

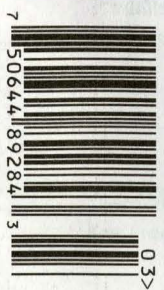
TURNING WHEEL

The Journal of Socially Engaged Buddhism



DHARMA & DEMOCRACY

*Dennis Kucinich, Taigen Leighton, and Others on
Joining Spirituality and Politics
Plus: Jan Chozen Bays on Jizos for Peace*



From the Editor

On Voting

When the Buddha told us, “no picking and choosing,” he meant don’t pick all the cashews out of the trail mix. He didn’t mean don’t vote.

Remember the first noble truth: Life is Suffrage. *Suffrage* comes from a Latin word meaning to cast a vote with a broken tile (really!). I would like to see us bring back this method of voting in places like Florida, but if we can’t do that, then we can at least sign up to be election monitors.

Our right to vote is hard-won. In 1964, as a college student, I went to Mississippi to support black people in registering to vote. People were risking their lives, and some were losing them, in order to exercise their right to vote in the United States. 1964 wasn’t that long ago.

Soon after, I became old enough to vote myself (which was 21 back then), but before I registered, I accidentally became a felon, convicted of aiding and abetting another person (boyfriend) to possess marijuana. (Not my proudest moment, but still, I wasn’t really hurting anybody.) As a felon, I was not allowed to vote, even though I learned a lot about our democratic system as a result of my tangle with the law. When my conviction was overturned on appeal a few years later, I was no longer a felon—impermanence!—and I registered to vote.

Because of my experience in Mississippi, and because I had temporarily lost my own right to vote, I took it seriously, and I have always voted since.

No Americans should take the right to vote for granted. Even free white men didn’t get the right to vote in this country without a revolution. And finally all the rest of us have gotten it, too. In 1870, the 15th Amendment gave the right to vote to all male citizens, regardless of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” In 1920, 72 long years after the Seneca Falls conference declared that “All men and women are created equal,” the 15th Amendment gave women the vote. As a woman, I honor the courageous lineage of Lucretia Mott *Daiosho* (“great teacher”), Elizabeth Cady Stanton *Daiosho*, and Susan B. Anthony *Daiosho*. Not voting would feel like I was disrespecting them, and Thomas Paine, and Martin Luther King Jr., and the many others in the lineage.

Don’t give up! Don’t hold yourself apart from your fellow humans, thinking you are too pure to vote. And don’t fall into cynicism, thinking it’s useless. Beneficial actions produce beneficial results, whether you can see them or not. When you vote, you participate in the sangha of this nation. I love going to my polling place at the local senior center. I enter public space, that threatened habitat.

Voting is a kind of vowing, and as Buddhists we are accustomed to vowing to do the impossible. It’s a matter of intention. Sentient beings are numberless; I vote to save them.

I’m happy to welcome Colette DeDonato as the new managing editor of *Turning Wheel*. Colette is a poet and an experienced editor, and recently edited *City of One*, an anthology of poems about peace by young people. She’s expecting a baby in the fall, and will be taking a maternity leave. In the meantime, she has joined us in time to give to this issue her humor, her organizational skill, her equanimity, and her ability to trim the verbal fat from writing. I look forward to working with her, and to having a very young member in the BPF extended family soon. ❖ —Susan Moon

Coming deadlines for *Turning Wheel*:


Spring ’05: **No theme**. Deadline: December 6, 2004

Summer ’05: **Crossing Borders**. Deadline: February 7, 2005

Send submissions of essays, poetry, drawings, or photographs to *Turning Wheel*, P.O. Box 3470, Berkeley, CA 94703-9906, with SASE; or to <turningwheel@bpf.org>.

TURNING WHEEL

The Journal of Socially Engaged Buddhism



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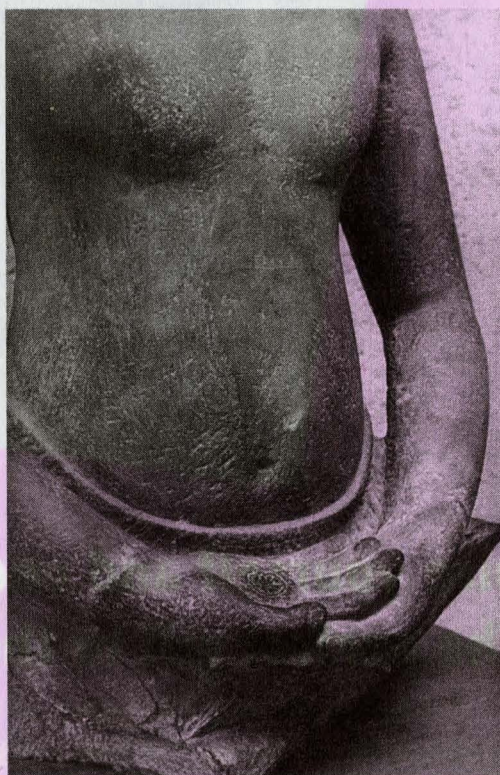
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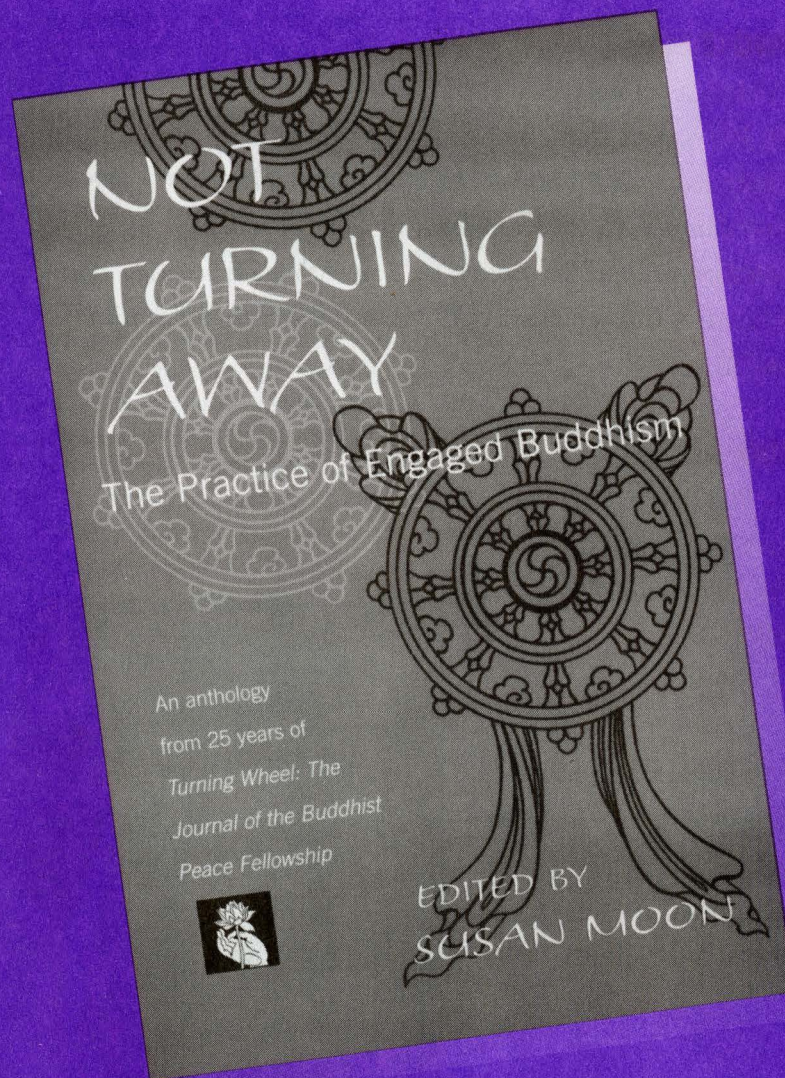
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Letters

We welcome your responses to what we print. Write to Turning Wheel, P.O. Box 3470, Berkeley, CA 94703, or send us an e-mail at <turningwheel@bpf.org>. Letters may be edited.

On the "Drapechi 14" Nuns

I'm serving a prison term in North Carolina. The article in the Summer 2004 issue of TW "The 'Drapechi 14' Nuns Have All Been Released" gave me a deep sense of accomplishment. After first hearing about them in the spring of 2001, I secretly circulated a petition here and wrote poems and letters to various organizations about my feelings for them. They have inspired me in my way of seeing prison life.

I have a photo of Chuye Kunsang and Passang Lhamo with a friend in Washington, D.C., displayed near my altar. Thank you for your coverage of this issue.

—Anonymous in North Carolina

On Science and Consciousness

I enjoyed the "Hungry Ghosts of the West" article in the Summer 2004 issue of *Turning Wheel*, and I agree that consciousness is one of the last remaining mysteries. I suspect, however, that the author would resist my referring to it that way—as if consciousness too may sooner or later be resolved and no longer remain a mystery.

The same issue of *Turning Wheel* repeats a quote from the Dalai Lama to the effect that if science should disprove any aspect of Buddhist cosmology, Buddhism must change.

I don't expect science to "disprove" consciousness. There is nothing to disprove. But I do expect science to be able to say more about how it works. When that happens, I don't want to see Buddhists disappointed because they were hoping that science would fail. That would put us on the wrong side of awareness.

Science has seen many revolutions, most of which have corrected our sense of ourselves as being the center of the universe. Understanding consciousness will simply be another step in that realization.

Whether or not we understand how sentience works, we will remain sentient beings. As the Buddha said, it's all in our heads, and knowing how our heads work won't make it less so. It will simply make it less grandiose, which will be good for us.

—Russ Abbott

Response from Annette Herskovits

Thank you for a thoughtful and thought-provoking letter. As I understand Buddhist teachings, the wise have a mind that is not attached to any view, including a scientific theory or even Buddhist views. This is not the same as denying the truth of scientific theories or Buddhist teachings, or the value of reason. The Dalai Lama's confidence in science and rationality makes me feel the more at home with Buddhist teachings.

But science and reason have limitations. Denying those

limitations is another path to grandiosity. In Colin McGinn's words: "We should have the humility, and plain good sense, to admit some things may exist without being knowable by us."

—Annette Herskovits, Berkeley, California

On Pema Chödrön's Article

Pema's article in the Spring 2004 issue of *Turning Wheel* brings the work of peacemaking home to the heart. Her quote from Jarvis Masters regarding the similarity of all "angry faces" was particularly appropriate. No matter who we are, we are familiar with the feeling of anger rising up in us. We all harden our hearts when our cherished beliefs and opinions are challenged.

Pema has pointed the way to transformation. Notice that you first see the "concrete walls" erected by others. Notice that you have built your own walls and perhaps strung barbed wire on top of them. Notice your self-righteousness, your unease. Be willing to sit with it. Face the fear. Unless we "soften the hard places of our hearts," compassion and peace elude us.

Jarvis has been able to consistently transform negative to positive, disaster to ease, and he does this in one of our most oppressive, dangerous, and devaluing systems—on San Quentin's death row. I celebrate the courage and presence of mind of Jarvis Masters. If one person can do it, it is doable.

—Kamala Dietz, St. Helena, California

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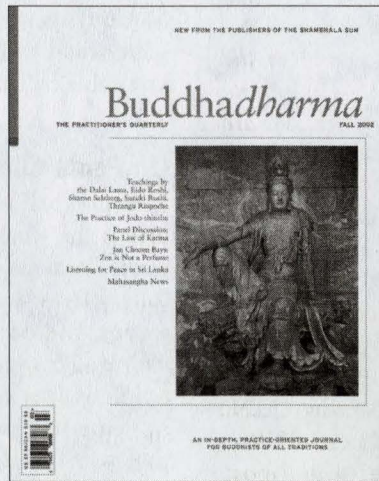
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FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF THE SHAMBHALA SUN.

Indra's Net

Compiled by Annette Herskovits

In the image of the "jeweled net of Indra," found in the Avatamsaka Sutra, the universe is represented as an infinite network of jewels, each of which reflects all the others. We are always struck in putting this section together by the way all our lives touch each other, as symbolized by Indra's net.

Voices in the Wilderness vs. United States

In the anxious early months of 2003, when Iraqis were awaiting attack by the United States' full military might, a delegation from Voices in the Wilderness (ViTW), including two BPF representatives, traveled to Baghdad. ViTW formed in 1996 to oppose the economic sanctions the U.N. Security Council imposed on Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War, a war which had "near-apocalyptic results, leaving most means of modern life destroyed," said then U.N. Undersecretary General Martti Ahtisaari.

By 1998, the sanctions were so clearly harming Iraq's people—not Saddam Hussein—that the U.N.'s humanitarian coordinator in Iraq, Denis Halliday, resigned, saying: "We are in the process of destroying an entire society. It is as simple and terrifying as that. Five thousand children are dying every month." Yet the United States opposed lifting the sanctions.

In southern Iraq, where U.S. forces had used depleted uranium shells, radioactivity levels soared. Cancer cases rose sharply, especially among children. Yet the U.S. and Britain blocked requests for radiotherapy equipment, chemotherapy drugs, even pain-control drugs. As World Health Organization's Karol Sikora pointed out, this was because of "a rather ludicrous notion that such agents could be converted into chemical or other weapons."

The newly founded ViTW informed then U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno that it intended to violate U.S. law and U.N. sanctions by bringing medicines to Iraq. It organized over 70 delegations, delivering humanitarian aid to hospitals and schools. ViTW representatives remained in Baghdad through the 2003 invasion.

In 1998, the U.S. Treasury Department imposed a \$100,000 fine on ViTW, but the group would not pay or even go along with sanctions by applying for a license to deliver medicine. The fines were dropped to \$20,000. ViTW still refused to pay. In 2003, the Justice Department asked a federal court to collect the fines. ViTW responded that it was "absolutely guilty of providing medicine to the people of Iraq."

The sanctions were lifted in May 2003. The lawsuit continues. ViTW is countersuing the U.S. Government for reparations to the Iraqi people, for the 14-year embargo's catastrophic effects. It asks people to write Attorney General John Ashcroft (fax: 202/307-6777), explaining the lawsuit's injustice. And it promises never to use donations to pay penalties "for performing works of mercy."

Easing Dukkha: Women Cooperatives in Refugee Camps

In the mountains along Thailand's border with Burma, some 140,000 Burmese live in refugee camps. Most are Karen, an ethnic group that has fought the dominant "Burmans" for autonomy and survival since 1949, when Burma won independence from Britain. One-sixth are Christian, the others Buddhist, but the better-educated Christians dominate the insurgents' Karen National Union (KNU).

The first refugee wave entered Thailand in 1984, when Burma's military dictatorship launched a brutal campaign against the Karen. KNU's decline started in 1994, when KNU Buddhist soldiers, accusing their Christian commanders of discrimination, formed the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA). Armed and supported by the junta, the DKBA joined the Burmese army in attacking KNU strongholds. The KNU lost all its territory.

The army then began relocating Karen civilians into army-controlled areas. It destroyed villages, raped women, burnt crops, and used men and women as slaves to carry military supplies and build roads. Thousands fled to the jungle, where they lived on the run, and refugees streamed into Thailand for a harsh and precarious life in camps.

The DKBA conducted cross-border raids, burning camps to the ground. The Thai government moved the camps repeatedly. To discourage camp dwellers from becoming "too comfortable," it allowed only flimsy bamboo huts to be built, and forbade income-generating projects inside the camps or work outside.

Those who work outside anyway are mercilessly exploited in the factories proliferating on the border to take advantage of illegal migrants' cheap labor. Women face the additional risk of rape by Thai police or abduction by sex traffickers.

Many women suffer from depression, and their distress affects the children. To ease their *dukkha* (suffering), an Australian woman founded Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment (WEAVE) in 1990. (*Dukkha* is also Burmese for "refugee.") With funding from several aid organizations, WEAVE trained medics and midwives; then, in response to women's complaints of boredom and economic dependency, started a craft cooperative, defying official Thai opposition. As the women became more self-reliant, their families' well-being improved.

The cooperative now has 400 members in three camps who weave, sew, and embroider beautiful clothing and furnishings using traditional techniques and designs. Recognizing the women's need for self-esteem, WEAVE has also trained them to run the cooperative. Karen women determine prices, monitor quality, and design products. The administrative staff consists of six Karen and six Westerners, all paid on the same scale. With Internet help, orders are growing and WEAVE hopes to add 100 women to the cooperative by year's end.

Contact WEAVE at www.weave-women.org or Box 58, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand 50202.

The Crimes of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

Tenzin Delek, a monk living in the ethnic Tibetan area of China's Sichuan Province, was convicted for a series of bombings and sentenced to death in December 2002. His execution has been suspended for two years. Lobsang Dhondup, a poor, illiterate Tibetan who "confessed" to plotting the bombings with Tenzin, was executed hours after his appeal was rejected.

Tenzin became a monk in 1957, at age seven. While China destroyed monasteries and persecuted monks, Tenzin somehow received a Buddhist education. In 1982, he went to India for further study. The Dalai Lama recognized him as a reincarnate lama. Returning home in 1987, he helped establish monasteries, schools, and clinics, carefully maneuvering with the authorities. But eventually, his popularity and devotion to the Dalai Lama roused their enmity.

In August 2000, he fled to the mountains, leaving a tape for his supporters explaining that state security officials had questioned him: "They said everything I did was a crime." After visiting a remote area where people had no doctor or medicines, Rinpoche planned to build houses for the elderly near main roads where they wished to live. This was a crime.

"The county's forestry department tried to confiscate the people's forest," Tenzin went on. "This is like stealing a baby bird's food from its mouth. When I saw this, I could not just stand still." After he appealed to the central government in Beijing, the prefecture officials, who profited from logging, had to return the forest to the public.

He also founded Geshe Lungpa, a school for 160 poor children: "The nomads here are very poor. I started collecting the children from poor families who cannot pay for their education." The government educates Chinese, but "Tibetans do not get education."

Tenzin, aware that authorities were looking for excuses to arrest him, had fled to the mountains before, in 1997. A month later, some 500 people, primarily farmers, marched to the county seat, protesting that Tenzin was the only one who cared about the people. When he returned six months later, after officials promised not to harm him, thousands joyfully welcomed him.

In 2000, after his second flight, he again returned safely, thanks to massive petitioning by supporters. Then the authorities silenced him and he was forbidden to teach, speak in public, or travel. Eighteen months later, he was arrested and charged with the bombings.

The clinics, orphanages, and schools he established have all declined. Geshe Lungpa school was taken over by Chinese officials and promptly failed. The number of monks in Orthok monastery, a vibrant center of learning with seven branch monasteries, all established by Tenzin, has dwindled, and two branch monasteries have closed. Harassed by authorities, the area's Tibetans have given up protesting.

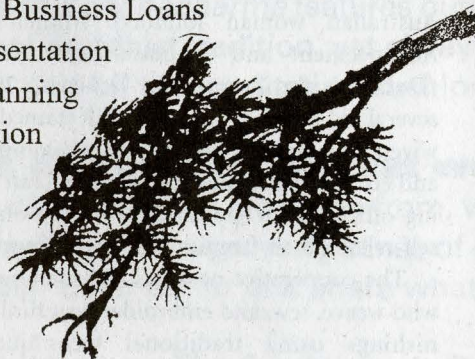
Send an e-mail message (www.savetenzin.org) or write Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing (No. 2, Chaoyangmen Nandajie, Chaoyang District, Beijing, 100701) asking for Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's release. ❖

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THE WALL

Nonviolence in Palestine

by Annette Herskovits

Wherever Israeli bulldozers begin destroying homes and fields to make way for the “security barrier,” Palestinian villagers, unarmed, gather in protest.

