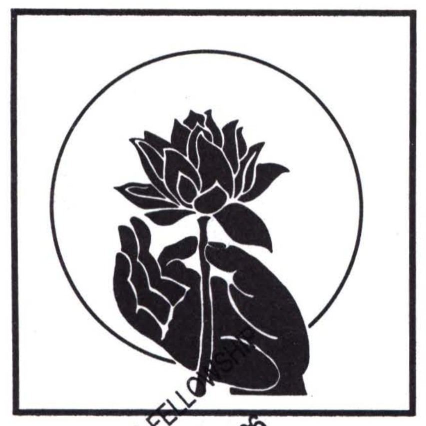

BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP

NEWSLETTER OF THE BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP, SPRING 1990

BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP
P.O. BOX 3470
BERKELEY, CA 94703-9906

The Agony of Tibet

GALEN ROWELL

❖ *Renewed Buddhist Environmental Awareness*

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The Buddhist Peace Fellowship was founded in 1978, as a network of individuals and local chapters, to bring a Buddhist perspective to the peace movement, and to bring the peace movement to the Buddhist community. Membership and subscription information are on the back cover. Single copies $4.00 postpaid from the BPF National Office

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Global celebrations of Earth Day 1990 have now launched the "decade of the environment." World Watch Institute and other knowledgeable people stress that this decade is the turning point. If we don't reverse our bad environmental habits, they will do us in. Buddhism, as a philosophy and religion, has a lot to offer in working with habits of the mind; that work in turn can provide a foundation for mindful activity that makes good environmental sense.

In this issue, we offer articles on environmental problems and projects in countries around the world, including those which receive relatively little press in North America. We also present articles and resources on Buddhist philosophy as it informs environmental work and ethics. We do not intend to drop environmental issues now that Earth Day has passed. These are not simple problems we are confronting. We are in for the long haul. Please send us your stories of environmental activities for future issues.

The work on this issue reflects the way we need to work on environmental problems — with group effort. The newsletter advisory committee, created at the January Board meeting, began to function with this issue. We also had the good fortune to work with Will Waters, who has joined us as an assistant. We are grateful for his copyediting and typing, and especially for his calm and attentive presence. You wouldn't be reading this without him.

It's clear that environmental problems are too big to be solved by one person. Together we can face our collective grief and anxiety, and use the strength of our practice to slow the runaway destruction of our planet's life-support systems.

—Stephanie Kaza

For The Busy Buddhist

There are many opportunities to engage in specific action regarding the issues in this magazine. These appear at the end of the articles. We encourage you to take note of these and respond where appropriate for you. Below we have two further suggestions:

1. Write to the organizers of Earth Day, 1990 to express gratitude for the enormous amount of dedication and work that went in to creating the spectacular celebration. The international office address is Earth Day 1990, P.O. Box AA, Stanford, CA 94309. If you know your local organizers address, write to them! They all deserve our deepest thanks.

2. There are reports from Tibet that women — especially nuns — are being tortured in jail. The nuns are at the forefront of the freedom movement in Tibet and are often incarcerated. While in jail they are being sexually and physically tortured. Please write to the Chinese offficials below asking them to stop this treatment of women in their jails:

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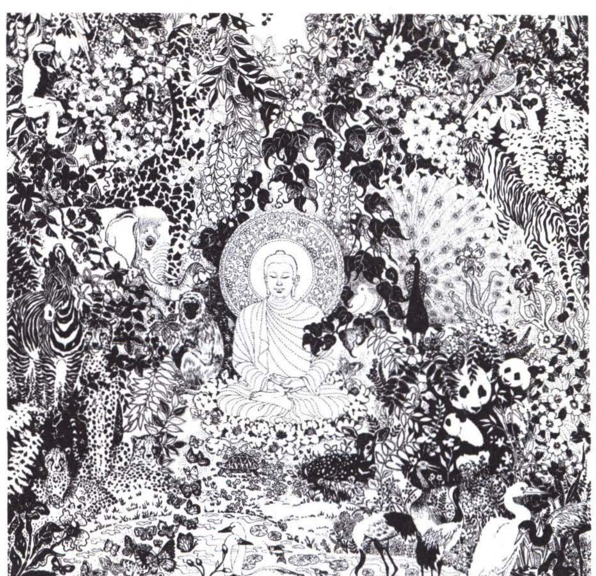
Xizang Zizhiqi Renmin Zhenfu
Lasashi, Xizang Zizhiqi
People's Republic of China

Yang Youcai Jianchazhangi
Xizang Zizhiqi Renmin Jianchayuan
Lasashi, Xizang Zizhiqu
People's Republic of China

BPF All Members' Meeting September 22 & 23, 1990

BPF members from all over the country will be coming together this weekend in Cambridge, Ma.,to share ideas, insights, and inspiration. The focus will be on building community in BPF, and extending our reach as an organization. This is a great opportunity to feel more connected to the network of people who are BPF and who are working to create peace in their lives and in the world. We are planning an all day meeting and an all day workshop. Chapters, please consider sending a delegate. For those not affiliated with a chapter, this is a good time to meet other members of BPF. The Cambridge chapter will be arranging acccomodations in individual homes, so cost once in Cambridge will be low. This is an opportunity not to be missed! Contact Margaret at the main office or Jim Austin (617- 643-2343) in Cambridge for more information.



BPF Earth Day Project

The latest BPF project was an encouragement for Buddhists to live in ways that support an interdependent understanding of the world. We created a beautiful poster (blue border with deep green printing and graphics) of the Buddha contemplating the interdependence of all beings. The line drawing came to us from the Buddhist Perception of Nature. We also sent out a packet of suggestions and readings addressing the overlap between Buddhism and ecology. These packets and posters were sent out as an offering to over 300 sanghas in the U.S. Both are available from the BPF office: poster $7; packet, $2 including postage.

