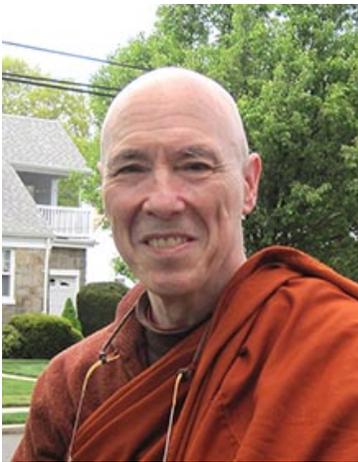




Embracing the Spirit of the Season An Appeal by Our Chairperson



By Ven Bhikkhu Bodhi - The holiday season is not just an occasion to exchange gifts with family and friends but an opportunity to express love in action. Love is expressed in action by helping people who daily face the pangs of suffering—the pangs of poverty, war, neglect, and malnutrition—by enabling them to live healthy lives of meaning and purpose. Buddhist Global Relief was founded precisely to help such people prevail over these challenges: to obtain urgently needed food, to receive a decent education, and to learn effective means of earning a living.

The recipients of our aid, we have found, are people of grace, dignity, and inner beauty. What they need to realize their potentials is just a helping hand, a gesture of human solidarity. It is the generosity of our supporters that enables us to extend this helping hand. And make no mistake about this: Your donations do make a critical difference. For those living at the edge, these donations are not so much gifts as lifesavers.

Thus, our partnership with Lotus Outreach has helped a fatherless girl raised in a hut in Cambodia to finish high school, go on to college, and become an engineer. Our partnership with the What If? Foundation in Haiti has provided meals to thousands of hungry children and is now equipping a new school that will offer these children an education. A partnership in Côte d'Ivoire with Helen Keller International, fully funded by BGR, will reduce childhood mortality by promoting optimal nutrition among pregnant women, nursing mothers, and infants.





Your holiday gift will enable us to continue providing these grants in 2017 and to develop new partnerships and projects in the future. Your contributions are literally saving and transforming lives. They are sending girls to school in Cambodia, Vietnam, Bangladesh and India. They are providing children in Cameroon, Haiti, and Bangladesh with a substantial mid-day meal. They are helping women in Sri Lanka and India acquire vocational skills. They are teaching farmers in Southeast Asia, Haiti, and Africa—largely women—methods of ecologically sustainable agriculture.

In just eight years, BGR has become a magnificent Buddhist presence on the stage of global philanthropy, and it is your generosity that has made this possible. Please bring forth a heart of great love and compassion and, in the spirit of the season, offer us a generous gift, whether large or small, that best accords with your means.



Through your gifts, you become an essential part of our team. Let us work together to promote the well-being and happiness of our unseen brothers and sisters all around the world. Let me close by wishing you and your family an abundant rainfall of blessings in the coming year and for a long time to come.

Free Lunches as An Educational Incentive in Cameroon



By BGR Staff - A BGR project in Bangem subdivision of Cameroon, in West Africa, undertaken in partnership with the social service organization CENCUDER, is making big news. The project, which started last academic year, aims at enhancing the education and health of over 95 poor and needy village children attending the Ebase-Bajoh primary school. The core of the project is the distribution of a hot school lunch to the pupils, many of whom are girls and orphans. The feeding program, which is intended to promote literacy

amongst school-age children suffering from chronic hunger and an insufficient diet, is the first of its kind to be undertaken by an NGO in the Bangem subdivision. It is quite astounding that in this country—which is 40% Catholic, 30% Protestant, 18% Muslim, and probably 0% Buddhist—it is a Buddhist organization that has come to the aid of the poor children of the region.

The program is having a strong positive impact on the lives of these children, many of whom might have had to forgo their primary education without the meal program. In the 2016–17 academic year, which just began, the Ebase-Bajoh primary school has witnessed a rise of 15% in school enrollment. Many pupils have left neighboring primary schools to join the pupils of Ebase just because of the delicious meals their peers in Ebase shared with them when they met during youth week and the national day's activities. The pupils of Ebase-Bajoh often regret vacations or holidays in the course of the academic year since they know they would have to miss their balanced meals at this time. Each time the director of CENCUDER arrives at Ebase, the children always rush and scramble around him just to find out the next type of meal to be served to them.





