

# WORLD PEACE ASSEMBLY SEPTEMBER 17-19, 1982

For three days in September, 1982, the Providence Zen Center in Cumberland, Rhode Island, was host to the Great Masters World Peace Assembly in celebration of ten years of Korean Buddhism in America. Buddhist teachers from many traditions, as well as representatives from other religions and hundreds of guests,

gathered together to focus on creating world peace. Over 400 guests came to the rural Zen Center that early autumn weekend, many from Europe and the Far East.

The weekend unfolded through lectures, panel discussions and workshops, and many informal get togethers. During the World Sangha peace ceremony, gifts were

exchanged, Dharma speeches given, and a World Peace Message was sent to the heads of governments and religions in many countries. Everyone present joined in chanting and meditation. A third day of live art performances and a Zen art exhibit was hosted by the Shim Gum Do Zen Sword Center in Brighton, Massachusetts, whose founding

master, Chang Sik Kim, is a student of Zen Master Seung Sahn.

In this issue PRIMARY POINT presents the full text of the World Peace Message and some of the key lectures from the Assembly.

## A Cambodian Prayer

*Ven. Maha Ghosananda is one of the few surviving Theravadin Buddhist monks from Cambodia. In 1980 he was invited to the United Nations to represent the nation of the Khmers in exile, as well as to gain support for the Cambodian peace movement and to teach Buddhism. In his U.N. work he travels throughout the United States and Europe, to reach Cambodian refugee communities.*

*He was trained in his native Cambodia to become a disciple of the internationally acclaimed Japanese monk Nichidatsu Fujii (who was 99 years old), founder of the Nihonzan Myohoji sect devoted to the establishment of world peace.*

*After 15 years in India at Fujii Ashram in Rajgir, Maha Ghosananda traveled to Buddhist centers throughout Southeast Asia and Ceylon. He was in Thailand during the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia in which most of his Buddhist colleagues were killed. Meeting the first influx of refugees, he distributed 40,000 leaflets on the Buddha's discourse on the power of metta (loving kindness), helped establish schools and temples in the camps, and became a major figure for the refugees as well as the international community.*

*There is a steady flow of visitors to his temple in Providence, RI. An accomplished linguist, he speaks Cambodian, Thai, French, and English. Last December he met with Pope John Paul II in Rome, to discuss the plight of the many thousands of Cambodian refugees stranded in Thailand. He recently left for a peace mission to Thailand and possibly Cambodia, with hopes that the Pope would also visit the refugee camps in Thailand this spring.*

Brothers and sisters, my name is Maha Ghosananda and I am a Buddhist monk from Cambodia. For more than a decade, the people of Cambodia have known the great suffering of warfare, persecution, and famine. I pray that like millions of peaceful Khmer people, all people will find strength and compassion in their hearts and guidance in these words of the Buddha.

"In those who harbor thoughts of blame and vengeance towards others, hatred will never cease. In those who do not harbor such thoughts, hatred will surely cease."

For hatred is never appeased by hatred. It is appeased by love. This is an eternal law. Just as a mother would protect her only child, even at the risk of her own life, even so let one cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings. Let one's thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world above, below, and across, without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity. Whether one stands, walks, sits, or lies down, as long as one is awake, one should maintain this mindfulness. This, they say, is to attain the blessed state in this very life.

May all beings exist in happiness and peace. Then no problem!

The suffering of Cambodia has been deep.

From this suffering comes great compassion.

Great compassion makes a peaceful heart.

A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person.

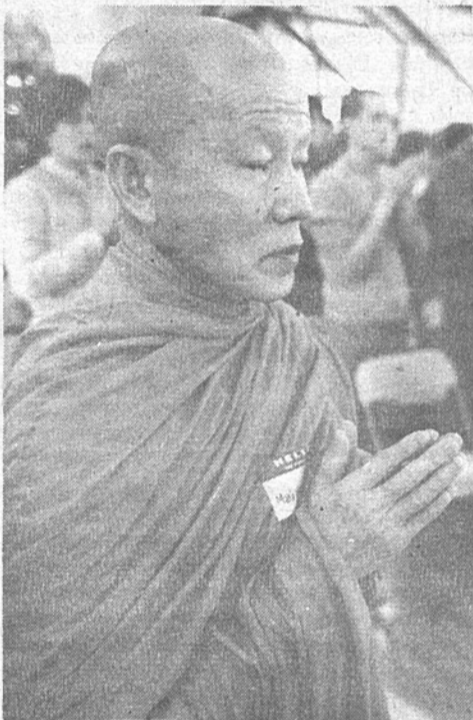
A peaceful person makes a peaceful family.