Az-Zawiya, a village of 6,000, will lose 90 percent of its land to the wall, which would encircle it and two other villages in an enclave with only a narrow entrance. According to the International Women’s Peace Service, bulldozers appeared in Az-Zawiya on June 6 and by the next morning hundreds of olive trees were laid waste. Several hundred villagers gathered to march to their land but were blocked by soldiers shooting rubber bullets (rubber-coated metal shells that have killed and maimed many). Some women and girls managed to reach the land; the bulldozer drivers threatened to run them down. After a 45-minute standoff, soldiers dispersed the group with tear gas.

Villagers started to hold Friday prayer services on the land. As many as 1,000 villagers joined in, together with internationals and Israelis. Most respected the rule not to throw stones, but hundreds were injured. In early July, Israel’s High Court ordered the Defense Ministry to halt work near Az-Zawiya, but the army claimed the ruling did not apply to work already under way and vowed to keep working. Presently, the standoff continues.

The 120 miles of barrier already completed have had disastrous effects on Palestinians. For example, Qalqiliya, a town of 42,000, is now surrounded by a wall 25 feet high. Israel confiscated half its agricultural land. Farmers cannot reach the town’s market, and about half the residents have left.

The wall’s projected 450-mile path winds deep into the West Bank, beyond Israel’s border, to include several large settlements. In all, Israel will annex about half that territory, home to some 200,000 Palestinians. The remaining half will be divided into 16 enclaves surrounded by the wall, which will separate the 1.9 million Palestinians there from jobs, water, health care, schools, and markets. This is Palestine as envisioned in Israeli Prime Minister Sharon’s “unilateral disengagement plan,” which calls on the army and occupation administrators to leave these enclaves.

For international audiences, Sharon endorses the Palestinian state on Bush’s roadmap, but according to journalist David Hirst, he told his Likud Party members: “My plan is difficult for the Palestinians, a fatal blow. There’s no Palestinian state in a unilateral move.” He predicted there would be “no responsible Palestinian leadership for a long time to come,” and to that end he has had Palestinian leaders assassinated and institutions—buildings, office equipment, databases—systematically destroyed.

The strangulation of Palestinian society that began with Israel’s occupation in 1967 will reach a new phase, as Sharon implements his solution to Israeli expansionists’ puzzle: how

to annex as much land as possible while warding off the Palestinian “demographic threat” (their rapid population growth), thus ensuring a Jewish majority in Israel.

But will Sharon succeed? Massive civil disobedience is the strategy most likely to derail him: he needs “terrorism” to make his plan acceptable to the world and to Israelis. There are signs other than the resistance to the wall that nonviolent approaches are gaining among Palestinians. A soap opera aired on nine radio stations uses fictional scenarios to teach nonviolence resistance methods. Organizations cannot handle all the requests for nonviolence training, including one from a group formerly committed to armed struggle, and another from an entire town.

Nonviolence is not new to Palestinians. Nonviolent marches and strikes predominated in the first *intifada* (uprising, 1987–1993), and for many years violence rarely went beyond throwing stones at heavily armed soldiers. Nonviolence leader Mubarak Awad urged Palestinians to boycott Israeli goods and violate curfews. When Beit Sahour’s 10,000 inhabitants refused to pay taxes to Israel, the army besieged the town and confiscated \$5 million worth of goods. Then Israel deported Awad as a “security risk.” As the army’s response to stone throwers became more brutal and Palestinian armed factions vied for influence, violence grew. Many young people turned to extremist Islamic groups.

Today, Israelis are joining Palestinian nonviolent resistance in growing numbers. The recently launched first Palestinian-Israeli radio (www.allforpeace.org) declared, “Genuine peace will be based on a strong bond between both peoples, not their leaders.” Writer Tanya Reinhardt tells of watching astonished as “two hundred Israelis...demolished with their bare hands the stone and earth barricade” erected by the Israeli army in the village of Rantis. And Citizens of Israel Against the Fence calls for immediately ceasing construction of the fence.

Two women’s organizations, one Israeli, one Palestinian, have formed the Jerusalem Link. They demonstrated together against the wall and wrote a joint proposal calling for an International Women’s Commission to participate in all peace negotiations, since, as one member said, the conflict’s mix of “militarism, fundamentalism, and ultranationalism is a deadly combination for women.”

The International Court of Justice’s decision recognized that a wall built far inside the West Bank is not meant to fight terrorism but to annex territory. Both U.S. presidential candidates berated the decision and also back Sharon’s plan. The House voted almost unanimously to support Israel’s annexations, given the “realities on the ground,” as if these had happened naturally rather than through uninterrupted government support of Israeli settlement.

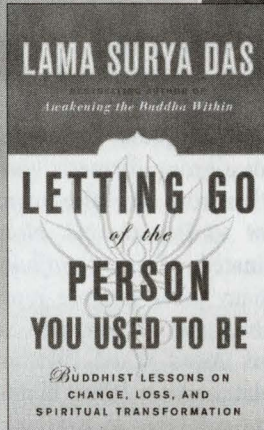
A majority of Israelis hope the wall will end suicide bombings, but many fear Israel will not survive the destruction of Palestinian society. Arabs and Muslims the world over are keenly aware that the U.S. is the chief obstruction to finding a peaceful solution guaranteeing the Palestinians’ security and rights. U.S. politicians must be educated about the folly of Sharon’s plan. ❖

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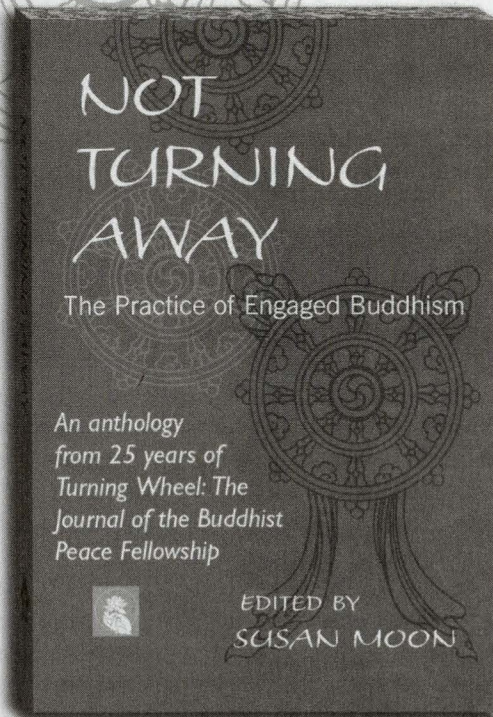
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EDITED BY SUSAN MOON



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Light Flyers

by Stephanie Kaza

Cottonwood tufts drift through the air, dusky white emissaries of the rough-barked trees. This is their time in the seasonal cycle—flowers to seed, seed to soil. The clots of soft down pile up along curbs and sidewalks. Yesterday I lay on my back in the grass and watched the bits of fluff race across the sky. A few shot wildly ahead of the rest, riding streaks of wind. Like some kind of indecipherable I Ching, the white duff made patterns in the air, revealing the forces that carried them.

Our lives are like this, I thought, each of us moved about in great patterns by forces we can barely comprehend. I was thinking of my mother, whose life is coming to a close. How could I ever know the forces that shaped her journey? Too complex, too numerous to fathom. Arcing high above the cottonwood tufts were shiny white gulls and dark swifts. Closer in, a fierce dragonfly darted sharply at insects and intruders. Framed by verdant trees, my small window of sky was an infinite depth stage with players soaring in and out on their own cues. For a moment I could see the space between the forms, the Big Space. Shift of perception, shift of mind state.

Tibetan Buddhist teachings work directly to cultivate this perception of space. As one of the five elements, space suggests ocean-mind, mind of compassion, mind of total openness. "You cannot feel earth unless you feel space. The more you feel the space, the more you feel the earth," wrote Chögyam Trungpa in *The Myth of Freedom*. He described this experience of space as "a natural product of awareness." Out of such awareness arises openness to infinite possibility, the ground of compassion.

Walking by Lake Champlain, I can taste the big space of water and mountains. Clouds lifting in space, tree limbs reaching into space. I begin to see space everywhere—space between bicycles on the bike path, space around rocks on the shoreline, space below the yellow buttercups floating in the woods. Space that allows movement, space that sup-

ports life. Is this not the space between thoughts that we glimpse in meditation?

If you perceive space,
The fixed ideas of center and boundary dissolve...
Though it may be said that space is empty,
Space cannot be described...
The essence of mind is like space;
Therefore, there is nothing which it does not encompass.

—Mahamudra Upadesa

And thus is my mother held in the vast space, becoming the whole universe. As her mind slowly unravels, fixed ideas unhinge and dissolve. Her words blur into incomplete syllables; she is forgetting how to eat and walk. We communicate mostly by touch and tone of voice. In the warmth of summer, I take her outside to be with the Big Space. I point out birds and flowers for her pleasure, but behind them I see the open sky, the empty woods. We visit very quietly; I can hardly hear her speak. The big forces have carried her to this point across many geographies, inner and outer. Now what is the space that moves in her life?

The wheelchair bumps over the ground. We stop by the edge of the field and I hand her a dandelion gone to seed. "Blow, mom, blow the little seeds on their way." We take a deep breath and blow. The wind catches the light flyers and off they go, up into the sky, tiny dots moving miraculously in the big space. ❖



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History

Takeko Kujo

by Diane Ames

In 1887—24 years into the great modernization drive called the Meiji—the headquarters of the Nishi Hongwanji, one of the Japanese Pure Land schools founded by Shinran, seemed firmly stuck in the feudal past. In the mansion in which the hereditary abbot and his family lived in almost imperial seclusion, virtually every aspect of life was controlled by the rules of long-dead courts. Thus the abbot's children, including his youngest daughter Takeko (1887–1928), were brought up by servants, rarely seeing their mother even though she lived in the same house. When the elder son, Kozui, was betrothed and his ten-year-old fiancé, Kazuko, was moved into the mansion to learn the unique ways of the place, Kozui and his brother had to be moved out to other temples at once. However, the girls, Kazuko and Takeko, became close friends. Kazuko's marriage to Kozui (she was 15, he was 21) made little difference. Kozui soon departed to study in Europe, leaving the two girls alone to study the *koto*, the tea ceremony, and Buddhist doctrine in a decaying old house on the grounds thought to be haunted. However, the abbot, Koson Otani, who had braved tradition to see his children fairly often, added a modern touch by having them study foreign languages.

In 1903 Koson Otani died and Kozui finally came home,

to succeed him. One year later, the Russo-Japanese war began. With the encouragement of the progressive new abbot, Kazuko and 17-year-old Takeko founded an organization called the Buddhist Women's Association, which sent the soldiers warm socks and helped the families of the dead and disabled. This was the first national women's association in Japanese history. The organizational experience stood Takeko in good stead later.

When Takeko was 21, it was arranged that she marry Prince Michitaka Kujo, a man of exalted rank indeed. When he left at once to study at Cambridge, she managed to accompany him on his journey, with her brother Kozui and her friend Kazuko in tow. She enjoyed the trip until her husband sent them home, saying that he might return in a decade or two. Then Kazuko died. Takeko's poems lamenting her loneliness won critical acclaim.

For the rest of her short life, Takeko threw herself into charity work in the slums of Tokyo. She was especially known for organizing relief for the victims of the apocalyptic Tokyo earthquake of 1923. After years of work towards setting up a charity hospital, she bequeathed her fortune for that purpose, leaving Asoka Hospital as her legacy to Japan's poor.

To this day, Takeko Kujo is regarded as a model by those wishing to bring Japanese Buddhism back to the real world. Her poems and her book of Buddhist reflections, *Muyuge*, are still read. ❖



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Family Practice

What Would Buddha Tell His Son About the Draft?

Family Practice and Registration for the Military

by Mushim Ikeda-Nash

*a sword's a stinking thing
a wise man will use
as seldom as he can.*

—from "Fighting South of the Ramparts," Li Po,
in *Five T'ang Dynasty Poets*, trans. David Young

This morning I dreamt that a woman was holding a baby. A huge, venomous snake slid up onto the woman's lap behind the baby, and she gave it a loving, peaceful glance. The snake rose up behind the baby as though to shelter it, the way Naga, the serpent king, sheltered the Buddha from the hot sun as he meditated in the forest. I was admiring the woman's trust in the benevolence of this wild creature when the snake bared its fangs and struck at the baby's head from behind.

I woke up and told my husband Chris, "I'm scared." I knew, at least in part, what the dream referred to. Last week, at the urging of my son's godfather, who is a veteran of the Vietnam War, I had begun to do Internet research on draft registration and conscientious objector (CO) status. I had e-mailed a staff person at the National Youth and Militarism Program of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), and she replied this morning, referring me to www.nisbco.org, the Center on Conscience and War. I quickly scanned the website, printing out useful information to give to my 15-year-old son Joshua to read.

Joshua and I had a meeting last week to begin talking about whether he wants to start a file that can be used to apply for CO status if there is a draft when he turns 18.

"A conscientious objector doesn't believe in war, ever, and will not kill a person for any reason," I told Josh. "I don't know if that represents your beliefs or not."

"I don't believe in this war in Iraq," Josh said pointedly. Then, thoughtfully, he added, "I really don't know what I'll believe in when I'm 18. Three years is a long way away."

"It seems like that to you," I said, "but if when you get there you should need and want to request CO status, you'll need a record of activities that demonstrate your belief in nonviolence. Remember that flyer that your teacher gave you at the end of ninth grade this year, talking about a Quaker youth camp to learn conflict resolution skills? Or, maybe you could intern with the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. We need to get some counseling on this from the AFSC."

Joshua, who self-identifies as a Buddhist, remained silent, giving me a resistant look that said, "Hey, I'm on my

summer break and I don't want to be bothered having to think about all these heavy, depressing issues." In fact, Josh had seen the movies *The Fog of War* and, more recently, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, and had initiated several conversations with Chris and me about the Bush administration and the invasion of Iraq. But discussing war in the abstract is different from contemplating being shipped off to wage war.

"I have only one child, and I will be damned if I've worked this hard to raise him, only to send him off if the draft is reinstated when he turns 18," I told my husband. "But the fact is, Josh will have to make his own decision." I imagined what it might be like to join the vast band of mothers in the world whose children have killed and been killed in distant wars.

I've begun talking to all the men I know about what happened when they turned 18. I realize that, in part because I'm a woman, in part because my husband was excused from registration because he had asthma as a teen, I've never thought much about this. It's been a blind spot, an area of denial for me. Hearing these stories gives me new insights into the experience of growing up male in the United States.

I don't know what the outcome of this process will be. I only know that remaining in ignorance is not an option. My dream tells me that resting in my spiritual practice of universal love and tolerance isn't enough; the venomous serpent of war may still strike my child, because it is systemic violence, not an individual attack. My son's 18th birthday looms in my imagination like an iron gate; the decisions he will have to make as he goes through that gate by himself will affect the rest of his life. How I wish I could protect him forever! ♦

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American Buddhist Values and the Practice of Enlightened Patriotism

by Taigen Dan Leighton

A number of Japanese Buddhist founders, including Saicho, Eisai, Dogen, and Nichiren, issued proclamations encouraging the spread of Buddhism in order to protect the nation. In a similar spirit, I wish to speak of the value of Buddhism to America's true national security. And conversely, I also wish to speak of the value of foundational American principles to the potential development of Buddhism in the United States. American maxims such as "liberty and justice for all" and the unalienable rights of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" can be profound supports for the universal liberation espoused in the bodhisattva way.

This is a critical year in the history of the United States and the world, when the recklessness of our own government, counter to American foundational values, threatens not only our national security but the well-being of humankind. For all people concerned about the welfare of future generations, Thomas Paine's stirring words in 1776 are now pertinent: "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman." In Buddhist terms, this is now a time for the patience, commitment, and effort of bodhisattvas.

The starting point of Buddhist life involves meditative awareness. In the Soto Zen tradition in which I practice, the basic meditation instruction is to turn the light within to focus on illuminating the conditioned self. Settling into uprightness, aware of our sensations, thoughts, and feelings, not turning away from our own confusion and grasping as they arise, we can uncover our deep connection with wholeness and calm. This inner balance is the foundation of our practice, and allows the transformative function of awakened awareness.

But if Buddhism were only about finding inner

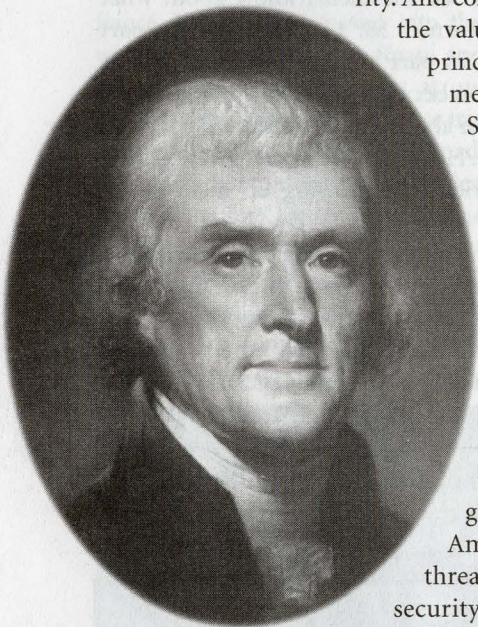
peace it would not have survived 2,500 years, and would not deserve to survive today in the West. Buddha values must be applied in three realms. First is to this body and mind on our own seat. Indeed we must bring awareness, and forgiveness, to the confusion, fear, and sorrow inside our own conditioned skin bag.

The second realm of expression of meditative awareness is when we arise from our formal practice and return to our everyday activities, interacting with our friends, family, and co-workers. And we are challenged by the sufferings that arise to express dignified, helpful responsiveness.

But our Buddhist values must also be expressed in the third realm, the society around us. We express Buddha heart through precepts. In the bodhisattva way these precepts are not commandments but guidelines to helpful activity. Considering which Buddhist guidelines may be relevant to the societal realm, I would start with nonharming (*ahimsa* in Sanskrit). We try not to hurt others, or ourselves, and we also do what we can to help prevent others from inflicting harm on others. Closely related to that is the precept of not killing. Again, this means not only that we do not ourselves kill others but also that we try to prevent killing *by* others. But all precepts, including both nonharming and not killing, can be stated positively as well. These precepts are reminders and encouragements to promote helpfulness, and to support life and vitality. We are reminded to care for our own energy and vitality but also to support the vigor and gifts of our everyday associates: family, friends, and neighbors. Moreover, in the culture around us, this precept implies that we try to support the livelihood and growth of everyone in our society, and of beneficial cultural forms.

This leads to one of the most important precepts, to act to benefit all beings. This is the inclusive outlook of universal liberation, the goal of the bodhisattva way. And it is also the fundamental wish of the Metta Sutta from the earlier Pali tradition, "May all beings be happy. May they be joyful and live in safety." This guideline is strikingly in accord with foundational American principles of liberty and justice for all, of equal justice under the law, and of equal opportunity. These democratic principles help exemplify how to enact basic Buddhist aspirations in the world.

Another relevant Buddhist precept is to not lie.



Thomas Jefferson

"I hope we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of our monied corporations which dare already to challenge our government to a trial by strength, and bid defiance to the laws of our country."

