

TURNING WHEEL

The Journal of Socially Engaged Buddhism



Nourishment

**Alice Walker • Joan Halifax • Sulak Sivaraksa
Plus BPF Member Survey**



From the Editor

For the past 17 years, Sue Moon has occupied this space, this welcoming portal into each issue of *Turning Wheel*. I feel like I'm moving into a well-loved home, one that many people have entered over the years to settle into a comfy chair, have a cup of tea (coffee or beer for some of us!), and listen to stories. With much humility, I step into this role and invite you to come in for a visit with the people who live inside the pages of this *TW*.

The theme of this issue, nourishment, is especially poignant for me. I used to be proud of the fact that I wasn't burned out like other activists I knew, and I wanted to keep up that record in my role as BPF's executive director these past three years. But this year I was finally humbled by burnout, by losing touch with my own source of nourishment. I was hit hard by the loss of a loving relationship that was impacted by all the giving I was doing everywhere else, by my efforts to knock down windmills and change the world. My Zen teacher, Vicki Austin, has stressed the necessity of nourishment as part of the spiritual path. So I took the month of June off from work, with the intention of nourishing my soul. I had a broken heart and a tired body. I needed a break, in a big way.

It took two weeks before I allowed myself to think of anything BPF-related. In mid-June, while flying to New Mexico for some personal retreat time in the high desert, I finally cracked open the summer issue of *TW*. Sue's article, "Grandmother Mind," made me laugh and weep. I remembered what a gift Sue has given to the world, through her own stories and as a midwife for the stories of so many others. Another article in that issue—Annette Herskovits' description of how she has grappled with the paralyzing effects of trauma from growing up as a European Jew during the Holocaust—moved me deeply. I was in awe of her courage and honesty. And Will Hall's article, "The Freedom to Sit," sparked my appreciation for his advocacy for the rights of people with psychiatric diverse-abilities, a commitment that I share.

Reading that issue of *TW* and reflecting on my relationships with people in the BPF community, I was reminded of how grateful I am to be part of this circle and to be serving as *TW*'s new editor. Our community, and this journal, weaves together people of diverse backgrounds and experiences. The common thread is a shared aspiration to understand how our lives are not separate from the lives of those in Iraq, along the borders in Texas, behind prison walls, and in many other places. This kind of connection across differences is deeply nourishing to me.

This issue marks some other transitions. We say goodbye and warm thanks to Colette DeDonato, *TW*'s managing editor for the past three years, and wish her well as she and her family move to Oregon to start a new life. We welcome our new executive director Earthlyn Manuel, who shares her thoughts on nourishment on page 5.

You'll see a few changes in this issue. In response to the question, "But where does it say this stuff about social engagement in the core teachings of the Buddha?" we're launching a thought-provoking new section: Roots of Engaged Dharma (pg. 15). We've added a calendar of events, and Indra's Net includes more news about BPF members and chapters.

But what doesn't change is *TW*'s mission: to bring many voices to the table so that we can all share in the power of stories to heal and restore our souls and our world. Take off your coat and stay a while! ♦

—Maia Duerr

Coming deadline for *Turning Wheel*: Spring 2008 issue: January 7, 2008

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>. We also welcome letters. Send to "Editor" at address above or via e-mail.

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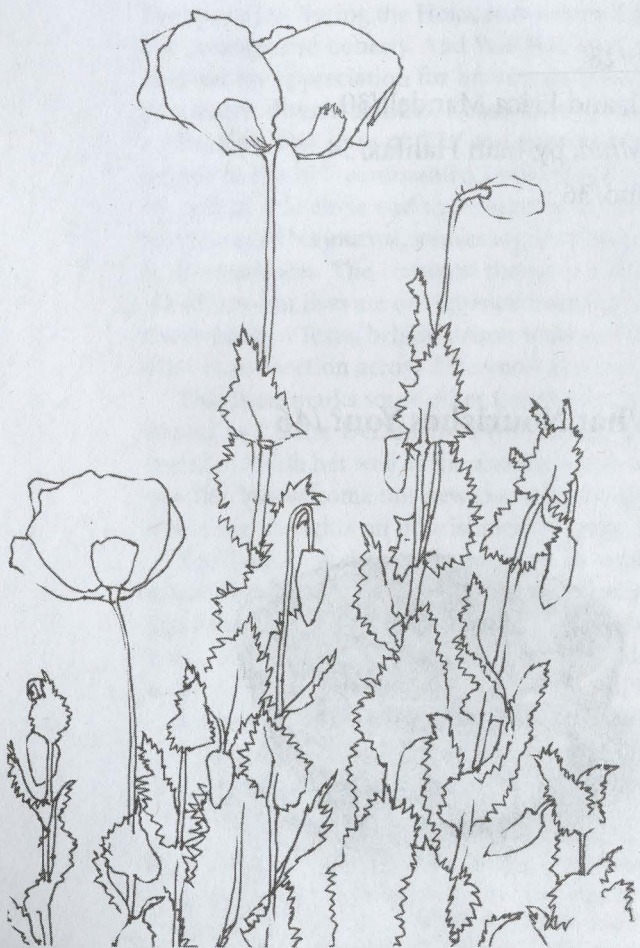
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The Practice of Resting

by Zenju Earthlyn Manuel

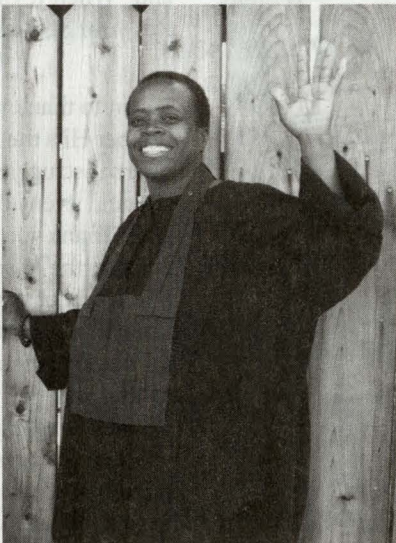
My parents worked hard their entire lives. Watching them work day and night, I made a secret vow as a child to find ways to enjoy life, to have fun. The problem was, I didn't know that enjoying life had to do with nourishment and not so much with earthbound desires. So I found myself using all the money I earned to indulge in food, parties, anything to satisfy whatever craving I had. I thought giving myself whatever I desired was the way to nourish myself. Of course, I went deep into a great amount of suffering.