Some of the books we suggested are listed below, and in the ***Books*** section, this issue. For the complete list, write for the packet.

Aitken, Robert. *The Mind of Clover: Essays in Zen Buddhist Ethics.* San Francisco: North Point Press. 1984.

Bateson, Gregory. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1972.

Callicot, J.Baird and Ames, Roger T., eds. *Nature in Asian Tradition of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.

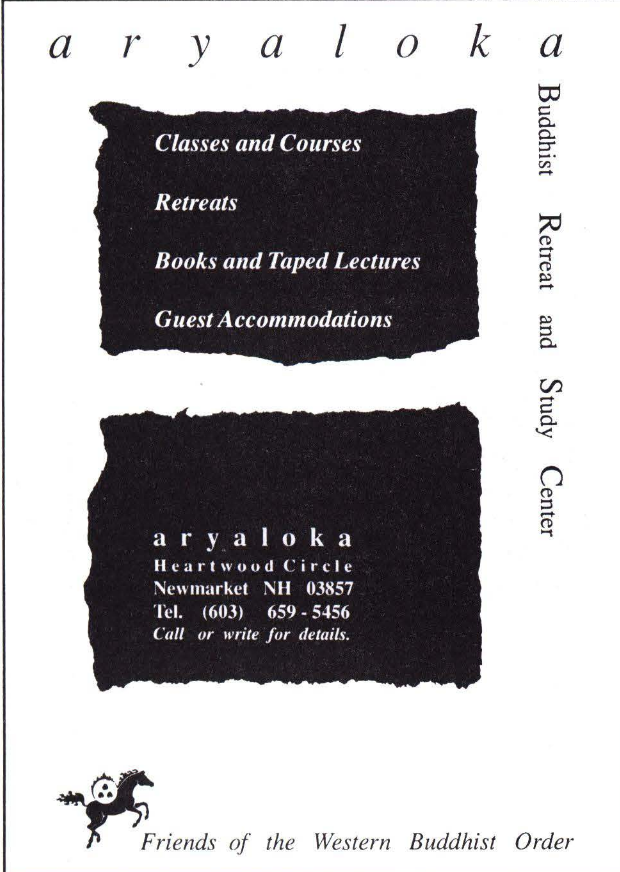
Davies, Shannon, ed. *Tree of Life : Buddhism and Protection of Nature.* Buddhist Perception of Nature Project, 1987.

Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1966. (First published in 1949.

Nhat Hanh, Thich. *Interbeing: Commentaries on the Tiep Hien Precepts.* Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1987.

Seed, John, Joanna Macy, Pat Fleming, and Arne Naess. *Thinking Like a Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings.* Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1988.

—Margaret Howe, National Coordinator



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Letters

Dear BPF

...Before exposing myself in a personal way to the international dimensions of engaged Buddhism, I must admit that I could barely get my mind to focus on the subject. With destitute Asian refugees right in our own U.S. cities, it seemed that there was plenty to worry about without taking on something as peripheral as, say, the Chittagong Hill Tribes. But I now wonder if one of the root problems of engaged Buddhism in North America is precisely its lack of exposure to such situations, where the suffering is so acute and the solutions seem so remote.

The kinds of encounters that occurred at the INEB meeting (plus related visits to Thai slums and refugee camps) are quite salutary for aspiring "engaged Buddhists" from wealthy First World countries. Surprisingly, one is somehow calmed and centered by being with those who have suffered the most. While the reality is often worse than our vague, half-repressed images, at the same time it is also ***better*** than what we imagined — one sees that dignity and hope and humor can be maintained even amidst terrible adversity. Thankfully, what we have in common manages to cut through differences of culture and privilege.

Such direct exposure also provides a mirror in which to view the kinds of discussions that typically take place at meetings of BPF chapters in the U.S. Too often we fall into solipsistic ruminations about the relative merits of action or non-action, lamenting our inability to find concrete projects that will excite everyone in the group. For North Americans especially, a fitting antidote to such irresolution may be increased involvement in the ***international*** problems. A good start might be a trip — ideally a group trip — to a troubled area; what needs to be done would then become apparent naturally. Many of the problems actually originate in the First World. (For example, U.S. and Japanese multinational companies are poised to extract Burma's rich oil and timber resources.) As First Worlders, we may have more leverage to affect such things than the refugees in the camps will ever have.

— from Ken Kraft, Assoc. Prof. of Religion Studies, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA; and Visiting Scholar, International Institute for Zen Buddhism, Hanazono University, Kyoto, Japan

Dear Friends,

I have increased my contribution this year to make up for being so late.

If you mail me financial appeals quarterly, I will send more. There is something to be said for the begging bowl tradition. People don't always give until asked repeatedly.

I sell car repairs for a living. I am amazed how many people don't replace their brakes until I tell them that they have none. If I don't tell them they have none, they may think their car is safe and end up by killing me or someone else. So I let them know, regardless.

Don't be afraid to go after the money necessary for your survival. If the BPF newsletter didn't tell us the truth about ourselves, as it so mindfully does, we too might think it's OK to live our desperate lives of suffering so full of everything except compassion and wisdom. And we might end up killing someone in the process...

—from Joseph Heflin

Readings

Everybody Wants To Get Into The Act, and It's About Time

President Bush has proposed a major new initiative beginning in October of 1990, called "America The Beautiful." The proposal has three parts: 1. a land acquisition program to expand the National parks, wildlife refuges and forests (budgeted at $250 million); 2. a restoration, protection and enhancement program for natural resources, called Legacy '99 (budgeted at $202 million) and; 3. a National Tree Planting and Forest Improvement program, with a goal of planting and maintaining a billion trees annually. That's right, a billion trees a year (budgeted at $175 million.)

Soberly recalling that these are the same people who gave us the Army Corps of Engineers, it was nonetheless exciting to see the government getting involved. The tree-planting initiative particularly seemed germane to BPF purposes, since it involves a nationwide volunteer effort — something we could actually do.