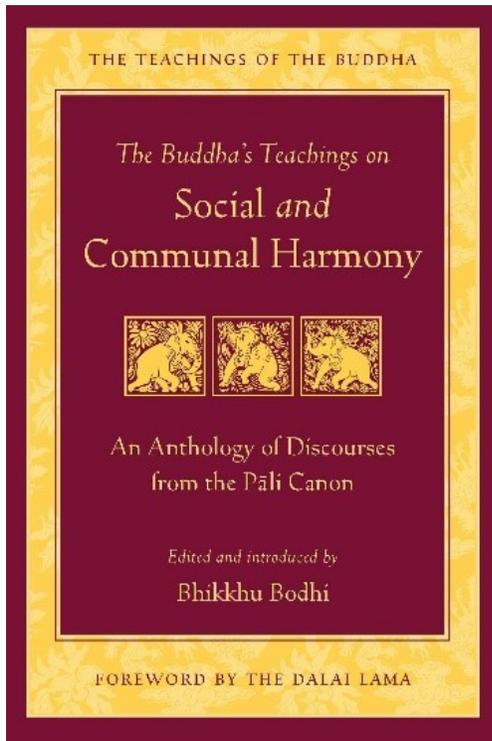
So far, many parents have testified to the improvement of their children's health, academic performance, and behavior at home. Absenteeism on account of ill health, which affected the students' academic performance, has been significantly reduced. Through this feeding program, pupils whose parents can't even afford a meal are ensured of a balanced meal each day. The pupils and parents are deeply grateful to BGR for this program. CENCUDER thanks Buddhist

Global Relief for the joy and smiles they have brought in the lives of these needy kids and parents in Ebase village and for boosting CENCUDER's image in the southwest region of Cameroon.

Through this program, the government of Cameroon and other stakeholders will understand that fighting illiteracy requires more than just making primary education free. It also requires promoting incentives for children to attend school and remain healthy throughout the school year.

This article is adapted from a report sent by our partner, CENCUDER.

New Book by Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi



By BGR Staff - Wisdom Publications has just published a new book by our chair, Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, entitled *The Buddha's Teachings on Social and Communal Harmony*. The book is an anthology from the Pali Canon, with a general introduction and individual chapter introductions by Bhante. It has a foreword by the Dalai Lama and a prologue and epilogue by Alan Senauke. The text itself is organized into ten chapters, dealing with such topics as anger, proper speech, good friendship, the community, disputes, and the establishment of an equitable society. Here follows an edited excerpt from the Dalai Lama's foreword and from Bhante's general introduction.

"The materials gathered here clearly demonstrate that the ultimate purpose of Buddhism is to serve and benefit humanity. Since what interests me is not converting other people to Buddhism, but how we Buddhists can contribute to human society according to our own ideas, I am confident that readers simply interested in creating a happier, more peaceful world will also find this book enriching." — His Holiness the Dalai Lama

From the author's introduction

On one occasion, Sakka, the ruler of the gods, visited the Buddha and asked the anguished question: "Why is it, that when people wish to live in peace, without hatred or enmity, they are everywhere embroiled in hatred and enmity?" The same question rings down the ages, and could be asked with equal urgency about many trouble spots in today's world: Iraq and Syria, the Gaza Strip, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, Charleston and Baltimore.

This problem must also have weighed on the Buddha's heart as he traveled the Ganges plain on his teaching tours. The society of his time was divided into separate castes distinguished by the prerogatives of the elite and the servile status of those at the bottom. Those outside the caste system, the outcasts, were treated even worse, subjected to the most degrading indignities. The political landscape, too, was changing, as monarchies led by ambitious kings rose from the ashes of the older tribal states and embarked on military campaigns intended to expand their domains. Within the courts personal rivalries among those hungry for power were bitter. Even the spiritual communities of the time were not immune to conflict. Philosophers and ascetics proud of their theories sparred with each other in passionate debates, each seeking to defeat their rivals and swell the ranks of their followers.

Once he began teaching, the Buddha's primary mission was to make known the path that culminates in inner peace, but the Buddha did not turn his back on the human condition in favor

of a purely introspective quest for liberation. From his position as a renunciant who stood outside the conventional social order, he looked with deep concern on struggling humanity, enmeshed in conflict while aspiring for peace, and out of compassion he sought to bring harmony into the troubled arena of human relations, to promote a way of life based on tolerance, concord, and kindness.

