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Sallie B. King/Being Benevolence

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Introduction

In the Buddhist Compassion Relief General Hospital in Hualien, Taiwan, a large mosaic in the lobby greets visitors. The mosaic depicts Shakyamuni Buddha treating the illness of a sick monk, an event recorded in Buddhist scripture. Visitors to this Buddhist hospital are told that this image “represents the policy of this hospital. Besides treating the illness, the staff must, as Buddha did in the mural, also show compassion towards the individual.” The founder, Master Cheng Yen, states that “illness is one of the many unavoidable sufferings between birth and death, and that we should do all we can to help the sick feel less miserable—if it is at all possible.”

When I read this passage, I was strongly struck by the juxtaposition of three things: the words, “illness is one of the many unavoidable sufferings between birth and death,” calling to mind the first of the Four Signs that led Siddhartha Gautama, the future Buddha, to renounce his life of wealth and ease to seek answers to the problem of the human condition; the image in the mural of the same man, now Shakyamuni Buddha, treating with compassion and skill the sickness of an ailing monk; and, finally, the existence of the Buddhist Compassion Relief General Hospital, founded by the nun Master Cheng Yen. In the juxtaposition of these words and images is a response to those who feel that Engaged Buddhism is somehow inappropriate or un-Buddhist, the product of Western influence.

It is often pointed out that the kind of suffering that Shakyamuni Buddha was concerned to eliminate is the kind that is intrinsic to the human condition, inherent and ineliminable; the paradigm of this kind of suffering, in fact, is represented by the first three of the Four Signs: illness, old age, and death. As Master Cheng Yen says, illness is one of the “unavoidable” forms of suffering. There will always be illness, just as there will always be birth and death, as long as there are human beings. But to those who say that the Buddha, in response to his dismay over the human condition and the first three of the Four Signs, sought and discovered a way to end the human condition as such and that this and only this is the end of Buddhism, one may point to Master Cheng Yen who, in turn, points to the Buddha as not only the Great Physician, the one who shows the way to cure the inherent ills of humankind, the human condition as such, but also the one who, in the meantime, bends to help a sick man here and now with his skill
and compassion. One does not preclude the other. Indeed, for Engaged Buddhists, each necessarily encompasses the other. In short, to those who say that Buddhism’s cure for *ill*, for suffering, for *duḥkha*, is to leave the world of samsara altogether, to leave behind a condition of being that is unfixable, one may point to the example of the Buddha, who did indeed teach a way of leaving samsara altogether, but who also, as the record shows, was concerned to heal that part of the suffering of samsara that could be healed within samsara.

As for Western influence, the Buddhist Compassion Relief General Hospital is again instructive. The hospital was fundamentally born out of the dedicated compassion of Master Cheng Yen. This compassion was guided by two events. The first occurred when Master Cheng Yen visited a friend in a hospital. While leaving the hospital, she saw a pool of blood on the floor of the entrance hall. When she inquired about it, she was told that the blood was from an aborigine woman suffering from a miscarriage who had been refused admittance to the hospital because she was unable to pay the required entrance fee (at the time such fees were required by all hospitals in Taiwan). The second event came from the visit of three Catholic nuns to Cheng Yen. They pointed out to her that “there are all sorts of Catholic hospitals and schools and charity organizations, but never any Buddhist ones. They told the Master that, in the eyes of the world, the Buddhists are but a passive group of people contributing nothing to society.” The combination of these two events determined Cheng Yen to found a hospital that would care for everyone with compassion and skill, regardless of whether they could pay.

Is this Western influence? There is no doubt that the Catholic nuns’ words served as a goading irritant. Cheng Yen writes, “I left home because the teachings of kindness, compassion, joy and unselfish giving in the sutras touched me deeply. However, for the last two thousand years, from India to China, there is little concrete evidence of Buddhist contributions to society. While other religions such as Christianity and Catholicism have acted to improve public welfare, I felt ashamed about being a nun who could not implement the Buddhist teachings of compassion and wisdom in society.” As she was hatching the idea for the hospital, Cheng Yen said to her followers, “We will become Kwan-yin’s [Kuan-yin’s] watchful eyes and hands, and the world can never call us Buddhists a passive group again!”

