dreams
 Laughing at dreams
 A message of dreams
 To friends in dreams:
 When dreams are recognised
 One is awakened from dreams.

Jenny Hoang



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