This implies speaking the truth, or what we can see of it from our limited and particular vantage points. We must humbly recognize that the fullness of reality goes beyond our own views. So speaking our truth includes listening to the views of others, really hearing their fears and concerns and insights. This precept also implies that we must at times be willing to tell truth (as we see it) to power. From such commitment grew the Truth Power of Gandhi's *satyagraha*. And the very concept of truth is now at risk in the United States, as our government and its corporate media apparatus master the technique of the big lie to justify and promote wars of aggression.

When Thomas Jefferson initiated the principle of separation of church and state for the United States, he never intended that we should not apply spiritual values to public life. We must use our principles to consider what is happening in our world, as indeed Jefferson did. But Jefferson was insisting that no one person (not even the president) should be empowered to speak to God for everyone. Nor can one person speak to or for Buddha for everyone. We each have the right to our own particular way of approaching the sacred.

The principles of liberty and justice for all, and the unalienable right of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" articulated by Jefferson and other founding fathers are highly synchronistic with Buddhist perspectives. Jefferson's writings remain a touchstone for these worthy principles, despite modern disclosures of his deplorable personal shortcomings, including not only slaveholding but probably fathering children with one of his slaves. Jefferson made some efforts toward abolition of slavery early in his career but succumbed to the conditioning and economic imperatives of the slave plantation culture in which he was raised. Yet his enunciations of personal liberty for all still inform modern views of liberation, as do those of his contemporaries such as Thomas Paine and Patrick Henry. In his famous speech in 1775 ("Give me Liberty or give me Death"), Patrick Henry also said, "In proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at the Truth, and fulfill the great responsibility which we hold.... Whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and provide for it."

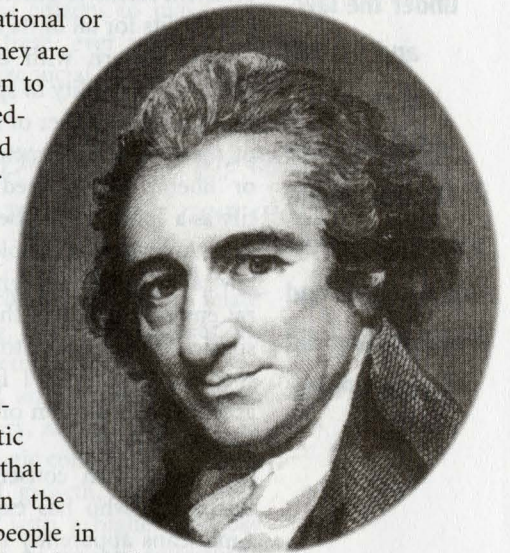
Jefferson was thinking of the corruption of governments and the need for sustained public oversight when he said, "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." Slightly altering Jefferson's saying to "the price of liberation is eternal vigilance," we find an incisive Buddhist motto. The Buddhist practice of mindfulness represents another mode of ongoing vigilance. Shakyamuni Buddha did not finish his work upon

awakening. Rather, the Buddhist order began with his liberation, and he himself continued ongoing meditation practice throughout his life. Similarly, Buddhist devotees, in whatever age, must remain vigilant in order to help suffering beings. Practically speaking, one must continually attend to one's own inner intentions and habitual patterns. Insights into these habit patterns may be transformative but are not usually sufficient to eradicate them. Our humanity includes the recurrence of personal shortcomings.

Jefferson also declared that he "vowed eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." The practice of vow is also central to awakening practice. The traditional four bodhisattva vows are to save all sentient beings, to cut through all delusive afflictions, to enter all pathways to dharma, and to realize the Buddha way. These inconceivable vows cannot be enacted based on rational or intellectual calculations. But they are supported by vigilant attention to our conduct and awareness, dedication to helpfulness, and humble familiarity with our own limitations.

One of the most fundamental principles of Buddhism is nonseparation. We are deeply interconnected with all beings. This philosophical teaching of interconnectedness becomes realistic and practical as we realize that what happens to people in the Middle East deeply affects people in California, Delaware, or South Dakota. All people in the world are the same in having needs and feelings, in wanting to love and be loved. And so truly inclusive patriotism, dedicated to universal freedom, would not make anybody into some evil other. From a Buddhist viewpoint, there are indeed evil actions, and the perpetrators must be held accountable. However, there is no group of people whom we can label as "evildoers," deserving of being bombed or tortured. We must realize our own human tendency to make others into Bad Guys, so that we can feel that we are the Good. Now, after seeing the pictures from Abu Ghraib, we know that "Torturers Are Us." Americans too can become torturers. Depending on the combination of circumstances (including the current documented pattern of encouragement of torture by governmental higher-ups), we all share the human capacity to commit torture and humiliation against innocent detainees, or else, in other circumstances, to be as selfless as Mother Teresa.

The Buddhist ideal of universal awakening is sup-



Thomas Paine

"When those who are concerned in the government of a country make it their study to sow discord and cultivate prejudices between nations, it [is] unpardonable."

I self-identify as a conservative, because I wish to help conserve such American principles as "equal justice under the law" and the Bill of Rights.... I feel no more "liberal" about accepting oppression of rights and freedom than did Thomas Paine.

ported by the American democratic principles of liberty and justice for all, equal justice under the law, and the unalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And these American ideals are enhanced, in turn, by the Buddhist ideal: May all beings be happy. There can be no true peace and justice, or happiness, which is not somehow shared with all people. True national security cannot be forever maintained through the oppression of peoples we designate as "other." Jefferson wisely insisted on changing the Declaration of Independence from an earlier draft advocating "life, liberty, and the pursuit of property." Buddhist teachings can help us find deeper meaning to happiness and contentment than mere acquisitive consuming of property and commodities. But unfortunately, in its current massive corruption, our government seems to pursue not happiness for all people but profits for all of its own corporate sponsors.

My concern with our national situation arises from responsibility to spiritual precepts and values. It is not at all a matter of Republican or Democrat, nor of the increasingly meaningless labels "conservative" or "liberal." When asked in questionnaires, I self-identify as a conservative, because I wish to help conserve such American principles as "equal justice under the law" and the Bill of Rights; to help conserve the natural environment and the preservation of nonhuman species of beings; and to help conserve worthy ancient spiritual traditions. I feel no more "liberal" about accepting oppression of rights and freedom than did Thomas Paine.

I agree with conservative commentator Patrick Buchanan, who has expressed sincere concern that Americans apparently now have a fundamental disagreement about the very nature of morality and truth. One version of this split might be stated: Should immorality in our country be defined by a singer exposing her breast at the Super Bowl, or by a president lying about weapons of mass destruction in order to start a war for the sake of his friends' massive war profiteering and extremist ideologies?

In 1791, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "If there be one principle more deeply rooted than any other in the mind of every American it is that we should have nothing to do with conquest." In the same year, Paine wrote in *The Rights of Man*, "That there are men in all countries who get their living by war, and by keeping up the quarrels of nations, is as shocking as it is true; but when those who are concerned in the government of a country make it their study to sow discord and cultivate prejudices between nations, it becomes more unpardonable." Later, in 1816, Jefferson wrote of his concern, "I hope we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of our monied corporations which dare already to challenge our government to a trial by

strength, and bid defiance to the laws of our country." Now that such corporations write the laws and their own regulatory protocols, sustained vigilance will indeed be required to restore the objective rule of law.

I hope all Buddhist citizens of the United States will exercise the practice of voting this November, in what may well be the most important election in American history. But even if we change our current corrupt administration, we need an open, long-term national dialogue about spiritual values. True freedom requires that we as Buddhists, from the various traditions, express our values, just as diverse Christians and those of other religions express their truths. To have an open discussion we must actually hear each other, not assuming that we have all the answers, and that God (or Buddha) is only on Our Side. Only with open discussion can this become a Pure Land in the Buddhist sense, a land of the free and home of the brave, rather than a land of the fearful and a home of torturers.

Another Buddhist precept that we would do well to heed is not harboring anger, sometimes translated as not getting angry. But attraction and aversion are wired into our being as deeply as protons and electrons. One Mahayana commentary says that not to get angry when it is appropriate also violates the precept, or, to quote the bumper sticker, "If you are not outraged, you are not paying attention." But harboring anger until it turns into grudge is unproductive and self-corrosive. From such grudges grow endless cycles of vengeance, which can result in religious wars. Ultimate transformation and universal liberation cannot come from hatred or from seeing some particular group of persons as the enemy but only from deep education about the true values of kindness, cooperation, and nonseparation.

Our expression of spiritual values will only be helpful when informed by our return to inner work to find dignified calm and wholeness. Then we can present our views without stridency, in the context of actual dialogue and illuminated values. Such enlightened patriotism depends on including all beings, and on fearless openness to truth. ❖

This article is an expanded version of a talk given June 5, 2004, at the Buddhist Peace Fellowship's "Change Your Mind Day," at the Ellipse in front of the White House, Washington, D.C. The article includes some material from an essay, "Buddhism in the West and Liberation as Eternal Vigilance," published in *Dharma World* magazine, Japan, Fall 2004.

Taigen Dan Leighton, a dharma heir in the Suzuki Roshi lineage, is author of Faces of Compassion: Classic Bodhisattva Archetypes and Their Modern Expression and is editor and co-translator of a number of Zen texts, including Dogen's Extensive Record, Cultivating the Empty Field, and Dogen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community.

A Politics of Thought, Word, and Deed

by Dennis Kucinich

Editor's Note: The following essay is adapted from a conversation between former presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich and Free Radio Santa Cruz (96.3 FM) host John Malkin on The Great Leap Forward, a program focusing on social change and spiritual growth.

Dennis Kucinich, at the young age of 31, became the mayor of Cleveland. He recently won the international Gandhi Peace Prize, and he is now serving his fourth congressional term for the Tenth District of Ohio.

The very idea of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people implies that government derives from the consent of the governed. That means that in a democracy there must be power for all or for none. And the relationship between government and citizens is really spelled out in our Declaration of Independence, in our Preamble to the Constitution, and in the Constitution itself. There is a set of rights that the people in a society have, and above all those rights is the right to reconstitute the government. So the essential power derives from the people. In a democracy it must be thus. When the power derives from the government, it is something other than democracy.

Politics in this country is becoming profoundly antidemocratic. The government is usurping the rights of the people. The passage of the Patriot Act, for example, represents a total undermining of basic constitutional rights that people have in a democratic society. That's why I spoke against it and offered legislation to reverse it. We must be safeguarded. And we must safeguard our democratic privileges when government seeks to vitiate those privileges by using fear to pass actions that are anathema to free speech.

When government usurps the people's sovereignty by accelerating tax cuts to those who don't need them, promoting unnecessary wars, and promoting an expansion-based Pentagon budget, the quality of freedom is eroded. We should understand that the government's budget is more than the allocation of tax dollars—it's an allocation of values. What we need to do is to reconfirm the public's control over their government. But this government is becoming increasingly out of control, taking us into unwarranted wars, squandering our resources, and creating fear. This is not the way to maintain a democracy.

Our country's founders were very sensitive to the spiritual and ethical beliefs of our first citizens, and they paid homage to those beliefs in the Declaration. They recognized the role of something transcendent in the affairs of our nation. The founders saw something sacred in nature itself, and saw the procession of an American republic as deriving from some very deep moral and ethical principles. As we become attuned to our obligations as citizens to make our democracy ever green, ever fresh, ever restored, we understand that we can catalyze social change. We can

The question is: Do we have the courage and confidence to create a new world?

create conditions that cause the government to relate to people's need for housing, healthcare, education, jobs, and a cleaner environment.

The possibility for social and economic change derives from American history, and is connected to spirituality. There is a synergistic connection between social change and spiritual growth, an idea that nationhood should connect with a higher purpose that extends from our hearts. As we join collectively and merge into the one out of many (*e pluribus unum*), aligning with the very first model of this country, we come to understand the power of human unity and how we become the change that we aspire to. In that way, we confirm the essential spiritual principles that are the bedrock of this country.

To transform suffering, war, and poverty, we first must take into account that the forces moving through the world are not unconscious. We actually have the capacity to *choose* to be agents of creativity or of destruction. Like the metaphorical power of the Hindu gods Shiva and Vishnu, the powers of creation and destruction exist in this world simultaneously. It's up to us to decide if we will become agents of one or the other.

Empathy and compassion are gifts we grant to ourselves by granting them to others. The cultivation of nonviolent communication is one way to affirm our own humanity. The choices that each one of us makes every day with the words we use (which are of

course preceded by thoughts) and with the actions that follow from our words can either create empathy and compassion or not.

We consciously choose in each moment to create a certain life for ourselves and for others—and then we have to live with what we have created. We are co-creators, at all times, and we must remember the great power that we have to describe a new world just through our thoughts, language, and actions.

I advocate a unity of thought, word, and deed. We

What could be more impractical than raiding other nations and killing their people in order to get their resources?

must practice dedication to nonviolence. We have the capacity to create the world anew, and this creative power is prophetic. If we believe that war is inevitable, that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. On the other hand, a belief that peace is inevitable leads to an awareness of our interdependence. The peace we give to others is the peace we give to ourselves.

Our choice is not between utopia or the lower circles of Dante's Inferno. It's a choice to live in an ethical way in every moment of our lives. What could be more impractical than war? What could be more impractical than raiding other nations and killing their people in order to get their resources?

I think we're at a new era in human understanding, in which there is a consciousness of the unity of all people. When Jung wrote of the collective unarticulated consciousness, he was speaking of the shared aspirations that all people have—whether or not they know each other. All over the world there's a sense of striving toward hope. The capacity to dream is something that enables us to draw a new architecture from another dimension.

The question is: Do we have the courage and confidence to create a new world? This question has faced human beings throughout history. Can we go on that voyage—within and without—to create new conditions? I believe that when our founders spoke of creating a more perfect union they understood that it is our human responsibility to do so.

We need to celebrate the capacity to evolve as a nation. We need to discard the old thinking that says war is inevitable, poverty is inevitable, and life is a funeral march to the grave. We need to get in tune with a *new* world, a world that is about connecting with each other. We have the capacity to support the greening of the world itself. Is there any other way to live in this nation and world?

On the path to a peaceful world, we may face anger and suffering. We must understand why people

become angry. Anger has a way of coming back around to us. If we send our anger out there into the world, what we'll have is a whole lot of angry people. Anger is born of a sense of disempowerment and the belief that we have no control. Pure anger leads to rage, which leads to destruction. But when you have a sense of mastery in your life, you don't become angry because you see that you can redirect the outcome.

I advocate an awareness of the transformative power of love. You have to try to love those you disagree with, because they're an aspect of you. The question then becomes: do you love yourself?

The real challenge in politics is to avoid disparaging people. That doesn't mean that you don't have a debate. That doesn't mean that I don't challenge the president for his policies on Iraq, healthcare, or education. Democracy must be about robust debate, but the tone we set is important. If we disparage someone on the opposite side politically, this leads to dehumanizing ourselves. We have to credit people with their basic humanity, and the stronger our disagreements with them are, the more difficult this is to do. But how else are we going to solve our problems in this world?

If we are caught in Us-vs.-Them thinking, calling other people part of an axis of evil, and if we are determined that there can be no peaceful coexistence, then we have set ourselves on the path to our own destruction.

When we function from a place of fear, that creates a primal response of retaliation and revenge. As bombs drop around us, instead of cowering and thinking, "Gee, we had nothing to do with that," we need to work to break the cycle of violence. We have to step away from fear and live *confidently* in order to move toward the world we want to create.

Some people choose to work toward a nonviolent future by cultivating new communities based on cooperation rather than by trying to reform political systems. At the same time, we have to understand that in today's world, politics has a rude way of intruding upon everyone. And so my goal is to make it possible for peaceful communities to live in an authentic and gentle way. We need more communities with these shared values. For myself, I choose to work within government and political structures as a way to create a culture of peace, sustainability, and optimism. Let's set about this joyful endeavor of creating the world anew. ♦

Free Radio Santa Cruz (www.freakradio.org) is commercial-free, collectively run, and has been broadcasting for almost 10 years without a license from the U.S. government. A book of interviews by John Malkin will be published by Parallax Press in the spring of 2005.

The Ravens' Dance

Our desire for connection is deep and trustworthy; and the connection we hunger for, the wisdom we seek, is both a birthright and a privilege; it is both intrinsic to our nature and also remarkable and rare—particularly in this time of systemic violence, deception, and greed.

Today I saw the bluebirds in the meadow beyond the gate. They will winter here, flashes of blue in the muted colors of dry winter grass. In the evening I hear Canada geese in a dark sky. I imagine the wetlands and lakes where they will stop on their long journey south. Every year more and more have been paved over, or drained, or poisoned. I hope the journey will be a safe one. I pray.

Do not hope to become someone other than yourself. Do not imagine that you will wake up one day to find that the person who was living in your skin, the person who made you so uncomfortable, has disappeared. Do not attach yourself to some belief system in order to become immune to the world's ills; or as a way for you to forget the part you might play in the world. You are more powerful than you know. Do not avoid the risk of disappointment. As Joseph Brodsky said, "Disappointment makes you a better poet."

In winter the ravens flock. All day they fly complex patterns low to the ground. They are so improbably large, and so awkward on the ground. In the air they are as graceful as eagles. People say that ravens are the spirits of ancestral shamans. I believe it. They are my friends, ever watchful. My house sits on their land.

The truth is not a commodity, a concoction of palliative axioms. Yoga is not a sedative. Meditation is not a sedative. Gaza is real; Baghdad is real. Colombia, the Central African Republic, South Los Angeles, are real. The list is as long as you want. All of it is real.

The owl suddenly appeared as I was walking one summer evening. It circled a few feet above my head. Three times it circled, and then flew into the last light of sunset.

The individual is a half-truth, and so is the arrogance of any religion, or religious construct, that proposes a singular resting place. Allow yourself the conceit that all living beings depend on you. To care for them, to be present, to be alive for them is what you were born for. ❖

—Caitriona Reed

[Adapted from a longer poem which can be read at www.manzanitavillage.org.]

