Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda
Ground Purification Ceremony

Thirty-seven years after work on the first Pagoda was halted

By Rev. Senji Kanaeda

Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo

“"The appearance of a Pagoda touches the hearts and minds of all people. Those who venerate this pagoda absolutely reject nuclear warfare and firmly believe that a peaceful world will be manifested. The vision of the Peace Pagoda has the power to bring about a spiritual transformation. It illuminates the dawn of a spiritual civilization.”

— Most Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii (1885-1985), Founder, Precepter, Nipponzan Myohoji.

Please join us on Saturday, August 24, 2019, at 11:00 AM at Ground Zero for the Ground Purification Ceremony for the Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda.

The ground purification ceremony (Jichin-sai) is a traditional Buddhist and Shinto ceremony in order to receive permission from the local guardian god (spirit) and purifies the building site. It is also the means to pray for the related people’s safety during construction and for prosperity.

As part of the ceremony, Omiki (Sacred sake), Okome (sacred rice) and salt are also returned to the ground.

Supporters of the Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda are expected to attend from across the U.S. and from other nations for this joyous occasion. We will have guest speakers, prayer, and music. Please join with us if you can.

For more information please call or email Rev. Senji Kanaeda at Kanaedasenji@gmail.com, and (206) 780-6739 and (206) 724-7632.

Rev. Senji Kanaeda lives at the Nipponzan Myohoji Temple on Bainbridge Island, where he has worked and prayed for peace since 2003.
On Friday afternoon, May 17, 2019, Kitsap County sent a brief email to Ground Zero that stated, “Your permit # 19-01165 has been reviewed and approved for construction by Kitsap County Department of Community Development.” With that short message, the permitting process for the Peace Pagoda, now named the Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda, was finally resolved.

Reverend Senji Kanaeda was notified of the building permit by phone—he had been walking and chanting in Bainbridge Island and praying for the Peace Pagoda when he received the call.

When Nichidatsu Fujii Guruji first came to Ground Zero in the fall of 1980, he proposed that a Peace Pagoda be built there. Guruji said it would commemorate and support people being jailed for peace. In 1982, construction of the Peace Pagoda had begun, only to be met with legal challenges during the permitting process and in the courts. On May 28, 1982, the geodesic dome at Ground Zero, containing a statue of the Buddha and a crucifix, was burned to the ground.

On June 16, 1982, on Bainbridge Island, Nichidatsu Fujii Guruji said, “The peace pagoda that we attempt to erect at Ground Zero is a reflection of our ardent wish to eliminate nuclear weapons. Its erection is a direct challenge to the power and authority that has established a nuclear submarine base. … Time will eventually come when the government will be compelled to admit the wrong.” Guruji stated, “We shall wait.” Years later Ground Zero obtained FBI records that indicated two Marines from the base started the arson fire that destroyed the dome.

In March 1985, attorney Mickey Gendler outlined options to challenge the final February 25, 1985 decision against the Peace Pagoda by the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners. But by then, construction of the pagoda had stopped years before, and the dream was put on hold.

In February 1987, the Ground Zero community and Ron Konzak obtained permission from Kitsap County to build the Gendai Hoto, a smaller stone stupa which contained the remnants of the Buddha and the crucifix united by fire. The Gendai Hoto was erected at Ground Zero by the Nipponzan Myohoji Order with the guidance of Sister Jacqueline Gemme in September 1987.

In July 2003, Reverend Senji Kanaeda moved from Japan to the Nipponzan Myohoji Temple on Bainbridge Island and revived the dream of the Peace Pagoda. However, discussions regarding the Peace Pagoda were cut short by the fire that destroyed the Ground Zero house in April 2005.

Efforts to gain a permit for the Peace Pagoda on Bainbridge Island were stopped by the City of Bainbridge Island planning department. Other locations were considered but gaining a permit was always a problem.

On April 4, 2015, the Ground Zero community approved the Peace Pagoda design and construction on Ground Zero property. That approval involved a seven-month process with a Peace Pagoda committee, several Ground Zero community meetings, and steady communication with members of the Stewardship Council and members of Ground Zero. The Navy stated in writing that it would not oppose the construction of the Peace Pagoda.

In 2016, renewed efforts for a Peace Pagoda building permit were stopped when the County informed Ground Zero of a new requirement for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) in order to continue the use of its property and house as a center for work and actions. The CUP, or land use permit, would have cost many thousands of dollars, involved public hearings, and likely resulted in impossible restrictions on the use of Ground Zero property. Ground Zero was told that after it obtained the CUP, the County would then address a building permit for the Peace Pagoda. Ground Zero was in danger of losing use...
of the house and property. After a series of public records requests and ongoing discussions with numerous County officials, Ground Zero members realized that Kitsap County land use regulations were being incorrectly applied to Ground Zero. The land use regulations requiring a Conditional Use Permit for Ground Zero had been enacted after Ground Zero was established in 1977.


