Dear friends,

We will be publishing in three parts a reflection on ‘spirituality and human rights in action’ by Atty. Perfecto Caparas, which we perceive as quite relevant given the concerns expressed by some religious on their involvement in human rights issues. Some thoughts providing an insight into the thinking of the current President of Indonesia, useful reflection for life, and the discovery of the profound meaning of life/ the body are the few items lined up for this newsletter.

At a seminar organised in early February by Albert Schweitzer Association Philippines (ASAP) and Asian Human Rights Commission on Child Rights (AHRC) where over 20 government, semi-government and NGOs participated, the sad incident of over 2000 Manila children being rounded up and detained without court orders was reported. We reproduce here statement issued- number 5 - by the participants on this matter. Hope to provide more information on this matter in the next issues. The editor.

Please take note of our new e-mail address: rghr@ahrchk.org

1) Spiritual Warriors
2) Instructions for life - In a Lighter vein
3) The uniqueness of man in Islam - By Abdurrahman Wahid, the President of Indonesia
4) Songs of the Sons and Daughters of Buddha
5) Child detainees without court orders - In Manila
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1) Spiritual Warriors
by Perfecto G. Caparas II

SPIRITUALITY IN ACTION

THE human rights struggle is inevitably a struggle for heightened spirituality among humanity. For how can men and women celebrate their humanity amid conditions of want and fear? Of tyranny and wrath? Of inequality and institutional injustice? And much more, our own spirituality? Dialectically, the struggle for human rights and spirituality are intertwined. We drink from the wellspring of our humanity’s basic spirituality the
shining inspiration, the brilliance of thought, the strength, the courage of heart, the fiery militancy and passion of our struggle and conviction. And conversely, we advance, through the sheer gift and force of our divinity, the core characteristic of our own spirituality, the human rights struggle aimed to negate, to shatter the walls of human indifference and apathy, which are in themselves, too, byproducts of an unjust social order, together with its own socio-cultural, historic-religious, economic and political underpinnings.

The spiritual human rights warrior pushes for the epochal march of humanity towards its greater levels of spirituality. Hers/his manifests a concrete form of proactive and enlightened spirituality specially aimed at destroying any and all negative social forces and conditions that negate the basic humanity, and spirituality, and, thus, divinity and sacredness of man/woman.

A human rights advocate, in whatever field s/he may be, fact-finding and documentation, fact-finding and documentation, rehabilitation and healing, writing, solidarity and networking, or lawyering, serves as a mere channel, an instrument through whom, through whose life and works, the Divinity of Creation flows. For human rights warriors stand up and fight against the forces of injustice and oppression. Her/his goal is to eradicate social structures and conditions which breed man's exploitation of man by man. Her/his noble endeavor is prompted by no other than her/his own Higher Self, the Divine Spark of the Universe. Her struggle is directed at demolishing any aberration that diminishes the humanity of man/woman. Her/his own sensitivity, intuition, the fires of struggle and experiences, inner conflicts and turmoil, fears, weaknesses, inspirations and pains, all these serve to refine herself/himself as a gallant warrior.

2) Instructions for life - In a Lighter vein

1. Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
2. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.
3. Follow the three Rs: Respect for self, Respect for others and Responsibility for all your actions.
4. Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.
5. Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly.
6. Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.
7. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.
8. Spend some time alone.
9. Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values.
10. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
11. Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll be able to enjoy it a second time.
12. A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life. Do all you can to create a tranquil, harmonious home.
13. In disagreements with loved ones, deal only with the current situation. Don't bring up the past.
14. Share your knowledge. It's a way to achieve immortality.
15. Be gentle with the earth.
16. Once a year, go someplace you've never been before.
17. Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.
18. Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it.
19. Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.

3) The uniqueness of man in Islam - By Abdurrahman Wahid, the
President of Indonesia

"What differentiates human beings from all other creatures? Man has been endowed with a distinct personality that is absent in any other creature. Firstly, man's personality has the composite elements of the absolute truth. Thus a human being has the capacity to fight till death for a cause he or she believes in. The second element is that rational or calculated way of doing things, which is related to the advances made in science and technology. The third element is the capacity for aesthetic appreciation. The fourth is his inherent solidarity with fellow human beings. The composition of these elements is different in infinite ways from man to man, from an individual member of society to another. This then creates the necessity of preserving the individuality of a human being.