My next attempt at nourishment again included some level of feeding my desires. I took long walks and baths, received manicures, pedicures, and bodywork, and listened to soft music. Although these things were much more nourishing than what I had previously chosen, their temporary nature could not sustain me through the difficulties of daily life.

In 1988, a friend introduced me to Buddha's teachings. Practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhist way made me aware of how much I counted on suffering as a way of life. Eventually, hours of chanting *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo* and other parts of the *Lotus Sutra* created an environment of stillness and concentration in which I could see that I had not yet cultivated the seeds of joy in my life, and therefore deep nourishment, in the context of dharma practice, was not available to me.

The Buddha said, "Faith is nourishment." I think he was speaking of this deep nourishment. With faith, there's no need to cling to external pleasurable things for a joyful life. Instead, there is an understanding that nourishment comes from trusting the core teachings of Buddha: compassion, wisdom, love, and peace.

Now I experience nourishment as spiritual sustenance, in whatever form it appears. When I feel extreme emotions such as grief or anger, I take time out to sit with how I feel without analysis. I just acknowledge that something is happening as I breathe through life, and the tears I shed are nourishing. When I feel disconnected from people around me, long walks in the woods among the trees can bring me back to the nature of life, and I am sustained by returning to the earth. When I am listening to music, especially my own drumming, a note, a rift, can often touch places deep inside, previously unknown to me, and this is nourishing. Yet I cannot just decide that crying, walking in the woods, or listening to music will always be a nourishing experience. These expectations can lead to suffering if the walk is not in the right place, the music off center, or the crying interrupted.



As the new executive director of BPF, I am now dealing with many complex issues of work. I ask myself, "What is the experience of being deeply nourished?"

Since my arrival at BPF at the end of May 2007, I have come to see the organization as a dear spiritual friend to many dharma practitioners and others. BPF's vow for peace is as grand as any other bodhisattva vow, feeling almost impossible, yet it is this commitment to peace that has moved this organization for nearly 30 years. There have been long cycles of accomplishments and new visions during those years. However, I suspect there have also been frayed nerves, bouts of stress, and times of weariness. As peace workers, we are challenged to balance the enormous hours of activist work and the need to nourish ourselves in a way that truly sustains our lives.

Recently I sat with Tenshin Reb Anderson. I had just returned from New Mexico and felt extremely tired and out of sorts. I complained of not being able to get to the zendo and felt my practice was not where it ought to be. He looked at me with much caring and said, "You don't believe that resting is part of your practice." There was a long pause. If I made resting a part of my practice, then the deep nourishment that comes from following the path of dharma would be available to me. Although I still take long walks and baths, receive pedicures and bodywork, and listen to soft music, I now believe that a nourished life is one in which I care for my life so that I can follow the way of a bodhisattva. And I need rest for such a life.

Our bodhisattva path at BPF need not be an arduous journey of working endless hours but rather a moment-by-moment effort of nourishment in order to engage in loving intimacy with others. In this way, a deeply nourished life can take a direction of liberation by which production (labor) is not the measure of our worth.

A vow to rest is a vow for peace. ❖

Acarasiddhi

When I can't see her
she chalks a cursive metta
on my broken steps.

Poems and stories by Acarasiddhi (Anthony Press) have appeared in Lichen, Spitball, and The Heart As Origami.

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Letters

We welcome your responses to what we print. Write to turningwheel@bpf.org. Letters may be edited.

Building More Alliances

As a cover-to-cover reader of *Turning Wheel* for nearly six years, I very much liked your issue on Building Alliances to Address Racism (Spring '07). It helped me to see how I was conditioned with racist fears and concepts that became automatic. Although all the articles were very good, I particularly liked the Indra's Net piece by Elyse Mergenthaler and "When It Gets Dark" by Meg Yardley. In my opinion it was your best issue ever!

—Bruce Krawisz, Marshfield, Wisconsin

I want to thank you for the Spring 2007 issue. In "Where the Rubber Hits the Road" your discussion of the events and the internal struggles folks went through is very moving—and stressful even to someone reading what happened a year later. Thank you for recounting the story in detail and highlighting the lessons people learned. Nonetheless, I feel like one aspect of the story was left out. In particular, the African American woman who wrote the threatening letter comes off as very one-dimensional. There is no acknowledgment of the pain that lay behind her letter. Yet an outcome that would be healing for everyone concerned would certainly be one that brought this woman and her community into the picture in a complete way.

This is our work: Seeing everyone, even those we have sharp differences with, as our teacher; not treating people as the "other" in fearful, objectifying ways; and recognizing and seeking to understand the sources of a person's hurtful behavior (as folks at BPF probably do all the time in their prison work).

In Urusa Fahim's article, I found the "shame vs. guilt" idea to be stimulating, and I wanted to suggest James Gilligan's book *Preventing Violence* as an instructive study of the sources of shame and its power to shape people's actions.

Seeing one's personal path to enlightenment connected in a real way with the larger institutional and systemic aspects of white supremacy seems essential to me. Thanks to everyone again for the excellent issue and for the commitment you show, in very personal ways, in facing up to white privilege in your lives.

—Chip Smith, Fayetteville, North Carolina

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Eighth Page: \$90

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Calendar of Socially Engaged Buddhist Events

 Events with BPF logo are sponsored in full or part by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

Please send event listings to <maia@bpf.org>.