On May 9, 2018, Ground Zero members met with Kitsap County officials to discuss Ground Zero land use and permitting issues for the Peace Pagoda. What was expected to be a contentious meeting ended within minutes when the Assistant Director for the Kitsap County Department of Community Development informed Ground Zero members that the County had withdrawn the requirement for a Conditional Use Permit and that the County wanted to help Ground Zero build the Peace Pagoda.

During all of this time—since 1980, when Guruji declared a Peace Pagoda should be built at Ground Zero—Nipponzan Myohoji Order nuns and monks and Ground Zero members have worked together to save the planet on the brink of nuclear disaster.

Now is not the time to let up on resistance to Trident. The Peace Pagoda will be built with labor and funds from supporters of the Buddhist community. Ground Zero members look forward to providing assistance to their sisters and brothers with the Nipponzan Myohoji Order.

Ground Zero will work soon to establish some type of easement to ensure that Nipponzan Myohoji Order members will forever have access to the property. Likewise, Ground Zero would like to ensure that the property will always be open to the public.

It is our deepest wish that the Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda will grow in the hearts of all peace-loving people in the U.S. and across the planet. This will be the first Peace Pagoda on the U.S. West Coast. The Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda is likely the first Peace Pagoda to be built on land owned by a peace community other than the Nipponzan Myohoji Order.

The Peace Pagoda, when built, will be 110 feet from the property line separating Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action and Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor—with the largest concentration of deployed nuclear weapons in the U.S.

On April 8, 1982, The Most Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii stated:

NA-MU MYO-HO-REN-GE-KYO

“There are limits to the enforcement of policies that aggravate the arms race. However, people’s aspiration toward peace is boundless. Violence of the authority might temporarily gain victory. Yet it is nothing more than a springtime dream. The life of religion, the foundation of all non-violent movements and the creation of peace, is infinite.”

We shall meet any kind of hardship thoroughly by our unshakeable spirit of perseverance and await the coming of spring, the time of blossoming…"

In 1985, Shelley Douglass stood in front of the unfinished Peace Pagoda. The article quoted her as saying, “We stand for what is not typical. This is a military county, but we’re saying there is a better way.” Photo courtesy of the UW Archives.

Glen Milner coordinates legal efforts on behalf of Ground Zero. He lives in Lake Forest Park.
Nine Cited for Blocking Base Entrance During Mother’s Day Action

By Elizabeth Murray

Approximately 30 pro-nuclear disarmament activists took part in a spirited rally at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor on Saturday, May 11 in the spirit of the original antiwar message of Mother’s Day, which calls for the abolition of war and militarism.

This year the Ground Zero Center activists were accompanied by the Seattle Peace Chorus. Also participating was Chicago-based peacemaker Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, whose keynote address at the Ground Zero Center entitled: “Deploying Love in a Permanent Warfare State.” Earlier in the day, Tacoma-based attorney Blake Kremer briefed the activists on their legal rights while undertaking nonviolent actions.

During the afternoon action at the base, activists blocked the entrance to Trident Gate (Main Gate) while holding up banners that read: “Disarm Trident, Deploy Peace” and “Congress Wants $1 Trillion for Nuclear Weapons, What Will Be Left for Our Children?” Supporters stood alongside of the road held aloft signs reading: “Abolish Nuclear Weapons” and “Our Children Deserve Better.”

Brenda McMillan of Port Townsend; Kathleen Kelly of Chicago, IL; Kit Kittredge of Quilcene; Doug Milholland of Port Townsend; Mona Lee of Seattle; Ramon Naacanaynay of Shoreline; Larry Kerschner of Centralia; and Bob Delastrada of Olympia were cited on the county side of the blue line. James Manista of Olympia was cited for crossing the line onto the federal side.

Elizabeth Murray serves as Member-in-Residence for Ground Zero. She has joined in citizens’ delegations to Russia and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Appeal to Navy Personnel distributed at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor

By Glen Milner

On June 11, seven Ground Zero members handled out over 100 leaflets at the Main and Trigger Avenue entrances to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, starting at 6:30 am and ending at around 7:30 am.

Ground Zero member Mary Gleysteen stated, “I have been leafleting at the Bangor submarine base since the mid 1970’s. This is the most important leaflet I have ever handed out. In a time of unprecedented global instability, it is a direct appeal to people who have the ability to prevent annihilation of life as we know it by refusing to launch the illegal and grotesquely devastating Trident weapons of mass destruction.”