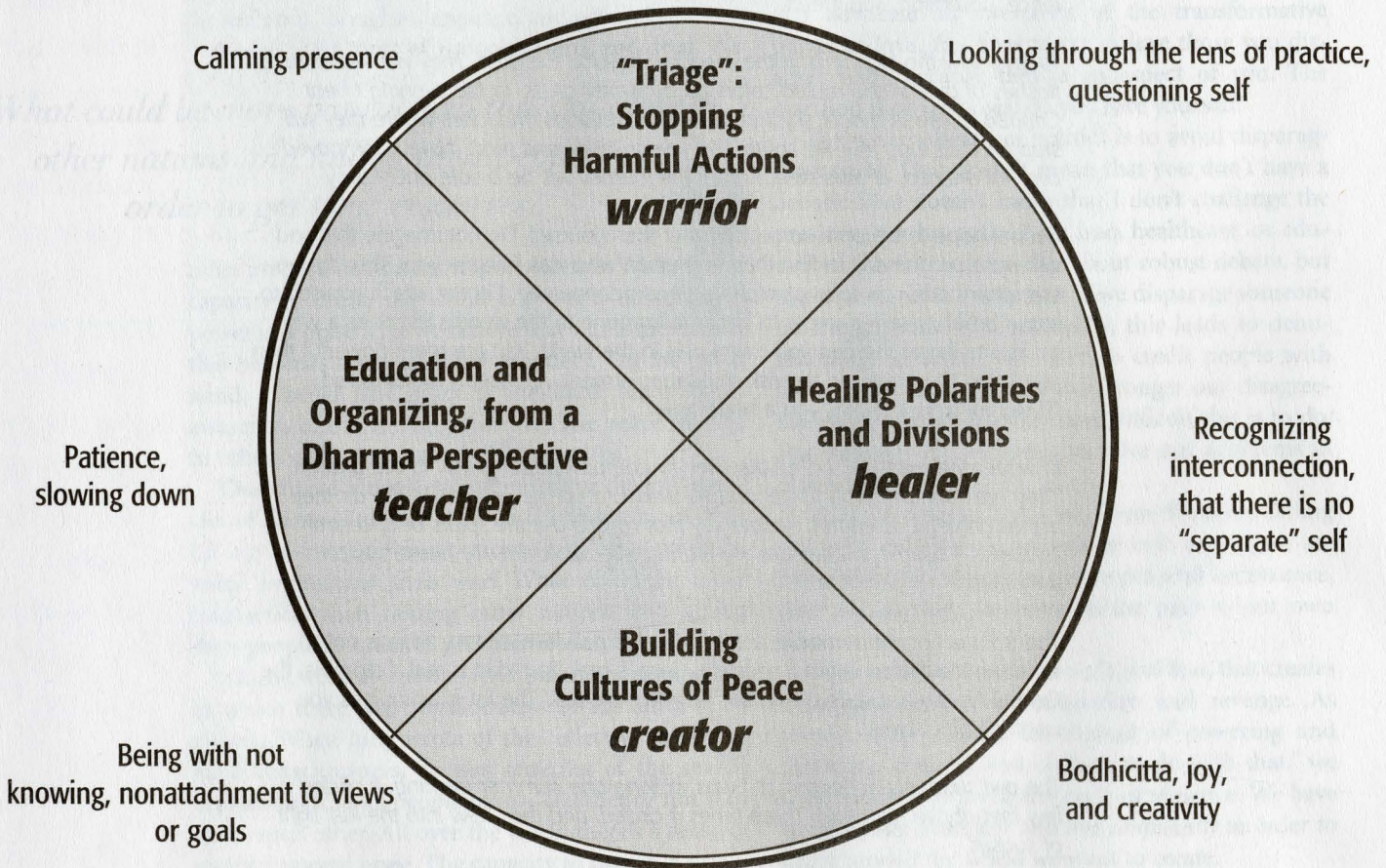
Caitriona Reed is a meditation teacher, group facilitator, and poet. She has led retreats and workshops in Buddhism, deep ecology, and social responsibility in the U.S. and Europe for more than 20 years and has trained with Buddhist teachers in several traditions since 1971, including Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh in whose lineage she was a teacher for 10 years. She is cofounder of Ordinary Dharma in Los Angeles and Manzanita Village Retreat Center in Warner Springs, California.

The Mandala of Socially Engaged Buddhism

The inner circle of the mandala represents the potential “fields of engagement” for dharma activists. At different times in our lives, we may feel drawn to different kinds of actions. The six qualities of Buddhist social activism (in the outer circle) can permeate whatever we do.

This mandala is based on a group conversation from the April 2003 BPF community retreat in Berkeley, California. We invite you to experiment with it as a tool in your chapter. Please let us know how you use the mandala and your suggestions for changes.

—Maia Duerr



Examples of actions in the Four Fields of Engagement:

"Triage": Stopping Harmful Actions

- Participating in vigils, rallies, and marches against the war on Iraq
- Sitting in meditation vigil at state-sanctioned executions (death penalty)
- Writing letters or calling legislators to call for a stop to harmful environmental practices

Healing Polarities and Divisions

- Reconciliation or listening circles with groups that have "opposing" points of view
- Practicing nonviolent communication
- Addressing issues of racism, classism, sexism, etc., within our sanghas and chapters, and in society

Building Cultures of Peace

- Working to establish a Department of Peace in the U.S. government

- Working with children and young people

- Building creative arts communities

- Fostering monastic communities that are based on principles of sustainability and nonharming

Education and Organizing, from a Dharma Perspective

- Empowering ourselves and others with information about a specific issue, such as the minimum wage (economic injustice)
- Asking questions—"Why is this situation like this? Who is suffering from this injustice? How can we change it? Who has the power to change it? How can we connect with that power?"
- Designing actions intended to shift power and encouraging others to participate in the change process. Providing contact information for legislators, suggested letters to write, invitations to vigils, etc. ❖

What's Buddhist About Buddhist Social Activism?

by Seth Segall

“Just what is it that is specifically *Buddhist* about Buddhist social activism?” Are we only Buddhists who just happened to be social activists before we discovered the dharma, and are we simply looking to carry on our social activism under the banner of our new religious identity? Or, on the other hand, can social activism be something that grows organically out of the wisdom and compassion developed through the Buddhist path? If so, is this kind of spiritually based social activism identical to, or different from, the spiritually based social activism espoused by the Friends, the Unitarians, the Mennonites, or the Catholic Workers? Is there something specifically Buddhist that we bring to the progressive movement? Are there particular social issues that fall naturally within the purview of Buddhist social activism (e.g., diversity issues within our sanghas, the civil war in Sri Lanka, the Chinese occupation of Tibet), or are our issues identical to those of other activist traditions (e.g., the uses of American power in the world, criminal justice reform, and racial, economic, and sexual inequality in our society)? Do we have a specific doctrine relating to economic, political, and social issues, or, as Buddhists, do we eschew “isms” as attachments to the “thicket of views”?

Our Buddhist Peace Fellowship chapter met recently at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, to explore these questions. It was an opportunity for us to examine the presuppositions that had drawn us together to establish our BPF chapter. In true Buddhist fashion, we treated the questions as koans—questions that open one up to discovery rather than close one down with answers. I left the meeting feeling touched, stimulated, and grateful for the conversation. Afterwards, I found myself continuing to engage with the key question: Just what, actually, was Buddhist about Buddhist social activism? These are the thoughts that came to me in the process:

1) Buddhist practice is nondual. It allows no space of separation between self and other. The dichotomy of working on the self but withdrawing from the world, or working on the world but bypassing the self, is antithetical to Buddhism. Since everything is connected, when I change myself, I change the world; when I change the world, I change myself. How could it be otherwise?

2) Everything that happens happens right here, immediately, in one's own experience. This is true whether the happenings are bodily sensations and personal emotions, or the remembered images of Abu Ghraib prison, or one's reactions to listening to President Bush on the nightly news. All of these are mental objects that call for an equal degree of mindful attention, wise reflection, and skillful response. All are part of Buddhist practice.

3) Buddhist practice is continuous. There is no dichotomy between the sacred and the profane; there is not one realm that belongs to Caesar and another that belongs to a deity. Nothing is excluded from Buddhist practice. We practice all the time, whether sitting on the cushion, talking with friends, shopping at the mall, or voting in the booth. Every moment is a moment of continuous, seamless practice. Social action is a realm of practice no different from meditation or sutra study.

4) Buddhist practice is universal. No thing is left out; no one is excluded. We apply our practice to all people: the good, the bad, and the ugly. We include animals and plants within our practice, too. We are not against anyone: we are not against soldiers, criminals, capitalists, landlords, Republicans. No one is left out of our caring and concern. We say, “May all beings be happy.” That is our practice.

5) We are not struggling against people but against processes: greed, aversion, and delusion. We work ceaselessly with these three poisons, whether they occur within us or within George W. Bush. We no more despise George Bush for his greed, aversion, and delusion than we do ourselves. George Bush is just a collection of the five aggregates, the same as we are.

The war in Iraq, for example, is the outcome of innumerable causes and conditions which include, but are not limited to: the history of British colonialism in Iraq; the ways in which modernity impinges on traditionally organized societies; the changing nature of the world order in the age of globalization and multinational corporations; the historic relationship between the Bush family and the house of Saud; the role Christianity played in helping George Bush overcome his drinking problem; the role that social class

QUESTION MARKS

This is not a quiz! We offer these questions as springboards to discussion.

- ★ How does being Buddhist affect the way you think about your responsibilities as a citizen?
- ★ How does your participation in the democratic process relate to the precepts?
- ★ How do we maintain a nondualistic perspective if we decide to campaign for particular candidates?
- ★ What feelings arise for you when you think about people who intend to vote for President George Bush in the next presidential election?
- ★ What feelings arise for you when you think about people who intend to vote for Senator John Kerry in the next presidential election?
- ★ When judgment and despair around politics arise, how do you relate to them through your Buddhist practice?
- ★ How do you, as an engaged Buddhist, help build a government that is not based on greed, hatred, and delusion?
- ★ How do you practice right speech when talking about politics?
- ★ How do you choose between voting for somebody you believe in and voting for somebody you think could win?
- ★ As Buddhists, do we have a responsibility to create a dialogue between political extremes?
- ★ What would a government that fully supported the liberation of all beings look like?
- ★ What radical actions, consistent with your Buddhist practice, would you take in response to a government whose policies you find harmful?
- ★ Does a renunciate life in a monastery or nunnery contribute to the democratic process?
- ★ Would the Buddha vote?

has played in shaping George Bush's consciousness; the geopolitical consequences of the dependency of industrialized societies on petroleum; the greed of oil companies, and companies that produce the goods and services needed for war; Saddam Hussein's sociopathic personality structure, which is itself a consequence of genetics and past experiences; the rise of neoconservative thought in reaction to the New Left of the 1960s; the post-9/11 fear of terrorism; and so on, ad infinitum. George Bush and Saddam Hussein did not create the war, but the karma of the world flows through their actions in an unbroken chain. We are here to be yet another influence in the great sea of causes and conditions. We are not here to control the world; no one ever does that. We are here to ceaselessly witness and ceaselessly practice. Our practice includes being present to suffering, being a friend to those forgotten, and being unafraid to speak our truth (with a small "t") to those with power.

6) Buddhist practice is not overly attached to outcome. When we sit on the cushion and we are not enlightened, we do not become discouraged and change our practice. When we demonstrate for peace and war breaks out, we do not become discouraged and change our practice. Not getting the outcome we want does not invalidate the value of working for peace. In her concept of the Four-Fold Way, educator, author, and cultural anthropologist Angeles Arrien (www.angelesarrien.com) urges us to 1) show up, 2) pay attention, 3) tell the truth without blame or judgment, and 4) be open, but not attached, to outcome. This is the dharma, in short. Buddhist practice is about being here, being mindful, and speaking truthfully, again and again, without discouragement. Practice is, as Suzuki Roshi once said, making one's "best effort on the moment forever." If one can be deeply present, like Avalokiteshvara, and see the suffering of the world, if one can show up with the intention to relieve suffering whenever one encounters it to the best of one's abilities, if one can include every being within the circle of one's care and compassion, and if one can avoid anger and disillusionment when suffering does not always abate despite one's best efforts, then one is engaged in a social activism that also epitomizes Buddhist practice.

This is what is Buddhist about Buddhist social action. ❖

Seth Segall is spokesperson for the Connecticut Chapter of BPF. He is a clinical professor of psychology at the Yale School of Medicine and the editor of Encountering Buddhism: Western Psychology and Buddhist Teachings, published by SUNY Press.

THE POLITICS ISSUE

LESSONS
OF ABU GHRAIB

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tricycle

THE BUDDHIST REVIEW

FALL 2004 \$7.50

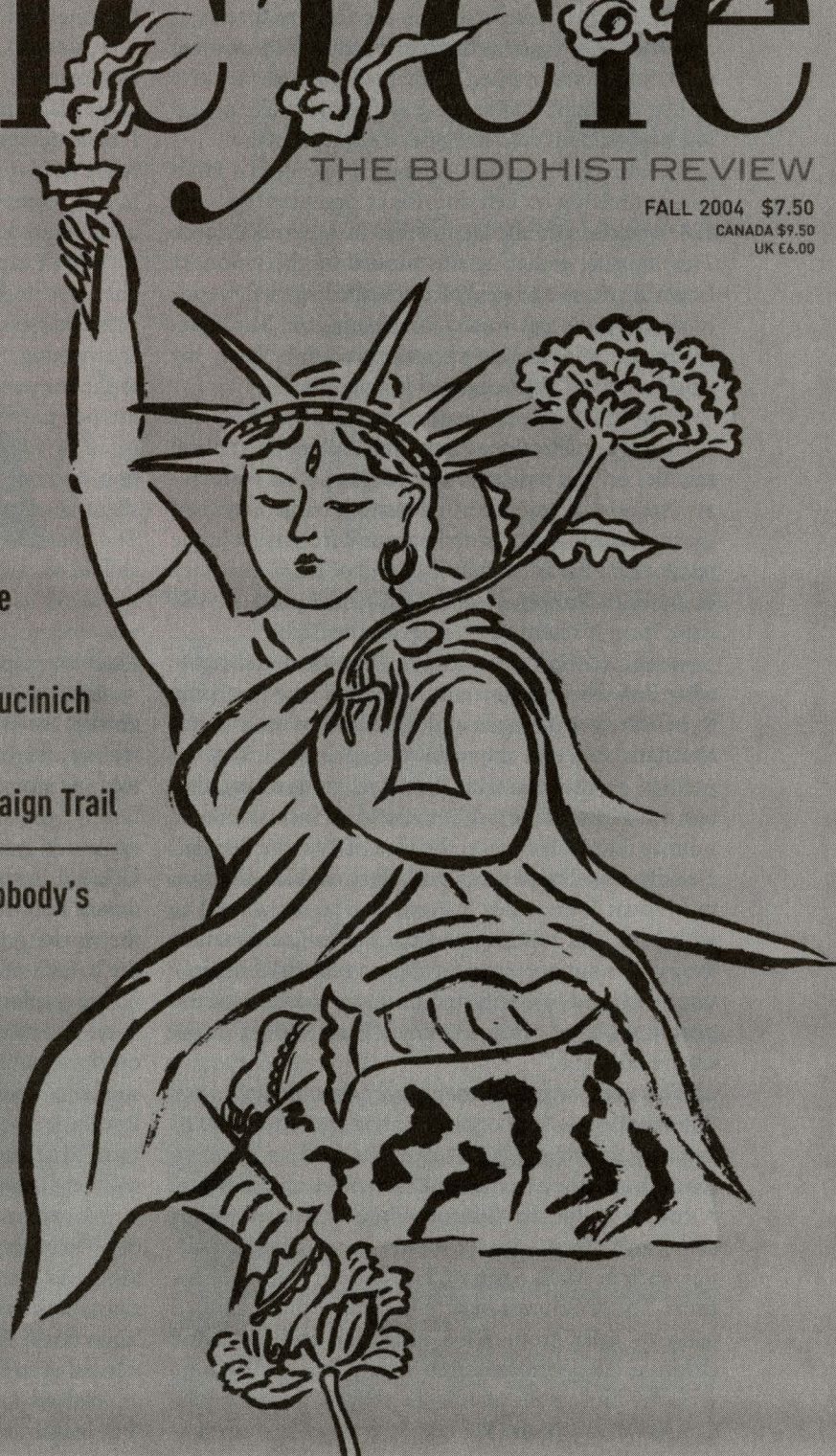
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- ☑ Awakening to Politics:
A Buddhist on the Campaign Trail

- ▼ Enlightenment: What Nobody's
Talking About
- ▼ The Future of Religion
- ▼ Philip Kapleau Roshi
Remembered



Left and Right

A Transformational Encounter

by Tom Atlee

How do we encounter people whom we see as fundamentally politically different from ourselves? Do we see stereotypes or individuals? Do we see them as threats or as fellows? Do we treat them respectfully? More often than not, we are trapped in the manipulated narrative of Left vs. Right that seems designed to make us feel like heroes in an epic struggle of good vs. evil.

In June of 2004, I was privileged to join in a fascinating meeting of Left and Right organized by Let's Talk America and the Democracy in America Project. This unusual gathering was funded by the visionary Fetzer Institute and generously hosted at their wooded Seasons Retreat Center in Kalamazoo, Michigan. When we said our good-byes three days later, my worldview had been changed forever.

The event took place in the newly emerging, deeply democratic political space some are calling "the radical middle" or "the radical center," a space filled with creativity and dialogue. Let's Talk America organizers had journeyed into that common ground from their home territory on the Left, while the head of the Democracy in America Project, Joseph McCormick, had arrived there from his home base deep on the Right.

Joseph McCormick was a military man and right-wing Republican politician in Georgia who has come to believe that dialogue and deliberation are a better alternative to our unproductive, polarized state of politics. He believes, with almost religious fervor, that our most important task is to build an inclusive community that truly reflects the idea of "We the People." He advocates broad cross-boundary conversations, as in his own Democracy in America Project, as well as with Let's Talk America and the Public Conversation Project. He supports the formation of official institutions designed to clarify and promote the voice of the people, such as "wisdom councils" and "citizen deliberative councils."

This event was overwhelmingly about people, very different people. The organizers had invited leaders of the liberal and progressive Left as well as some of Joseph's longtime friends and associates on the Right. A couple of former Clinton administration officials came, and others who have roots in progressive politics, such as Mark Satin of The Radical Middle, folks from The Compassionate Listening Project, and a team of folks from *Utne Magazine* and the Utne Institute. Also in attendance were pillars of the conservative movement such as the chair of the American Conservative Union (the largest grassroots conserva-

tive organization in the U.S.), a leading spokesperson for the Christian Coalition, an FBI veteran, and a former U.S. congressman who is a board member for the National Rifle Association.

I came to this weekend largely because of Joseph McCormick. His journey had brought him to the same place mine had, but through the opposite door. I had tremendous respect for him, but I couldn't relate to his right-wing past at all. Even as I joined him in our common dedication to dialogue, I couldn't quite figure him out through my progressive lens.

What I experienced during the weekend gave me a gut-level understanding of how my own ideological righteousness could close my mind and heart. Before the meeting, I researched the people who were coming to the conversation. I read articles by conservatives and listened to their radio talk shows. Of course, I got triggered by what they said. I reacted with anger, frustration, and rejection of who they seemed to be. I created silent counterarguments and felt my adrenaline rise. The dialogic side of me was despairing. I knew I should set aside my reactions and try to see these conservatives as people, but the task seemed daunting. I was anxious, determined to work hard to be open, but I half expected the whole effort to be a disaster.

And yet, I had a remarkable time. In small mixed groups, we explored what the U.S. meant to us when we were 12 years old and what it means to us now. I told my story of growing up in a progressive, activist family that sided with socialist revolutions. I explained how I had learned all the bad things the U.S. did in the world, and how I still held on to the dream that our country had a crucial role to play in the world, a powerfully positive myth to live out for the benefit of all humanity.

We explored our experiences of political difference. A conservative told of his experience speaking out in a public forum as a college student. After he spoke, a radical student had shouted "When the Revolution succeeds, your kind will be the first to be shot!" The audience cheered the radical, and this man had never forgotten it. I can understand why.

We explored the psychological and tribal dynamics of polarization, and what is lost and gained by seeing others as the enemy and by feeling certain we are right. We came to a place where we didn't want to use labels at all. We were searching for some other ways to relate that had more positive possibility in them.

I talked in depth with one conservative, learning that he too was very concerned about the Patriot Act

and the current administration's global ambitions. He had other serious disagreements with the current administration that he would never voice in public because of his persona as a conservative opinion leader.