But he did even more. He founded an intentional community devoted to fostering inner and outer peace. He was the founder of a new spiritual movement that from the outset was inevitably communal. As time went on, his teaching attracted increasing numbers of men and women who chose to follow him into the life of homelessness and take on the full burden of his training. Thus, there gradually developed around him a *Sangha*, a community of monks and nuns who lived in groups, traveled in groups, and trained in groups. For the Sangha to flourish, the Buddha had to become an “organization man.” He had to establish a detailed code of regulations for the uniform performance of communal functions and to promulgate rules that would restrain if not totally obliterate divisive tendencies.

The Buddha also taught and guided people who chose to follow his teachings at home, as lay disciples, living in the midst of their families and working at their regular occupations. He was thus faced with the additional task of laying down guidelines for society as a whole. In addition to a basic code of lay precepts, he had to offer principles to ensure that parents and children, husbands and wives, employers and employees, and people from very different backgrounds and social classes would be able to live together amicably. In the face of these challenges the scope of the Dhamma expanded. From its original character as a path to spiritual liberation, it gave rise to a broad ethic that applied not only to individual conduct but to the relations between people living under diverse conditions, whether in monasteries or at home, whether pursuing their livelihoods in the marketplace or workshop or in the service of the state. Under all these circumstances, the chief ethical requirement was the avoidance of harm: harm through aggression, harm by trampling on the claims of others, harm through conflict and violence. The ideal was to promote good will and harmony in action, speech, and thought.

The last part of this anthology moves from the intentional community, as represented by the monastic order, to the larger social domain. Its theme is the establishment of an equitable society. The texts include the Buddha’s teachings on family life, on the relations between parents and children and husbands and wives, and the maintenance of a beneficent home life. The last part of this chapter deals with the Buddha’s political ideals, which are represented by the figure of the “wheel-turning monarch,” the *rājā cakkavattī*, the righteous ruler who administers his realm in harmony with the moral law. Although principles of governance laid down for a monarch might seem obsolete in our present age with its professed commitment to democracy, in their emphasis on justice, benevolence, and righteousness as the basis for political authority, these ancient Buddhist texts still have contemporary relevance.

Walk Season Concludes



By Kim Behan - This year Buddhist Global Relief held ten U.S. Walks to Feed the Hungry. The first walk of the season kicked off in Milford, Michigan, which was followed by walks in Seattle, San Francisco, Philadelphia, San Jose, Los Angeles, New York, St. Louis, Willington (Connecticut), and Houston. This year our chairperson, Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, participated in three of the walks—in St. Louis, Willington, and Houston. Our executive director, Tom Spies, also participated in three

walks—in Philadelphia, New York, and Willington. Earlier during the summer, a walk was held in England, organized by The New Buddha Way, and a solidarity walk took place in India, held by our partner in Nagpur, the Bodhicitta Foundation.

All of us at BGR thank everyone who organized the walks, coordinated the activities, posted on the website, announced the walks on Facebook, volunteered at the sites, and turned out to join a walk. We thank the venerable monks, nuns, and other clergy who came along to inspire the walkers, and especially those who made donations to support a walk. These walks are BGR's life line. They are our main fundraising event of the year, and it is the funds raised by these walks that sponsor our many projects around the world—projects that literally save lives and shine light into the darkest corners.





You may not see it with your own eyes, but your participation in a walk—your dedication, your generosity, and your compassion—are truly saving lives. You are giving others the chance to live with hope and dignity, you are forging bonds of solidarity with people around the world with people you will never know and see.

For your contribution, we wish you and your families abundant blessings of peace, happiness, health, and delight in the Dharma.



How You Can Help BGR

Interested in volunteering for BGR? By joining our team, you will meet others who share your values and are working to put compassion into action and help create a better world. Some volunteers need to be located in a particular place, but most can work from home, wherever that may be. Please check the list of Volunteer Opportunities on our website and contact our volunteer coordinator at info@buddhistglobalrelief.org for further information. As always, donations to BGR are welcome. You can donate by PayPal or credit card on the [BGR website](#), or by check mailed to:

Buddhist Global Relief
2020 Route 301
Carmel NY 10512, USA

Thank you for your help!