September

Sept 1-7: The 2007 International Network of Engaged Buddhists Conference: Engaged Buddhism from Social Welfare to Social Change

Taipei, Taiwan

See: www.inebnetwork.org/web

Sept 3: Cleveland Peace Show

Co-sponsored by Cleveland BPF

See: www.peaceactioncleveland.org

Sept 11: Floating Lantern Ceremony (BPF-NYC)

New York City

More info: info@bpfny.org, 212/545-4123

See: www.bpfny.org

Sept 15: Peace March

(Washington BPF is participating)

Washington, DC

More info: Bill Jenkins, worldofmuse@aol.com

October

Oct 5-8: BPF Teen Retreat Weekend

Northern California location TBA

More info: teen.reg.oct@bpf.org

See: www.bpf.org

Oct 7: Talk by David Loy

Co-sponsored by BPF-NYC

New York City

More info: info@bpfny.org, 212/545-4123

See: www.bpfny.org

Oct 8: Interfaith Fast to End War in Iraq

Worldwide, endorsed by BPF

See: <http://interfaithfast.org>

Oct 11-14: Detroit Street Retreat

with Sensei Grover Genro Gauntt

Zen Peacemaker Community

Detroit

More info: detroitstreetretreat@yahoo.com

Oct 25: BPF presents an evening with Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, founder of Sarvodaya

Oakland, CA

More info: justine@bpf.org

See: www.bpf.org

November

Nov 5-10: Bearing Witness at Auschwitz

with Sensei Grover Genro Gauntt and Sensei Fleet Maull
Peacemaker Institute

Oswiecim, Poland

More info: Kate Crisp, peacemaker@indra.com,
303/544-5923

See: www.peacemakerinstitute.org

Nov 11-16: Living with Illness Retreat

with Jean Wilkins, Susan Benjamin, and Daniel Bruce
Upaya Zen Center, Santa Fe, NM

More info: registrar@upaya.org, 505/986-8518

See: www.upaya.org

December

Dec 12-Jan 6: Pilgrimage to India and Nepal with Barcelona BPF

See: www.bodhyanga.org/spain/charity/pilgrimage2007.html

Dec 28-Jan 2: BPF New Year's Teen Retreat

Cazadero, CA

More info: teen.reg.ny@bpf.org

See: www.bpf.org

February 2008

BPF Event with Joanna Macy in the Bay Area, date and location TBA.

April

April 26-May 5: The Living Buddhism Conference "Breaking the Mould: Buddhism Comes West and Gets Engaged," organized by Amida Trust

Narborough, Leicestershire, United Kingdom

More info: gina@amidatrust.com

See: <http://amidatrust.typepad.com/conference2008>

May

May 17-18: Spirituality and Social Enterprise Conference with Roshi Bernie Glassman and others

House of One People, Montague, MA

More info: Laura Carboni,

laura@zenpeacemakers.org, 413/367-2080 ext. 4#

See: www.zenpeacemakers.org

Indra's Net

News and stories from the world of socially engaged Buddhism, in the Buddhist Peace Fellowship community and beyond.

Repression of Freedom of Religion in Tibet Continues

In August, China's State Administration for Religious Affairs posted a new set of regulations on its website declaring that reincarnations of "living Buddhas"—Tibetan monks of the highest order—must first seek approval from Chinese authorities. In an apparent effort to target the current Dalai Lama, who is living in exile in northern India, the rules prohibit any Buddhist monk living outside of China from recognizing a "living Buddha." The new regulations take effect September 1.

The Chinese government has long insisted that it must have the final say over the appointment of the most senior Tibetan monks. In 1995, the Dalai Lama and Chinese authorities chose rival reincarnations of the 10th Panchen Lama, who died in 1989. After the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama is the most important figure in the Tibetan spiritual hierarchy and will identify the next Dalai Lama when the current one, now 72, dies. As a result, Beijing could control the eventual selection of the 15th Dalai Lama.

"China's repression of Tibetans, like that of its own people, is extremely strategic," said Paula Schriefer, director of advocacy at Freedom House, based in Washington, DC. "Chinese authorities are keenly interested in the selection of Tibetan spiritual figures due to the tremendous reverence with which they are held by their followers."

Religious freedom in Tibet is strictly limited by the Chinese government. While some religious practices are tolerated, officials forcibly suppress activities viewed as vehicles for political dissent or advocacy of Tibetan independence. Possession of pictures of the Dalai Lama can lead to imprisonment, and religious affairs bureaus continue to control who can study religion in Tibet. Only boys who sign a declaration rejecting Tibetan independence, expressing loyalty to the Chinese government, and denouncing the Dalai Lama are allowed by Chinese officials to become monks.

—Freedomhouse.org

FOR/BPF Delegation Visits Colombia

In April and May, Linda Ruth Cutts, former abbess of the San Francisco Zen Center, and her daughter, Sarah Weintraub, coled a Buddhist delegation to Colombia. The delegation, which was co-sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and BPF, called themselves "Lotus in Muddy Water." They traveled through the country for two weeks and met with

individuals and groups addressing peace and human rights concerns, and learned about the historical and political context of Colombia's brutal civil war. Some of the groups the delegation met with included Justapaz (a Christian center for justice, peace, and nonviolent action), Afrodes (an organization that supports displaced Afro-Colombians), and Asociación Campesina de Antioquia (the Antioquia Farmers' Association). Along the way, the delegation practiced meditation, visited the Centro Zen Montaña de Silencio (Mountain of Silence Zen Center), and accompanied friends in the Red Juvenil de Medellín (Medellín Youth Network) in the International Worker's Day march.

Read the full report from the Lotus in Muddy Water Delegation at www.bpf.org/html/whats_now/2007/colombia_report.html.

Northwest Interfaith Peacewalk Commemorates Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days

Monks and nuns from the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Temple and members of several other faiths led the third annual Interfaith Peacewalk, which ended August 6 at the Trident Nuclear Submarine Base in Bangor, Washington.

The purpose of the walk, which started on July 16 in Eugene, Oregon, was to commemorate the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to remember those who have suffered radiation poisoning near nuclear testing sites in the U.S. Each step of the walk was dedicated to a nuclear-free future. Monk Gilberto Perez of the Nipponzan Myohoji temple said that Iraqis are now seeing physical effects of uranium ammunition used during the Gulf War. Perez said, "We ask for forgiveness that



photo: Gordon Sturrock

we should all live in peace. We pray to relieve the suffering of all people."