He shared a fascinating perspective on the history of the abortion issue, suggesting that decades ago the old Dixiecrat Democrats used to favor abortion for racist reasons, so many Left civil rights leaders were pro-life, while Conservatives promoted the pro-choice position as a matter of personal liberty. Republican encroachments in the Democratic South combined with internal party politics, new prenatal science and the rise of feminism ended up generating a reversal of those stances. He felt many positions on both sides were being held more solidly than was justified by the facts of the matter, and he was intrigued with the possibility of deliberative councils of randomly selected citizens investigating important public issues together.

It was immensely clarifying to me to find out who lived on the other side of the wall I had built in my own perceptions. I could feel how my determined ignorance was limiting my options, and, most importantly, the options of my entire country and the world. I ended the weekend with great new friends and associates, people who had started out identifying with the Left or Right but who were now more intrigued with each other as people and with new possibilities of making a difference together.

Perhaps my biggest insight was the realization that if we stepped out of the Liberal/Conservative, Left/Right duality, we might find vast areas of workable common ground. The great political dichotomies present us with artificially polarized differences. They lead us to gather together in our tribes, preparing for war, so that we totally lose sight of the possibilities for alliances.

Polarization tricks us into dehumanizing the other side, and breaks our connections as citizens and as members of our communities, causing a loss of what sociologists call "social capital." It encourages us to ignore information, insights, and solutions from the other side.

It is important to remember that the extreme of polarization is genocide and civil war. To move beyond polarity is to move in the right direction. I see my challenge now as nurturing an open curiosity, with less fear and judgment and fewer preconceptions. I now expect that, upon meeting so-called conservatives, I will probably find them different from whatever I may have expected. I may even come away wiser, with a more nuanced sense of the issues we discuss and what they really mean in the big picture. As Let's Talk America says, "What if what unites us is more than we realize, and what divides us is less than we fear?"

All that said, I'm not at the point of loving everyone. I realize there are extremists out there who cannot tolerate real dialogue or recognize the humanity and

legitimacy of the Other. But I also realize that extremists exist on both sides and are often leaders in creating polarization for their own ends. Extremists are a natural part of polarized systems. But the ideologues are seldom the majority, or even a sizable minority, of either side. The many people on all sides who could potentially hear each other can only do so when they are provided with respectful, nonthreatening forums that support them in relating to each other across political divides. Such forums are hard to come by in

I sensed a profound personal shift away from Left/Right framings that was comparable to my earlier shifts away from sexism and homophobia.

today's political culture. It is up to us to make them.

In the end I experienced a deep, gut-level transformation. I sensed a profound personal shift away from Left/Right framings that was comparable to my earlier shifts away from sexism and homophobia. As with those other shifts, I still have impulses from my earlier state, but I don't believe in them anymore. I am convinced that the whole Left/Right framework is crippling us. It is also clear to me that we have a long, hard slog ahead of us as we try to free ourselves from this worldview, because the deep psychological impulses driving it are extremely powerful.

What struck me most, and with tremendous irony, was that I had bought into a frame of reference that prevents us from achieving true collective wisdom. I enjoyed the benefits of righteous certainty and was able, even eager, to project blame onto others. I dehumanized others in ways that prevented me from engaging with them to discover their full humanity, and from seeing the systemic dynamics that prevent us from working together.

I now want to dedicate my life to changing the social structures that uphold polarized ways of seeing the world. I want to promote and support opportunities to encounter others in heartfelt, intelligent ways that empower us all.

Sunday morning we sat in a circle, with a candle and a leaf representing life in the center. We went around the circle, speaking of things we were going to do now that we had talked. And so it was that we signed the following declaration:

We the People

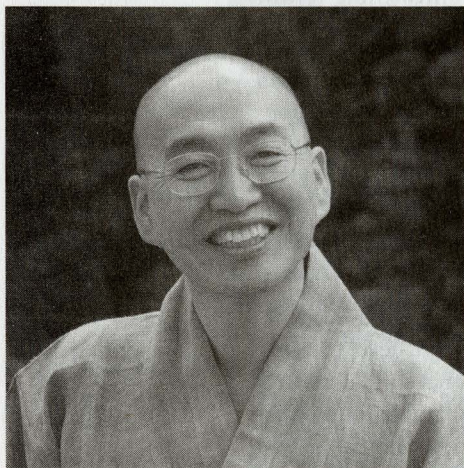
- *Cherish our country and the founding ideals and institutions on which it stands.*
- *Respect our differences, and recognize that to keep our democracy vital and alive, the United States of*

(continued on page 31)

Open Mind, Blessed Land

A Conversation with Venerable Pomnyun Sunim

by Robert Lyons



The Ven. Pomnyun Sunim, born in South Korea during the early fifties, grew up in the rigid world of North and South. As he came of age, his home country made a successful transition to industrial prosperity, while North Korea descended deeply into isolation and poverty. The two societies, sharing a culture and a peninsula, might have been worlds apart.

Ven. Pomnyun entered the Buddhist monkhood as a youth

but abandoned his robes to join South Korea's democracy movement. He was arrested and tortured on two occasions. The movement prevailed, and Ven. Pomnyun turned his focus from political issues to social ones. He formed the JungTo (Blessed Land) Society to apply Buddhist teachings to the full range of modern ills, from greed and poverty to environmental degradation. In 1991, he was ordained as a Buddhist monk, becoming the Venerable Pomnyun Sunim.

He worked in Dongeshwari, India, for several years, where he established a free school, a medical center, and a village development program for the 16-village hamlet of untouchables. He was, however, drawn home later in the 1990s, as floods and drought ransacked North Korea. Tens of thousands of starving refugees fled across the border to China, and Ven. Pomnyun visited these "food refugees" repeatedly in 1997 and 1998. He saw the desperate circumstances of their lives in China and learned from them of the appalling dimensions of the famine in North Korea, where some 3 million people had died.

As his organization assisted the refugees, Ven. Pomnyun raised awareness about the urgency of the situation at home and abroad. He reported that the famine was claiming more lives than the Korean War, and he urged South Koreans to put aside their fears and suspicions and help the North Korean people. This, he said, was the true path to reconciliation and reunification. South Koreans responded by donating thousands of articles of clothing and \$2 million for food aid. A million people petitioned the South Korean government to send massive quantities of food and medicine to the North.

Ven. Pomnyun's ongoing advocacy and relief efforts reflect his belief that Buddhists must engage with the real world and act to relieve suffering. He does so as part of his larger vision for "a new humane society" that also brings people into harmony with nature. He works in concert with other engaged Buddhists around the world and also with like-minded Buddhist and Christian NGOs in Korea to create his articulate vision, "Open Mind, Good Friends, and Clean Earth."

Robert Lyons met Ven. Pomnyun at a peace conference in Seoul in 2003. Lyons subsequently conducted this interview by e-mail.

...

TW: How did you come to be an activist?

Ven. Pomnyun: I was born and raised in Kyoungju, which was Korea's capital for a thousand years. In the sixth grade I joined a group to study the city's historic and cultural sites, and found that most of them were Buddhist. That was my first contact with Buddhism; it led me to join the Buddhist student group.

During high school, I dreamt of becoming a physicist or an astronomer. Then I had a conversation with my mentor, Ven. Bulsimdomun Sunim. I told him I was very busy preparing for my final exams.

"Where are you coming from?" he asked me. "From school." "Before that?" "The library." "Before that?" He kept asking the same question until I answered, "My mother's womb."

"Where were you before your mother's womb?"

"I don't know."

Then he asked me, "Where are you going now?" "I am going home." "After that?" "To school." And he kept asking the same question until I answered, "I die."

"Where will you go after you die?"

"I don't know."

Then my mentor shouted at me, "Why are you so busy when you know neither where you are from nor where you are going?"

I felt like I had been blind until that moment. It was a great shock. And I entered the temple as a monk after the final exams.

I became involved in social movements when I was in my twenties. The 1970s in Korea was the time of President Park Jeong Hee's military dictatorship. Korean society was experiencing rapid industrialization; many farmers, workers, and poor people suffered greatly in the process. The student movement and the

social movement for democracy were very strong. My brother was a college student and became involved in the movement for democracy. I joined him in the movement and was imprisoned and tortured.

Back then, I believed in Buddhism as a religion, but it was not enough to help me understand the reality of my situation. I even had slight doubts about Buddhism. Then I delved deep into the life of the Buddha and I learned how he faced difficulties and practiced to solve them. From this new perspective, I recognized the social activism in the Buddha's life, which had been forgotten in the Korean Buddhist tradition. The Buddha lived among the common people and worked to eliminate class and gender oppression, and to promote peace.

Until then I had thought spiritual practice and social activism were separate things and wondered which one should be the priority in my life. But in the life of the Buddha those two were merged into one. In Mahayana Buddhism, we strive to "seek truth in the heavens, and save the people in the world," and we believe that "what is good for me is also good for others." When I practice this way, I'm joyful and satisfied, I'm happy to be helping others (however little it may be), and I feel responsible for the community and the time I live in. Yet, simply put, I'm doing this for no reason.

TW: What work have you and the JungTo Society been doing to help promote peace on the Korean Peninsula and for the well-being of all Korean people?

Ven. Pomnyun: First, we work to preserve our environment and create a sustainable way of life through the Zero Waste Movement, which promotes public recycling programs. Second, we work for peace on the Korean Peninsula, give humanitarian assistance to North Korea, support refugees, and promote human rights around the world. Finally, through continual practice we work to help individuals achieve happiness, freedom, and family harmony, and to resolve confusion and conflict between people in all walks of life.

TW: How do you feel about the present U.S. administration's policy toward North Korea?

Ven. Pomnyun: Washington's hostile stance against North Korea is not appropriate. Its refusal to participate in six-party talks with South Korea, North Korea, Japan, China, and Russia and its chilly relationship with the Pyongyang government are not conducive to peace on the Korean Peninsula. This stance actually increases China's influence in North Korea.

If the U.S. could accept the Communist regime in Pyongyang and establish direct contact with the government there, and if North Korea could stop developing nuclear weapons and dumping nuclear waste, we might see a stronger, more stable Korean Peninsula. This would also serve international interests.

It is especially desirable for the U.S. to turn its hos-

Korea in the 20th Century: A Chronicle of Suffering

1905–1945

Following the Russo-Japanese War, victorious Japanese occupy and colonize Korea and Manchuria. The Korean economy and social institutions undergo wrenching modernization and industrialization. Massive migrations from countryside to cities.

1941–1945

World War II. Millions of Koreans are mobilized in support of the Japanese war economy. 200,000 Korean "comfort women" are pressed into sexual slavery. Some 20,000 Korean laborers living in Hiroshima and Nagasaki die in U.S. nuclear attacks. After the war, Korea is partitioned at 38th parallel; millions of Korean families are separated.

1950–1953

Korean War: North Korea and China vs. the U.S. and South Korea. American aerial bombing kills more than 2 million North Korean civilians and destroys every city in North Korea but fails to win the war. An armistice ends the fighting (peace treaty has never been signed). For 50 years the U.S. has maintained a garrison of 30,000 troops in South Korea, with the South Korean military under U.S. command. The Korean demilitarized zone is the most heavily fortified border in the world.

1953–1994

Kim Il Sung rules North Korea as a Communist totalitarian state.

1953–1987

For three decades South Korean political life is marked by widespread political repression, corruption, fraudulent elections, military coups, martial law, etc.

1987

Kwangju uprising. Local residents, students, and labor leaders in this small South Korean city protest martial law and drive government troops from the city. Three days later the army is sent in to quell the rebellion, killing thousands. Seminal event in eventual restoration of democracy in South Korea.

1994

North Korean leader Kim Il Sung dies; his son Kim Jong Il takes power.

1983–present

South Korea becomes one of the Asian "economic tigers" as its economy soars, led by conglomerates such as Daewoo, Hyundai, and Samsung. The North Korean economy, dependent on subsidies from China and Russia, goes into steep decline after the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union. South Korean per capita gross domestic product is now 18 times greater than North Korea's; South Korea has the highest rate of Internet usage in the world.

1995–1996

An estimated 2 million people starve to death in North Korean famine. Refugees flood into China. Food aid from U.S. is linked to political objectives.

2000–2004

President George W. Bush names North Korea as part of the "Axis of Evil." Tensions mount as U.S. hints at military strikes if North Korea does not abandon its nuclear weapons program. Six-Party Talks involving North and South Korea, Japan, Russia, China, and the U.S. focus on nuclear disarmament but also touch on security, economic, and human rights issues of all parties.



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tile policies into positive engagement. War on the Korean Peninsula is possible so long as the U.S. is willing to consider a preemptive strike against Pyongyang. Such a war would result in hundreds of thousands of casualties and could topple the economies of both Koreas.

TW: What are the prospects for concluding a peace agreement between North and South Korea?

Ven. Pomnyun: The biggest obstacles to a lasting peace in Korea are Washington's anti-Pyongyang stance and North Korea's response. The U.S. and North Korea should reach a peace agreement through direct dialogue, normalize relations, and forge peace in the Six-Party Talks (U.S., North and South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia). Also, a peace agreement between the two Koreas should be reached.

TW: Is a desire for reunification shared by most Koreans, North and South?

Ven. Pomnyun: Most South Koreans want reunification through reconciliation and collaboration. South Korean tycoons hope for reunification so they can take advantage of cheap North Korean labor. The South Korean military's aggressive stance against North Korea is on the decline. Our former president's "sunshine" policy of seeking cultural exchanges, family visits, and so on, was partly effective in promoting reconciliation and cooperation between the two Koreas.

TW: Are you optimistic about the Six-Party Talks?

Ven. Pomnyun: Six-Party Talks are not the best choice for a first step. A better choice would be for the U.S., North Korea, and South Korea to reach a peace agreement, which the six countries would then guarantee. There is broad consensus that the establishment of a multilateral security system is essential to bring about peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula as well as in all of Asia.

TW: Is there anything Americans can do to help?

Ven. Pomnyun: Americans can push to change Washington's policies concerning North Korea. Due to Washington's hard-line stance toward Pyongyang, tensions are running high, which makes peaceful coexistence with Pyongyang difficult. So Washington should begin a dialogue with Pyongyang as a way to bring about peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

The U.S. should also give more humanitarian aid to North Korea. Regardless of whether or not we like our Communist neighbor, this would save North Korean civilians from starvation. ❖

Robert Lyons is the BPF chapter coordinator and facilitates the East Bay Chapter. Along with Cedar Spring, he recently organized BPF's presence at both national party conventions, as well as the peace walk between them, from Boston to New York.

Jizos for Peace

What to Do About an Old War

by Jan Chozen Bays

In Japan a 60th birthday is a special event. Next year I will celebrate my 60th birthday by making a pilgrimage to Japan, a pilgrimage of reconciliation for a war that was ending as I was being born. I am writing to invite everyone to join me in making a very large gift, a gift of thousands of tangible prayers for peace and for an end to nuclear destruction.

In Buddhism we look at cold, hard facts, such as the coexistence of human life and suffering. It seems that war always has been and always will be a part of that suffering. The Buddha himself could not stop wars, even in countries where his presence was vivid and his teaching was most potent. How do we reconcile what seems to be the inevitability of war with the prompting of our hearts that makes it imperative that we work for peace?

This is the koan that has come alive for me as I have worked on a project called Jizos for Peace. The project began with my birth, to pacifist parents, on August 9, 1945, the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, three days after the bombing of Hiroshima. That hundreds of thousands of people died in Japan in the few days around my birth has led, I think, in some mysterious way, to my becoming a Zen Buddhist priest in a Japanese lineage in a monastery dedicated to Jizo Bodhisattva.

At our monastery we make ceramic statues of Jizo, the special protector of children, women, travelers, and those caught in hellish realms. A few years ago I decided I would take 60 of these little Jizo images to

Nagasaki in August 2005, on my 60th birthday. Then I saw the very moving exhibits at the Atomic Bomb Museums in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Many were in memory of the thousands of children who were mobilized to work on clearing fire lanes in case of bombings. They were vaporized instantly, and their grieving families could find nothing but fragments: a school badge, a piece of a lunch box, a burnt sandal. It was hard to make my way through the whole of the exhibits, hard to look the Japanese visitors in the eye. What terrible suffering we had all caused!

I began to wonder if we could make and offer one Jizo for every person who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I discovered that an estimated 270,000 people perished, either from the bombs themselves or from the effects of radiation, in the first year after the atomic bombs were dropped. This included Koreans, Chinese, and prisoners of war from the U.S. and European countries. How in the world could we make this huge number of Jizos?

Kaz Tanahashi, a Japanese-American artist and peace activist, had an idea. We could draw many Jizos on pieces of cloth and sew them together as prayer flags and tapestries. We began this work at a retreat on the eve of the war in Iraq.

We drew and painted, silently chanting the Jizo mantra, *om ka ka kabi san ma ei sowa ka*, and sending a prayer for peace out as each Jizo was completed. "Peace to President Bush." "Peace to Saddam Hussein." "Peace to the soldiers." As we worked with our bodies, the agitation and distress in our minds and hearts gradually settled.



Jan Chozen Bays, courtesy Hogen Bays

Dogen Zenji was right when he said that we do this practice by means of our bodies. Peace was restored to our hearts and minds through the activity of our hands and our quiet chanting. We could not stop this war, but we could transform our divided hearts, our

that we had decided to undertake a pilgrimage on the 60th anniversary of the bombing, to bring a Jizo for every person who died in Nagasaki and Hiroshima in the first year after the attack, an incredible 270,000 Jizos in all. The Jizos would be offered in apology for the bombing, as a memorial for the people who had died 60 years before and as hundreds of thousands of prayers for peace in the future.

When I brought out the cloth prayer flags we had made, containing images of hundreds of colorful Jizos, and uncoiled the red and white chains of origami Jizos, the faces of the hibakusha lit up in broad smiles and they began to talk excitedly. They turned to Kaz, who was serving as interpreter.

“No one from America has ever apologized or brought us anything after the atomic bomb was dropped.”

Tears stung my eyes to see their happiness as they passed our small handmade tokens from hand to hand around the table. I realized that we had undertaken something beyond imagination. Jizos for Peace had become a work of reconciliation, of reparation for the harm our ancestors had done before we were even born. We were working to clean up the karma of a war that had ended 59 years before. I looked back at other wars—the Vietnam War, the Gulf War. Would our practice call us to follow behind those wars, too, doing what we could to clean up the karma of great amounts of suffering purposely inflicted? I realized that 50 years from now I would be dead, but someone might need to make offerings in Iraq. It was then I felt the project grow out from under my small vision.

This tangible expression of our desire for peace seems to have universal appeal. Panels have come in



Jizos in Japan
Photos by Judy
Nathanson

anguish over the war. Thich Nhat Hanh says that when just one person is a little more at peace, the whole world is a little more at peace. When outer work for peace seems blocked, then the inner work becomes most important.

One Jizo for each person who died. As we make what seems like an impossible number of Jizos, the enormity of the destruction of life that occurred in Japan 60 years ago begins to sink in. Our Jizos are tiny compared to the size of even a baby, but the prayer flags, panels, and garlands of origami Jizos pile up and overflow the tables.

In the last year we have taken some of the Jizo prayer flags and chains of origami Jizos to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to find out if people there even want these offerings. Everyone we met, from government officials to peace activists, was surprised, happy, and supportive.

