

Buddhist Peace Fellowship  
Annual Report 2009



### **BPF's Vision**

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF) envisions a future in which people from all backgrounds come into a heartfelt realization of our interconnection to each other and to the Earth. We believe that actions generated from this understanding will create societies guided by generosity, compassion, wisdom, and justice.

### **Mission and Purpose**

The mission of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF), founded in 1978, is to serve as a catalyst for socially engaged Buddhism. Our purpose is to help beings liberate themselves from the suffering that manifests in individuals, relationships, institutions, and social systems. BPF's programs, publications, and practice groups link Buddhist teachings of wisdom and compassion with progressive social change.

### **Letter from the Executive Director**



Dear friends,  
After tearfully saying goodbye to many staff people, one of BPF's long-term members visited our new one-room office in Oakland. He mentioned that it reminded him of the old days when the organization was born. I laughed knowing that we were being born again and that BPF would continue to be shaped according to the times. More than ever before, BPF would need to respond to the challenges presented in today's world. Would we survive?

In 2008 we witnessed the economic and social political grounds shaking beneath us. In 2009, America elected its first African American president, Barack Obama, in an effort to change what was happening to us as a society. Unfortunately, the

downsizing of every major corporation and the doors closing for many businesses, including well-loved non-profit organizations, was inevitable. Along with this downslide BPF's donations faltered as we shifted our size and direction away from direct services into collaboration, endorsement, and advocacy. However, because BPF had made restructuring plans long before the deepest economic downturn we were able to sustain the organization, albeit within a slim structure.

In 2008, as Executive Director it was my responsibility to lead the organization from its fiscal deficit into solvency. This included restructuring the organization by reducing staff, program and operating expenses. In 2009, it was imperative that BPF begin to gain momentum while still staying within the constraints of our resources. Were too small to survive?

*In other words, BPF was experiencing its greatest lesson of impermanence while having the task of continuing its 30 years of leadership in socially engaged Buddhism.*

*Fortunately, it became clear that BPF needed to be a leader in passing the legacy of Buddhist leadership to young people (under 50 years old). We needed to support those who had been associated with Buddhist organizations but were seen as too young to be Buddhist masters or teachers. Yet, as an organization in the world, we needed their visions and leadership for the future. Therefore, my first task was to re-establish the beloved BASE program as a environment in which youth could spread their wings.*

BASE (Buddhist Alliance for Social Engagement) was started years ago as support for practitioners to integrate their meditation practice while taking action in the world. We invited two students, who had been practicing Buddha's teachings and were active in their communities, to be volunteer coordinators of the BASE program. They would be responsible for

creative ways to develop support groups nationwide, for revising the curriculum, and for finding ways in which BASE would meet the needs of the new generations to come. As one of the students was an intern at the Graduate Theological Union, his work at BPF became a path for his practice, education, and work in the world.

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship has long been associated with the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) since its inception in 1989. We see this connection as our unwavering commitment to maintain our contact and involvement, in whatever form appropriate, with the various communities of practicing engaged buddhists around the world, but especially in Asia, where Buddhism is rooted. This indispensable obligation has in the past several years manifested in our BPF board member Anchalee Kurutach becoming a part of the INEB community. Anchalee first attended the INEB conference in India in 2005 and since 2007 has served as an active member of INEB's Executive Committee. In 2009, Anchalee helped organized the 20th Anniversary Conference/Celebration of INEB, which took place in Chiang Mai, Thailand in November 2009. Over 200 participants from different Buddhist organizations around the world attended the event (from Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Bhutan, Nepal, Ladakh, Tibet, South Africa, Europe, Australia, Canada and the US.) The successful celebration combined meditation retreats with series of semi-academic symposiums and networking sessions. The topics of the discussions reflected the broad range of work currently done by INEB members - from peace and reconciliation to gender equality, economic and environmental justice, revival of Buddhism and Buddhist reform, alternative education and youth leadership. Various Buddhist traditions were represented, offering rich and diverse

perspectives as well as powerful communal chantings. A peace march through the town of Chiang Mai and an international alms round was organized to bring attention and support to the suffering in Burma.

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship continues to value the profound connection and sharing of rich experiences in socially engaged buddhist works with friends from the International Network of Engaged Buddhists.

In addition, at the end of 2009, BPF, walked its talk. I passed my position of Executive Director to Buddhist practitioner, Sarah Weintraub, who is also an active peacemaker in the conflicts of Colombia, South America. With her youthful enthusiasm, commitment to Dharma and socially engaged Buddhism, we were on our way to shaping the rebirth of an organization many rely upon as family and community.

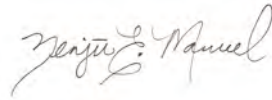
We launched a new website with a significant donation by board member, Chris Wilson. Realizing that the website was BPF's face in the world, we needed a site that informed the world that we were alive. We were ready to provide leadership on integrating dharma and engagement with issues such as war, poverty, and ecological disasters, among others. The website [bfp.org](http://bfp.org) features, What Buddhist Are Saying about the issues of the day and highlights What We [BPF] Are Doing. This is important information as an organization in transition.

We finished the year with a promise for a sizeable bequest from one of BPF's donors. With this bequest we would be well on our way to re-establishing our footing in the changes we had to meet during 2008 and 2009.

