

WHY THE YPC CHOSE THE NONVIOLENCE PROJECT

The year was 1995. The New York Youth Peace Committee (YPC) had just finished celebrating the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. A celebration steeped in flowering ideals of peace and brotherhood. But as we contemplated what our next step was as a committee for peace, two events occurred that changed the direction and focus of what would be our next four years.

First, one YPC member had been mugged on his way home from the New York Culture Center. Not long after, another youth division member was murdered on the subway after telling his “gang” he was no longer interested.

The dialogues that ensued were intense and thought-provoking. With discussions focusing on the three poisons of greed, ignorance and anger, we soon came to realize that until the negativity that exists in the human heart is healed, there can be no peace throughout our world, even if the United Nations declares that war is abolished. We asked ourselves what could we, as Buddhists, do to calm the fires of violence that rise from such unhappiness and suffering.

Our journey toward understanding and overcoming violence in this world led to the selection of the nonviolence video and information kit as the YPC’s next project.