When we first sat down to talk with the atomic bomb survivors (*hibakusha*) in Nagasaki, they seemed reserved and somewhat nervous. I was a bit nervous, too. What if we made thousands of Jizos and nobody wanted them? The survivors listened attentively, but their expressions didn't change as I explained the history of the Jizos for Peace project, how I had been born to pacifist parents on the day the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, and how I had come to be a teacher at a Zen monastery dedicated to Jizo Bodhisattva. Their eyebrows lifted as I explained



from children and adults, from dharma centers and Christian Sunday schools. Now we are getting Jizo panels sent from Japan! Two women there have made 5,000 origami Jizos! It makes me smile to think of

JIZO IN PRISON

Everyone matters.

When Chozen Bays described the Jizos for Peace project at last summer's meeting of the American Zen Teachers Association, it immediately seemed to me that it was a way for the forgotten population of prison inmates to become visible and to offer their yearnings for peace to the world. It was something that they could send out under their names as individuals, not merely their numbers as prisoners.

I was fortunate to be able to present the idea to Ana Boatwright, deputy warden of Oakhill Correctional Institution in Wisconsin. We had become acquainted at meetings of the Department of Corrections Religious Practices Advisory Committee, of which she is a co-chair and on which I serve. Since the materials pose little security risk and offer a positive outlet, she was able to have the program approved for the entire state system.

The project was embraced by chaplains, program directors, and the inmates themselves. I supplied the muslin panels and pens, taking them in with me and taking them out with me. We found time during our regular Buddhist group meetings to work on Jizos. Something about Jizo Bodhisattva that is meaningful to prison inmates is that he carries a staff with six rings representing the six realms of existence, saying, in essence, "I go anywhere to help anybody!"

Eight institutions have been involved, seven where I conduct programs and one where the recreation director spearheaded the activities. To date, 49 panels have been made, with a total of 2,944 images of Jizo. More are in the works, carrying wishes for peace in the world out from the cell halls and segregation units, each message from a human being striving for his own inner peace. Of all the messages, one resonates constantly in my mind, offering a powerful prescription for peace: "Everyone matters."

*Tonen Sara O'Connor
Resident Priest
Milwaukee Zen Center*

Jizos winging their way across the Pacific Ocean in both directions.

Tonen Sara O'Connor, teacher at the Milwaukee Zen Center, has taken Jizos for Peace into the prisons in Wisconsin. (See article at left.) The pieces of cloth and the ink pens must be approved before they are allowed inside. Many lovely panels have been created by incarcerated men, including two delicate drawings by men in maximum security who were in handcuffs and were only allowed to use the inside of a ball point pen. The message they gave Tonen is, "I'm trying to change. I'm struggling to grow beyond the killer (or rapist or child molester) I was." Tonen will help to bring these banners to Japan in 2005, "to show the prisoners that their messages for peace did go out, and that people were moved by them." The project gives a voice to those otherwise invisible in our society.

The hibakusha are afraid that when they die a new generation will forget the devastating potential of nuclear weapons. They know that the world is not safe from nuclear weapons. Dirty bombs are burning and radiating a new generation as I write. If anyone would like to do some mopping-up work, to engage body, heart, and mind in one much-needed practice of peace and reconciliation, please join in making Jizos for Peace. For information and detailed instructions, see www.jizosforpeace.org. ❖

Jan Chozen Bays is the cofounder, with her husband, Hogen Bays, of Great Vow Monastery in Clatskanie, Oregon, where they teach and reside. She is also a pediatrician working in the field of child abuse.

Left and Right, continued from page 25

America needs every one of our viewpoints, ideas, and passions, even those we don't agree with.

- *Recognize that meeting here and across our land for dialogues across differences builds trust, understanding, respect, and empowerment—the conditions necessary for freedom and democracy to live in us and around us.*

- *And therefore we, still grounded in our own considered conscience and convictions, commit ourselves and our communities of interest to foster dialogue across the many divides in the United States of America, in large and small groups, to build trust, insight, and inspired action towards the more perfect union we all desire. May it be so.* ❖

For more information about these issues, go to www.co-intelligence.org and www.letstalkamerica.org.

Tom Atlee is president of the Co-Intelligence Institute in Eugene, Oregon, and author of The Tao of Democracy, published by The Writers' Collective (www.taoofdemocracy.com).

Meeting Myself in the Cell House

by Scott Darnell

July 2004 marked the 25th year of my life spent behind bars. When people find out how much time I have served, I usually get looks of shock and disbelief. Their eyes grow big. Their mouths drop open. Invariably they have to ask, "How did this happen?" It isn't an easy answer to give. I was a boy of 15 when I first entered the system. By the time I had gone through court and was given a natural-life-plus-30-year sentence, I was all of 16 years old. The rest of my teen years were spent in a juvenile facility, battling myself and everyone around me until, after a botched escape plan a few months shy of my 21st birthday, I was transferred to the adult division of the Department of Corrections.

As any recovering alcoholic or drug addict will attest, sometimes you have to hit rock bottom before you can begin to make your way up again. I hit rock bottom the moment the cell door slammed shut behind me in the Receiving and Classification Unit, where inmates are first sent to determine which institution is most appropriate for their placement.

It's amazing what the mind will do to occupy itself when the ready distractions of the outside world are not available. For two very long months I had nothing in R&C but my own thoughts and feelings to occupy my time. Memories long forgotten or intentionally suppressed came bubbling up to the surface.

I found myself very depressed over the life I knew I would never have. Suicide briefly occurred to me. Then I became angry at myself over all the despicable, abusive, self-serving things I had done throughout the years that ultimately landed me behind bars.

Toward the end of my stay in R&C, I went through a mandatory evaluation process with a counselor assigned to the cell house I was in. For the first time in my life I confided in someone, no holds barred, explaining the circumstances of my crime, my memories of abuse from childhood, and my rebellion through delinquent and criminal behavior.

By the end of my two months in R&C, I decided that if I had to spend the rest of my life in prison, at least I would not live it in the same destructive, self-deluded manner that had caused so much grief.

With the counselor's help I was transferred to an institution where I could enter a volunteer therapy program. For the next six years, for six to twelve hours a week, I attended this program with the single-minded goal of making my decision a reality.

In the Twin Verses of the Dhammapada, we are

told, "All that we are is a result of what we have thought. It is founded upon our thoughts; it is based on our thoughts." I realized this fundamental truth for the first time in therapy, or "group," as its members commonly referred to it.

Every session in group was spent learning how to identify the myriad thoughts and feelings that shaped the way I saw and dealt both with myself and the world around me. Our first ideas about ourselves naturally originate in the treatment we receive from parents or other primary caregivers. As a child I never found it acceptable just to be myself. I saw myself as unworthy of love and undeserving of tenderness.

My mother's influence helped shape these core ideas I had about myself. She was only 16 when she had me, and she was very sick, stricken from an early age with diabetes. A disease manageable with proper care these days, diabetes was not as easily treated during my mother's childhood in the '50s. While most kids were out playing, my mother was either undergoing tests in the hospital or confined to her bed at home.

Unfortunately, when she was allowed out, she tried to make up for lost time, regardless of the consequences. By her early twenties she was saddled with a child (me), married, divorced, and married again. On top of that she was facing the prospects of dialysis, possible blindness, and an early death.

All of this was a heavy burden for her, as it would be for anyone under similar circumstances. Unfortunately, my mother was ill-equipped to manage that burden. When things got too rough for her, I was the one she usually lashed out at.

My mother's favorite word to scream at me in fits of rage and frustration, when my four-year-old fingers failed to tie my shoe or when my toys weren't properly put away, was "retard." To me it meant I was a loser, helpless and unlovable.

The word was often accompanied by threats to have the police come and take me away—I didn't deserve to live in the same house as normal people. Other times it was hurled at me with heavy blows that left me cowering in the corner or under the bed in tears.

When I was seven, my mother died of complications associated with diabetes. She was 23. In my child's mind, I blamed myself for her death. She had left me because I wasn't good enough. She would rather have died than be forced to live with a retard like me.

In Tolstoy's classic novel *Resurrection* he writes, "Nobody can wholeheartedly do anything unless he

believes that his activity is important and good." To see ourselves as less than important or good becomes so intolerable for the psyche that some type of solution, no matter how warped and bizarre, must be found to enable us to go on with our daily lives.

With the faulty logic of a seven-year-old, I believed that if I enacted the behavior I had learned and became the abuser, I would be the type of person my mother would have respected. Of course being the abuser instead of the victim also meant having power and control over others. Although deep down I felt that I could never hope to be a truly good person, I could at least be good at being bad.

At first this seemed to work out fine. The more I skipped school, ran away from home, shoplifted, or got into fights, the better I felt about myself. I certainly couldn't be a retard if I could outsmart the truant officer or slip past a store clerk with a carton of cigarettes. I certainly couldn't be a victim cowering in fear when I could bully schoolmates and make them cower instead.

And I got more attention when I was bad. In the beginning the attention was positive, as relatives tried to counsel and support me. But their efforts were in vain. Deep down I still believed I was the retard, constantly having to prove to myself that I wasn't.

By the age of 10, I was carrying and brandishing a knife at school. I was stealing anything I could get my hands on, from spare change to neighborhood bicycles. At one point I stole a handgun from my stepfather's room and robbed a woman on her way home from the grocery store.

The attention I received grew progressively more negative, as I came into contact with law enforcement and, finally, the prison system. Yet even then, negative attention was better than no attention.

In group I received a different type of attention. It was based, as strange as it may seem for a prison setting, on the idea of unconditional love. We were told that the things we believed about ourselves weren't necessarily true and that we could become people worthy of the love and respect we sought.

Group was run by a prison psychologist named Mike, and about 60 of us participated. We ranged in age from 20 to 70 years old. Almost half were civil commitments, men deemed by the courts "sexually dangerous persons" because of a mental defect that caused them to sexually offend. SDPs, as they were commonly known, had an indeterminate sentence, and their eventual release depended solely upon their continued progress and eventual completion of the therapy program.

The rest of us were felons, serving sentences that ranged from 10 years to life, for crimes that included everything from armed robbery to child molestation,

rape, and murder. The majority, whether civil or criminal, voluntarily participated in the program with the intention of gaining insight into and changing the behaviors that had led to our incarceration in the first place. Our group motto was "No More Victims." It was a goal each of us aspired to wholeheartedly.

Mike taught us step by step how to be aware of and question our thoughts and feelings. Through his persistence we slowly learned how to map out our patterns of negative behavior and to recognize circumstances in our lives which could eventually trigger violent or otherwise antisocial responses.

Mike, unlike many psychologists and psychiatrists who had passed through our lives, was never distant, condescending, or quick to prescribe the latest psychotropic medication as a substitute for what might otherwise be achieved through therapy. We were not "cases" to him. We were people.

When Mike thought something was funny, he would laugh uproariously with us. When someone broke down in tears relating an incident of childhood abuse, he would often be crying right along with him. He never gave up on anybody in group, sometimes waiting years for someone to turn the corner and begin to deal with the issues necessary for his well-being.

For the first year and a half I was in group, I neither understood nor appreciated any of these things. I fought Mike, and, by extension, everyone in group who tried to get past my defenses and help me deal with my problems. At nearly 21 years old, I had the emotional maturity of a seven-year-old. The idea of giving up anything that might leave me exposed to another person was terrifying. The seven-year-old had been terrorized enough.

On more than one occasion I stormed out of group, cursing everyone along the way. As I slammed the door behind me, I told myself that I was a victim, being unduly harassed by a bunch of know-it-alls who were trying to make themselves look good at my expense. When I found myself confronted with my relationship with my mother, I would often defend her as though she had been a saint. "She was sick," I'd explain. "It was my fault for not listening."

When arguments failed me, I would slide down in my chair and refuse to speak, trying my best to look hurt and misunderstood as group carried on.

Eventually it occurred to me that it wasn't group I was fighting as much as myself. Group wasn't trying to hurt me. All of my nonsense arguments and petulant behavior didn't keep me safe; it kept me separate from the very people trying to help me. In time I began to trust and confide in them. Little by little, the seven-year-old began to grow up.

Group became my first experience with sangha, a place of refuge where I could confront the delusions

When I allowed myself to see what I had done to my victim, I simply fell apart. I sat there, crumpled in a chair.

of my life and find release from the suffering I had created for myself in so many ways. In time I came to understand my mother's problems and how they had led her to deal with life. I in turn allowed myself to feel the pain and suffering she had initially caused me as a child, and now, as an adult, I began to deal with it in a way that brought forgiveness, closure, and release.

Thanks to group I let go of the lies I had accepted about myself and began to believe that I was in fact worthy of such things as love, friendship, trust, loyalty, and happiness. It was an awakening of sorts. My life, for the first time, took on meaning and an inner quality it had never had before.

Still, every coin has two sides. As necessary for healing as it was to face the abuse I had suffered, it was equally important for me to face to the ways in which I had abused others. Until group my actions were completely self-centered. I never had any real consideration for other people's feelings unless it somehow served me. Empathy had no part in the equation. In our group, when we finally allowed our defenses to completely fall away and we were confronted with what had been done to the people we had victimized, we relived the incidents in great detail. Only then, in touch with the abuse and suffering in our pasts, did we become capable of empathizing with those we had abused. For the first time, those we had hurt became actual flesh-and-blood human beings in our eyes.

When I allowed myself to see what I had done to my victim, I simply fell apart. I sat there, crumpled in a chair, oblivious to everyone around me. All I could do was cry, shaking uncontrollably at the horror of my actions and

through the same process I was in order to get well.

In or out of group I found myself surrounded by friends. They would sit with me, sometimes in silence, their mere presence enough of a comfort to get me through. Other times they would try to draw me out in conversation, reminding me of how proud they were of me, or how much courage they thought I had to face up to what I had done. My experience encouraged others in group to begin taking the first steps in coming to terms with their own crimes.

This then gave me the strength and courage to move on. I realized how much I owed to others. It wasn't just about me and dealing with my life. It was about trying to help others, paying back some of what I owed to a group of men who had invested themselves so fully in me, by investing myself back into the group.

For the next several years, I did just that, sharing my personal experiences with my fellow group members in order to help them break their own cycles of abuse and ultimately become decent, healthy human beings.

As life-altering as the group experience was for me, and as much as I grew as a human being over the years, I have learned that all things truly are impermanent. Overcrowding and the need for reorganization of the prison population eventually led to my transfer to another institution.

This was a difficult time for me. Group had become my family. I missed them dearly, thought about them often, and on more than one occasion shed tears over the loss of their companionship. But for the first time in my life, separation from the people I loved and cared about was not confused in my mind with abandonment. I could move forward with a sense of well-being and confidence in myself.

Not long after my transfer I was lucky enough to get an inmate job assignment as a cell-house clerk. I took care of records, made sure inmates who needed to see a counselor or a doctor had an appointment, and generally tried to keep the galleries running smoothly and efficiently.

It was during this time I had the good fortune to meet an inmate who practiced Soto Zen. He was the first Buddhist I had ever met, and through him I was introduced to the teachings of the Buddha. It was an introduction I welcomed, as much for the growing friendship between us as for the hours of study and lively conversation it provided.

The Four Noble Truths, the noble Eightfold Path, and Kannon's Great Heart Sutra were among the first things I committed to memory. The teachings of Buddha reminded me of many of the things I had learned in group. For example, suffering due to false ideas of self and the idea of karma made perfect sense to me.

When I finally read those lines in the Twin Verses

We simply remove our shoes and perform gassho before a colored-pencil drawing of the Buddha set up on a makeshift altar.

what I had put the victim of my crime through.

At one point I got up and beat my fist bloody against the wall. If several of the larger members of group had not put me back in my chair, I would probably have hurt myself more. All I could see was the face of the person I had murdered.

That day, and for days afterward, I walked the prison yard like a zombie, bursting into tears at the slightest thought of my crime. I couldn't eat. My sleep was fitful at best. Everywhere I looked I could only see reminders of what I had done, and how the person I had murdered would never experience anything good again.

I truly believe the only reason I made it through that side of therapy without just lying down in the dirt and giving up was because of the support and dedication of my fellow group members, many of whom had already gone through or were going

of the Dhammapada about how we are a result of our thoughts, I was forever hooked. Soon after, I took refuge, with my friend as a witness. At the time, there was basically just me, him, and the practice of sitting. But that was enough.

Later I began to correspond with a man associated with the San Francisco Zen Center who regularly shared his own experiences and insights with me. He encouraged me to continue to grow in my personal practice and reminded me through his many letters that even though I was locked away behind bars, I was never alone.

I have been a practicing Buddhist now for nine years. Each day is a welcome journey. Some days of course are easier than others. Prison is certainly no country club. Prison is gun towers and razor wire. It is months at a time on lockdown status in a tiny cell. There are billy clubs and pepper spray, and convicts ready to take advantage of any perceived weakness they might exploit.

Even worse, prison is the separation from family and friends. Children grow up and move on without ever having known us. Holidays filled with sparkling lights and family dinners we experience only as a card or a photo filled with smiling faces we cannot touch.

While an inmate may serve time, prison is a denial of time both for him and his family. When my stepfather died on the operating table during open heart surgery, I was reminded of how true this actually was. There were things left unsaid and undone between us. I regretted not being there for him during his illness and not being able to attend or speak at his funeral. I wish he could have known the kind of person I've tried to become.

I know men who spend their years inside thinking of little else but revenge over what they have lost or given up. They fixate on it, facing decades behind bars with no other purpose. Their despair drains them of hope and leaves behind an empty shell.

Still, there are those who choose to live, right here, right now. They don't give in to despair but allow themselves the possibility of change and of being a positive influence on the people around them. Granted, they are few and far between in this environment. But they are most certainly here. Some of them I was fortunate enough to meet years ago in group. Currently, five of us meet in the prison chapel each week for an hourly sangha meeting.

The meetings themselves are simple enough. We have no formal rituals to speak of. We simply remove our shoes and perform *gassho* before a colored-pencil drawing of the Buddha set up on a makeshift altar. After *gassho*, we sit on the floor or on old prayer benches.

During our hour together in sangha, we encourage one another in practice. We offer emotional support and advice on how to deal with the day-to-day challenges that occur in a prison setting.

Several weeks ago one man came to the sangha with a question about charity. He was well known for his habit of helping out anyone on his gallery who would ask for something. Coffee, a candy bar, soda, whatever was asked for he freely gave with no strings attached.

Lately, however, he had felt himself being used, and wondered whether or not he should continue granting people's requests. His concern was that, should he refuse, he would only be protecting his sense of pride and attachment to material objects.

By the end of our hour we all had a chance to weigh in with our opinions, coming to the conclusion that to continue to give selflessly should remain the goal. But a person could also be selfless in refusing a request if he felt the request was exploitative. By refusing selflessly, he wouldn't be enabling or strengthen-

I know men who spend their years inside thinking of little else but revenge over what they have lost or given up.

ing patterns of exploitative behavior that, in the long run, would only lead to negative karmic consequences. Whether to give or not to give, the primary goal should be to act with the other person's best interest in mind.