But let us be careful of one thing. I gather that many of those who want to dismiss Engaged Buddhism as “merely” the product of Western influence, and thus not truly Buddhist, are concerned about Western cultural imperialism. They want Buddhism to be preserved as Buddhism and not to be overrun and transformed into some distorted, Westernized quasi-Buddhism by the tidal wave of Western culture that is sweeping the world. This concern, with which I very much sympa-
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Third, overlooks something important. Ironically, it diminishes the very thing it is trying to protect: the agency of individual Buddhist leaders.

Buddhism today, like all religions, exists in a dynamic world of constant encounter among the world's religions. Buddhist leaders and followers are regularly exposed to a barrage of Western culture. The leadership of Engaged Buddhism, in particular, is highly subject to such influence. Many of them sought out Western education and spent formative years in the West, and almost all of them regularly engage in discussions and exchanges with Western leaders, religious and secular. The heart of the question is this: does this extensive exposure to Western culture, religion, ideas, and ways of thinking—which I by no means want to minimize—mean that Engaged Buddhism is the product of Western influence? To assume so is to deny the subjectivity and agency of the Engaged Buddhist leaders themselves.

Those who think that Engaged Buddhism is the product of Western influence have in mind a model of cross-cultural encounter that assumes the overwhelming power of Western ideas and culture and minimizes or negates the power of Buddhist ideas and culture. It assumes that Buddhist ideas and values are helpless before the onslaught of the conquering culture. But this set of assumptions negates precisely those things that it is most concerned to protect: the alterity and agency of the Buddhist leadership. Of course, there are good historical reasons for conceiving of cross-cultural and interreligious encounter in terms of this model (for example, the joint offensive of British imperialist and Christian missionary forces in colonial India). I believe, however, that it would be much more accurate in the case of Engaged Buddhism to take as our model for cross-cultural encounter the model of dialogue.

In the dialogue model, representatives of the two cultural/religious groups meet as equals, each side represents itself in its own words to the other side, and each listens respectfully to the other and then does whatever it wants (or nothing) with what it has heard. In dialogue, ideally all participants are aware that everyone always speaks from a particular point of view, based in each case upon the person's cultural background and personal experience. Thus, in this model, the image of the tidal wave of cultural imperialism, obliterating everything in its path, may be replaced by the image of a less overpowering wave, depositing all kinds of detritus—sand, shells, and garbage—from a distant shore on one's beach. Dialogue gives one more material upon which one may draw, but one is by no means forced to accept anything. One responds as one will and, it is important to note, always from the cultural and religious place where one is situated. Thus, if an Engaged Buddhist, in the course of learning about Western culture, hears an idea that sparks interest, it is as a Buddhist and from a Buddhist perspective that that idea sparks interest and
from that perspective, again, that he or she responds to the idea and chooses what
to do with it.

I believe this model fits the case of Engaged Buddhism very well. It respects
the agency, the subjectivity, and ability to choose of both parties to the dis-
cussion. The Engaged Buddhist leadership is constituted by highly intelligent, very
well educated men and women who are not of a nature to be pushed around, intel-
lectually or otherwise. Think, for example, of the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh,
Buddhadassa Bhikkhu, Sulak Sivaraksa, Aung San Suu Kyi, and A. T. Ariyaratne.
Intellectually, these leaders are quite capable of holding their own. The first three
have even written books in which they articulate their own Buddhist perspectives
on Christianity! In their lives of social and political engagement, moreover, they
have all made a career, on the one hand, of resisting force and, on the other, of
fashioning and holding up creative visions of new possibilities. Asia is no longer
the world of the British Raj. All the evidence indicates that, although the En-
gaged Buddhist leadership is thoroughly familiar with Western religious and socio-
economic-political ideas, they are more than capable, in dialogical fashion, of
selecting particular ideas of interest from the Western world (for example, human
rights) and responding to them in a Buddhistically trained and educated manner,
incorporating them into their views, when they so choose, by finding parallels or
sympathetic values in the Buddhist tradition that have perhaps received little at-
tention in the past. Ideas or values that are dissonant with their own they let pass.