Madison BPF Hosts Nonviolent Communication Workshop

The Madison, Wisconsin, BPF chapter held a Nonviolent Communication (NVC) training January 26–27, taught by Lucy Leu and Ruby Phillips. Lucy and Ruby came to Madison from Seattle, where they have been active in the Freedom Project, which trains prison returnees as peacemakers through mindfulness and NVC training. The 101 participants of the Madison training represented numerous local Buddhist sanghas, plus other peace and justice groups in the community.

—Kathy Derene, Madison BPF

Portland's Buddhist Festival in the Park

The Portland, Oregon, BPF chapter was one of the main organizers for the Buddhist Festival in the Park, which began four years ago as Change Your Mind Day (sponsored by *Tricycle* magazine) and has evolved into a celebration of local diverse Buddhist communities. This year's theme, "Path of Compassion," attracted more than 900 people to Colonel Summers Park June 2. Adults listened to talks, monastics blessed pets, and kids learned about altars and created their own tiny Buddha statues. To end the day, teenage Burmese dancers performed a traditional dance for everyone.

—Heidi Enji Hoogstra, Portland BPF

Tallahassee BPF Marks Juneteenth

On June 19, the Tallahassee, Florida, BPF chapter invited people of all races and spiritual beliefs to join a ceremony to honor the memories of those who were lynched, and to help heal the shame, blame, and guilt from the aftermath of slavery that affect all Tallahassee residents. The event was held downtown near a large oak tree, the site of lynchings in the 1930s. One woman who attended said, "I saw this event as an opportunity for racial forgiveness with the Native Americans and the African Americans. We have racism that is still here and it needs to be healed."

Healing and Dharma at the U.S. Social Forum

This past January, a ragtag group of radical seekers, soul rebels, healers, and mystics started to talk about how their piece of social justice work would be represented at the United States Social Forum (USSF) in Atlanta, this summer. The forum, with the theme "Another World Is Possible, Another U.S. Is Necessary," was to be organized by and for activists and community organizers from all over the country.

Jesse writes: Buddhists, Yoruba practitioners, Jews, Indigenous medicine people, sound-healers, Christians, and yogis came together on our planning calls because we knew something good was cooking. We had no idea what it might be. We used different language to talk about it, but we were sure of two things: 1) the work of liberation has inner dimensions that are rarely attended to in mainstream activist culture, and 2) the USSF was the perfect place to demonstrate the value and power of these inner dimensions to a broad range of social change agents.

We decided to create a multitransitional cross-cultural space for people working for social change to come and center, breathe, and heal during the forum.

Nearly 10,000 people buzzed around downtown Atlanta between June 27 and July 1; several hundred of them found a quiet place of rest and reflection in the "Community Healing and Spiritual Practice Space." Many people came into the space exhausted and war-torn but left rested, energized, and clear-minded. The space was held by a team of volunteers from a number of groups, including stone circles, Spirit in Motion, and BPF, represented by staff member Oren Sofer.

Oren writes: The significance of what we were doing didn't hit me until my second night in Atlanta, when the group of organizers met in the space for a brief council and dinner. There were 13 of us, representing all different places, traditions, ages, and colors.

I felt honored, inspired, and grateful to be in the room with each of these people and to hold a piece of wisdom in my Buddhist practice. As the only white male in the group, I also felt a mixture of humility, gratitude, and respect in holding that place of identity, with all of its painful history, in this group.

We spent a day creating the main healing and practice space and several altars in the surrounding area. Local BPF member John Simon connected us with the Atlanta Shambhala Center, which loaned us zafus and zabutons. We transformed the basement of the AIDS Survival Project into a serene and beautiful place of practice. We built an ancestor altar in a park behind the Atlanta Civic Center, and it became a powerful space for rituals to honor and remember loved ones, teachers, and inspirational figures who have passed.

During the days of the USSF, our group of practitioners offered yoga, guided meditation, Native and Yoruba healing ceremonies, acupuncture, massage, and more.

As I walked around the forum and handed out flyers, I sensed relief, excitement, and interest from many with whom I spoke. We were one of the only groups simply offering space, with no demands or expectations to "join our cause," get involved, or take action. With over 300 workshops a day, having a space to just be and come back to oneself seemed essential. I thought of Gandhi, King, and others, and how deeply rooted their work for peace and justice was in spiritual practice.

Our work offered something unique, powerful, and much needed to the community of activists and folks doing the hard heart work of change. We held the space for the integration of inner and outer, for ritual, healing, and transformation. ❖

—Jesse Maceo Vega-Frey (BPF board member) and Oren Sofer (BPF administrative director)



Cara, Egypt, and Omisade at an outdoor altar at the USSF

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History

Lo Ch'ing and the Grain Boatmen

by Diane Ames


The grain boatmen, who brought barges of grain to the capital on an elaborate system of canals, were among the poorest men in Ming China. In a land in which marriage was nearly universal, most boatmen apparently could not afford to marry. They suffered great hardship during the winter when they were out of work. Many drowned. If they became disabled or simply got old, they had nowhere to go. To more affluent Chinese, they hardly seemed human.

Enter Lo Ch'ing (active 16th century). We know little about him except that he was born near Ch'eng-yang into a military family and so probably became an army officer serving in the grain canal patrol troops. As such he would have become familiar with the boatmen's plight. Tradition says that he also became a devout lay Buddhist and decided to study under a "heretical teacher" whose name is not known. After practicing under this teacher for 13 years, he wrote five texts on doctrine that still survive. Scholars pronounce them an eclectic mixture of Ch'an (Chinese Zen) and Pure Land teachings, heavily laced with quotations from the most popular sutras and even Confucian texts—in short, loosely organized anthologies of the orthodox popular Buddhism of the day.

Lo also began attracting disciples, among them a Ch'an monk named Ta-ning. Together they began to preach to the lowly grain boatmen and to set up the system of temple-hostels that became vital to the boatmen's survival.