A peaceful family makes a peaceful community.

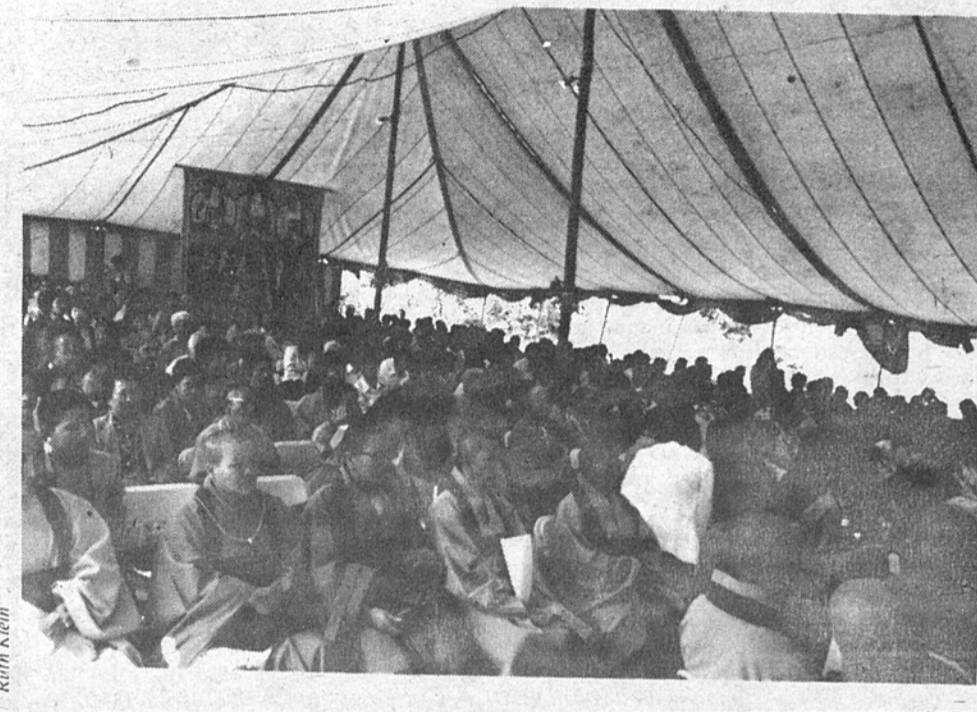
A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation.

A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world.

Amen.



Norman Grant, Jr. / Woonsocket Call



Ruth Klein

## Seeing Suffering Directly

*Jack Kornfield, a teacher of Vipassana meditation, has been a student of Buddhism for fifteen years. His training includes six years in Southeast Asia, studying as a layman and as a monk in Theravada monasteries. His main teachers are Achaan Chaa and U Asabha Thera for the Mahasi Sayadaw. He has also studied with many other teachers, as well as with two Zen Masters. He graduated from Dartmouth College with a degree in Asian Studies and also holds a Masters and a Ph.D. degree in Western psychology.*

*Currently he teaches with his colleague Joseph Goldstein at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts, at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, and at intensive meditation retreats held throughout the United States and Canada.*

*He is the author of "Living Buddhist Masters" (Prajna Press, Boulder, CO, 1983) which presents the variety of Buddhist teachings through the words of contemporary masters.*

(Chanting in Pali):

Buddhang saranam gacchami.  
Dhammag saranam gacchami.  
Sanghang saranam gacchami.

(Homage to the Buddha.  
Homage to the Dharma.  
Homage to the Sangha.)

I have come here today to join with so many people to speak about different aspects of world peace. I wonder from my heart what I can say that will make a difference for myself and all of us together? "What can we actually do?" may be the first question. There are different kinds of

answers. There's one that says "Don't just sit there, do something." We must see that there's something immediate that must be done in this world to make world peace happen. Then there's the other answer, which is especially relevant to those of you who are involved in meditation practice. "Don't just do something, sit there." This second answer is based on the fact that, whatever our action might be, to be truly effective it has to come from a deep inner understanding, not just an emotional reaction to the situation of the world today. So in the very beginning, to look at the problem of world peace it seems important for us to look at its source.