The other thing missing from the tidal wave image is the fact of the two
directions in which cultural exchange flows. It is not the case that the Engaged
Buddhist side is doing all the receiving. The Dalai Lama’s and Thich Nhat Hanh’s
books are published in English and can be found in most American bookstores;
some of the Dalai Lama’s books have even made the New York Times bestseller
list. The Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh speak regularly to large audiences
throughout the West. The nonviolent struggle of Tibet has made a great impres-
sion upon many. Thich Nhat Hanh’s idea of “being peace” has begun to alter the
fundamental thinking of many Christian pacifists about how one approaches so-
cial activism. It is no doubt fair to say that there has been greater influence from
the West on Engaged Buddhism than the reverse, but we should not forget that
this is a two-directional exchange.

It may fairly be asked whether such a thing as “Engaged Buddhism” exists. Or,
to speak more carefully, is there a form of Buddhism with sufficient unity among its
various examples and sufficient difference from other forms of Buddhism to go by
the single name, “Engaged Buddhism”? Engaged Buddhism is not defined by geo-
graphic location. There are Engaged Buddhists throughout the Buddhist world—
in South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the West—wherever there is sufficient freedom for Buddhists to engage the problems of society as conscience and Buddhist principles dictate. Nor is Engaged Buddhism defined by sect—there are Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana, and nonsectarian forms of Engaged Buddhism. Engaged Buddhism is defined and unified by the intention to apply the values and teachings of Buddhism to the problems of society in a nonviolent way, motivated by concern for the welfare of others, and as an expression of one’s own practice of the Buddhist Way.

Engaged Buddhism did not begin from a single point and spread. On the contrary, it arose in different locations throughout the Buddhist world in response to the crises faced in each place in the twentieth century, a century that was in many respects disastrous for Buddhism in Asia, but also propitious in seeing the spread of Buddhism to the West and the development of many reform movements, of which Engaged Buddhism is one. Today, a loose network among Engaged Buddhists exists in the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, founded by the Engaged Buddhist leader Sulak Sivaraksa, and, more important, in the many personal relationships among Engaged Buddhist leaders and activists. This networking is a way for Engaged Buddhists to share ideas but no more than that. There are no institutional or ecclesial structures formalizing Engaged Buddhism as a sect or as a sociopolitical movement, nor are any such structures likely to develop. They would serve no purpose. Engaged Buddhism exists as an intention and a practice within existing forms of Buddhism.

Naturally, with the geographic and sectarian diversity that exists among Engaged Buddhists, there will be differences among them. There are differences as well based upon individual character and individual interpretations of Buddhism. Engaged Buddhism is unified the way a philosophical school is unified. In the latter, there is a set of issues of particular interest, a set of ideas and values that all thinkers assume, and a characteristic way of approaching issues, but each individual thinker takes a somewhat different approach and indeed makes his or her contribution to the formation of the school of thought by virtue of those individual variations on the common theme. In the case of Engaged Buddhism, there are two categories of variation on a theme. First, there are differences in idiom in which the forms of expression, images, and language of the individual thinkers and movements differ to some extent. Second, there are cases of more substantive difference in which the fundamental values remain the same, but those values are interpreted or applied differently or in different degree.

An example of the first kind of difference concerns one of the most important values of Engaged Buddhism, universal benevolence. A Mahayana idiom
for expressing this value uses the bodhisattva Kuan-yin, beloved throughout East Asia as the Bodhisattva of Compassion. Cheng Yen takes the familiar image of Kuan-yin, whose many eyes and arms in one of the traditional forms is traditionally understood to represent Kuan-yin’s ability to perceive and respond to trouble everywhere, and transforms it in Engaged Buddhist style:

The Master looked at the crowd, met their pleading eyes, and saw their beseeching hands with palms touching. Suddenly she realized that by joining all these eyes and hands a force could be formed—a force with enough eyes to locate the suffering ones and enough hands to grant them help.

The Master smiled when she thought of Kwan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy and the Protector of All in Distress, who, according to legend, has a thousand observing eyes and a thousand helping hands. The Master then said, “We will become Kwan-yin’s watchful eyes and useful hands, and the world can never call us Buddhists a passive group again!”

In a masterful way, Cheng Yen simultaneously demythologizes Kuan-yin while using the traditional meaning and devotion accorded her to inspire a large group of Buddhist faithful to translate their ideals and devotion into practical, hands-on action.