The program, dubbed the "thousand points of shade" by the head of the Forest Service, is divided into two parts: urban and rural. Money for the rural areas will be spent in cost sharing and technical assistance to private landowners who plant and maintain the requisite number of new trees.

The urban part of the initiative, called Community Trees, entails the creation of a nonprofit foundation which will work with the Forest Service to promote tree planting. The goal is to plant a total of 30 million trees annually in 40,000 cities and towns throughout the country. The project aims both to reverse the current trend of urban deforestation and to reduce the power used for air conditioning in cities. Planting three trees per building, researchers estimate, can cut cooling loads by 50%. But today only one tree is planted for every four that die or are removed.

President Bush announced these lofty goals in a

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White House Tree Planting Ceremony, March 22. The fact sheet sent from the White House stated that the grounds were home to more than 500 trees and 4000 bu...er..., shrubs.

BPF members and chapters seeking to put meditation into action this way should contact their local Forest Service. — *Tensho David Schneider* ❖

Britain Admits Sending Envoy to Tibet, Snubs Dalai Lama

London, December 13th; The British Government is refusing to meet with the exiled Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama. The admission was made today by a Government spokesman in the Lords after concerted questioning from all sides of the House on British policy over Tibet.

This position is bound to lead to political embarrassment for Whitehall, which claims to support nonviolent policies but has hosted several leaders of terrorist or violent nationalist struggles in recent months, including Yasser Arafat, Oliver Tambo and Prince Sihanouk.

The Government also admitted that a British official, with three Conservative MPS, had visited Tibet in October, at the invitation of the Chinese Government. Both admissions came barely 48 hours after the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, where he was received by the Norwegian King and by the Prime Minister.

Lord Reay, a Government Whip, nevertheless told the Lords that no European leaders had ever met publicly with the Dalai Lama. He justified his Government's point-blank refusal to meet the Nobel laureate by describing such a meeting as "open to misinterpretation"—presumably by the Chinese. This remark brought cries of "disgraceful" from the floor of the chamber.

This is believed to be the first time the British have refused to meet a Nobel Peace Prize Winner. Baroness Elles, a former Conservative M.E.P., asked how many leaders had to meet the Dalai Lama before Mrs. Thatcher would be prepared to. Lady Ewart-Biggs, for the Opposition, said the Government's refusal to meet "the one world leader who, at every level of his life and thought, stands for peace" put in doubt their claimed commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflict.

Viscount Mersey, the Conservative peer who led the debate, went further, calling on the Government to honour its agreement to the 1961 UN Resolution on Tibet, which had supported Tibet's right to self-determination.

But the most forceful intervention came from Lord Grimond, who described British policy as 1930's-style appeasement. "We have not been smiling since we appeased Hitler," said the former Liberal leader, directing his remarks at smiling Tories on the Government Front Bench, "and we will not be smiling if we appease China. It never works. It has never worked in history

and it will not work now."

The Minister claimed that British disapproval of China's Tibet policies was evident in the EC ban on the sale of arms. Lord Willoughby de Broke, himself a Conservative, pointed out that the Government had licensed the sale of radar equipment to China on September 14th, a fact of which the Minister admitted he was unaware.

Lord Reay, a junior Government official, was speaking in place of Lord Brabazon of Tara, the official spokesman in the Lords on Foreign Affairs. Lord Brabazon's absence was not explained. Last June, when the Tibet question was first due to be raised, the Government had also refused to field Lord Brabazon to answer from the dispatch box.

British First to Visit Martial Law Tibet

The Government's admission that a British official had visited Lhasa in October will be taken by some as further evidence that the British have quietly condoned Chinese policies in Tibet. The visit, apparently intended to be secret but leaked to the press, came despite Foreign Office claims in mid-October that no diplomats were allowed in Lhasa.

The Minister, who had implied that the evidence presented by the peers was partisan, said that by contrast the British official reported Lhasa to be generally calm and economically thriving.

Lord Reay refused to answer a question about the propriety of quoting evidence gathered by a team led by MP Robert Adley, described by Lord Avebury as "a well-known advocate and friend" of China who had supported Chinese actions in Tiananmen Square.

Adley, a former director of Holiday Inn, is also rumoured to have business links in Lhasa. The team is believed to have spent just three days in Tibet, without the benefit of a Tibetan speaker amongst them, and is likely to have been accompanied by Chinese officials at all times.

The MPs, the first Western dignitaries to have visited Tibet since martial law was imposed there in March 1989, held meetings with senior Chinese officials during their visit, despite the ban on high-level links imposed by the EC Governments after the June 4th massacres.

There were no speakers from amongst the 1,000 or so eligible to enter the debate who spoke in favour of the Chinese occupation, nor any who were present to support British Government policies towards China. Three of the speakers spoke unequivocally of Tibet's right to independence, and all of the speakers were in favour or the Government establishing friendly relations with the Dalai Lama.

The debate is the first to be held on Tibet in the British Parliament for many years, and was remarkable for

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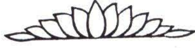

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its cross-party solidarity and for the support voiced for self-determination as well as human rights for Tibetans.❖

—reprinted from Tibet Information News Update, Dec. 89.

Peace Climb

As I write this, (April 16) the Peace Climb is slowly making its way to the top of Qomolangma, the Goddess Mother of The World, the tallest mountain in the world, Mt. Everest. They aim to be at the summit on Earth Day; there they will broadcast messages of peace to the world below via CD ROM and satellite technology.

By the time you read this, members of the expedition will be working to rid Qomolangma of the garbage which has accumulated over the 70 years of assaults on the peak — two tons of garbage.