There's a story of a teacher in the Middle East, Mulla Nasrudin. Some of you may have heard of him. He's a fool, a wise man, and a kind of mythical figure. One day he was out in his garden, sprinkling bread crumbs around. One of his neighbors came up to him and said, "Mulla, what are you

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## ZEN IN THE SPIRIT OF MARTIAL ARTS: THE WAY OF THE IMPECCABLE WARRIOR

### A ONE-DAY WORKSHOP

JUNE 16, 1984

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Miguel Palavecino, Aiki Kempo Karate School, Toronto

David Mott, Cold Mountain Dojo, Toronto

Maria Kim, Shim Gum Do Zen Sword Center, Brighton, MA and others

For Information & Registration, please contact

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COST: \$15 PER PERSON (includes Vegetarian lunch)



## In Our Next Issue:

On the weekend of April 7 and 8 the Providence Zen Center and the Kwan Um Zen School hosted an ecumenical conference on world peace, initiated by Zen Master Seung Sahn, and entitled "Prayer and Meditation in the Nuclear Age." Some 250 visitors came to rural Cumberland, RI, to meet 20 religious leaders representing Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist and other traditions in a series of lectures, workshops and panel discussions. The conference ended Sunday afternoon with a moving candlelight service before an interfaith altar, marked by prayers, chants and readings by the religious leaders from many faiths, including Rt. Rev. George Hunt, Episcopal Bishop of Rhode Island, Ven. Maha Ghosananda, Srimata Gayatri Devi, Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, among many others. The next issue of PRIMARY POINT will be devoted to a detailed report of the conference and will include photographs of the many highlights of the weekend.



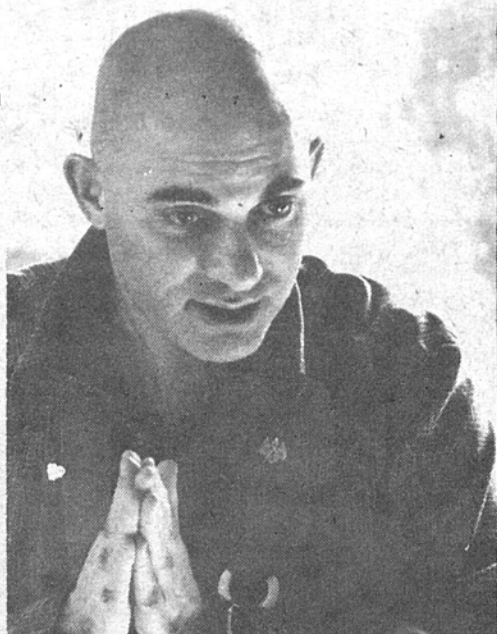
## PEACE ASSEMBLY

CONTINUED

## Much Ado About Nothing

We all know there is suffering. The world is full of suffering, and we all see it; but each of us has to see it as "my" suffering. In Buddhism we say there is no "my" or "I," but in the experiential sense, we have to feel it as "my" suffering. Then it is not a question of seeing or doing anything about it, we do it naturally.

Let me give you the analogy of two hands, each with its own consciousness. Let us call one "Harry" and the other "Joan." Harry and Joan have read all the texts about how they are part of one body, and they strongly believe it, but they each have their own consciousness. Someone offers them money. Joan reaches for it and Harry feels jealous, so he tries to take it. Or worse, Harry catches on fire. Joan sees Harry burning and says, "Maybe I should help." Then she thinks, "But I might get sued." Eventually she does help, or maybe she just walks away and pretends nobody saw her.



cannot wait. We have to do it right now, muddy ourselves right now.

Peace or harmony does not come about by making everyone the same. That seems like a simple idea, but it does not work. We think if we can get everyone to have the same idea or the same way, we will have happiness. In talking about the Three Treas-

ures, we say Buddha is the aspect of oneness or sameness, Dharma is the aspect of differences. It is very important to understand that they are the same thing, and that they have to exist together. We call that sameness Sangha.

I was once with Jonas Salk, the inventor of the Salk vaccine, and he was talking about the Zen communities he had seen springing up. He thought that was the way

to make this sick world sane and healthy again. He used the analogy of a body with a disease, full of unhealthy cells. If you just try to fix up the unhealthy cells, it is endless. But if you start injecting healthy cells into the sick body, they duplicate and thrive. Little by little the body becomes healthy again. Salk felt that Zen communities were healthy precisely because they have so many facets to them. They don't try to make everything into one entity. There are many things going on, people living together and accepting various forms, perhaps living in small communities.