We could not have done this work without our supporters. Therefore, we would like to take this time to thank you all of our supporters for keeping BPF's doors open

and encouraging us to find ways to act as a catalyst for socially engaged Buddhism. As we celebrate all of our challenges and accomplishments we are reminded to practice *bodhicitta* – awakened heart, so that each moment we experience compassion as impermanence pervades our work in the world.

In peace,



Rev. Zenju Earthlyn Manuel



#### **BPF 2009 Staff**

Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, Executive Director and Interim Turning Wheel Editor, (until November 2009)

Sarah Weintraub, Executive Director (starting November 2009)

Caroline Acuña, Membership Coordinator (until November 2009)

Everett Wilson, Business Manager

Leslie Thomas, Administrative Assistant

#### **BPF Board of Directors**

Jesse Maceo Vega-Frey, (Co-Chair-until December 2009)

Phyllis Oscar, (Co-Chair),

Anchalee Kurutach,

Chris Wilson

#### **Summary of Accomplishments for 2009**

The goals and accomplishments were as follows:

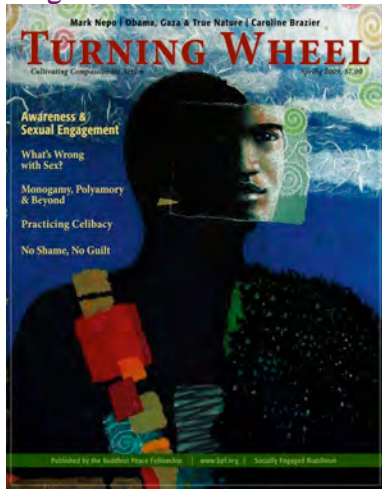
##### **Goal: To strengthen BPF in the transition period that began in 2008.**

We met with an organizational consultant to clarify and clear any fiscal and programmatic confusion left from 2008. This enabled us to make decisions based on short-term needs. We considered 2009 the year to not expand but to maintain Turning Wheel magazine and increase our fundraising efforts.

In increasing fundraising plans were made to streamline database management including installing a new system with the company Salesforce in which donors and members could manage their own accounts via internet. The new system would increase our capacity to respond quickly to donors.

The board and staff held several all day retreats to discuss the changes at BPF and how to sustain the organization as we continued to receive donations.

**Goal: To sustain Turning Wheel Magazine**



(spring/summer 2009)

Again BPF entered the year with the intentions of maintaining the landmark Turning Wheel Magazine at any costs. Along with a magazine consultant, John Ellis, who had been working with BPF as a volunteer for four years, we decided to decrease the promised four issues a year and reduced the publication to two issues: spring/summer and fall/winter.



(Fall/Winter 2009)

Our 2009 Spring/Summer issue was on *Awareness and Sexual Engagement* Practice and sexuality. After this issue it was decided to abandon the themes per issue and structure the magazine around war

and peace. Therefore, articles in the 2009 Fall/Winter issue were in affect on war and peace.

BPF continues to work with John Ellis to accomplish the following for Turning Wheel:

- Increased advertisement
- Increased distribution
- Quality content
- Professionalism in presentation

To honor our membership and those who support the magazine are intention is to present the experience of socially engaged Buddhism as a legitimate path of liberation.

**Goal: To support BPF Chapters**



(Kristin LoKen at a rally on behalf of BPF)

BPF recognizes the role of chapters in the work of the organization. We continue dialogues on how to align the chapters with the national office and visa versa. This symbiotic relationship is key to furthering BPF's work in the world.

Objective within this goal include:

- Reconnecting with chapters
- Providing a stronger voice from the chapters with the board of directors
- Communication about the changes in the national office

While these objectives have been in place for some time, we feel that with the new leadership the chapters will become an integral part of BPF's direction and vision in the long haul.

**Goal: To continue fiscal agency to international initiatives**

BPF continued to provide fiscal agency and non-profit development to socially engaged Buddhist groups such as the following:

- Tibetan Children’s Refugee Fund – managed by Gordon and Margo Tyndall
- Dharma Companions – Prison Correspondence
- Dhamma Moli – orphanage for young girls from labor abuse and sex trafficking



(young nun at Dhamma Moli)

The year of 2009 ended with a donor response that enabled BPF to continue into the year of 2010. The support informed us that BPF’s new Executive Director and the changes were taking root in a positive way. We expect in 2010 that we will have made it through one of the world’s toughest decline in business. Most of all having new leadership is exciting and we are looking forward to an organization shaped by new energy.

**Statement of Financial Position for 2009**

**Income**

Contributions from Individuals	\$93,224
Program Income	2,701
Memberships	52,161
Other Income	5,758

**Total Income** **\$153,844**

**Expenses**

Program Services	
Turning Wheel Magazine	25,413
Chapters & Peacework	15,000

Program Expense Total \$ 30,413

Supporting Services

Management & general	\$59,799
Fundraising	32,700
Membership Development	21,818

Supporting Srvc. Expense \$ 8,000

**Total Expenses** **\$136,730**

**Total Assets** **\$ 87,642**

**Total Liabilities** **51,671**

**Net Assets/Fund Balances** **\$ 35,971**

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Source of Information: 990 Tax Returns for 2009- Prepared by ADM Associates  
*BPF Tax I.D.- 94-3011277*