The cleanup climb is the brainchild of Jim Whittaker, first American ever to reach the summit, which he did in 1963. Since then, Whittaker has been looking for ways to combine his passion for climbing with socially redeeming causes. When he conceived plans for the Peace Climb four years ago, tensions between the USSR, the US and China were high. "I thought, let's do something on the highest mountain in the world. Let's get our enemies together, and show that through friendship and cooperation, the highest goals on Earth can be reached. Then we thought: what's another big threat to humankind? The environment, so we agreed to tie it in with Earth Day, because I climbed Everest on May 1st, and this climb could occur on April 22."

Simple thoughts like these led Mr. Whittaker on a virtuoso performance of citizen diplomacy; he went twice to China, twice to Russia, and several times to Washington to assemble his team, and to obtain clearances and support. He also managed to put in place a new protocol for scaling Qomolangma: any future expeditions must pay a fee to the Chinese government; if the expedition does not leave the mountain pristine, they forfeit the fee and the money goes to pay Tibetans to clean the slopes. A cleaning deposit on Mt. Everest.

A related note is that all five Chinese climbers are actually Tibetan, though Mr. Whittaker is scrupulous about referring to them as from the "Tibetan province." Circumspect or not, Whittaker knows the power of the local culture: "Tell your readers that when I climbed Everest in '63, the whole team would pass by the mani stones [stones carved with the mantra Om Mani Padme Hum *-ed.*] on the right so the prayers would be used. We respect fully that religion, and we'll be doing the same in Lhasa. If there's any way we can help rebuild the Rongbuk monastery we'll do that too." ❖

—Tensho David Schneider

Contributions to help defray the costs can be mailed to: The 1990 Peace Climb Association, 221 Middlepoint Rd., Port Townsend, WA 98368

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Streams of Consciousness

Like everyone even moderately prey to the media, we (at the BPF National Office) have been deluged recently with material for raising environmental consciousness. We've even done some of the deluging ourselves — see the National Coordinator's report.

Working through a long, dense packet of good ideas from the North American Conference on Religion, we found an interesting way of thinking about environment. "Congregation habitat" could be examined in five basic areas: 1. physical environment; 2. learning environment; 3. worship (or practice) environment; 4. community (sangha) environment; 5. global environment.

Since we were running several pieces on physical environment in this issue, we decided to wade in and find out a bit about where we were, literally. We learned, thanks to an innovative group here in Berkeley, Ca., that the BPF Office is right above Codornices Creek, and that our totem critter therefore is a quail.

East Bay Citizens for Creek Restoration has not only mapped all the creeks running from the hills behind the University of California down across the flats and into the Bay, they've decorated the sidewalks with colorful stencils of each creek's totem. Thus you might find yourself at an intersection in the unshaded flatlands of West Berkeley when your eye falls on a rainbow dragonfly stenciled on the curb. You'll know that somewhere below you, in a culvert or a deeply cut cement channel, runs Schoolhouse Creek.

Large, brightly-colored banners of the totem animals now festoon Berkeley's main streets. In addition to songs, stories, and performance pieces, the EBCCR has developed an estimable theoretical underpinning. From a presentation by John Steere, entitled *Streams of Consciousness: Eco-Art and Reclaiming Creeks:* "In restoring creeks and watersheds — by design we are restoring a relationship and a vital linkage between ourselves and nature. There is an essence we share that is perhaps stirred whenever we encounter water courses. The change begins with the perception of our place on the earth, realizing that we are part of it, rather than apart from it. Marcel Proust once remarked, 'The voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes.' It is this ability to encounter our cities along with the water that flows through them with new eyes and creative acts that will give us the capacity to reshape them along healthier lines." ❖

— Tensho David Schneider

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THE AGONY OF TIBET

by Galen Rowell

— reprinted by permission from Greenpeace Magazine, v. 15 no. 2, March/April 1990.

In 1981 I set off to lead the first two American expeditions allowed into the backcountry of Tibet since the Chinese invasion three decades earlier. For a photographer, it was the chance of a lifetime. I thought little of politics or human rights. I simply wanted to climb mountains and take photographs of the mysterious land I had read so much about.

I never dreamed that I would make five visits to Tibet over the next eight years, become the subject of diplomatic complaints, be held by soldiers overnight against my will, and see many of my articles go unpublished in the United States out of fear of Chinese retribution. But if I had it to do all over again, there's only one thing I would have done differently. I wouldn't have compromised the story of Tibet's environmental destruction as much as I did. Then, I was worried about going back. Now I simply want to tell the story.

For three weeks, we walked — over 100 miles in all. We saw virtually nothing. The wildlife had disappeared.

Before 1981 the remote parts of Tibet were shrouded in mystery. All that modern naturalists knew about the region came from reports at least three decades old. "I have never seen so many varieties of birds in one place," wrote British explorer Kingdon Ward in 1920. "One great zoological garden," Joseph Rock wrote in a 1930 National Geographic. "Wherever I looked I saw wild animals grazing contentedly." In the thirties, a German traveler named Dalgleish reported sighting a herd of 10,000 chiru, a Tibetan antelope now rarely seen. In the forties, Leonard Clark reported, "Every few minutes, we would spot a bear or a hunting wolf, herds of musk deer, kyangs, gazelles, bighorn sheep, or foxes. This must be one of the last unspoiled big-game paradises."

This glory was what I had come to see. For an exorbitant fee — $50,000 to guide several naturalists for three weeks in the Anye Machin mountains of northeast Tibet — our Chinese hosts promised "a wealth of rare birds and animals...thick virgin forests where deer, leopards, and bear thrive, while the grasslands and gravel slopes near the snow line are alive with hordes of gazelles, wild asses and rare musk deer."

For three weeks, we walked — over 100 miles in all. We saw virtually nothing. The wildlife had disappeared.