In order to achieve goodness and to help realize the unique individuality of each person, Islam enjoins the individual to uphold values such as truthfulness, honesty and humility and to generate an ever increasing well-spring of God-consciousness".

... Muslims now face the dilemma of whether to continue with the status quo which upholds the dominance of religious laws and a rigid moral code accepted by Muslim communities everywhere, and thereby place greater impediments upon the development of humanity and individuality, or reinterpret the teachings of Islam in such a way that its fundamental values and ideals will be able to assist in the realization of humanity."

* "Aids and Impediments to the Realization Of Humanity According to Islam" by Abdurrahman Wahid, The Human Being, Perspectives form Different Spiritual Traditions, Published by ALIRAN

4) Songs of the Sons and Daughters of Buddha

translated by Andrew Schelling and Anne Waldman (Shambhala Centaur Editions) Rediscovering the significance of LIFE!

NANDUTTARA

I used to worship
fire, the moon, sun,
all the gods

I used to go down
to the riverbanks
for the bathing rites

I took holy vows
shaved half my head
slept on the ground
wouldn't eat food after sundown

Then I decked myself
out with many ornaments
baths, unguents, massage -
you name it -

Tried everything
to stave off death

I was a slave to my body
Then I really "got" it
saw my body as it really is
went homeless

Lust? Sex?
Forget it
All that binds me head and foot
is loosened

5) Child detainees without court orders - In Manila

The group wishes to take particular notice of about 2,000 child detainees taken from the streets without any order from the judiciary in the course of roundup operations against street children waged by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, local government units, and the police about three months ago.

This, in the guise of beautification of Metro Manila. Metro Manila can never be beautified as long as there exist children who are detained without any judicial order. In fact, the moral quality of Metro Manila will stand to be condemned by such practices. The group calls for the immediate stop of rounding up street children and for appropriate action to be taken in returning them to their parents and/or guardians. For this purpose, immediate access to these detention centers should be given to lawyers, community and church leaders, and NGOs, especially those dealing with child rights. The group particularly calls on the Commission on Human Rights to investigate these centers as soon as possible and to publish a report relating to this matter on an urgent basis.

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6) ANNOUNCEMENT

You may obtain past copies of this E-Newsletter and other related material from RGHR. Those who wish to write articles or letters may contact rghr@ahrchk.org and the address given below.

SOME OF THESE DOCUMENTS WILL APPEAR IN PRINT FORM IN Human Rights SOLIDARITY - A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE ASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Posted on 2000-02-14
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remarks:1

Asian Human Rights Commission

For any suggestions, please email to support@rghr.net.
Dear Friends,

We are including two urgent matters. The attack on Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer and the arrest of Max Ediger, which is of grave concern to us. They have both, in their work as human rights activists, promoted non-violence and peaceful solutions. We are worried about the methods by which the Thai Government is handling Burmese political refugees as alien workers. You will find part II of Spiritual Warriors by Atty. Perfecto Caparas, which is a reflection on 'spirituality and human rights in action'. Please note the Prayer Day for Burma on March 12, the day to pray for Justice and Peace in Burma. We have included a comment made by Peter S. H. Chen on President Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia, which is a response to the article published in the previous issues of the e-newsletter.

Please take note of our new e-mail address: rghr@ahrchk.org

1) Max Ediger, An American Peace Activist Arrested
2) Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer Physical Assaulted
3) Spiritual Warriors: Part II - By Atty. Perfecto Caparas
4) Prayer For Burma: March 12, 2000
5) A Comment on The President Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia - Peter S. H. Chen
6) Updates: Newspapers Gave Good Response To The Monument For The Disappeared Persons In Sri Lanka

1) Max Ediger, An American Peace Activist Arrested

The reaction has been very firm and strong among many leading human rights activists against the arrest of Norman Max Ediger, 53, from 'Burma Issues'. Ediger was arrested under the possible charge of harbouring illegal immigrants. Along with Ediger eight other people were arrested. Human rights organisations have said those arrested are genuine political refugees, and not illegal aliens as charged.