Of course, the image of Kuan-yin would not work in a Theravada country. Though Theravadins do speak of compassion, they more frequently speak of mettā, loving kindness, than of compassion, as their idiom for expressing beneficence. A little reflection makes clear that, when compassion (concern that others not suffer) and loving kindness (wish for others to be well and happy) are translated into action, they come to the same thing: benevolence, concern for the welfare of others, and action to enhance others’ welfare. Thus, Theravada language and images of loving kindness are used in fashion similar to Mahayana compassion language to inspire action to enhance the well-being of others.

For example, in Sri Lanka, A. T. Ariyaratne, founder of the Sarvodaya Shramadana and leader of an important movement to end the violence in that country, organizes mass peace meditations. At those mass meditations, hundreds of thousands of people are taught not only to meditate on mettā, but also to use those meditations to dismantle attitudes and actions of hostility supporting the violence in Sri Lanka and to inspire action to bring the violence to an end. Like Cheng Yen referring to Kuan-yin in the Mahayana case, here Ariyaratne refers to a central icon of the Theravada Buddhist tradition and uses it to inspire beneficent action. This seems to me a difference in idiom.
More significant differences, it seems to me, are those that involve differences in interpretation and application of common values. We will see in chapter 6, that, although all Engaged Buddhists strongly espouse nonviolence, some do so as principled pacifists and some as pragmatic pacifists. Some recognize potential limits to nonviolence, and others would give up all else before they gave up pacifism. These are significant differences, but they are not great enough to break the coherence of Engaged Buddhism, because all remain committed to living by nonviolence, often under the most difficult conditions. It is important to bear in mind these individual differences among Engaged Buddhists. Although there is general agreement among them, they do not as a rule speak for each other.

A book like this cannot be exhaustive—it cannot survey each of the Engaged Buddhists on each issue—they do not all write on each issue!—nor can it compare and contrast their variations and differences in all combinations on all issues. As a result, I have concentrated upon the views of those who have commented most extensively or thought most deeply or with most innovation on an issue and selected the most significant differences to explore.

I do not wish in this volume to repeat the information already available in Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia. I refer the reader to that volume for much fuller descriptions of the Asian Engaged Buddhist movements than I will provide here. The intention of this work is to dig more deeply into the philosophical substructure beneath the Engaged Buddhist movement as a whole, to examine Engaged Buddhist thinking, its roots in traditional Buddhist thought, and its creative development of tradition; to identify its strengths and probe its implications; and to raise questions, opening doors for further thought and investigation where there is thinking yet to be done. I have the greatest respect for all the Engaged Buddhists. When I challenge them, it is in a spirit of taking their ideas seriously and with the hope that such challenges may in a small way assist the ongoing development of an important contribution to Buddhism and the world.

Although I do not wish to go into detail here, I do want to introduce briefly the thinkers and activists whose words will appear most frequently in these pages. Others will appear occasionally, but these are the thinkers on whom we will focus. Not all Engaged Buddhist leaders will be found in these pages. Because of the nature of this volume, I have been most interested in those who have made the most important and/or most creative contributions to Engaged Buddhist thought per se.

A. T. Ariyaratne is a Sri Lankan Buddhist layperson and, since 1958, the founding director of Sarvodaya Shramadana, a development and peace organization that is the largest nongovernmental organization in Asia. He has pioneered
the discovery of Buddhist economics as an alternative to capitalist and communist economics and invented a Buddhist self-help development process (Sarvodaya Shramadana) that has revitalized village life in more than half the villages of Sri Lanka. This is a development process that is concerned not only with economic development, but also takes a holistic approach to the well-being of both the individual and the village in their economic, cultural, social, political, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, ultimately seeking the “awakening” or enlightenment of both individual and community. In recent years, Ariyaratne’s attention has turned more and more to the effort to end the violence between Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. Ariyaratne has won the Niwano Peace Award and the Gandhi Peace Prize.