## Seeing Suffering

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doing? Why are you sprinkling those bread crumbs around?" He answered, "I do it to keep the tigers away." So his friend said, "But there are no tigers within thousands of miles of here." And Mulla replied, "Effective, isn't it?"

In a way our ceremonies, our gatherings, and our demonstrations are somehow like sprinkling crumbs around. All of Buddhism, religion, and politics can be seen in that way. It's something artificial, something conceptual. It's removed from the direct situation. What is the direct situation?

First, there's suffering in this world, and there's a lot of it. The beginning of the teaching of the Buddha, and our own understanding of the problem of world peace, is to look at that suffering. At this time on the planet, today, there are hundreds of millions of people who are starving, malnourished, and don't have enough to eat. People like us—no different—eyes, ears, hand, bodies, stomachs, hearts, hundreds of millions so impoverished that they have little or no shelter and clothing to protect them from the elements of sun, wind, and rain. There are hundreds of millions of people who are sick with diseases that we know how to cure with a simple kind of medicine. But they can't afford the medicine or don't have access to it. This is happening here today, on this planet, which is not very big. Many of you have traveled some distance to come to this gathering know that—you can fly around this planet in a day.

For us to begin looking at the direct situation is not a question of ceremonies or religion or Buddhism or any of that nonsense. It's really to look in some very deep way at the sorrow and suffering that exists now in our time, in our world, to look at our personal, individual, and collective relationship to it, to bear witness to it, to acknowledge it, instead of running away. The suffering is so great that mostly we don't want to look. We close our minds. We close our eyes and hearts.

Do you know about Somalia? Do you know how bad the starvation is in sub-Saharan Africa? Every one of us in this room is actually rich in some fashion or other, fantastically rich by comparison to most of the people in the third world: rich in Dharma, rich in teachings, rich in clothes, rich in food. It's not easy to look directly at something like starvation. What we do is close our minds to it and make ourselves somehow separate.

It's so easy to make excuses for hoarding, for greed, for taking care of Number One first. It's so hard to really look at what's going on in the world, at the sorrow, and suffering. That's really what's asked of you if you want to do something. If you want to make a change, a difference, it means looking at the world with real honesty, unflinchingly and directly. Then look at yourself and see that this sorrow is not just out there, but it's also in ourselves. It's our own fear and prejudice and hatred and desire and wanting and neurosis and anxiety. It's our own sorrow. We have to look at it and not run away.

There are two sources of strength in this world. One source of strength is people who aren't afraid to kill. They run a lot of the world, if you look at it from a political point of view. People who aren't afraid to kill run nations, run wars, run much of our world. It gives one a lot of strength to not

be afraid to kill. The other source of strength in the world—of real strength—is people who aren't afraid to die: people who have looked into the very source of their nature, have looked in such a deep way that they understand and acknowledge and accept death—and in a way, have died. They bring to life fearlessness and caring. They bring not just a sense of small I, taking care of only myself and my family and my country—all these things—but something that transcends that separateness.

In this world these days, people think that strength comes from guns, from the power to kill, from force. They feel that love and compassion is a weakness. When India was separated from Pakistan and became independent in 1949, there were many riots. Millions of people were refugees—Muslims and Hindus moving from one country to another. In the west—in what is now Pakistan—Nehru and Lord Mountbatten sent tens of thousands of Gurka troops to keep the riots down. They didn't do a very good job, but he sent them there to try. To the east—in what is now Bangladesh, (it was East Pakistan then)—he sent Gandhi. Gandhi went to the east and he said, "I'm going to walk on foot from one village to another and talk to people and ask them to stop. And I'm going to stop eating, I'm going to fast. And I'll die—that's fine with me—but I'm not going to take any more food until you stop this nonsense." When people heard this, it did much more to bring peace in the east than those tens of thousands of troops in the west. Why? How did that happen? Because of his love and courage, because Gandhi truly wasn't afraid to die, because he cared about something much greater than himself.

The world doesn't need more oil, or more food, or more energy, or more medicine. It doesn't need more resources. There's plenty to go around. The world needs less greed, less prejudice, less fear, less hoarding, and less of all those forces that keep it from being fairly distributed and that keep darkness going.