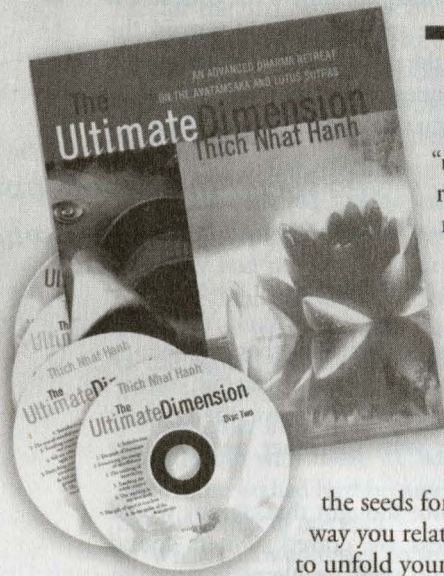
Some of us here once thought that money would bring us the happiness we craved. Others found momentary respite from their problems in drugs or sex. The adrenaline rush of a burglary or the comfort and companionship of a street gang did it for a few. Through our individual practice and each other's support, we are learning that these things only lead to further suffering and ultimately, incarceration, whether physical, mental, or emotional.

These days my thoughts and actions are far different from those I engaged in when I first came to prison. Whether facing a wall during meditation in my cell, performing *gassho* in our sangha, or scrubbing a floor on a job assignment, I find hope, purpose, even quality. I see a little more clearly that whether it's a roshi or a counselor, a prison sangha or a therapy group, freedom or incarceration, Buddha nature lies at the heart of every moment lived in awareness and engagement.

While the hard truth of the matter is that I will in all likelihood spend the rest of my life serving a prison sentence, my life has become far more than a prison sentence. Now, here, this moment, is something more. It is the freedom of heart and mind that comes with letting go of my fears and self-deluded ideations. It is Buddha, dharma, and sangha, and where possible, the opportunity to give something back to a world from which I've taken so much. ❖

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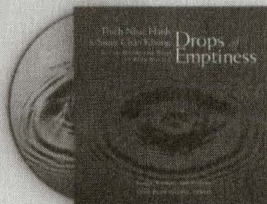


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One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the Twelve Steps

by Kevin Griffin

Rodale Books, 2004, 304 pages, \$13.95

Reviewed by Diana Lion

In this important new book, Buddhist meditation teacher Kevin Griffin uses his personal history to relate dharma practice to Twelve-Step addiction recovery programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous, delineating both the resonance and the differences. With drug and alcohol addiction widespread and growing among people of all classes, races, and ethnicities, his book fills an important gap for anyone wanting to understand addiction in the context of Buddhist practice.

The book is beautifully personal, in typical Twelve-Step style, with Griffin's past as its backdrop. He writes vividly about having been a musician addicted to alcohol, drugs, and sex, and how he has transformed his suffering into a life of service. While his story is painful and self-revealing, he never sinks into sentimentality or self-pity:

I began to see that I had another problem besides booze and drugs: waitresses.... I headed back to L.A. with the sense of deep craving, the feeling that I needed sex to survive.... Finally I came to see that this was an insatiable desire; in fact, the more I sought out sexual comfort, the less satisfied I was. A classic example of the Second Noble Truth: Desire is the cause of suffering.... I saw that I needed to stop.

Griffin's narrative skill and use of detail illuminate the universal nature of his struggles with craving, addiction, and recovery. His book will clearly be helpful to those who share his struggles. But it will also deepen the understanding of readers who have never had a drink or tried a drug in their lives. After all, craving is a feeling we all know.

Like China Galland, another dharma practitioner who has written about Buddhist practice and alcohol abuse, Griffin explains that Buddhism alone was not enough to help him stop using drugs and drinking. He also needed the Twelve-Step practices of having a "sponsor" (someone who has been in recovery longer and offers consistent support), "working" each of the Steps, and attending AA meetings regularly. These meetings became as much sanghas as their Buddhist equivalents, and the relationships in them come across as rewarding and even life-saving.

Like many newcomers to the Twelve Steps, Griffin wrestled with their concept of a God or Higher Power. Describing how it differs from the nontheistic dharma perspective, he writes:

In some sense, I think it's impossible for me to "understand" God—God is beyond understanding.... When I was a child, I was taught that God is everywhere.... How could one person be everywhere? He couldn't. But something could: the Law of Karma.... So when [in AA] we "made a decision to

turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him," from a Buddhist perspective we were deciding to try to follow this map, trusting that there was value in living skillfully, making the sacrifices this path requires, and committing ourselves to our spiritual growth.

In each of the book's 12 chapters, Griffin describes his struggles to relate dharma and AA practices. For example, in the chapter on Step Six, which refers to being "entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character," Griffin illuminates the differences between dharmic and AA strategies for letting go, describing a three-month retreat at Insight Meditation Society at which he learned to feel the feelings in his body. Then, tackling the controversial phrase "defects of character," he discusses the dynamic nature of the self and compares "character defects" to the ways we all act unskillfully, noting how we delude ourselves when we don't see our unskillful ways:

In the last days of my drinking I fell back on a corrupted version of the Mahayana Buddhist principle that everything I did was just an expression of my Buddha nature. Drinking a lot? "Drunk Buddha." Chasing women? "Lustful Buddha." Cheating on my girlfriend? "Lying Buddha." I imagined I was "playing the edge," transforming what appeared to be unskillful actions into enlightened activity through my spiritually advanced being.

As director of BPF's Prison Project, I think this book will be of real help to the enormous number of prisoners in this country who have been locked up for drug-related offenses or whose lives have been significantly affected by addiction. AA is present in most U.S. prisons and jails (even those with no other programs for inmates) thanks to volunteers who are living out Step Twelve: "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we try to carry this message to other alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." Many who have worked the Twelve Steps share the path of recovery with people in prisons, jails, homeless shelters, schools, and recovery programs, a practice that serves both givers and receivers.

The poignancy of the human condition is that we seem to be hard-wired for craving despite the suffering it causes—a result of what may have been nature's way of ensuring that humans would eat and procreate. Now, even those of us without substance-abuse struggles are drawn into the expanded cravings of the 21st century and the resulting problems. This book helps us all to work with our grasping, which is, after all, a universal form of suffering. I recommend it highly. ♦

Diana Lion is the director of BPF's Prison Project.

Bonus Fact for the Day

Enfranchisement comes from medieval French, and means to become a free French man rather than a serf. It means to eat French fries and be proud of it.

May all beings be liberated. May all beings be French.

Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities

by Rebecca Solnit

Nation Books, 2004, 143 pages, \$12.95

Reviewed by Rebecca Turnbull

As a young adult, I am new to activism. I wasn't around for the civil rights movement, the women's movement, Vietnam-era protests, *Roe v. Wade*, or really even the Gulf War. I am here today, however, loud-mouthed and passionate. The future beckoning is as unforeseeable as ever and activism as pertinent. Unfortunately, I find a general sense of frustration among my fellow activists, and, even more disheartening, a sense from some that protest is futile, problems too big, and solutions too remote. As I gear up for several months of intense activism and protest before the fall presidential election, I find myself and my compatriots craving a booster shot of revitalization and hope. That shot just might be Rebecca Solnit's *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities*.

Hope. We lack it, we need, we crave it, Solnit serves it up on a silver platter. She notes that many, if not most, of our greatest successes as activists are invisible, and it is sometimes hard to see that what we do actually sets change in

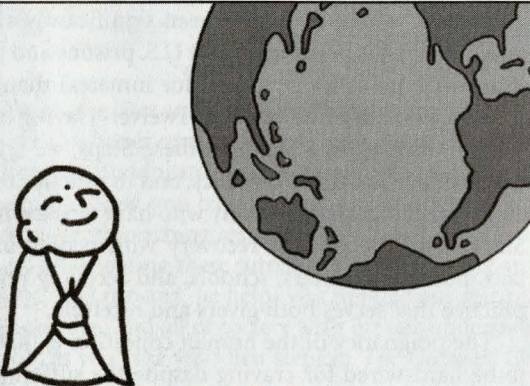
motion. She reminds us of times that activists have succeeded in changing the prevailing reality and creating a new paradigm. Beginning with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, moving to the Zapatista movement in Mexico and the WTO protests in Seattle, and closing with the global outcry against George W. Bush's war in Iraq, Solnit fuels the fire of a strong international movement.

As she asserts, one of the hardest things about being an activist is that problems seem so dire and change so slow. Burnout feels almost inevitable at times. Solutions seem elusive and even unreachable. She eloquently points out that "we never did save the whales, though we might have prevented them from becoming extinct." For students of Buddhism, the lesson of impermanence echoes loudly throughout the book. Every victory, no matter how big or small, is constantly in flux—as is every seeming defeat. There is never a time to pack up and go home, because nothing is assured.

All this impermanence can be harrowing at times, but it can be rejuvenating as well. Thought of in a certain way, daily life can be a form of activism, a reality that Solnit beautifully portrays while being careful not to demand an ascetic lifestyle. "Joy doesn't betray, but sustains, activism," she writes, urging folks not to shy away from the things that make them happy. At the same time, she neatly sets up success through practice: "If your activism is already democratic, peaceful, creative, then in one small corner of the world those things have triumphed."

This book feels important for activists to read, especially as we gear up for a tough and tiring fall. The future is dark, but, as Solnit observes, it is "a darkness as much of the womb as of the grave." We don't know what is coming; we can't and, in my opinion, shouldn't know. But in this unknown, hope is shrouded in secrecy. While our adversaries are strong, a movement is brewing all over the world, from small farmers' markets to the WTO collapse in Cancún. Solnit invigorates the burned-out and disheartened, urging us to action: "'We are winning,' said the [protesters'] graffiti in Seattle, not 'We have won.'" ❖

Rebecca Turnbull is a student at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, where she studies Religion and Politics. Originally from Massachusetts, she began her reading and writing career early in life on the shores of Walden Pond.



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Whatever It Takes: Bo Lozoff and Friends

CD, \$15.00, www.humankindness.org or 919/304-2220

Reviewed by Diana Lion

Virtually everyone involved with prison dharma work has heard of Bo and Sita Lozoff, the couple who founded the pioneering Prison-Ashram Project over 30 years ago. Grounded in Bo Lozoff's belief that "prisoners have the opportunity to dedicate themselves to [the] inward journey without the distractions and luxuries that occupy many people in the 'free world,'" the North Carolina-based project has touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of prisoners in over 500 institutions. Bo, a longtime fan of motorcycles and rock 'n' roll, recently brought together a group of friends to record 14 of his original folk/rock/country songs, half of them composed just after he ended a year of self-imposed silence. His easy-to-listen-to lyrics appeal to baby boomers and ex-prisoners alike, and range well beyond the average CD to muse on the inevitability and unpredictability of death, the attributes of a beloved dharma teacher, and the issues faced by prisoners after their release. Lozoff hopes to sell 100,000 copies of the CD to fund construction of the newest project of his Human Kindness Foundation: a visionary biodiesel refinery that will train and employ ex-prisoners while producing an environmentally responsible energy source. ❖

Caught in the Act: Reflections on Being, Knowing and Doing by Toinette Lippe

Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2004, 192 pages, \$12.95

Reviewed by Tova Green

Caught in the Act is Toinette Lippe's second book of reflections on her life. Lippe notes that her first book, *Nothing Left Over*, was about paring down. *Caught in the Act* is about opening up and exploring. She wrote it at a turning point in her life, after her son had finished college and her mother had died.

Lippe, transplanted to New York from London, has edited spiritual books (by Zen Peacemaker Order founder Bernie Glassman, BPF's Melody Ermachild Chavis, and others) for almost 40 years and practiced meditation for 45. After decades of hard work and exacting deadlines, she began to edit at home and to reduce the number of hours she worked. Her life became full of new possibilities.

Lippe describes her struggles with being rather than doing, and with allowing more room for disorder and chance in her life. She writes:

In the last few months I have had the sensation of floating. It is hard to tell whether this is because I am not facing any maxi or mini crisis at present. There are definitely times when I am content to sit and wait to see what turns up. I am no longer striving so hard. The spirit of inquiry perches on one of my branches, its head cocked on one side, alert and waiting.

Her study of Chinese brush painting teaches her to be fully present in each moment:

[My teacher] Wanxin watched me trying to improve on a bamboo stalk I had already painted and then explained that in Chinese painting, if what comes out on the page differs from what is in your head, you just leave it as it is. You can always try again, but you can't change the past. Don't think of it as a mistake.

Lippe's anecdotes arise from her travels, her friendships, her reading, and her meditation practice. Her style is clear and revealing. Her book will appeal to those searching for what is authentic in life, as well as those dealing with transitions, including retirement. In becoming intimate with Lippe's journey, readers have the opportunity to tune in to their own. ❖

Tova Green, a former BPF staff member, is a priest living at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center.

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Books in Brief

Reviewed by Shane Snowdon

New from Shambhala

Shambhala Publications is offering a cornucopia of enticing titles for summer and fall, among them *Not Turning Away*, the anthology of writings from *Turning Wheel* noted here previously (and enthusiastically). Their summer list features two additions to the growing and much-needed body of work by Buddhist psychotherapists: the paperback edition of **Miriam Greenspan's *Healing Through the Dark Emotions: The Wisdom of Grief, Fear and Despair***, which has helped many, and **Harvey Aronson's *Buddhist Practice on Western Ground: Reconciling Eastern Ideals and Western Psychology***. The title has an academic flavor, but the book is personal and highly accessible, with musings on anger, attachment, and individuality that will intrigue anyone seeking to bring the wisdom of Eastern spiritual traditions to Western daily life and social engagement.

A different take on this enterprise is Shambhala's combined publication of two classic texts on vegetarianism by the 19th-century Tibetan Buddhist **Shabkar: *Food of Bodhisattvas: Buddhist Teachings on Abstaining from Meat***. The best-known arguments against meat-eating in Tibetan Buddhist literature, the texts are highly readable—and also bring to life Shabkar, a wandering pilgrim who lived in the wild and communed with crows, cuckoos, sheep, and wild asses.

Fall brings the important and moving title *At Hell's Gate: A Soldier's Journey from War to Peace*, by **Claude Anshin Thomas**. Thomas, now a Buddhist monk and teacher, volunteered for duty in Vietnam when he was 17—and a year later had been responsible for hundreds of deaths. After his return home, he struggled with trauma, addiction, homelessness, and despair until he happened to attend a retreat led by Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh, who has done much to reach out to the U.S. soldiers who served in his native Vietnam. Thomas's powerful book describes not only this journey but also the global meditation teaching and peace pilgrimages he has undertaken since, including his 1995 walk from Auschwitz to Vietnam.

The Dalai Lama, Up Close and Personal

An extraordinary new book about the Dalai Lama is as hard to put down as classic beach reading: *The Wisdom of Forgiveness: Intimate Conversations and Journeys*, **Victor Chan's** delightful account of his years of acquaintance with the Dalai Lama (Riverhead Books). While much has, of course, been written about the Tibetan leader, he comes alive in this title as he does in no other. Written with the Dalai Lama's full cooperation, the book vividly captures his wisdom and fabled charm with anecdotes not to be found elsewhere (including his meeting with South African

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in which the two playfully circle each other on the floor like puppies). Chan's narration is perceptive, admiring but not reverential, and particularly moving when he describes his feelings as a Hong Kong native about the Chinese treatment of Tibet.

That subject, by the way, receives an excellent overview in a brand-new release from the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT): ***When the Sky Fell to Earth: The New Crackdown on Buddhism in Tibet*** (available from ICT at www.savetibet.org or 202/785-1515). Its well-designed 122 pages provide a clear, up-to-date summary of Buddhism's status in Tibet and also include rare internal documents describing the Chinese government's Tibetan plans and policies.

Buddhism at Work in Sri Lanka

Two decades ago, Joanna Macy's *Dharma and Development* described for Western audiences the visionary Sarvodaya movement of Sri Lanka. Closely associated with Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne and based in Buddhist and Gandhian ideals, Sarvodaya has fostered grassroots cooperative work that has, in turn, nurtured nonviolence in Sri Lanka and offered a global vision of peace, social justice, and sustainable development. **George Bond's new *Buddhism at Work: Community Development, Social Empowerment, and the Sarvodaya Movement*** (Kumarian Press) provides hard-to-find details about the last 20 years of the movement and compares its construction of Buddhism with Buddhist nationalism and fundamentalism.

Religions and Peace

BPF senior adviser Alan Senauke recommends a new volume comprised of lectures given in Glasgow last year: ***War and Peace in World Religions*, edited by Perry Schmidt-Leukel** (SCM Press). Noted theologians each describe a major world religion's "characteristic responses to the issues of war and peace," while Hans Kung and Norbert Klaes discuss "global ethic" and "multireligious cooperation," respectively. The lecture "War and Peace in Buddhism," by editor Schmidt-Leukel, contrasts "radical Buddhist pacifism" and "Buddhist realpolitik," and notes that "[the principle of] protection of the dharma...in combination with the conviction that one's own denominational form of Buddhism is the true or superior one has served to legitimate religious conflicts of an inter-religious and of an inner-Buddhist kind."

The Wanderings of a Buddhist Poet

Pacific Northwest poet **Judith Azrael**, whose work has appeared in *Turning Wheel*, has just published ***Wherever I Wander*** (Impassio Press). Among its gentle, meditative essays are extended descriptions of her stint teaching writing in a prison camp in Washington State and her complex responses to the events of September 11, 2001. ❖

Shane Snowdon is book review editor of Turning Wheel.

Director's Report

The Only Work That Makes Sense

by Maia Duerr



Dear friends,

As I write this column, I am on a cross-country journey from Massachusetts to California to begin work as BPF's executive director in September. My route thus far has taken me northwest across the Hudson River, through a torrential downpour along the New York Thruway, and to the field in Cooperstown where the game of baseball was born. The long miles on the road have given me a chance to reflect, and to bring my mind back to the September morning three years ago when all of our lives were changed.

I remember that morning very clearly. At the time, I was living at the San Francisco Zen Center (SFZC). We had come out of the morning meditation period and were gathering for our usual breakfast of porridge and tea. A resident came into the dining room to tell us that something horrible had happened in New York City and Washington. The news was just coming in, so it wasn't clear what had happened—only that there were explosions, buildings had fallen, thousands had been killed, and the U.S. was apparently under attack. I went about that day in a daze. Later I returned to Zen Center, grateful for the refuge there.

The next day, I went to my job at the Buddhist Peace Fellowship office across the bay in Berkeley, where I was working as the associate editor of *Turning Wheel* and BPF's webmaster. I threw myself into the only work that made sense to me in that moment. I compiled responses to the tragedy from various Buddhist teachers, including Thich Nhat Hanh, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and Roshi Joan Halifax, and posted them on the BPF website. In the midst of so much suffering and fear, it felt essential to bring forward voices of fearlessness and compassion.

In the spring of 2002, I left the BPF staff to accept a job as a research director for a nonprofit in Northampton, Massachusetts. My work was a form of right livelihood, but I had a sense that something was missing. I thought of the words carved onto the han outside the SFZC zendo:

*Great is the matter of birth and death,
All is impermanent, quickly passing.
Awake! Awake! Each one.
Don't waste this life.*

I began to seek ways to engage more directly with peace and justice work. During my time in New England, I have become something of a student of social justice movements. I learned a lot from doing coalition work with the American Friends Service Committee, for example. I've had the privilege of working with some amazing commu-

nity organizers in the western Massachusetts area. I took part in the noble tradition of civil disobedience in response to what I saw as an unjust war, getting arrested with 54 other people for blocking a road leading into Westover Air Base in Chicopee, Massachusetts. I have learned how deeply intertwined the personal and the political are, and the importance of empowering people to become agents of change.