Aung San Suu Kyi is the leader of Burma’s National League for Democracy, which since 1988 has worked for the emancipation of Burma from its brutal military regime and the institution of democracy and human rights in Burma. She and her party won a landslide victory in 1990, winning more than 80 percent of the constituencies, after which the military regime refused to transfer power and instead placed her under house arrest, where she remained for six years. Separated from her family as her sons grew from childhood to adulthood and even as her husband was dying, she has remained a steadfast and courageous example of the nonviolent struggle of a people for self-determination and decency. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. At this writing, she is once again under arrest.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1906–1993) was a Thai Buddhist monk, exceptionally skilled in interpreting the Dhamma of the Buddha for the modern era. A rebel against the Buddhist institutional system, he broke from the Buddhist establishment, educated himself in a new way of approaching Buddhist thought, and established himself independently in his own monastery. He was not an activist, but a Pali scholar and creative thinker intent on reforming Thai Buddhism and challenging Thai Buddhists lulled by traditional interpretations to look at the teachings of the Buddha more deeply and to see them with fresh eyes. He articulated a fresh and powerful spirituality that gave many people renewed interest in Buddhism. More than a thousand people a year, including many foreigners, came to his monastery, Suan Mokh—itsel itself a creative approach to Buddhist spirituality—for training.7 Buddhadasa also made very original and even deliberately provocative contributions to Buddhist social and political thought, always with the intention of stimulating thought and discussion. In this sense he has been instrumental in communicating the idea that Buddhism should have an application for the life of society. His talks and writings have been of great interest in intellectual and so-
cially progressive circles in Thailand and beyond, and through them his influence on Thai society has been considerable.

Venerable Master Cheng Yen is a Taiwanese Buddhist nun who in 1966 founded the Tzu Chi Foundation, a huge charitable organization with more than four million members based in Taiwan but with branches in twenty-eight countries where expatriate Taiwanese and Chinese are found. The four missions of Tzu Chi are charity, medical care, education, and culture. It has made particularly significant contributions in establishing free medical care in Taiwan and elsewhere, in providing international disaster relief, and in establishing the world’s third-largest bone marrow data bank. With her tremendous charisma and exalted moral standards, Master Cheng Yen is the object of deep devotion to her followers. She has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and has won the Philippine Magsaysay Award, the Eisenhower Medallion, and the Noel Foundation Life Award.

In the company of the other Engaged Buddhist leaders, Venerable Cheng Yen stands out as the only one who is firmly apolitical. Whereas, of the present company, only Aung San Suu Kyi has sought political power, all the other Engaged Buddhist leaders have made extensive comments on political matters, and most of them have been directly involved in political struggles. Cheng Yen is the only one who never comments on political matters or in any way engages them. In addition, she requires that her many followers have nothing to do with politics. It would be possible to argue that Cheng Yen is not an Engaged Buddhist leader but a Buddhist reformer and leader of a huge Buddhist charitable organization. She has, however, galvanized millions of Buddhists to take concrete action to relieve the suffering of others by convincing them that their identity as Buddhists requires this active expression. Thus, I believe that it is best to see her as an Engaged Buddhist, though somewhat anomalous with respect to her strict abstention from politics.

His Holiness, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso is the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people. Born in Tibet, he was identified as the Dalai Lama at the age of two and taken at four for training to the Potala Palace in Lhasa. Following the Chinese invasion of Tibet, he fled Tibet in 1959. Since that time, from his home in Dharamsala, India, he has led the Tibetan government in exile—overseeing its transformation from a medieval institution into the beginnings of a modern democracy. He has also headed the Tibetan liberation movement and overseen the well-being of the Tibetan people in exile. He has continually reached out for dialogue with the Chinese and offered many peace plans, to no avail. He has popularized his core beliefs of nonviolence and universal responsibility to a global audience. The Dalai Lama has won the Wallenberg Award, the Albert Schweitzer Award, and the Nobel Peace Prize. His courage and cheerfulness in the face of ad-
versity and his unique personality, sense of humor, and principled pacifism have all combined to make him the most popular and influential Buddhist teacher in the world, indeed a spiritual teacher to many non-Buddhists, and a beloved figure and inspiration to countless more.