So the first teaching of the Buddha is to see suffering very directly, unflinchingly acknowledge it in the world, in ourselves, and to see its source, which is fear and attachment, greed and separation. Only if we look directly can we see its end, because the end of suffering is an acknowledgement of light and dark, up and down, sorrow and joy. We have to see all those things without attachment, without separation.

We really have to look at how we make separation. How do we make this world of "I want this; I want to become that; this will make me safe; this will make me powerful?" How do we create it? How do you do it? Race, nations, age, religion. Look in your heart and see what is "us" and what is "them" for you. Who is "us?" Does "us" mean Koreans or Buddhists or Christians or Americans or white people or capitalists or... Who is your "us?" Whenever there's a sense of "us," then there's a sense of "other." Do you have an "us," if you look really honestly? That's it, folks, right there. You want to know what is the source of the trouble in the world? That's it, that point, that "us." Give it up.

Why should you give it up? Why not "us?" It's not because it's bad, or because it's immoral. It's because morality hasn't worked. The Ten Commandments and the Buddhist Precepts have been around for a long time and everybody's still killing each

other. It gives one a lot of strength to not

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Then suddenly something makes Harry and Joan's consciousness rise. Now it is here, in my head. I see everything else as separate, but my two hands are part of me. That is so obvious I do not talk about it any more. It would be absurd to go around telling people that these two hands are mine, or to try to convince one hand that it is part of the same body as the other hand.

The point is we will have problems until this realization occurs. Even after it occurs, one hand is still going to catch fire, but it will get taken care of immediately, even if taking care of it destroys both hands. The problem of what we should do is gone. We cannot stand here just talking about what to do. Shakyamuni Buddha said, "Wake up!"

Consciousness has to drop out of both our hands and our hearts, in order for us to experience this world as one body. Then naturally we take care of things. That does not mean the world is at peace, but at least we know what to do. We can say everything is fine, but if our body has diabetes, we do not just say, "Fine." We do something about it.

What can we do? First, wake up and then do something. That is the only message I know. That is what Buddhism is about: wake up! How do you wake up? That is another story. But when somebody does wake up, a group naturally forms around him or her. For every circle there is a center. I am a mathematician and I love this aspect of mathematics. The center of a circle is a point which has no dimensions. If it has some dimensions, it is a blur, and then it is not the center of a circle anymore. It is another circle.

The circle is the Dharma, or all things. Whenever we have a center (which means, a nothing), immediately a circle forms around it. As we wake up, a circle forms, a community, a sangha. That second step happens immediately in the evolution of peace.

As a community, I think you should do the activities that the head of your community, as the clearest person, gets into. If that does not feel right, then do what you want to do. Everyone has a lot of ideas of what's good or appropriate, and ideas are all right, or all wrong. But you have to pick something. It is a cop-out to say, "I am going to wait until I've gotten my own practice to the place where I want it." You will never do that. It is also a cop-out not to get your practice to that place.

Ideally, first you realize the way, then you get right into the midst of what we call attachments and delusions and do your work. Shakyamuni said we are already enlightened, so practically speaking we



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# World Peace Message

Signed at GREAT MASTERS WORLD PEACE ASSEMBLY\* Providence Zen Center, September 18, 1982.

*This is a crucial period in the history of our planet, a time when changes in the fabric of this precious life are being set in motion—changes that we can barely control and do not fully understand. In the richest countries the mental hospitals are full; in the poorest countries stomachs are empty. Governments are spending \$1,000,000 per minute to out-do each other in the arms race, wars continue to break out between nations, and there is widespread fear of nuclear annihilation. The richness and diversity of 500 million years of evolution are rapidly being reduced to a point from which it can no longer recover.*

*Today the threat of nuclear annihilation is beginning to knock down the barriers between self and other, rich country and poor country. This threat is pointing to the fact that we all have our feet on the same soil. If the family of man is to survive there must be a stop to the escalation of nuclear arms.*

*The establishment of peace and the prevention of war are the ideals of all ethical people. All the suffering in this world comes from causes and conditions that reside in each one of us, set in motion by the individual and collective force of our desire, anger and delusion. This fire of desire, anger and delusion obscures the true nature that we share in common. We have so lost sight of this true nature that instead of loving each other, cooperating with each other, and working together and helping each other, we cling to and defend our opinions.*

