

Hiroshima and Nagasaki or Auschwitz and Serbia.”

This volume should prove illuminating both to practitioners and scholars of Buddhism who may not have schooled themselves on this particular perspective on the tradition and to people around the world who are personally and collectively involved in one or another phase of the peace initiative, as well as to, the general educated reader who is interested in learning what Buddhism has to contribute to the human striving toward world peace.

– J. Bruce Long

## **Buddhist Exploration of Peace and Justice**

**By Chanju Mun & Ronald S. Green, eds.**

**Blue Pine, Honolulu, HI, 2006, 294 pp. ISBN: 0-9777553-0-4**

This book is one volume in an on-going series edited by Ven. Chanju Mun on the general topic of Buddhism and Peace. It is composed of five special speeches and twenty-three papers presented at the fifth seminar convened on this topic in Seoul, Korea in 1991. The theme of the seminar was “Exploration of Ways to Put Buddhist Thought into Social Practice for Peace and Justice.”

These seminars have been convened consistently every-other year since 1983. The papers from the first, second and fourth seminars have already appeared in print; Dr. Mun is planning to publish the proceedings of the third, sixth and seventh meetings in the future.

All seven seminars have been held under the auspices of Dae Won Sa Temple in Hawaii and have been co-sponsored by various other Buddhist or Buddhist-related organizations. Collectively, these conferences represent a consistent and thorough exploration of the potential or actual contributions of Buddhism, worldwide, to the promotion of Peace and Social Justice and, on the whole, have maintained a high level of inquiry all the way along.

As the title indicates, the volume is concerned with the exploration, from various academic and religious perspectives, of possible and actual contributions that Buddhism has made to the establishment of peace and justice within the modern, seriously fractured and war-torn, but ever hopeful, world of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

It is impossible, in short order, even to summarize, let alone analyze and evaluate the many papers that make up this complex volume. Thus, the most that we can hope to achieve in a brief review is to offer a brief overview of the entire volume and a short statement of the primary focus of selected papers.

The volume is divided into two sections, beginning with five special speeches delivered by native spokesmen for the Korean tradition, followed by twenty-three papers presented by scholars and practitioners of Buddhism, representing a variety of academic and religious communities.

Jean Sadako King, the former Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawaii, made a pre- sentation on the “Exploration of Right Livelihood as One Path to Peace and Justice.” She asserts that in contrast to the letter and the spirit of the Buddhist Eight-fold Path to “do no harm,” modern nation states, especially the US, have invested a discouragingly large percentage of their national budgets to the production of weapons of warfare. She contends that to

avoid falling over the brink of mass destruction, the world needs to return to the principle of Right Livelihood as understood by ancient Buddhist teachings as the defining core of their national policies.

J.C. Cleary, a writer and translator, observes that the central genius of Buddhism is its elaborate and sophisticated development of, what in modern language is called, the “science of the mind.” He believes that an implementation of the principles arising out of the Buddhist analysis of mind and its role in promoting peace and tranquility will greatly enhance the search for peace and justice.

Dr. G. Lubsantseren, of Mongolia, calls for contributions to the cause of peace and justice based on the Five Precepts. In this regard he states, “. . . we can address ourselves to the growing importance of Buddhism in the present-day international and national life of countries, on the significance of Buddhist philosophy and principles of compassion and morality and on the increasing importance of perfection and purification of man’s inner world.”

Yeremei Parnov, President of the European Society of Science Fiction, USSR, draws on the most ancient of all symbols of the universe, namely, the serpent biting its own tail, as a metaphor for the ideal of a one-world order and a calls for all nations to work toward the realization of world peace, drawing on the metaphor of the snake biting its tail as a symbol of perfect order.

The late scholar of Chinese Buddhism, David W. Chappell, formerly of the University of Hawaii, presented a paper on “Bodhisattva Social Ethics.” Rather than dealing with the topic as presented in heroic stories of socially active Bodhisattvas, he focuses his study on rules and precepts followed by two Buddhist communities: the Fangdeng

list of twenty-four vows in China and the Fanwang set of fifty-eight vows in Japan. A first-time ever English translation of the latter text is included in an Appendix.

In-hwan Chae, Director of Korean Buddhist Research Institute, of Dongguk University of Seoul, calls for the realization of true and lasting world peace through implementation, in both individuals and societies, of the principles of Chan Buddhism.

In one of the two papers from the Theravadin Buddhist perspective, Medagoda Sumana-tissa, under the title, “The Theravada Buddhist Experience of Social Practice for Peace and Justice,” examines the role of man in society according to the early Pali tradition.

Graeme MacQueen, of the Department of Religious Studies, of McMaster University, in Canada, juxtaposes the concept of the bodhisattva contained in the Perfection of Wisdom (*prajna-paramita*) tradition and the vision of a New World Order represented by reports on television and the print media, in the form of a post-modernist, “metanarrative,” i.e., a “grand narrative,” used to “ground people’s existence and give meaning to their lives.”

David J. Kalupahana, also formerly of the University of Hawaii, presented a paper, entitled, “Language and Peace,” “devoted to an examination of the manner in which the Buddha, after formulating his own understanding of the nature of existence with its own internal consistency and harmony, tried to achieve peace or harmony in relation to theories and views different from his own without coming into conflict with them.”

Finally, to be noted, two concluding papers on specific, practical applications of selected principles and practices of Buddhism, to the fostering of peace and justice: one, entitled, “Master Yongseong’s Life and Works: An Engaged Buddhism of Peace and Justice,”

a Dharma Teacher, at the Dai Won Sa Buddhist Temple of Hawaii. Seon Master Yong-seong (1864-1940) was an eminent Buddhist leader in his day, whose disciples have formed an influential Buddhist community that continues to play a leading role in contemporary Korean Buddhism; and the other, "The Republic of Korea's Policies to Build a Peaceful Northeast Asia," by Hak-joon Kim, Chief Assistant to the President for Policy Research, Seoul, Korea, describing a policy program with the objective of achieving a state of peace and concord between the two Koreas.

This volume of essays has two primary strengths: first, it, like the other six volumes in the series, seeks to address directly and clearly, the myriad of highly complex and troubling issues worldwide concerning the establishment of peace and justice; and second, its scope of coverage is as broad as it is incisive, by considering a wide variety of Buddhist perspectives concerning the dual set of issues stated in the title of the book.

Because of these two intellectual virtues, this book will shed significant light on some of the main issues that are dealt with by a variety of people involved, both in affairs of the Buddhist World and the academic inquiry into the nature of the modern world and most pressing challenges that it faces: from philosophers and historians of religions, sociologists and psychologists, to ethicists and students of international relations.

I recommend the book strongly and look forward to the appearance of the other three sets of conference papers, which the editor reports will find their way into print in the near future.

– J. Bruce Long