Established in cities near the canals, especially in southern China, these temples were maintained by small permanent staffs that carried on religious rituals, kept copies of Lo's works, and supported the temples by farming like Ch'an monks. They were also hostels in which the boatmen could stay in the winter and get simple Buddhist (i.e., vegetarian) food at a price even they could afford. Sick, disabled, and elderly boatmen were also cared for in these places. Not surprisingly, most boatmen became devotees of the school Lo had founded.

Since, unfortunately, the school lacked official recognition, it naturally attracted official paranoia. After all, many uprisings had been instigated by popular cults throughout Chinese history. However, even official documents denouncing the Lo temples noted that they neither taught heresy nor did anything illegal except exist. Some hostile bureaucrats even recommended that the hostels be taken over by the government because of the vital function they served. Despite this, there were many government campaigns to suppress the Lo sect. And despite that, Lo temple-hostels remained numerous for more than two centuries, attracting devotees throughout, and beyond, the boatman community. ♦



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Space Medicine

by Stephanie Kaza

At the northern end of our local bike path, the route crosses the Winooski River and circles around Delta Park. Some days we take the long option and head out to the causeway, an old rail line restored for walking and cycling. The gravel path leads down through the woods and emerges at the edge of the lake. If you keep going, the narrow causeway takes you out into the lake, so you are surrounded on both sides by water stretching far to the north and south. Off in the distance to the east are the Green Mountains, with Mansfield and Camel's Hump as familiar landmarks. To the west across Lake Champlain, the Adirondacks rise old and steep, a testimony of geologic time.


The causeway is our space medicine. When things press in and shrink my view, when stresses mount and clog my mind, when thought habits tighten like a noose—I turn to space for nourishment. When I am most troubled, it seems impossible to find such space on my own. It certainly is out of reach in my own mind. If I'm lucky, I will remember there is space medicine close at hand if I will just go toward it.

What is the nourishment of space? One thought stream in Buddhist psychology looks at space as one of the five wisdom energies. In her guide to these energies, Irini Rockwell recounts how Tibetan teacher Trungpa Rinpoche developed a practice for Westerners to allow them to contact these distinct energetic qualities through immersion in color. He designed five rooms, each with its own color and shape, and asked students to take a particular posture aligned with the energy of that space. The intensified experience would allow the student to work through resistance patterns and find the wisdom quality at the core of that energy. This became known as Maitri Space Awareness practice—paying attention to the totality of our experience in the space of not just the room but the entire world.

Each of the five wisdom energies are associated with colored light, wisdom qualities, and also confused qualities. Vajra energy is blue; its wisdom quality is clear seeing. Ratna energy is rich golden; its wisdom quality is equanimity and contentment. Padma energy glows red with passion and the quality of compassion. Karma energy is green, filled with energy for action; its wisdom quality is accomplishing good for others. The last of the five, buddha energy, radiates white light and spaciousness; its wisdom quality is all-pervasive, peaceful space. Each of these qualities is present in varying degrees in all of us, depending on our biological and cultural conditioning and how we work with the circumstances we encounter. Each can be nourishing and healing in addressing human suffering.


Going out on the lake is all about taking the medicine of buddha energy. Last week we rode to the end of the bike path and pulled over to Charlie's Boathouse. There, in the dim, rustic bait-and-candy store, we arranged to take a double kayak out on the lake. I had been finding my way

through the aftermath of my mother's death. I needed a big dose of space medicine. We paddled north along the sandy shore, following the reeds and pond lilies in the quiet waters. The mountains framed the big sky—Adirondacks to the west, Green Mountains to the east. We passed by scores of uprooted trees, graying and withered from earlier years, massive root mandalas in flat relief jutting up from the trunks. A lone sandpiper cried its alarm call and flew off against the few white clouds in the sky. We stopped paddling and drifted, just gazing into space. All-pervasive peaceful space. Letting the eyes gaze long and far, letting our minds range out beyond the familiar. It helped me remember, just a bit, the bigger world I'm passing through. ❖



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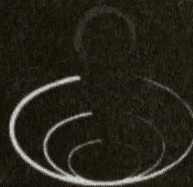
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Michael McAlister, teacher

Nagarjuna, who was also a devotee of Amitabha.

But the heart of Pureland Buddhism has less to do with the lexicon of Buddhas; it is more centered on the devotional practice of *Nembutsu*, or calling out to Amida. In Pureland it is only an encounter with the unknowable that can pull us out of our preoccupied self-clinging and point us toward the suffering we must fully experience before any kind of awakening is possible. It is this acknowledgment of our inherent fallibility, Brazier argues, that seems so relevant to a Western culture consumed by self-improvement. And it is the quiet faith in a measureless life outside our limited self that offers hope for a broader understanding, an activism grounded in compassion for the grief we all share. Brazier's book is a rewarding exploration of the importance of faith and devotion to the unknowable mystery at the heart of all religious practice.

A Zen Life: D.T. Suzuki

by Michael Goldberg, Executive Producer

Film, International Videoworks, 2006

www.azenlife-film.org

Reviewed by Katje Richstatter

"Though perhaps less universally known than such figures as Einstein or Gandhi (who became symbols of our time) Daisetz Suzuki was no less remarkable a man than these. And though his work may not have had such resounding and public effect, he contributed no little to the spiritual and intellectual revolution of our time."

—Thomas Merton

In this straightforward PBS-style documentary, filmmaker Michael Goldberg illustrates the life of Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1870–1966), a scholar and teacher of Zen Buddhism. Suzuki trained monastically under Shaku Soen but did not ordain as a monk; instead, he chose the life of a lay practitioner, married, and devoted his life to writing and forwarding a nonintellectual understanding of Zen in the West. Suzuki saw Western thought as overly enamored with scientific studies, and worked through his teaching and writing to destroy any ideas his students had of using Zen as a commodity, something they could "get" or "use" to change their lives.