*The predicament of the planet requires overcoming selfishness, the split between self and other. When the self is forgotten, then we can hear clearly, see clearly, think clearly; everything we meet is our true nature. All life is so intimately interconnected that our every action has a direct and genuine effect on the condition of this earth.*

*We are now meeting together at the Providence Zen Center in Cumberland, Rhode Island to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Korean Buddhism coming to the West. Many religious leaders from East and West are here—Buddhist, Hindus, Christians and Jews. We are chanting together, eating together and sharing the truth together, the expression of many parts of one body working together in harmony.*

*It is our deepest aspiration that the family of man can live in peace and harmony, that all people can wake up to their true nature—that deep, fundamental clarity that is beyond dogma and opinion. Then, in turn, we hope that all of us will use this love and wisdom to create world peace and save all beings from suffering.*

*The earth is spinning through space.  
When clouds disappear,  
There are 10,000 miles of blue sky.*

# The Power of Peace

*Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, a Tibetan Buddhist Lama and Founder/President of the Mahakaruna Foundation serving Buddhists worldwide, is widely recognized as a meditation master, healer, artist, and Tibetan doctor. Son of the most famous female teacher and renowned psychic in Tibet, Rinpoche came to the United States in 1979, bringing to Western students his professional skills and unique teaching style in the field of medicine, tantra, ritual, painting, sculpture, and traditional folk art. His permanent seat is the Chagdud Gompa in Eugene, Oregon, from which he frequently travels, giving seminars on meditation and Tibetan medicine. He works as a medical consultant in Eugene.*

*He was a featured speaker at the World Peace Assembly held at the Providence Zen Center in 1982, which drew 500 Buddhists and other guests from around the world.*

*He was born in 1930 and grew up in Eastern Tibet, receiving instruction from the great Buddhist scholars and yogis of that time, and spent many years in meditation retreats. In 1959 the Chinese took over Eastern Tibet, ultimately destroying the great monasteries and forcing the lamas to flee or be killed. Chagdud Rinpoche escaped, but without any of his precious Buddhist texts and ritual instruments. For two decades he stayed voluntarily in the Tibetan refugee camps in India, among the poorest of his countrymen, until a group of Americans, attracted to his qualities as a teacher, invited him to the United States.*

It is very good to be a part of the Great Masters World Peace Assembly and to meet people who are doing the work of making world peace. I greatly respect peacemakers because of their care and compassion for the beings of this world.

It is my wish that the spiritual power of peace will touch the mind of every person on this earth, radiating out from a deep peace within our own minds, across political and religious barriers, across the barriers of ego and conceptual righteousness. Our first work as peacemakers is to clear our minds of mental conflicts caused by ignorance, anger, grasping, jealousy and pride. All of you at this assembly have connection with spiritual teachers who can guide you in the purification of these poisons, and through this purification of your own mind, you learn the very essence of peacemaking.

The inner peace we seek should be so absolutely pure, so stable, that it cannot be moved to anger by those who live and profit by war, or to self-grasping and fear by confrontation with contempt, hatred and death. Incredible patience is necessary to accomplish any aspect of world peace, and the source of such patience is the space of inner peace from which you recognize with great clarity that war and suffering are the outer reflections of the minds' inner poisons.

If you truly understand that the essential difference in peacemakers and warmakers is that peacemakers have discipline and control over egotistical anger, grasping, jealousy and pride while warmakers, in their ignorance, manifest the results of these poisons in the world—if you truly understand this you will never allow yourself to be defeated from within or without.

Tibetan Buddhists use the peacock as the symbol for the Bodhisattva, the Awakened Warrior who works for the Enlightenment of all sentient beings. The peacock is said to eat poisonous plants which it transmutes into the gorgeous colors of its feathers. It does not poison itself, just as we who wish for world peace must not poison ourselves.

As you meet the powerful worldly men who sit at the top of the war machines, regard them with strict equanimity. Convince them as effectively as you know how, but be constantly aware of your own state of mind. If you begin to experience anger, retreat. If you can go on without anger, perhaps you will penetrate the terrible delu-



courtesy of Chagdud Gompa

sion that causes war and all its hellish sufferings. From the clear space of your own inner peace, your compassion must expand to include all who are involved in war—the soldiers caught in the cruel karma of killing, and who sacrifice their precious human rebirth; the generals and politicians who intend to benefit and cause disruption and death instead; the civilians who are wounded, killed and turned into refugees. True compassion is utterly neutral and is moved by suffering of every sort, not tied to right and wrong, attachment and aversion.