“We share a common concern with members of the armed forces—that the use of nuclear weapons would lead to unimaginable destruction to innocent populations and to our planet, stated Ground Zero member Glen Milner. “The legitimacy of an order to launch nuclear weapons is a discussion that is likely already occurring among Navy personnel.”

In addition to Mary and Glen, Elizabeth Murray, Mack Johnson, Mary Hanson, Michael Hill, and Rodney Brunelle also leafleted.

See the Appeal to Navy Personnel and the latest signatures on the Appeal at Ground Zero’s website.

Rodney Brunelle hands out a leaflet and a smile to a driver entering the base. Photo by Glen Milner.

Please contact info@gzcenter.org if you wish to sign the Appeal. Leafleters are discussing whether to make the Appeal to Navy Personnel an annual event, and whether to use the leaflet on additional dates in the next year.

Glen Milner serves on the leafletting committee and coordinates legal efforts on behalf of Ground Zero and the Peace Fleet.
Peace Fleet July 29!

By Glen Milner

On Monday July 29, at noon, local activists will stage a water-based nonviolent protest against the glorification of weapons of war at the Seattle Seafair festival. For the eighteenth year, peace activists will meet the U.S. Navy fleet in Elliott Bay. The boaters and kayakers will assemble by Pier 66. Other peace activists will meet on the Rooftop Plaza on Pier 66 on the Seattle waterfront at 1:00 for a nonviolent demonstration against weapons of war. An elevator is available inside the Pier 66 Bell Street Pier Cruise Terminal (2225 Alaskan Way) to access the Rooftop Plaza. Why would we demonstrate for peace at a Seattle maritime festival? We are here for the unrepresented and forgotten victims of these weapons of war and to accept responsibility for the crimes of our nation. And because the celebration of warships in our harbor helps bring about the normalcy of modern war. The fleet arrival at Seafair is a public relations and recruiting event for the U.S. Navy.

This is the first year for the fleet arrival on a Monday. It is also the first time in many years that the Coast Guard, Port of Seattle, and Seafair have announced plans for the fleet arrival more than several weeks before the event. The Port of Seattle provided basic information on the fleet arrival on June 4. The Port stated that the rooftop of Pier 66 will be open—a contentious issue in the past, when access to the rooftop had been prohibited to the public.

This year, the Boeing Company is the sole sponsor for the fleet arrival at Seafair. According to CNBC, the Boeing Company is the second largest defense contractor in the world with annual defense contracts amounting to $26.9 billion in 2017.

On April 22, 2019, the Coast Guard informed Ground Zero members that the Coast Guard would not be enforcing the no-protest zone, or so-called “safety zone,” in Elliott Bay this year. The 100-yard exclusionary zone at Pier 66 was established as a Coast Guard permanent rule in 2012. Coast Guard security zones for moving vessels and naval vessel protection zones will be enforced.

Glen Milner serves on the Stewardship Council and coordinates the annual Peace Fleet action.

2019 Pacific Northwest Interfaith Peace Walk

For A Nuclear Free World
In Respect of All Life

By Rev. Senji Kanaeda

“The religious basis of the non-violent movement was laid as far back as 2,000 years”-Ven. Nichidatsu Fujii

Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo

The annual Peace Walk is sponsored by Nipponzan Myoji Buddhist Order, Eugene, Tacoma, Vancouver Catholic Workers, Ground Zero Center For Nonviolent Action and Peace, Lake Forest Park for Peace, American Indian Organization for Change, Foot Prints for Peace, Bainbridge Island-North Kitsap Interfaith Council and more.

It will begin on Friday, July 26 in Eugene, Oregon, and continue on, reaching Portland and Vancouver on July 30. On Wednesday July 31 the walk will be in Tacoma, and on August 1 in Seattle. On Saturday, August 3 the walk will reach Ground Zero. The walkers will stay at Ground Zero through Monday, and then return to Seattle on August 6 for the “Hiroshima to Hope Lantern Ceremony” at Green Lake.

This will be the 15th Peace Walk in the Northwest. We walk to listen and share the voices of the victims of warfare. For the past 15 years, we have walked in Oregon, Washington, California, New Mexico, and British Columbia. Our ties to the Marshallese Community in Salem, Oregon have been strengthened through walking and praying with them. The steps we take are small just like a ripple in a pond, yet, it is certainly a way to teach the promise of peace on this Earth.