My other trek that year was to the Tibetan side of Mount Everest. I drove over 1,000 miles of back roads without seeing a single wild large mammal. My negative results confirmed those of Pema Gyalpo, who had led a delegation the previous year that traveled 8,000 miles overland. She made the trip for the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India, whose head of state is her brother, the Dalai Lama. "On long journeys," she wrote,"you used to see more gazelles, deer and antelope than people. Now, in three months of extensive training in Tibet, I did not see any of these creatures."

In 1950 Mao's People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet. Nine years later, the Tibetan people rebelled after China's promises of religious and personal freedom proved false. The revolt was brutally crushed, and the Dalai Lama fled into exile in India. More than 80,000 Tibetans were killed in the immediate aftermath, and observers estimate 1.2 million Tibetans have died at the hands of Chinese soldiers or as a result of imprisonment or starvation in the last 30 years. This carnage is just a fraction of the roughly 35 million victims of China's four decades of Maoist rule, but it represents a fifth of the Tibetan population. During the subsequent decade, more than 6,000 monasteries, temples and historic structures were razed. Alexander Solzhenitsyn calls China's administration of Tibet "more brutal and inhumane than any other communist regime in the world."

Before the arrival of the Chinese, Tibet had its own separate language, currency, government, and postal system. It also had the most successful system of environmental protection of any inhabited region in the modern world. There were no parks or wildlife preserves in the Western sense. Formal protection of wildlife and wildlands was unnecessary in a land where devout Buddhist compassion for all living beings reigned supreme.

Tibetan Buddhism essentially prohibits the killing of animals. Children are taught from birth that all life is sacred. In his classic work, Seven Years in Tibet, Heinrich Harrer wrote of the frustration of working with Tibetans on the dike that to this day protects the capital city of Lhasa from flooding. "There were many interruptions and pauses. There was an outcry if anyone discovered a worm on a spade. The earth was thrown aside and the creature put in a safe place."

The Buddhist ethic pervades all aspects of Tibetan culture. "I have never seen less evidence of hatred, envy, malice and uncharitableness," wrote British India's Trade Consul in Tibet, Hugh Richardson, after living in Lhasa in the 1940's. "The Tibetan system produced a people who in the upper levels were self-

controlled, intelligent, often deeply learned, capable, unpretentious, dignified, humane and friendly. The majority of people made efforts to live as much as possible with nature, not against it."

The 1950 invasion of Tibet, justified on the false grounds that Mao's China was simply restoring historical borders, was in many ways the consummation of China's long-standing desire to gain control of Tibet's natural resources. The Chinese know Tibet as Xizang, which translates as "western treasure house," a name that was born in the ancient myth that Tibet contained gold and other riches. Chinese infiltration into the country had already begun at the turn of the century, when settlers began to deforest the border regions. By 1910 the Chinese had established schools along the border that outlawed the Tibetan language and customs. In 1911 Tibet expelled all Chinese from its borders and was free of foreign control for nearly four decades.

After the invasion, China set out to "liberate" Tibet by systematically destroying its culture. Farmers were forced into collectives and required to grow winter wheat instead of the traditional barley. The policy produced bumper crops for a few years, before depleting the soil and ruining the harvest. To make matters worse, China brought much of the wheat home to feed a population cut off from other sources of grain as a result of the 1959 break with the Soviet Union. Tibet was plunged into a famine, the first in recorded history, which lasted through 1963. Another period of famine followed from 1968 to 1973.

As Tibet's animal and plant resources are destroyed, Beijing is now gearing up to extract gold and minerals, including uranium. China's armed forces have established nuclear missile bases on Tibet's high plateau.

The invaders made a sport of shooting indiscriminately at wildlife. In 1973, Dhondub Chödon, a Tibetan now in exile in India, reported that "Chinese soldiers go on organized hunts using machine guns. They carry away the meat in lorries and export the musk and furs to China." Important habitat for vast herds of wild animals was soon overgrazed as the Chinese forced nomadic families into communes to raise livestock for export instead of their own subsistence. Tibetans, including the children, were forced to kill "unnecessary animals" such as dogs, that were considered "parasites," as well as moles and marmots that vied with humans for grain and dug up valuable grazing land. Children were given a quota for small animals to kill that, if not met, resulted in beatings and other forms of punishment.

My first attempts to quantify environmental conditions in Tibet failed. Chinese officials either refused to give me statistics, or interpreters sensed what I was up to and stopped translating. I soon discovered, however, that if I feigned interest in increased productivity under the communist regime, I could glean some alarming statistics. The general secretary of a poor county in the mountains of Amdo province dug out papers and proudly rattled off figures that confirmed my worst suspicions about habitat destruction.

"Before we had communes we had just 7,000 animals. Now the same 700 square kilometers has 70,000 yaks and sheep. Since 1979, many people own their own animals as well. Our comrades are doing very well now. Each makes 30 to 40 yuan ($18-$24 at the time) a month, but through personal sales many make 100 yuan a month."

The general secretary admitted that much of the extra income came from the slaughter of wild musk deer. When queried about this apparent violation of Chinese law, he said that special dispensations were granted by the commune leader.

"What happens if a musk deer is killed illegally?" I asked. Such crimes meant a big fine, he responded, after which he admitted that he could not remember the last time a person had been fined. As it turned out, not one person in recent years had been fined for poaching, but several 15-yuan bounties had been paid for the pelts of snow leopards, which are officially protected as an endangered species in China by international agreement. Many 10-yuan bounties had been paid on wolves as well.

At the end of the first two trips in 1981, I joined several of the scientists who had traveled with me at a press conference in Beijing. We laid out the facts for the reporters. "The wildlife of this region has been decimated," said Rodney Jackson, whose snow leopard studies formed the basis of a National Geographic cover story in June 1986. "We came to Tibet because of inaccurate information given us by the Chinese about the presence of wildlife in an area they charged us dearly to visit. This, plus attitudes that endorse irresponsible wildlife depletion, can adversely affect China's friendship with other nations if they are allowed to continue."