Suzuki taught Zen as fundamentally ungraspable, an eternal negation; any cherished idea had to be destroyed, and any thought of accomplishment had to be abandoned. But as he lived between Japan and the U.S., he understood the amount of psychological discomfort these concepts caused in the West. The idea of finding the freedom of *satori* (awakening) within the form was, and continues to be, a balance. If there is too little freedom, form becomes dogmatic; too little form leads to relativism, an unlivable philosophy. Suzuki's teachings were based in the Mahayana tradition but radical

in their attempt to understand the Western Mind and integrate the differing psychologies.

Of the most interesting aspects of the film is the staggering list of people Suzuki encountered and influenced, including Carl Jung, Erich Fromm, Thomas Merton, Martin Heidegger, Alan Watts, and Robert Aitken. Artists were also attracted to Suzuki's teaching and to Zen, particularly in the 1950s and '60s, when John Cage, Alan Ginsberg, and Gary Snyder became devotees. There are a lot of interviews throughout, and Suzuki obviously touched many. His long life and prolific writing career brought him into contact with students in the United States, Europe, and Japan and exemplified a nonmonastic path of both seeking inner stillness and answering life's call. Through a mix of archival footage and interviews, Goldberg shows a detailed portrait of an individual many argue was most instrumental in bringing Japanese Zen Buddhism to the West, but also of the man himself, fully in and of this world. It is seeing Suzuki through the eyes of those who knew him that makes this documentary truly personal and moving.

Books in Brief

by Gail Bailey

Pavement: Reflections on Mercy, Activism, and Doing "Nothing" for Peace

by Lin Jensen

Wisdom Publications, 2007, 132 pages, \$12.95

There are times and situations in life that lead you to do extraordinary things. Like many activists across the globe, Lin Jensen felt driven to protest against the Iraq War. "Wanting to do something for peace, I discovered I first had to learn to do nothing for peace." For more than two years, Jensen's idea of doing "nothing" has been to sit zazen on the sidewalks of his hometown in Chico, California. With great insight, honesty, and compassion, Jensen reflects (often comically) on what he has learned, not only from the practice of being peace but also from those who pass him by, sit down to share bread, or have hatred in their hearts. *Pavement* is a wonderful memoir, a great inspiration for anyone struggling to do "something" in the name of peace.

Buddha Mind, Buddha Body: Walking Toward Enlightenment

by Thich Nhat Hanh

Parallax Press, 2007, 146 pages, \$14.95

Engagingly accessible and straightforward, Thich Nhat Hanh possesses the gift of a great teacher: the ability to

explain the most intricate of subjects in the simplest of ways. This book is no exception. In *Buddha Mind, Buddha Body*, a follow-up to *Understanding Our Mind*, Hanh delves further into the exploration of human consciousness and the inner workings of the mind. Through a sound explanation of the four kinds of consciousness to the first six paramitas, Hanh offers a path to happiness that begins with a sound understanding of how to train the mind.

Mindful Economics: Understanding American Capitalism, Its Consequences and Alternatives

by Joel C. Magnuson

Pilot Light Books, 2007, 366 pages, \$24.99

This is an invaluable resource for individuals and organizations wanting a comprehensive understanding of the way U.S. capitalist systems and institutions operate. Dr. Magnuson provides an extensive overview of some of the devastating consequences of capitalism (environmental degradation, economic inequality, and financial market instability) and offers suggestions for adopting a more mindful economics, one “rooted in democratic institutions, socially controlled by an active citizenry, and shaped by the values of people in their communities.” Magnuson admits that creating economic alternatives that challenge the status quo are extremely difficult yet acknowledges that the attempt is not impossible. This is a great guide for cooperatives, small businesses, and anyone dedicated to sound economic practices.

Nuclear Disorder or Cooperative Security? U.S. Weapons of Terror, the Global Proliferation Crisis, and Paths to Peace

by Lawyers’ Committee on Nuclear Policy, Western States Legal Foundation, and Reaching Critical Will of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom 2007, 253 pages, \$12

As a response to the June 2006 Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, three public interest groups have come together to offer a critical analysis of the report’s 60 recommendations, as well as offer their own response to how the U.S. and other countries can reduce and eventually eliminate their nuclear weapons. Divided into four parts, the book provides a comprehensive summary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and other international treaties; examines U.S. policy, research, and development of nuclear weapons; explores how concern over climate change has led to a renewed interest in nuclear power; and analyzes the role of language and the need for redefining the way we talk about nuclear weapons and security. More than a book, it is also a grassroots campaign for a nuclear-free world.

Tibetan Cooking: Recipes for Daily Living, Celebration, and Ceremony

by Elizabeth Esther Kelly

Snow Lion Publications, 2007, 108 pages, \$19.95

While filled with simply prepared recipes, including both meat- and vegetarian-based dishes, *Tibetan Cooking* is more than just a cookbook. Kelly includes background information on preparing food for offerings (*pujas*), creating a shrine, observing customs and etiquette, and even serving a lama. There is also a section dedicated to what to serve during Losar (Tibetan New Year). This is a good introduction to Tibetan cuisine, culture, and customs.

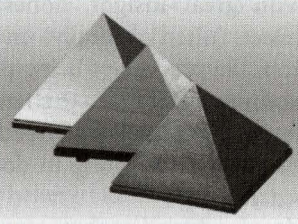
A Rare and Precious Thing: The Possibilities and Pitfalls of Working with a Spiritual Teacher

by John Kain

Bell Tower, 2006, 288 pages, \$23

In *A Rare and Precious Thing*, John Kain, a former associate publisher of *Tricycle* magazine, compiles a collection of interviews of spiritual teachers and students, interspersed with sections of quotes, inquiries into personal and community psychology, and practical advice. Many traditions are represented: Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Native American, and Vedanta. Kain aims to guide seekers as to both the potential benefits and pitfalls of working with a spiritual teacher. And while the conversationally written teachers’ biographies are interesting, and the advice offered is useful, the book falls into the trap of trying to do too much, and often overdraws the commonalities between these divergent traditions; the result feels scattered. —*Katje Richstatter*. ❖

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Transformative Justice

Transforming Justice at BPF

by Kenshin Catherine Cascade

For almost a decade, BPF's Transformative Justice Program has been growing, evolving, and transforming itself. Birthed first as the Prison Program by longtime activist Diana Lion in 1998, following a mandate from the BPF board of directors, the program grew to encompass prison ministry, a correspondence program (which responded to almost 1,600 letters from prisoners during 2006!), advocacy to end the death penalty, and networking. Diana was a passionate and prodigious worker. After more than seven years as director of the Prison Program, she developed a constellation of illnesses that forced her to take an extended medical leave, and the program entered a new stage in its life.