We will walk 11-16 miles per day. Work for peace by walking with us for the entire walk, just one day or even for a few hours, or just joining us for our evening potluck dinner and program. Bring personal gear and a smile with you and experience an experience of a lifetime. All are welcome.

The smallest of contributions gratefully received.

Rev. Senji Kanaeda leads Peace Walks around the world. To join the walk, contact him at (206) 780-6739 or (206) 724-7632 (cell) or email kanaedasenji@gmail.com.
Peacemaker Kathy Kelly Speaks at Ground Zero

“Resisting Trident is Deploying Love”

By Elizabeth Murray

With a dramatic and riveting speaking style that captivated her audience, international peacemaker Kathy Kelly wove a series of vignettes into a powerful message about the need for people to display basic humanity toward one another - both in everyday life and in U.S. foreign policy. With a culture awash in endless war, militarism and violence, we must all persist in the difficult work of transforming the way we view and treat others, she said.

Kelly, a longtime Chicago-based peace activist and founder of Voices for Creative Nonviolence (vcnv.org), spoke on “Deploying Love in a Permanent Warfare State” to a crowd of 45-50 who gathered May 11th at Ground Zero for the one-day event which included a nuclear resistance action at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor. Her speech reflected the original intent and spirit of Mother’s Day articulated by its founder, Julia Ward Howe.

In the “Appeal to Womanhood,” written in 1870, Howe deplored the culture of male violence and militarism in the wake of the Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War. She wrote:

“Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience. We, women of one country, will be too tender of those of another country, to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs.

“From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says: Disarm, disarm! The sword of murder is not the balance of justice. Blood does not wipe out dishonor, nor violence vindicate possession. As men have often forsaken the plough and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of Council.”

Kathy noted that it’s almost as though the collective peace movement is trying to stamp out a series of brush fires — every time you turn around, she said, it seems as if new war is about to erupt.

She began by referring to ‘Plowshares 7’ nuclear resister (and friend of Ground Zero) Steve Kelly, who is still imprisoned in the Glynn County jail for a nonviolent action calling attention to the malignant presence of Trident nuclear submarines at the Kings Bay naval base in Georgia (see kingsbayplowshares7.org).

Kathy (a longtime friend of Steve but no relation) said she was certain that in “the unusual cartography” of Steve Kelly’s worldview, “he truly does not recognize the authority of nation-states and their weapons arsenals.”

She emphasized the importance of following the wisdom of Steve and the Kings Bay “Plowshares 7” — who through their action sound the alarm that Trident submarines (eight of which are stationed at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor) each carry explosive potential equal to 1,825 times the destructive force of the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima.

Kathy recalled the peaceful sight of Senji, Utsumi and Denise - members of the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist order - chanting and drumming outside the Kings Bay Nuclear Naval Station in September 2018, during the weeklong peace walk she organized as a solidarity action for ‘Plowshares 7’ activists Steve Kelly, Mark Colville and Liz McAlister who remain incarcerated in Brunswick, Georgia.

She admired the fact that the Nipponzan Myohoji religious order dedicate themselves to summoning awareness — worldwide and within the United States — of how wrong and misguided it is to develop, store sell and use weapons, be they conventional, nuclear or economic.

“Our nuclear arsenal allows us to hold a gun to the heads of other countries,” Kathy said. “I remember, as a student at Loyola University, hearing Noam Chomsky. He said the United States tells every developing country in the world: ‘If you do not subordinate yourselves to fulfill our national interest, we will eliminate you.’”

Kathy—who has spent extended periods with vulnerable people amidst wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Gaza, among others—said that her organization, Voices for Creative Nonviolence, believes that “where you stand determines what you see.” She noted that VCNV activists have tried to stand alongside people who are unable to escape the brunt of war.

Kathy Kelly… continued on page 7
And yet, she said, in Yemen — where the Save the Children organization has reported 85,700 children have already died from disease and starvation caused by war — the Saudi government will not allow human rights or antiwar activists to enter Yemen.

Under a Saudi-imposed blockade, only one commercial flight per week, enters Sana’a, the capital of Yemen. The Saudis vet the passenger list, ensuring that no one boards the flight who lacks a UN Identification card or credentials proving employment with a non-governmental organization (NGO) with a long history of working in Yemen.

Nonetheless, she noted, several courageous journalists have traveled into Yemen and filed stories from remote areas that help us learn from Yemeni villagers.

Kathy told about people in the Yemeni village of Arhab who in 2016 cooperated to dig a well. When they finally hit water, their village celebration lasted long into the night. As people headed home, a Saudi warplane attacked them. When the Raytheon-manufactured weapon they dropped on the celebrants exploded, shards of the weapon traveled at eight times the speed of sound. Some of the celebrants were decapitated, others brutally maimed.