The Associated Press (AP) bureau chief demanded exclusivity and promised to send me copies of the story. It was never published. An AP correspondent in the United States later told me that they couldn't afford to run "unnecessarily negative China material" that might put their Beijing bureau in jeopardy. When Jackson took his story to several U.S. wildlife organizations that fund research in China, he was again rebuffed. Criticism of China was not allowed in this close-knit scientific community. If he continued to threaten the relationship these organizations had cultivated with Beijing, he could not expect to get money for his research.

After I returned home that year, my proposals for articles about the difficulties facing researchers and the environmental holocaust in Tibet were turned down. I was well connected with many national magazines, and I asked the editors why. "Our readers want upbeat stories," came the chorus. "And besides, China is our friend." The strongest motive, future press access, went unspoken. I began to see how the Chinese could censor the American press almost as successfully as their own.

My first major article appeared in the February 1982 National Geographic. I wanted to focus on the false promise of Tibet's "wildlife," but I didn't have the photographs to support such a story. I had not direct documentation of the killing, except for a picture of Rodney Jackson examining a fresh snow leopard pelt hanging on a commune wall. The editors and I agreed that shots of empty plains are not only inconclusive, but rather boring. The focus of the article was thus tightened into "Nomads of China's Wild West," a cultural profile of an armed and surprisingly independent Tibetan tribe called the Goloks. But I held out, bravely I thought, for at least one photo caption that mentioned the environment.

Beneath my photo of an overgrazed landscape ran a quote from me about the promise of "blue sheep, gazelles, bears, wolves, and deer — a richness of animal life touted to me by the Chinese authorities in Beijing. The Chinese also spoke of dense virgin forests. In fact, we saw almost no wildlife and...no forests at all."

Upon publication, the Chinese embassy lodged a formal complaint: I was guilty of an intentional political act that jeopardized Sino-American friendship. As I was planning to return to Tibet the following year as climbing leader of the first American expedition permitted to attempt Mount Everest's West Ridge, I heeded the Chinese authorities' demand that I write a letter of self-criticism. Beneath a haze of murky Latin-based words, I confessed how unwise I had been to say what I did if I ever planned to return to Tibet again.

For the next six years, I wrote with a split personality. For my own book, *Mountains of the Middle Kingdom*, published by the Sierra Club in 1983, I wrote a tell-all account, but for periodicals that might reach Beijing, I omitted all strong personal observations and opinions.

Despite this self-censorship, I again incurred the wrath of the Chinese authorities. My National Geographic assignment in 1988 was to document the Tibetan side of a proposed joint Chinese-Nepalese national park surrounding Mount Everest. My wife Barbara and I traveled with representatives of the Woodlands Mountain Institute of West Virginia, which had been working with both governments to create the park. As we left the United States in May 1988, we were told that China would announce the establishment of the park within days.

We were accompanied during our three weeks in the field by Yin Binggao, Director of Forests for Tibet, along with several of his employees. Despite Tibet's high altitude, large forests are nurtured by monsoon rains in parts of southeastern Tibet and also along the Nepalese border, where river valleys cut through the rain shadow of the Himalaya.

One of these valleys is on the east side of Mount Everest. While the rest of my group stayed in a 14,000-foot camp, I crossed a high pass and hiked into the fabled Valley of Flowers, discovered by the first British Everest expedition in 1921. Here, amidst 20 colors of native rhododendron blossoms, I was shocked to see trees being felled by the thousands. I photographed a convoy of Tibetan women carrying fresh hundred-pound beams over the pass directly through our camp. The operation appeared to be centrally organized. Lumber was cut on the spot and piled into four-cornered stacks that formed orderly rows across the valley.

Here, amidst 20 colors of native rhododendron blossoms, I was shocked to see trees being felled by the thousands. I photographed a convoy of Tibetan women carrying fresh hundred-pound beams over the pass directly through our camp.

Yin Binggao said he knew nothing about the timber operation. He suggested it must be Tibetans cutting wood on their own. A day later, we saw Chinese trucks in the village of Kharta loaded with the same wood bound for towns on the treeless plains to the North. There, virtually all new construction is undertaken by Chinese residents or officials. Embarrassed now, Yin Binggao promised to report the situation immediately to the closest forest official. I later found out the nearest office was in Shigatse, hundreds of miles from any forest.

The entire forestry department of Tibet employs just 13 people. According to official documents, $54 billion of timber has been cut within the borders of old Tibet since 1959. As Tibetans do not use much wood for fuel or to frame ordinary houses, the majority of this timber is destined for China. The deforestation is aided by the forced labor of thousands of Tibetan prisoners in the southeastern part of the country. In Amdo, nearly 50 million trees have been felled since 1955, and millions of acres at least 70 percent cleared, according to the Dalai Lama's exiled government in India. Roughly 70,000 Chinese workers have been brought to the region or have traveled there voluntarily, in large part to cut down the rich stands of trees.

My colleague assigned to cover the Nepalese side of Everest and I reached the same conclusion: the envi-

ronment on both sides of the mountain was being destroyed. Neither government indicated they were planning to declare a joint park, although the Nepalese had long maintained the rather ineffectual Sagarmatha National Park at the core of the proposed area.

National Geographic had hoped for an upbeat story, but instead of killing it entirely, they ran it as "Heavy Hands on the Land," a litany of wildlife and land-use problems surrounding a seemingly immutable mountain. Soon after publication, the Woodlands Institute informed me that, according to the Chinese government, my article was in error. I had stated that the park would not be created in the near future, but a document contradicting my claim had been forwarded to National Geographic by the institute.

In typically vague phrases, a Chinese official stated it was indeed the government's intention to proceed toward the goal of creating a natural preserve near Mount Everest, someday. I was surprised, since I had been present at meetings with the top two officials in the Tibetan government, both of whom refused to sign any letter of intent. Scanning the letter, I noticed that their names were indeed absent. It was signed by Yin Binggao. As of this writing, the intent to create the park remains on paper only.