Ediger has in the last 15 years been involved in the work towards a peaceful solution to reinstating democracy in Burma. His work is in many ways a very unique one seeking the peace and justice in Burma through non-violent means. This approach has been acknowledged by human rights groups throughout the entire world.
Max Ediger who is well known in the non-governmental organisation circles, has worked with Empower, an NGO that provides help to Thai prostitutes through education and skills training. He has also worked on a number of development projects in several slums in Bangkok, as well as on drug rehabilitation with addicts at the Thanyarak Hospital. He worked with mine victims during the Indochina War and has spoken out against both the military regime in Burma and some of the ethnic rebels fighting the junta.

At this moment it is not clear as to whether or not the charges will be pressed against Ediger and his colleagues. We sincerely hope that the charges will not be pressed and that the government will instead acknowledge Ediger's work towards peace and democracy in Burma.

2) Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer Physical Assaulted

Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer was attacked on Sunday the 13th of February, 2000 in the airport of Mumbai (Bombay) by the cronies of Syedna, the chief of Bohra priesthood. Dr. Engineer, badly bruised and bleeding, needed to be hospitalised for treatment and observation.

Dr. Engineer, the internationally renowned Islamic scholar, human rights activist, and ardent champion of inter-faith dialogue and understanding, has dedicated his life to the cause of liberating his community, the Bohras - a small Islamic sect. As a consequence, he has had to suffer not only social ostracism by a significant section of his community members - being blackmailed by the reigning priesthood - but also physical assaults from time to time both in India and abroad.

This time it happened at a scheduled brief stopover at Indore. There, however, the aircraft was detained for more than an hour to enable Syedna to board the plane along with his followers. The stranded passengers including Dr. Engineer raised their voice against the unjust treatment. This provoked the Syedna and his followers to single out the internationally renowned scholar and activist and launch a brutal attack against him, without any consideration for his sixty-plus age and frail health. At the same time his office and residence was vandalised.

Many prominent personalities of Mumbai have strongly condemned the fascist attack and called upon the Maharashtra government to bring the culprits and their instigators to book. They have also drawn the attention to the long-pending demand of the irrational powers of the Bohra priesthood. The attack against Dr. Engineer has underscored the fact that action in this respect brooks no further delay.

3) Spiritual Warriors

The human rights fighter stands as a spiritual warrior in the socio-economic and political front. S/he fulfills a part of the whole Divine Plan. For Life to renew itself. To seek for its own pristine beauty, through peace, solidarity, and harmony. Peace, communion, harmony, and serenity within ourselves, our brethren, our Mother Earth, and the entire Cosmos. 0-

A unifying force The struggle for human rights is endless. Just as the infant from the womb, to early childhood, adolescence, puberty, and adulthood matures, so does society so does men and women in their social life and relationships with each other, their own institutions and governments, as well as other nations, and finally, as one global family, who form part of the entire Cosmos. Depending on the stage of social development, more and more human rights workers would be reaching out to the vulnerable
members of society just like what they are actually doing now—the mentally weak and ill, children in need of special protection, women oppressed by gender, overseas Filipino workers, political prisoners or the prisoners of conscience—the farmers, fisherfolk, the workers, and indigenous peoples.

Human rights workers rage against the dying of the light. Collectively, they light up the torch of eternal vigilance of the people's rights and freedoms. This they do and concretize through politicization works, education, seminar, and forums, publications and writings, lobbying as well as marches, demonstrations and rallies. The human rights activists shall forever search for, be sensitive to, and be concerned with people whose human rights in their various facets and arenas are in one way or the other violated and trampled upon. Are we one in struggle? The universality of human rights makes it common to all, regardless of color of skin, race, social status, ethnic origin, religion, gender, ideology or political belief.

4) Prayer for Burma: March 12, 2000

The "Christians Concerned for Burma" calls for a Global Day of Prayer.

- Pray for an end to the atrocities in Burma
- Pray for the emergence of an open society and religious freedom for all peoples in Burma
- Pray for love and understanding among all the people of Burma
- Pray that we the Church will be faithful in opportunities to stand for love and truth

For further information please get in touch with Christians Concerned for Burma: e-mail ccb@pobox.com / www.prayforburma.org

5) A Comment on the President Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia,

by Peter S.H. Chen

Thank you for your email and the E-Newsletter which I have now received normally.