Two dynamic young men, Michael Callahan and Hong Chingkuang, were hired in 2005 as co-coordinators, splitting duties along lines reflecting their own unique talents and passions. Michael had worked with an organization called Critical Resistance in its effort to abolish the prison-industrial complex, and helped launch a newspaper called *The Abolitionist*. Hong had started a Buddhist newsletter called *neverdespise* during his eight-year incarceration and founded a Buddhist youth society called Jihua Tong on the outside.

Together, Michael and Hong envisioned what would become the Coming Home Initiative, and suggested that the Prison Program be renamed to make more explicit the commitment to social and spiritual transformation of the prison system that had been present since Diana founded the program. Soon after Hong and Michael joined the staff, BPF's board of directors also got into the act, strengthening its commitment and pledging to allocate increased resources to the program. The three-year strategic plan for 2006–2009 gives support for “the evolution of the Prison Program into an innovative Transformative Justice Program that integrates practice and action and addresses systemic injustice through community solutions like the Coming Home Initiative.”

The Coming Home Initiative, which is now being implemented, supports members of prison meditation and mindfulness groups as they make the transition out of prison and back into their home communities. The project has infused the Transformative Justice Program with new energy, and brings a more intensive focus to the potent interface between the individually transformative spiritual work that characterizes Buddhism and the socially transformative action that characterizes engaged practice.

In the early phases of this project, Michael and Hong carefully researched other reentry programs, developed relationships with key people and agencies in the larger community, imagined the design for Coming Home, and

thoughtfully created a strong foundation for it.

Early this year, each for personal reasons, both Michael and Hong began a prolonged leave of absence from this work. Ven. Suhita Dharma and I have now entered the picture as co-coordinators. Once again, the program is evolving in ways that reflect the unique talents and passions of the individual people at work within it.

Ven. Suhita Dharma, known familiarly as “Bhante,” is a monk with experience in street ministry and the ability to serve as a bridge between many cultures. I am a Zen priest and chaplain who has worked in jail, prison, hospice, and psychiatric hospital settings. Together we are bringing the Coming Home Initiative out of the planning stage and into operation.

Our first important step was to take a census of participants in prison meditation groups. The project was originally envisioned as addressing the needs of men coming out of the state prison system, particularly Buddhadharma sangha at San Quentin. But the census found that almost all of the prisoners being released to the Bay Area within the near-term would be women.

This was a welcome surprise. I have led a meditation group for incarcerated women for five years, and I have a special passion for the unique needs and issues of women, which are significantly different from those of men.

As a result of the census, the project refocused its efforts toward working with women and realized that a space adjacent to the main BPF office in Berkeley was well suited for this purpose. The Coming Home Meditation Room and Resource Referral Center opened at that site with a dedication on May 16, 2007. There we offer opportunities for daily meditation, mindful movement, and individual support for women going through the complex, multilayered process of decarceration.

Bhante has begun working individually with male ex-prisoners, mostly in San Francisco, and is excited about the possibility of partnering with the Faithful Fools Street Ministry (see www.faithfulfools.org). The Fools community is allowing us to use some of their space and share in the work they are doing in offering services to the community.

We will describe the activities and continuing creative evolution of the Coming Home Initiative in more detail in future issues of *Turning Wheel*. Please stay tuned! ❖

