



Buddhist Peace Fellowship

2930 Domingo Ave #1324 Berkeley, CA 94705

True Justice, True Peace

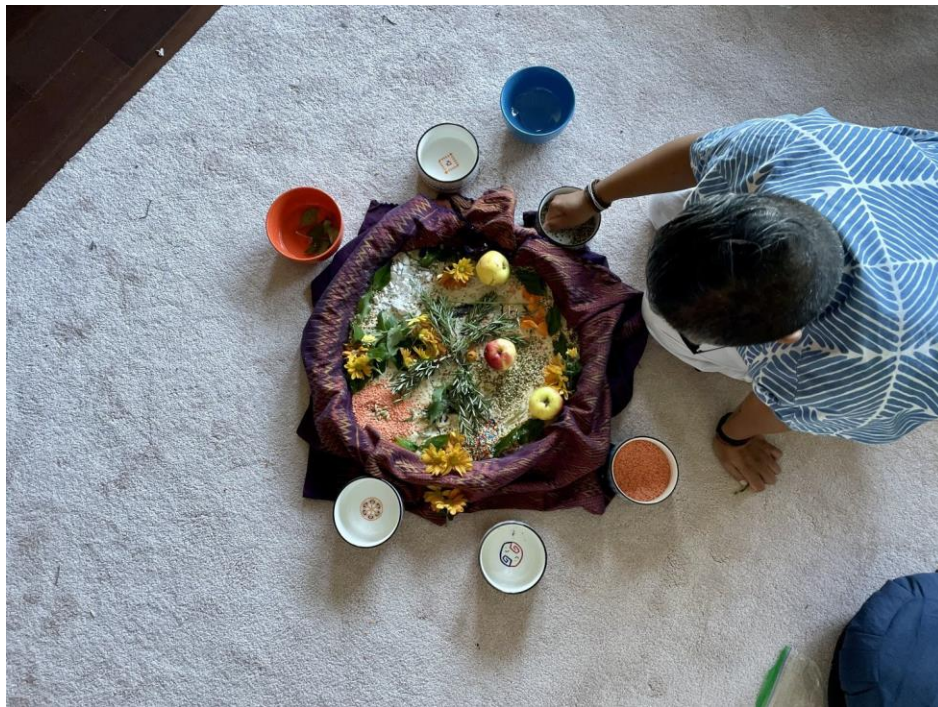


Photo of the ofrenda we created to grounded our recent board and staff retreat, led by brilliant facilitator Kimi Mojica (pictured). A tray draped in maroon fabric rests on a white rug, with small bowls surrounding it and a person preparing to add another offering. The tray has been ritually filled with earth-based items from our kitchens and apothecaries: apples, chrysanthemums, cascarilla, rosemary, dirt, lentils, honey, breastmilk, and rice.

Dear Dharma Family,

Yesterday, my toddler woke up early to the sound of a helicopter flying low over our Philadelphia home. She cried out for me, and I rocked her in the dark, acutely aware of how blessed I am to be able to comfort my frightened child.

In times of war, it's the pictures of youth that send me back to bed in the middle of the day, and keep me awake at night.

I shudder to think of what it must be like not to be able to protect one's child from unrelenting daily terrorism, settler-colonialism, and war.

I grieve the far too many children who will never grow up, or who will grow up crying for their lost parents. I'm terrified by how easy it will be for terrorists to radicalize the children who *do* manage to grow up under these conditions.

Several months ago now, Buddhist Peace Fellowship quietly signed the [Apartheid Free Communities pledge](#). In doing so, we joined over a hundred faith-based and solidarity organizations working together to end all support to Israel's apartheid regime and military occupation.

Which is to say – our support for a free Palestine did not come as a response to the current crisis. It came as an acknowledgement that the conditions leading up to the current crisis were already violent and unsustainable.

There is no excuse for terrorism. We mourn horrific deaths and kidnappings of Israeli civilians at the hands of Hamas. And we see that Israel's decades-long oppression of the Palestinian people did not make it safer. Oppression will never lead to justice. War will never lead to peace.

True peace is what we long to see – for this and future generations.

In the past few days, dharma teacher [Larry Yang's metta prayer](#) for unenlightened practitioners in unenlightened times has been a consistent refrain in my mind:

*May I be loving, open, and aware in this moment;
If I cannot be loving, open, and aware in this moment, may I be kind;
If I cannot be kind, may I be nonjudgmental;
If I cannot be nonjudgmental, may I not cause harm;
If I cannot not cause harm, may I cause the least harm possible.*

There has already been so much harm, and we certainly don't want to cause any more of it. Not with our words, not with our actions.

We also believe that in moments like these, where an urgent response is of the utmost importance, the most harmful thing to say is nothing at all.

So, with our imperfect analysis, with love in our hearts, and with our growing edges showing...

We say NO to a US-funded war of annihilation on Palestinians.

NO to governments engaging in terrorism and warfare targeting civilians.

NO to conflating anti-zionism with anti-semitism.

And NO to using tragedy as an excuse to expand Israel's settler-colonial hold on Gaza.

We thank you for all you are already doing to demand a ceasefire – [calling congress](#), [showing up at rallies](#), [talking to your people](#).

Buddhist Peace Fellowship will be offering a few online spaces for practice, learning and conversation in the coming days – starting on October 30th with "[True Justice, True Peace: An Engaged Buddhist Response to the Crisis in Gaza.](#)"

We hope to see you there.

Yours in love and struggle,

Kate Johnson
Co-Director, Programs and Partnerships
Buddhist Peace Fellowship