I noticed in the latest issue you ran a reprint from ALIRAN, a short article by the President Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia. The Indonesian President deserves a lot of respect and support not just in comparison with his predecessor and political leaders of his country but also among the government and political leaders of the world. To my mind he is an honest and upright and humble religious man with the courage to speak the truth even that pertaining his own religion, Islam, which is normally quite sensitive. Please join me in praying to Almighty God for President Abdurrahman Wahid and the people of Indonesia who had suffered tremendous poverty and deprivation and oppression under corrupt political and military leaders, and for the people in those parts of Indonesia torn by religious strife who, like the people in East Timor, had also suffered the brutal oppression of the military rulers, that His love, justice and peace will finally be established, and the human dignity of the people be restored. Yours in Christ.

6) Updates

Many newspapers have given good response to the Monument for the Disappeared Persons in Sri Lanka. Please see the latest edition of the
e-newsletter in which we brought the speech held by Basil Fernando on the 4th of February for the inauguration.

Daily News, Saturday 29 January 2000 wrote in short;

Monument to mark disappeared persons

Disappearance is a crime against humanity. Let us not allow it to happen again.

This will be a lasting memorial to remind all of us of the horrendous crimes perpetrated in our country and to concentrate all our energies to build a more human society and a culture devoid of hatred, killings and genocidal wars.

Posted on 2000-02-21
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remarks:1

Asian Human Rights Commission

For any suggestions, please email to support@rghr.net.
Dear Friends

The speech made by the Pope John Paul II on Torture in 1978 is included in the context of the 'Seminar on Torture, Inhuman and Degrading Punishment' being conducted. The issues of torture will be the focus of attention in the future. You will find part III, the last part, of 'Spiritual Warriors' by Atty. Perfecto Caparas. Finally Lin Chew of AHRC Human Rights School reports on the 6th International Conference on Buddhist Women, organized by Sakyadhita (Daughters of Buddha) in February in Lumbini, the birth place of Buddha.

Please take note of our new e-mail address: rghr@ahrchk.org

1) Pope John Paul II on Torture
2) Spiritual Warriors: Part III - By Atty. Perfecto Caparas
3) International Buddhist Women’s Conference By Lin Chew

1) Pope John Paul II on Torture

The Church and believers cannot remain insensitive and passive, therefore, before the multiplication of denunciations of torture and ill-treatment practiced in various countries on persons arrested interrogated or else put in a state of supervision or confinement. While Constitutions and legislation make room for the principle of the right to defense at all stages of justice, while proposals are put forward to humanize places of detention, it is obvious, nevertheless, that techniques of torture are being perfected to weaken the resistance of prisoners, and that people sometimes do not hesitate to inflict on them irreversible injuries, humiliating for the body and for the spirit. How can one fail to be troubled when one knows that many tormented families send supplications in vain in favour of their dear ones, and that even requests for information pile up without receiving an answer? In the same way we cannot pass over in silence the practice, denounced on so many sides, which consists in putting on the same footing those guilty, or presumed such, of political opposition and persons who need psychiatric treatment, thus adding to their pain another motive, perhaps even harder to bear bitterness.

Source: The address made to the Diplomatic Corps in 1978
2) Spiritual Warriors: Part III - By Atty. Perfecto Caparas

In human rights, too, lies the potency of unifying and harmonizing the entire human race. With respect for human rights as the foundation for a just and lasting peace and a relationship of solidarity, harmony, interdependence, mutual help, and cooperation. This being the case, spirituality - the very root and core foundation of humanity, the shining jewels of human rights - would rightly serve as the innermost core foundation of our one family, one globe, living within and in the universal cosmos.

Struggle through active non-violence How then does the spiritual warrior for human rights pursue her/his quintessential cause?