All along, BPF kept offering me opportunities to stay involved. First I was invited to become a board member. Most recently, the board and staff asked me to serve as executive director. I never imagined that I'd want to be the director of anything—I am a writer at heart—but as they say, life is what happens while you're busy making other plans.

Three years later, this continues to feel like the only work that makes sense to me. We live in urgent times, and yet we are called to remain steadfast in practice and "calm in the boat," as Thich Nhat Hanh would gently remind us. BPF is still one of the few places where I find a community of friends who are working toward the balance of "sitting for peace and standing for justice," to borrow the title of the conference held in New England this past summer.

As we go forward with fresh energy in the BPF office, we want to thank all those who have helped us over a period of transition in the past couple of years, particularly Melanie Phoenix, who completed her work here this past July. We are deeply grateful to Melanie for her steady and wise leadership, and for her huge heart. And we welcome Jenisha de Rivera, who steps into the position of administrative director. Jenisha comes to us with a strong commitment to social justice work and an excellent background of financial and operations management. We also welcome Colette DeDonato as *Turning Wheel's* new managing editor.

I am honored to begin work as BPF's director, and I look forward to meeting many of you and listening to your ideas and visions for BPF.

In the dharma,
Maia Duerr



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Turning Wheel Committee Dines Together!

In June 2004, the local (Bay Area) members of the *Turning Wheel* editorial committee gathered at Susan Moon's house for a potluck dinner.



TW editorial committee, local members: Back Row: Susan Moon, Sandy Boucher, Annette Herskovits, Terry Stein
Front Row: Mushim Ikeda-Nash, John W. Ellis IV, Meredith Stout, Jim Brown. Missing: Karen Payne, Colette DeDonato

From the BASE Coordinator Teen Retreat

This summer we held two teen retreats in the Bay Area, one in Sebastopol and the other in Santa Cruz. Both were unique and inspiring in their own way. At the Sebastopol retreat, an experienced 15-year-old student delivered a paper he had written on changing the world through developing small socialist dharma communities (much like a nascent Buddhadasa). Diana Winston led an afternoon workshop on socially engaged buddhism with the teens, reinvigorating their timeless Bodhisattva vows.

During the Santa Cruz retreat at Land of Medicine Buddha, Venerable Sister Rita Riniker led three evenings of Tonglen meditation, guiding the teens to destroy their "self-cherishing thoughts" (thoughts that keep us isolated from others in need). The teens were encouraged to open to the suffering of many beings, while they were reminded to love and appreciate themselves for the hard work they were doing on the retreat. With great care Sister Rita pointed out the difference between beneficial self-love—the self-love that unites us with ourselves and others—and the attached form of self-love that causes separation and fear. For the teens new to this practice, this was a subtle point to understand, yet by the nature of their questions and responses to the practice over the four nights it was clear that they were deeply moved by the Tonglen meditation and the great compassion it aroused. It was wonderful to see these younger hearts exploring issues of open and attached love. For many, it was the most enjoyable part of the day.

I was touched by the amount of suffering these teens were able to express. Though there was great joy and laughter

shared throughout the retreat, and they all appeared charming and well adjusted upon first glance, many of them told of the deeper pain and confusion in their lives. Some admitted they had addiction problems with drugs and alcohol. Both girls and boys spoke of how they had struggled for many years with eating disorders, and several shared that they had practiced cutting themselves. These things were difficult to hear, yet it was inspiring to witness the strength and clarity they had already developed around these destructive habits. Many came to the retreat hoping they might find something that could help them cope with their lives in more

healthy ways. The four-night retreat was short, but at the end the practices we shared and the community we developed was an important start for their future work in recovery.

For information concerning the upcoming Bay Area Teen Retreat from December 28 to January 2 and next summer from June 19 to June 24, please visit www.bpf.org/teenretreat.html or call 415/643-8289.

BASE Programs

The Youth Worker's BASE program finished up in June. For one of the members, Chris Gould, a bilingual teacher who works with lower-income Latino children in Potrero Hill, the BASE group was a very powerful support. She told us that she was at first reluctant to devote her limited time to the BASE meetings, until she felt the tremendous support she received from being in the program. To be in a group of other adults with a strong dharma practice who were also working with youth helped strengthen and clarify her own vision for working with kids. Chris also has been living in the BASE House in San Francisco for the past year and a half. She gratefully noted that as the school year ended in June she felt more grounded and less exhausted than in previous years, partly because of the community support she received from her BASE companions. Yeah sangha!

This winter two BASE programs will begin in January 2005. The first is an open-theme BASE group for those working in any service or activist field. The second BASE group will focus more closely on political art and artistic expression as an engaged dharma practice. There are possible BASE groups forming in San Jose and Sacramento. To find out more about these programs or about BASE in general, please visit www.bpf.org/base.html or call 415/643-8289. ❖

—Tempe Smith

ON BEING AN INTERN

by Rebecca Turnbull

I dropped out of Catechism class in middle school, just shy of my confirmation. A self-proclaimed atheist, I wanted nothing to do with religion. Yet somehow, a few years later, here I am working at the Buddhist Peace Fellowship as a summer intern, trying to figure out my spiritual self. I don't think I'm an atheist anymore; I might be somewhere near Buddhist, though I am not confident enough to declare that either.

This past semester was particularly trying for me; all of my classes were either in the religion or politics departments. While I found peace and solace in the sutras I read as a religious scholar, I became frustrated, agitated, and angry over much of the political history I studied. I found myself stretched thin. I couldn't help but feel guilty at the growing sense of peace I was cultivating within. In one moment I would be drawn to sit and meditate, but in the next I would be overwhelmed by thoughts of the immense global unrest. Almost every time I gave myself a moment of silence, my mind raced towards Sudan, Palestine, hungry children in the inner city of Chicago, declining farm communities throughout the world, or my peers without work or healthcare. I couldn't work on my own suffering while I thought of others who were hurting more.

I tripped over the BPF webpage while searching for a job and/or place to live in Berkeley for the summer. The phrase "socially engaged buddhism" caught my eye. Peace activism as Buddhist practice—a new concept to me that sounded incredibly relevant to my interests. I faxed them my resumé immediately with a sense that this was an organization I truly wanted to be a part of. Susan Moon, editor of *Turning Wheel*, called me a week later to ask if I wanted to help with the magazine. I was in the library writing a paper on international agricultural trade negotiations. I was in a daze, I had been holed up in the artificial light of the library for a few hours, and I was in dire need of a cup of coffee. Sue's voice was clear and calm. I accepted immediately.

A month and a half later I left school in Ohio for Berkeley, a city I had never visited. My mind buzzed with anxiety—I had never lived in a city, I didn't know anybody except a few friends from school, and I was unsure whether or not I would have enough money to get through the summer. But I arrived safely and showed up at the BPF office nervous and excited.

On my first day as an intern we sat together in silence in the afternoon. I hadn't meditated in months, and my mind was reeling with uncertainty about how to do it. But every staff member radiated an accepting warmth. I felt comfortable as I drew my wandering mind back to my breath.

There have been four interns working here this summer, all either in college or just graduated. Each of us is a student of Buddhism, both academically and personally. Every

week we met on Monday afternoons for a couple of hours to talk about our work and our lives. These meetings changed from shy introductions to a small sangha full of empathy and understanding. They were skillfully mediated by varying staff members, who led us to dig deep into our conditioning, practice, and goals. Simple and fun exercises like looking for the dharma in fresh strawberries became profound awakenings. I saw Indra's Net in the spots of the strawberry, and as I ate it, I felt calm for a moment, accepting and thankful for the way I was interconnected to the others in the room.

By the middle of the summer, a theme arose in our check-ins. Each of us, staff members included, was working with uncertainty and groundlessness. These feelings arose differently for each of us; some were searching for a path after college, others with balancing aspects of a path already chosen. In this community I was able to come back to the concepts I was struggling with at school. How can I balance my personal growth with the suffering all over the world? In the setting of this work environment I began to better understand the bodhisattva ideal that my happiness is connected to both those around me and those far away. I started to be able to be present with feelings of sadness and anxiety and I began to try and cultivate peace without feeling guilty.

Outside of the intern meetings, I also found ways to put my studies into perspective. I have always loved writing and reading. In high school when I read *The Grapes of Wrath* I identified the written word as a powerful means of protest. As I worked in the office reading submissions and organizing old issues of *Turning Wheel*, I was reinvigorated with a literary spirit that had begun to fade over years of analytic writing. Editors Sue and Colette were great to work with, encouraging me to write first a book review and now this piece. I participated in the *TW* editorial committee planning meetings and helped in the construction of the issue. As I end my internship I feel good about contributing to a product that lives up to my old ideal of activist writing.

Before I came out to Berkeley, I tried to explain to my friends what "socially engaged Buddhism" meant. I thought it was activism done by Buddhists. That is certainly an aspect of it, but over the last couple of months I have come to understand it as something more. It isn't just about fighting the death penalty or doing voter registration work, although that's part of it. For me, it has come to mean cultivating peace in each moment. That could be raising awareness about a pressing political crisis like the genocide in Sudan, or it could simply mean being honest and accepting of myself, and telling my loved ones what I need. Before the summer I had the sense that the world and I were separate and that if I wanted to worry about the world I had to forget about my own equanimity. I leave my internship with a new understanding of Indra's Net. I return to college believing that cultivating peace within my mind is part of creating an environment of peace all the world over. ❖

Prison Project Report

In July the Pioneer Valley chapter of BPF organized and sponsored a New England regional conference. Over 120 people participated in this event, from Florida, North Carolina, California, and many states in the northeastern U.S. Forty people came to the prison dharma workshop I offered, including a man who'd been incarcerated for 18 years and a woman who'd worked in prisons for 23 years. I was excited to meet Craig Richards and Ric Dunworth, two longtime BPF chapter contacts who have done prison dharma work for many years. The group at the workshop also included folks who had never set foot inside a prison or jail. The enthusiasm was palpable.

The group generated a long list of discussion topics that included dealing with issues of race, class, and gender, working with prison administrations, and keeping the work sustainable for ourselves. We wove together stories and examples from our own experience and made a start at addressing the wide range of subjects. We realized that we will need to stay in touch and meet again for longer next time in order to continue these conversations. One of the points that came up strongly, as it has in other workshops, is that once we go inside to offer our practice, we must maintain that commitment when people leave prisons. We need to develop effective dharma-based programs for postrelease.

Another encouraging development:

A case has been filed with the U.S. Supreme Court to end executions of juvenile offenders. The U.S. is one of five countries in the world (the others are China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, and Pakistan) that still execute people who committed crimes as juveniles. BPF submitted the statement below as a "friend of the court" for the case, to represent a Buddhist stance on this issue. For more information about the case, and to see the entire brief, visit the prison pages on our website.

"We oppose all executions, in keeping with the First Precept of Buddhism, which says not to harm any living thing. Furthermore, we see that executing juvenile offenders is even more contrary to Buddhist principles of compassion and the ever-present possibility of transformation

than executing adults. The absence of any mention of juvenile executions in the Pali canon (a primary source for the Buddha's teachings) underscores how inconceivable that notion was to the earliest practitioners of Buddhism. Modern society likewise understands the vulnerability of youth to the influence of others, and their need for guidance from parents and other adults. Driver's licenses, voting privileges, military service responsibilities, and other adult prerogatives are uniformly withheld from young people because it is commonly held that they are not ready for these responsibilities. When youth commit terrible crimes, we see that as a call for extra care, restraint, and guidance. Buddhism recognizes the possibility of transformation and rehabilitation. People can change if given the right conditions for doing so. (Traditionally in Asia troubled young people were sent to monasteries to live with monks and nuns, so that they could be raised in more wholesome and stable conditions. While this is not an option in modern secular society, it does suggest that changes in social conditions can cause a change in the person. It is noteworthy that many troubled youth have grown up on the street. Many who commit terrible crimes have themselves been abused.) That principle is even more pertinent to young people, who are still in their formative stages."

And finally, a tribute to the only corrections administrator I know who's an ex-felon. Michael Marcum served time for the murder of his father (who had been abusing his mother). He later became deputy sheriff in the San Francisco city and county jail system. After 39 years, he retired on July 23. He has been one of the most loyal supporters of our Prison Project (even writing letters of support to prospective funders on our behalf). In a moving final good-bye to his friends in prison work he wrote:

"Our work is necessary, critical, and frequently miraculous: We touch, and sometimes save, the lives of prisoners and former prisoners, victims, and the families of both. I am not embarrassed to think of it as a grace akin to childbirth. But we must not overestimate our reach: An awareness of our limitations gives authenticity to our work. Self-destructive, hateful, desperate, and violent behaviors are born of a mutual shame inherent in the terrible and mean distance between the haves and the have-nots..."

"This is a sad departure for me, much like my first release from prison. I make no bones about my gratitude...no bones about my bias in favor of ex-offenders and victim survivors as the best teachers of those in need of a path to dignity; and no bones about my contempt for those who deny dignity to their colleagues, subordinates, the prisoners in their charge, and even, in their shame, to themselves.

"Take care of yourselves and each other... Remember every day that these places can be dangerous to the heart. Act accordingly." ❖

—Diana Lion



AN APPEAL TO HELP SAVE TIBET

Tibetan children, nuns and monks continue to escape persecution by making a perilous journey across the Himalayas to seek freedom in Nepal and India. Many arrive traumatized and destitute. With a sponsorship of \$3.50 to \$30 a month, you can help save a life and preserve a culture. 100% of your contributions go directly to their support. To learn more please visit our website or call us.

TIBET AID

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Announcements & Classifieds

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Tea Circle: Full line of supplies and arts for Japanese tea ceremony. Visit our Web site www.tea-circle.com or call 707/792-1946 or 415/499-8431.

The Conch-Us Times: Journal of the Grateful Buddhists of America focuses on the Grateful Dead, spiritual, political, and environmental issues, socially engaged Buddhism, music, art, poetry, etc. \$8/year (USD \$12 foreign), payable to Ken Sun-Downer, P.O. Box 769, Idyllwild CA 92549; <conchustimes@yahoo.com>; www.conchustimes.org.

The Faithful Fools Street Ministry Presents *The Witness*, directed by Martha Boesing and performed by Rebecca Noon. *The Witness* tells the story of a young woman's journey through poverty and homelessness in search of compassion and enlightenment. The 50-minute presentation is available for touring and can be performed in your home, church, meeting hall, or school. Fees negotiable or by donation. For more information, call Martha Boesing at 510/530-6188.

New: BPF e-Newsletter

Want to stay up-to-date about BPF and the world of socially engaged Buddhism in between issues of *Turning Wheel*? Subscribe to BPF's new monthly e-newsletter. Visit www.bpf.org/html/get_involved/mailling_list/maillinglist.html to sign up.

Pema Chödrön Tape: *Practicing Buddhism in Times of War*, a talk given in San Francisco in 2003. \$11 (includes postage), available from BPF, 510/655-6169; <bpf@bpf.org>.

Do you have a Buddhist practice and a desire to put your editorial skills to work for a socially engaged publication? *Turning Wheel* is looking for an editorial intern. E-mail a resume and letter of interest to colette@bpf.org, or send to Managing Editor, P.O. Box 3470, Berkeley, CA, 94703.

BPF publications: *Making the Invisible Visible*, writings by people of color and their white allies about healing racism in our Buddhist communities. \$6 plus postage; order directly from Sheridan Adams, <metta108@sbcglobal.net>.

Safe Harbor, ethical guidelines, process, and resources for Buddhist communities. \$7 (includes postage), available from BPF, 510/655-6169; <bpf@bpf.org>.

Free Dharma Book. *Right Understanding in Plain English: The Science of the Buddha's Middle Path*. 176 pp. Send \$4 to cover printing and shipping costs to: Vipassana Foundation, 3200 McLeod Dr. #300, Las Vegas, NV 89121. Now on the web: www.vipassanafoundation.com.

GROUPS

Green Sangha: Spiritually Based Environmental Activism. Groups in Oakland and Marin County. Form a group in your hometown. Call 415/459-8610; www.greensangha.org.

Mindfulness, Diversity, and Social Change Sangha, blending mindfulness practice in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh with social change work, meets weekly in Oakland. Contact Olga at 510/540-0141; mindful@rightbox.com.

VOLUNTEER/DONATIONS/ SPONSORSHIP

Help Ven. Suhita Dharma, social worker and Buddhist monk, create a community center in Mt. Vernon, NY, to serve at-risk youth, people with HIV, and prisoners. Send checks payable to "Mettavihara Monastic Community" to Ven. Suhita Dharma, Desert Zen Center, 10989 Buena Vista Rd., Lucerne, CA 92356-8313; <kalibhante@yahoo.com>.

Prison Dharma Network (PDN) needs your donations of dollars and used dharma books to continue making the dharma available to prisoners. If you are interested in forming local or regional chapters to facilitate contemplative prison ministry, contact: PDN, P.O.

Box 4623, Boulder, CO 80306-4623, 303/544-5923; <pdn@indra.com>.

From the State Pen to Penn State.

If you believe in education and second chances, you can help Dirk Van Velzen in his pursuit of a degree in business administration at Penn State, where his GPA is, thus far, 4.0. Since incarcerated students are precluded from federal financial aid, Dirk has been marketing calendars made with drawings from talented incarcerated artists. Proceeds will help fund his undergraduate tuition in addition to a number of scholarships for other incarcerated students. Visit us online: www.prisonsscholar.com or 800/111-2222.

Please lend us a hand! October 2005 is the 20th Anniversary of the Peace Pagoda in Leverett, Mass. To celebrate, we will inaugurate the New Temple! There are many things to do before then. Please help us with cooking, lawn mowing, garden work, construction, painting, computer input, temple cleaning, etc. Contact Leverett Peace Pagoda, 100 Cave Hill Road, Leverett, MA, 01054. 413/367-2202.

BPF volunteers and interns, wanted, needed, loved. Call us: 510/655-6169.

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers:

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And a very special thanks to all the BPF summer interns:

Laura Karnes ❖ Mike Levy ❖ Alisha Musicant ❖ Rebecca Turnbull ❖

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www.buddhistaidsproject.org

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415/669-1954

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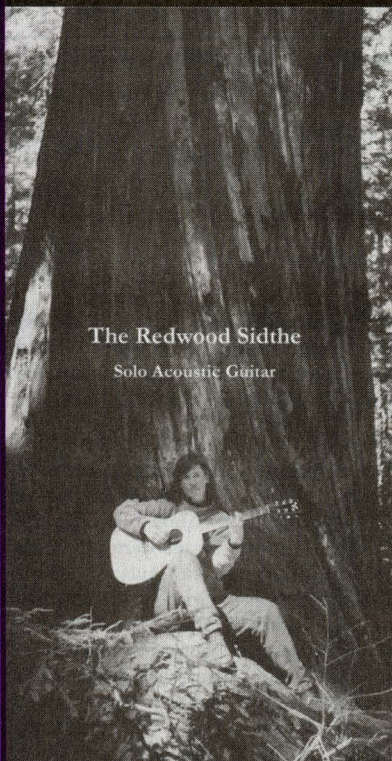
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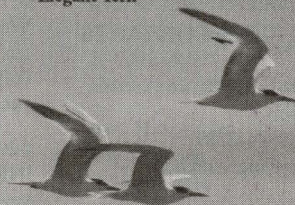
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