The next day, 100 people gathered to examine the destruction and search for loved ones. More war planes flew overhead, again bombing the villagers. Thirty-one people were killed.

She spoke about the village of Al Ghayyal which the U.S. attacked in January of 2017. Navy Seals had been sent to capture or kill an alleged Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) fighter. A battle broke out between the Navy Seals and villagers. The Navy Seals’ helicopter was disabled. Apparently a grenade killed one Navy Seal, Chief Petty Officer Ryan Owen.

But that same night, after the Navy Seals called for U.S. aerial attacks, U.S. forces killed 26 people, including ten children under age 13 and six mothers. The journalist Iona Craig traveled to Al Ghayyal to learn about the incident firsthand and report the grim details.

A more recent attack against civilians occurred when a Saudi warplane attacked a Save the Children hospital in Kifat, killing seven Yemeni civilians, four of them children.

Kathy recalled a U.S. attack on a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan. “Why did your people want to do this?” asked Khalid Ahmed, a young survivor who worked in the hospital pharmacy. “We were only trying to help people.”

Forty-two people were killed in the attack, which lasted for one and a half hours. Thirteen of them were Khalid’s co-workers, three of whom were doctors.

From Arhab, we can learn about cooperation for the sake of survival. From Al Ghayyal, we learn the pernicious nature of believing in exceptionalism. And from Kifat and Kunduz, the goodness of choosing service over dominance, she said.

Kathy recalled the time when, after she was arrested for planting corn on a nuclear missile silo site, a young soldier assigned to guard her chose to offer her a respite from her hours of standing under a hot sun: “Ma’am, would you like a drink of water?”

As he squeezed his canteen to assist her so that she—handcuffed—could drink the water, Kathy noticed that he had “more or less put down his weapon.”

She asked her Ground Zero audience to think about the soldier’s question: “Ma’am, would you like a drink of water?” What if, Kathy asked, we could pose that question to children, thirsting and starving in Yemen; or to the children of Flint, Michigan, who are forced to drink lead-poisoned water; or to the children of future generations, who will struggle with the consequences of climate catastrophe?

“What if,” she wondered, “we could tell them that we care far more about giving them clean, clear water than we care about maintaining our hideous arsenals of weapons?”

“Courage,” Kathy concluded, “is the ability to control our fears.” We catch courage from one another, she said. The Ground Zero Community’s peace work has created rippling circles of courage, as others recognize that resisting Trident is deploying love.

Later in the day, Kathy put her words into action as she joined fellow Ground Zero nuclear resisters in holding up several banners in front of Naval Base Kitsap Bangor and reading aloud passages from the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

This year’s Mothers Day event also featured the spirited musical accompaniment of the Seattle Peace Chorus as well a lively and well received presentation by Tacoma-based Plowshares attorney Blake Kremer, who showed activists how to exercise their legal rights when undertaking nonviolent actions.

Elizabeth Murray is a member of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, and serves as the Member-in-Residence for Ground Zero.
“Catastrophic climate change and nuclear war are unique in the threat they pose to the very survival of human civilization.”

— Ira Helfand

Nukes Huh! What Are They Good For? Absolutely Nothing!

By the Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemoration Planning Committee

Please join Ground Zero for our annual commemoration of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The weekend will start with a potluck supper at 6:00 pm on Friday, August 2. It will be followed by a discussion with local activists focused on the question, What is our relationship to the Trident base?

On Saturday, August 3, the Peace Walkers will arrive at 10:30 am, and the Tom Shea memorial is at 4:30 pm. In the evening, a concert starting at 7:00 pm with Hank & Claire (hanknclaire.com) singing songs of resistance and resilience.

On Sunday, August 4, the day will begin with our keynote speaker, David Swanson (pictured above). His talk, entitled, “The Myths, the Silence, and the Propaganda That Keep Nuclear Weapons in Existence,” will start at 10:30 am. David is a Virginia-based author, activist, journalist, and radio host. He is director of World Beyond War and the campaign coordinator for RootsAction.org. His books include War Is A Lie, When the World Outlawed War, and War No More: The Case for Abolition.

Lunch will be followed by nonviolence Training at 3:00 pm, presented by Julianne Gale and Zephyr Elise. Discernment and nonviolent action planning will follow.

On Monday, August 5, a vigil, flash dance, and nonviolent civil disobedience will take place at the entrance to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor.

We’d love to see you there!

For rideshare information to the August events, visit www.groupcarpool.com/t/uf9d57.