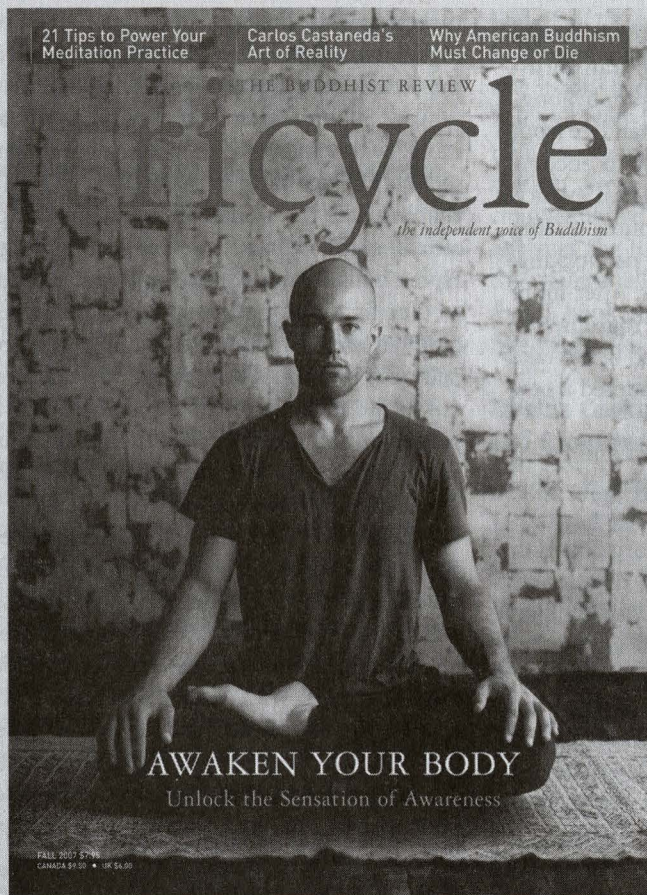
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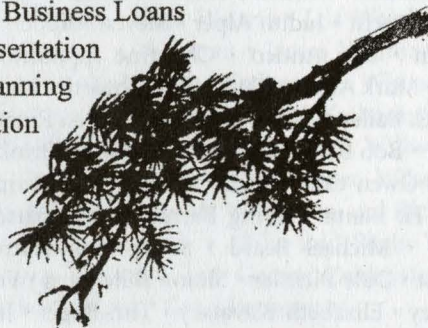
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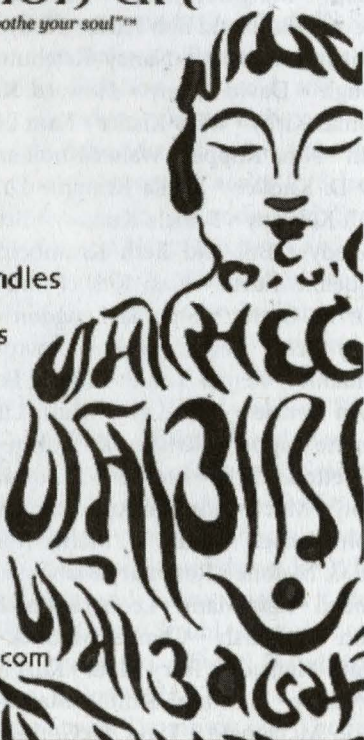
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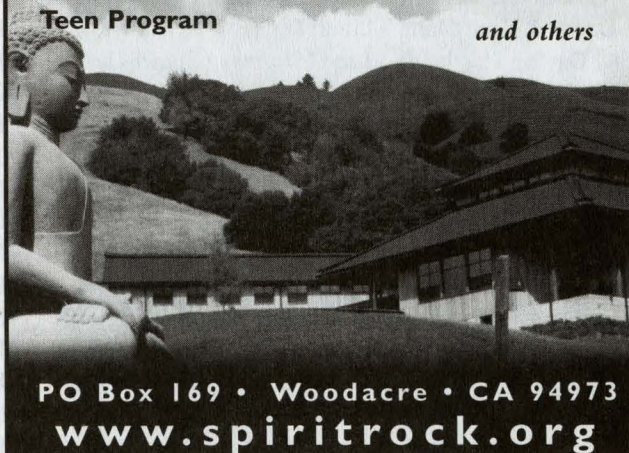
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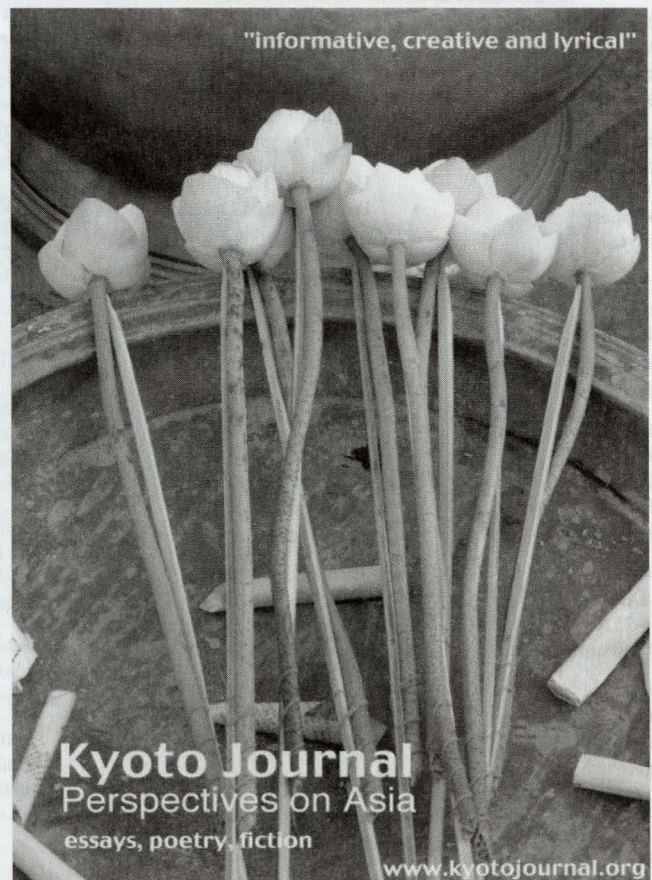
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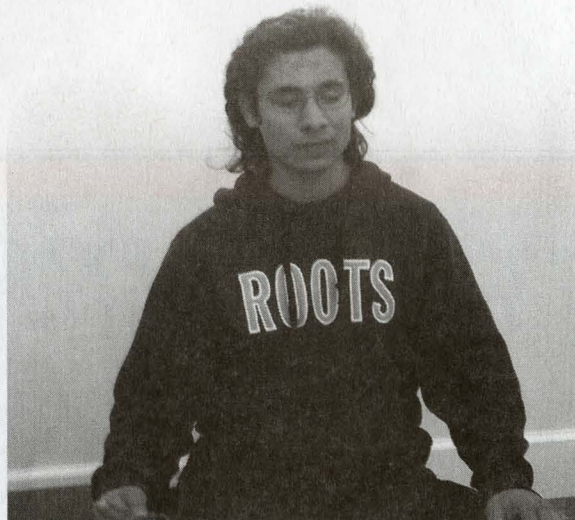
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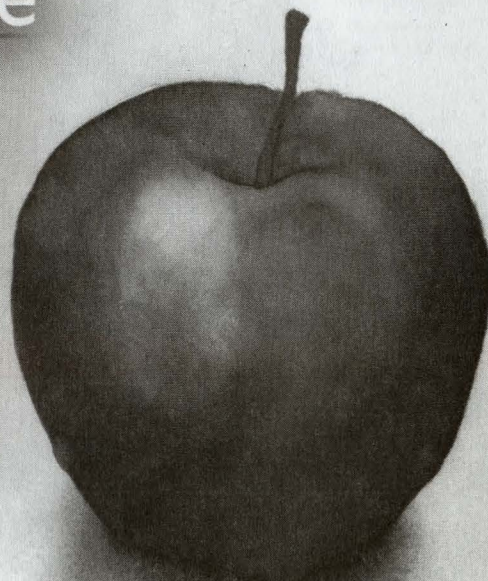
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