The Cambodian monk Venerable Somdech Preah Maha Ghosananda spent the years of the Khmer Rouge era in a Thai monastery, where he had been in training since 1965. He returned to Cambodia in 1978, shortly before the fall of the Khmer Rouge and immediately entered the refugee camps, where he worked tirelessly to heal wounds and prevent acts of revenge. Since that time, he has worked for reconciliation among the still mutually hostile camps in Cambodia and attained fame through instituting the Dhammayietra. The latter have been a series of annual peace walks that have had a tremendous impact on the healing of Cambodia. These walks have, in various years, accompanied refugees returning home, helped to ensure peaceful elections, brought a taste of peace to areas still experiencing hostilities, and drawn attention to the problems of land mines, domestic violence, and deforestation. Maha Ghosananda travels the world, looking after the Cambodian people in diaspora and attending meetings for peacemaking. He is the Supreme Patriarch of Cambodian Buddhism and is often called the “Gandhi of Cambodia.” A nominee several times for the Nobel Peace Prize, Maha Ghosananda was awarded the prestigious Niwano Peace Prize. Despite having lost his entire family in the Cambodian Holocaust, Maha Ghosananda always radiates infectious joy.

Venerable P. A. Payutto (Phra Dhammapitaka) is a leading Thai Buddhist scholar. His masterpiece, Buddhadhamma, is considered the most important work of Theravada Buddhist scholarship of the modern era. Like Buddhadasa, he has written extensively on the application of Buddhism to contemporary social issues. Payutto decries the paucity of social applications of modern Thai Buddhism as one of its deficits. “In fact, one of the hallmarks of Venerable Prayudh’s presentation of the Buddha’s teachings is his emphasis on Buddhism as a religion of action and effort...not one of inaction as it is commonly pictured.” In addition to his works of Buddhist scholarship, Payutto has written books on economics, political theory, science, the environment, and education. These writings have made a considerable impact and “helped bring Buddhism out of the monastery to a much more active involvement in social issues.” Phra Payutto has won the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education, in recognition of his efforts to promote world peace.

Sulak Sivaraksa is a Thai Buddhist layman and social activist. Himself of aristocratic descent, he champions the causes of the poor and the oppressed. He is a prominent social and political critic in Thailand and has been twice arraigned, and once imprisoned, on charges of lese majesty for his words critical of the govern-
ment. His concerns are wide ranging. He is an outspoken critic of corruption, militarism, consumerism, injustice, and globalization. He consistently promotes, with both words and creative actions, protection of the environment, gender equality, nonviolence, human rights, protection of local culture, and the application of Buddhist values to social reform. He has founded numerous publications and nongovernmental organizations, including the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. Sulak has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and has won the Right Livelihood Award.

Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Zen monk, trained in Theravada as well as the Zen tradition. He coined the term "Engaged Buddhism" to refer to the kind of Buddhism that he wanted to see develop: one that would actively and directly concern itself with the welfare of the people. He cofounded the School of Youth for Social Service to train young Buddhists in applying their Buddhist values to serve the needs of the Vietnamese people. When the war broke out, he became one of the leaders of the "Struggle Movement" or "Third Way" that tried to bring the war to an end without taking sides with either North or South. He traveled the West as a spokesperson for the Buddhist antiwar perspective, after which he was unable to return home. He became the chair of the Vietnamese Buddhist Peace Delegation that tried to bring the Buddhist message to the Paris Peace Talks. Martin Luther King, Jr., nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize. Since the war years, he has lived in exile in France, traveling the world giving talks and training on nonviolent social activism. He is a prolific writer and has published many books of prose and poetry on Buddhism, peacemaking, and Buddhist-Christian dialogue.

The structure of this volume is as follows. I begin in chapter 2 by examining the roots in Buddhist tradition of Engaged Buddhist social ethics. In that chapter, I survey the traditional Buddhist concepts and practices that come up most consistently in Engaged Buddhist discourse—interdependence, compassion, meditation, and so forth—and begin to look at how the Engaged Buddhists apply them to their particular concerns. Chapter 3 constructs a theory of Engaged Buddhist social ethics using an inductive method—that is, building the theory from its elements. Chapter 4 is a transitional chapter. It begins with Engaged Buddhist metaphysical views on the individual, society, and the relationship between the two and moves from there into a consideration of questions in political theory concerning the proper balance between the individual and society. The second half of the book focuses on applied social-political issues, chapter 5 on human rights, chapter 6 on nonviolence, and chapter 7 on social justice. In chapter 8, I summarize the major achievements of the Engaged Buddhists and then offer my own views on the issues that I have examined in the second half of the book.