Harmlessness and non-injury serves as an implicit, underlying, and core belief and principle stemming as it does from the pure nature of the human spirit behind the ferocious conviction of human rights activists who march, write, shout, advocate and fight in order to denounce rank injustices to slumdwellers driven out from their shanties, farmers who at gunpoint are barred from cultivating their own land, and prisoners who are tortured and unjustly detained.

The energy that spurs the human rights activists to denounce actually affirms the sacredness of man/woman's humanity. Human rights struggle is a bold form of spirituality. One that holds the value of sanctity of human life, dignity, and freedom as inalienable, indivisible, and interconnected. One who holds that a violation of the human rights of an individual diminishes and weakens us all. The human rights fighter combines inner reflection with enlightened action. For s/he strives to harmonize and synthesize, to raise to higher levels the struggle, towards newer and greater heights. Active non-violence serves as a potent tool to advance the cause of human rights, which to the late Sen. Jose "Ka Pepe" Diokno, is the greatest of all causes. As he wrote: "There is no cause greater than the cause of human rights." The form of struggle that ensures that the struggle would be based on enlightened awareness, on virtues that negate and counteract latent injustice, hence, a counter-culture, a counter-force to socio-cultural bases of structural injustice and oppression.

Thus, the struggle is for humanity's affirmation carried out by means of affirmative, proactive and non-violent yet potent and militant mass and collective actions mobilizing the vast segments of society: the critical mass. We struggle in the realm of consciousness and hearts. This, even as we learn from the painful lessons of decades of fratricidal war in our own country. And if need be, should the strong and the mighty become so misled in the arrogance of their own power, where all other peaceful means fail, through another non-violent revolution - the birthright of our people.

3) International Buddhist Women's Conference By Lin Chew

The Sixth International Conference on Buddhist Women, held from Feb 1-7 in Lumbini, Nepal, under the title: "Women as Peace makers: Self, Family, Community, World".

It was an impressive gathering. About 170 participants, at least two thirds of whom were nuns, gathered in the birth place of Buddha to exchange information and learn new skills and ways for improving their own practice of the precepts of Buddhism and for creating a more peaceful world for all humanity. Participants came from Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Canada, China, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea,
Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom, USA.

The days were filled with many informative presentations of different monastic traditions and "Buddhist" themes as "teaching Compassion" and "Loving Kindness"; "Dharma Education for Women in Nepal", and interactive workshops on peace-building, health and leadership. But it was most enlightening for me to hear the nuns (all very 'woman-conscious') speaking of their struggle to gain equal status with the monks in the monastic life, and their concern for the education of girls, not only for those who aspire to become "Bhikkhunis" (ordained nuns) but for all girls and women.

Some quotes, summarised from different presentations:

"...in Cambodia, there was the big work of reconciliation after the destruction of the war; but now the tasks of women is only doing housework and serving monks. We are now working to achieve equality - as teachers, as counsellors. We have formed a nun's association, and spread our thoughts through publications, distributed through 13 provinces; there is one on women's rights. We run training courses for nuns in local communities, to get awareness of women's rights."

"....in Myanmar, in pre-modern times women have always been active in the Sangha....but the monks will not allow revival of the Bhikkhuni Sangha (nun's order); they will not recognise their sisters, will not take responsibility for their education. But conditions are changing. New generations of educated nuns are studying and working for changes; nuns are also in the forefront of social welfare, running homes for the aged, orphanages, gaining recognition from the government for their good works."

" ...in New Zealand, the Buddhist Sangha is growing, but patriarchal structures are transferred to the Sangha; structures and history only support male spirituality, in training, women and men have different syllabuses and women are given only the preliminary teachings. There are but few women leaders, both in Buddhism and Judaism in New Zealand, both still discriminate against women. "

"...in Sri Lanka the Bhikkhuni Sangha was recently re-established. Nuns now practise 311 precepts and also engage in social activities"  

","...Vietnam is a very small country, has been until 25 years ago, in war: with the Chinese, the French and the Americans. So women suffer very much; after preparing to get married, husbands have to go to war. Every time husbands come back, women get children. They bring up their children without their husbands; they also care for their own and their husbands' families. Without the men, the society needs the work of the women; we have to work for money for the family, also for the temples; in the evenings we pray for the war to stop, for husbands to come back. .....There is a separate Bhikkhuni Sangha, the nuns are very independent, and take are of the education of young nuns, religious and secular; we run a clinic for aryuvedic and western medicine, a maternity clinic and a home for the disabled."