But that was not the end. Upon my return to the United States, I was notified that I had been tried and convicted in absentia for "sedition." During my trip I had given a picture of the Dalai Lama to the patriarch of a nomad family that gave us splendid hospitality for three days and opened up his family's lives for us to photograph. This was, using phrases that commonly issue from Beijing, "wanton intrusion in China's internal affairs, and overt support for the separatist Dalai-clique."

As I had become accustomed to doing, I sat down and wrote the obligatory letter to the Chinese Embassy explaining that I had no political motivation in giving the photo, and apologizing for any trouble I might have caused. It was simply a gift, I explained, to a man who invited me into his home and allowed me to photograph his family. But as I did this, I felt humiliated and compromised in a way I never had before. Something inside me finally snapped. Whatever the consequences, I vowed then that I would no longer just stand by and watch the power of my work be diluted.

Since my last journey to Tibet in 1988, much has happened. There are fewer wild animals and trees, more prisoners and paper promises, but still no parks or real progress toward environmental protection. Peaceful demonstrations for Tibetan independence in Lhasa in 1987 became riots after Chinese soldiers fired into unarmed crowds, killing Buddhist monks and nuns. Observers estimate that at least 600 Tibetans have been killed and thousands of Tibetans imprisoned and tortured in the subsequent crackdown. The Chinese government instituted martial law in Tibet in March 1989, and as of this writing it has not been lifted. Three months later, the government in Beijing unleashed its tanks on the students occupying Tiananmen Square. And in December, the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The most bizarre manifestations of China's ideological rule, such as the killing of all "unnecessary" animals, have disappeared. What remains is a steady consolidation of China's domination of the country, aided by naked political oppression. As Tibet's animal and plant resources are destroyed, Beijing is now gearing up to extract gold and minerals, including uranium. China's armed forces have established nuclear missile bases on Tibet's high plateau, and are now rumored to be preparing a high-level nuclear waste dump that would accept spent nuclear reactor fuel from China as well as Western Europe.

Despite the attention focused on the plight of Tibet in the last year, no country has gone on record as supporting Tibet's right to independence for fear of angering Beijing. In the wake of the Nobel Committee's decision to award its peace prize to the Dalai Lama, China has made it as difficult as possible for any nation extending support to the exiled leader. The government in Beijing even threatened to cut all economic ties to Norway if its king attended the prize ceremony. Although the United States Congress passed a resolu-

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tion condemning China's treatment of Tibet, President Bush refused to meet with the Dalai Lama, preferring instead to send emissaries on a secret mission to China. To this date, no U.S. President has ever shaken hands with the exiled head of state.

In May 1989, I traveled to Dharamsala with my wife to meet the Dalai Lama and discuss a book we are preparing together called *My Tibet*, to be published in late 1990 by the University of California Press. After several hours of interviews about the past, present and future of Tibet's environment, we found him to be deeply concerned, well versed in the natural history of his country, and surprisingly hopeful and compassionate in his outlook. The Dalai Lama believes that behind every apparently bad event lurks some hidden goodness. With the right attitude, he avows, one's worst enemies aid us in becoming clear and strong. Despite the desperate situation in his country, the Dalai Lama consistently argues against taking up arms against the Chinese. He remains confident that Tibet will emerge from Chinese oppression with greater compassion and unity than ever before.

It came as no surprise to us that a few months later, the Nobel Committee made special mention of the Dalai Lama's commitment to the environment, the first time a Nobel citation has made specific reference to the ecological crisis. As he looked at some of my pictures of Tibet's last remaining wildlife that I planned to include in the book, he commented on the way his people used to coexist with humans and animals before the invasion. "Some of that harmony remains in Tibet today," he told me, "and because it happened in the past, we have some genuine hope for the future."❖

MINING TIBET'S SACRED SITES
by John Ackerly

The hill behind the famous Trachen-Ma Temple in Riwoche, a village in the eastern Tibetan province of Kham, is considered sacred ground by Tibetan Bud-

JOHN ACKERLY, INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

dhists. It is also rich in uranium, a material the Chinese military wants. When miners were brought in to dig up the hill, Tibet's leaders protested to Beijing. After their concerns were ignored, they rioted.

A tense incident ensued, in which three surveyor's jeeps were set on fire and Chinese soldiers occupied Riwoche and rounded up villagers for interrogation. Their fate is unknown.

The saga of Riwoche is one of the better known clashes over Tibet's natural resources. As deforestation and indiscriminate hunting wipe out the region's terrestrial ecology, Tibet's occupiers are beginning to look underground — to Tibet's rumored veins of gold and other valuable minerals. Already, some 60,000 itinerant Chinese gold miners have flooded into Qinghai, formerly Tibet's Amdo province, forcing out 17,000 nomadic herdsmen and destroying vast tracts of rich grazing land.

The Chinese have also tapped Tibet's coal and borax, and are beginning to mine for the region's so-called strategic minerals: iron, copper, lithium and tungsten. Much of the work is related to military activities. China has built an underground nuclear testing site in the northeastern province of Amdo and has reportedly established five missile bases armed with at least eight intercontinental ballistic missiles, 70 medium-range missiles and 20 intermediate-range missiles on the Tibetan plateau. Fifteen divisions of Chinese troops are permanently stationed in what now constitutes the "Tibet Autonomous Region," or roughly one soldier for every ten Tibetans.❖

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THE LADAKH PROJECT

AN INTERVIEW WITH HELENA NORBERG-HODGE

by Susan Moon

I met Helena Norberg-Hodge in February, 1990, while she was in the Bay Area on a speaking tour. She's a remarkable and inspiring woman, a visionary, who has devoted the last 15 years of her life to an ecological development project in Ladakh, in northern India. She doesn't really look or talk the way I would expect such an independent, adventurous and powerful woman to look: she's soft-spoken, tall and thin, has long straight hair which she flips out of the way as she speaks. She's the very opposite of arrogant, never talking about herself at all unless prodded. She speaks gently, but with passionate intensity.