The work of peace is a spiritual path in itself, a means to develop perfect qualities of mind and to test these qualities against urgent necessity, extreme suffering and death. Do not be afraid to give your time, energy and wealth.

My suggestion for accomplishing this work in the world is to form an international network of spiritual leaders who are concerned with world peace. Spiritual leaders are in touch with the war-causing imbalances within their countries and can show us how to alleviate such suffering. They also have access to the minds and hearts of the people and can work to create the space of peace.

I hope some of what I have said is useful to some people. If not I am still glad to be connected to this effort and look forward to our work together. □



William K. Daby, Providence Journal—Bulletin

other. Why give it up? Because it doesn't work! You want to be happy, yet happiness doesn't come from arms or war or hoarding or greed or family or nation or security or attachment. You can have some happiness from those things—that's fine; enjoy it—but you can't have deep happiness of the heart. It doesn't work that way. That's the true teaching of the Buddha—and the teaching of the Dharma, quite apart from the Buddha. It doesn't matter about the Buddha, but it's the teaching of what is true. The source of happiness, the legacy of the Dharma, is not to make "us" and "them." On this planet at this moment, we are all of us together. We must touch that in ourselves. I don't care how you touch it. You can sit in zazen meditation or you can march in New York. But if you haven't understood that, then it's still going to be "us" marching and "them" outside or "us" sitting and "those" not sitting. Do whatever it takes to touch that. See where your "us" is and where your boundaries are. See that they don't work, that any "us" and "them" is not going to be the source of world peace and joy.

There's a story told that when the Buddha was walking down a road soon after his enlightenment, he met a man who stopped him. The Buddha was very beautiful, physically beautiful and handsome, with a wonderful field of love and energy around him. This man saw him and said, "What are you? Are you some kind of god?" The Buddha said, "No." The man said, "Well, are you some kind of an angel or deva?" He said, "No." "Well then, are you a man?" The Buddha said, "No." Then the man said, "Well then what are you?" The Buddha replied, "I am awake." That's all. It's not being a Buddhist or a

Christian or a Zen student or someone for peace or someone for war or a capitalist or a Korean. Not being anything. Just, "I am awake."

I close with one more story, borrowed, I must admit, from the Zen tradition. (I've borrowed lots of good things from Zen.) There was an old monk in China who practiced very hard meditation for many years. He had a good mind, became very quiet, had good meditation, but yet never came to touch in himself that end of "us," or "I" and "others." He never came to that source of complete stillness or peace out of which genuine change in the world can come. So he went to the Zen master and said, "May I please have permission to go off and practice in the mountains? I've worked for years as a monk and there's nothing else I want but to understand this: the true nature of myself, of this world." The master, knowing that he was ripe, gave him permission to leave.

The monk left the monastery and took his bowl and his few possessions and walked through the various towns to the mountains. He left the last village behind and was going up a little trail into the mountains. Coming down the trail, an old man appeared before him, carrying a great big bundle on his back. This old man was actually the Bodhisattva, Manjusri, who is said to appear to people at the moment they are ripe for awakening and is depicted carrying the sword of discriminating wisdom that cuts through all attachment, all illusion and separateness. The monk looked at the old man, and the old man said, "Say friend, young monk, where are you going?" The monk told his story. "I've practiced for all these years and all I want now is to touch the center point, to know that which is

true." The old man looked at him and his look was kind and wise. So the monk said, "Tell me, old man, do you know anything of this enlightenment?" At which point the old man simply let go of the bundle; it dropped to the ground and the monk was enlightened.

That's all. Just put it down. Drop everything: I, my, what I want to be, what I'm going to get, what will happen. Just be here. At this point the newly enlightened monk looked at the old man again, and said, "So now what?" The old man reached down and picked up the bundle again and walked off to town.

Here's the complete teaching in this story. It's to put everything down—all I, all me, all "us." To put it down means also to acknowledge it from where it starts: to see sorrow, suffering, pain, to see that we're all in it together, to see birth and death. If you're afraid of death and suffering and you don't want to look, then you can't put it down. You will push it away here and you will grab it there. See the world directly—use any way that you want to do it, but do it. Then you can put it down. Once you put it down, then with understanding and compassion you can pick it up again. □

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