"...in Tibet, (the Tibeten nuns present are living in India) we think religion should not be afraid of political conflict. We try to live in peace and teach people to live in peace, whether in education or in the monastic way......The education of nuns is the key to their self-realization and their potential to help others in community. Being a woman is very important, sometimes we don't realize it; we can learn from the roles of women and mothers. We have a project - running a school for nuns from outlying areas, in Dharmsala and around there are 500 Tibetan nuns; in Dharmsala there is a reception center, from where nuns who arrive are transferred to nunneries. Many nuns have been in prison, and have been tortured. In our
Tibetan Nuns’ Project we want to run health worker an teacher trainings; we also try to get rid of patriarchal tendencies. In Dolma Ling nunnery there will be a higher institution for nuns and lay people; we also provide for the older nuns in the mountains, who do not or cannot study any more."

It was clear from the presentations that there are abundant resources within Buddhism for engagement in human rights work; the workshops on health, leadership and Peace-building, all built on Buddhist precepts of individual responsibility for removing the conditions of suffering; universal compassion and "loving kindness" as basis for solidarity with the whole of humanity; and living in "mindfulness" to acquire the right knowledge about the human condition. These are solid foundations for human rights action; living the Buddhist precepts consientiously means studying, analysing (knowing) and acting in solidarity with all those who suffer......and are struggling to achieve freedom.

Explicitly applying human rights principles in the practice of Buddhism means using the specific framework and language for study and analysis (acquiring right knowledge) as well as for action (practising compassion). Consciousness of one's rights and freedoms entitles one to demand and claim these rights. The human rights system offers a strategy, both locally and at supra-national level if need be, to protest and demand accountability from states for the violation of human rights, which is the cause of inequalities, injustices and of suffering in the world. Human Rights uniquely, embody goals as well as principles of action: in striving towards the inclusiveness, egalitarianism and democracy which are the fundamentals of the human rights regime, we must make sure our own working and relational processes are also non-discriminatory, inclusive and democratic.

Affirmation of universal human rights for each and every human being entitles each one of us to claim and guard her human rights, at the same time realizing that these rights only have reality when the rights of everyone else are also realized and protected.

As the Buddha said, each one must walk her/his own path to enlightenment.......

The last session of the Conference was "envisioning Sakyadhita for the future".

Among the main proposals listed were: to work in war, conflict countries at peace-building; to work on human rights, form advocacy groups on issues like Tibetan cause and trafficking (sale) in girls; to promote education for girls (great need for voluntary English teachers); to undertake more social work / social action; to establish independent and self-supporting nunneries; to strive towards de-centralisation of Sakyadhita to become a movement, with autonomous regions or countries having their own responsibility and resources. For these, more skills will be needed: a.o., community-building (for nunneries); leadership and training for participation.

The Conference was organised by Sakyadhita : Daughters of the Buddha. Sakyadhita's continuing mission is the empowerment of Buddhist women in their quest to transform their lives, their communities, and contribute to peace in the world. According to Sakyadhita Secretary, the Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo:

"An important aspect of Sakyadhita's mission has been awakening women to their own potentialities and imparting the confidence and training needed to maximize those potentialities. Among people in Western countries, this has involved educating people and correcting the misconception that the ender problem has been solved. Among people in Asia, it has meant educating people about the attainments of nuns and
laywomen in the early Buddhist texts and the achievements of women in other Buddhist countries. Sakyadhita members have published numerous books documenting their research on women in Buddhist cultures. As a result of Sakyadhita members' efforts, more women are now being included more often in Buddhist forums and Buddhist women's concerns are more frequently being discussed. The justification of Sakyadhita's work is not simply to benefit women. Our work stems from the realization that inequalities lead to injustices and injustices inevitably lead to strife. Gender inequalities are the cause of violence perpetuated daily in homes around the world - homes where young people learn the values and habits that affect the rest of their lives. Strengthening women is a way of correcting inequalities, preventing violence and injustice, and building more peaceful societies at the most fundamental level - the family......”