We met several times, always on the run. Helena's sense of urgency about getting her message out meant that she had to fit me into a busy schedule of lectures, radio interviews, and meetings. One stormy night, in heavy rain, I gave her a ride from Berkeley to a dinner engagement in San Francisco, and I interviewed her as I drove. She held my little tape recorder close to her mouth. In the background of the tape you can hear the swish of windshield wipers, the hiss of tires on wet pavement, and horns in congested traffic at the Bay Bridge toll plaza. It's not like this in Ladakh, I thought.

Ladakh is a remote and isolated region in the high desert of the Himalayas, with a population of 120,000. It's on the Indian side of the Tibetan plateau, bordering on China, and is ethnically and culturally closely related to Tibet. Here people have lived for thousands of years in a fragile balance with their seemingly barren environment, raising yaks, growing barley, and wasting nothing. It is a primarily Buddhist culture, and the 10% of the people who are Muslim are mostly traders living in the town of Leh. During the four-month growing season, people work very hard, and manage to produce enough food for the whole year. During the long cold winter, people spend a lot of time sitting around the fire, telling stories, singing songs, sewing and weaving, having celebrations and ceremonies. A wedding, for example, lasts about two weeks. Or at least this is how it used to be.

In 1974, Ladakh was opened up to Westerners for the first time by the Indian government, and the culture began to change. It was at this time that Helena Norberg Hodge, then just 29, came to Ladakh as part of a Swedish documentary film crew. When the film was finished, she did not return to her work as a linguist in Paris — she stayed in Ladakh. A few years later, in 1978, she started the Ladakh Ecological Development Group, (LEDeG) out of her concern about the damaging effects of modernization and technological development on this ancient culture. The Ladakh Project is the international arm of the organization, and is based in Bristol, England.

LEDeG has been creating "appropriate technologies" based on renewable local resources. Small water mills and passive solar walls have been devised and installed. At the Project's Center, in the town of Leh, a library, museum and restaurant welcome tourists, giving them a chance to learn about Ladakh's culture, and to eat traditional food baked in solar-heated ovens. In 1986 the Ladakh Ecological Development Group received the Right Livelihood Award, known as the "Alternative Nobel Prize."

Susan Moon: Why did you stay in Ladakh after the film was finished?

Helena Norberg-Hodge: I was fascinated. I decided to stay because I was enamored with the people — their joy, their sense of self. Maybe the closest thing to it would be like living with the Hopis before the Spanish came to America.

BPF: What made you decide to start the Ladakh Ecological Development Project?

HNH: I saw the changes that began to take place after Ladakh was opened to tourists and to the influence of modern industrial culture. Modernization in a pre-industrial society like Ladakh creates terrible frustration and a sense of inferiority, because the dream it presents is not only inappropriate, it's usually unattainable. The jobs that will buy the cars and other symbols of a Western lifestyle are often not available. When I first went to Ladakh, there was no poor class of people. There was not even the concept of poverty. Now there is a widening gap between rich and poor, and many Ladakhis perceive themselves as poor.

BPF: At the core of your work is the question of what progress is all about. It's hard for me to understand why, in a place like Ladakh where the culture already provides people with their needs for everyday life, for family, community, and a spiritual life, why do they want "modernization?" Why do they want dark glasses? What is it they are really wanting?

HNH: You have to look at what I call the psychological aspect of development. Why would every young man on the planet want to squeeze himself into blue jeans that are two sizes too small? It isn't the blue jeans per se, it's a symbol. It's connected to perceiving the modern industrial culture as superior, and this means you are also inferior.

But even with the attraction of modern technology, the older people are not completely blown away by it because they're rooted in a traditional culture with traditional values. Flashy gadgets are interesting to them, but that's all.

BPF: That's reassuring.

HNH: Yes, but it's not going to save the culture, because the weak link in all the cultures is the young, and particularly the young men.

BPF: So is there a big generation gap in Ladakhi families?

HNH: An enormous gap — The young men are rejecting their parents and the culture itself. They often leave the village to look for work in the city. They are becoming cut off from family and community. There's less influence from grandmother, less contact with older generations, less contact with women.

BPF: But why do they perceive our culture as superior?

HNH: It has to do with the power we get from our technology. In the Ladakhi culture, work is physical work, walking and carrying things. We don't seem to have to do any work. A person sitting behind the wheel of a car or pushing buttons on a typewriter doesn't appear to be working. We seem to have figured out a magical way of not working and having infinite wealth at the same time.

LADAKH PROJECT, H.N. HODGE

BPF: It's almost as though there's something in human nature that wants things to be faster and bigger and shinier.

HNH: The modern culture glamorizes aggression. In Western films the hero usually drives around shooting people. I've seen these lovely soft boys turn into desperately insecure young men, and the more insecure they are, the more macho is the exterior.

BPF: Is this connected to the recent outbursts of violence in Ladakh, between Buddhists and Muslims?

HNH: Yes — the sense of inferiority breeds frustration and anger. The violence in the region is the completely logical consequence of the economic and cultural changes brought about by modernization.

When I first went to Ladakh, one of the things I valued most about the society was the remarkable sense of peace. But about three years ago I started seeing strains between ethnic groups. Everyone is getting the same education to compete for the same jobs, which wasn't true before. After only about ten years of development there are serious problems with unemployment.

Previously you had different ethnic and religious groups living side by side with full employment. There was no such thing as unemployment in a pre-industrial society. Now, with the intense competition, it's natural that a gap opens up. "Yes, we're different — I'm Buddhist and you're Muslim," or "I'm Shiya Muslim and you're Suni Muslim."

People used to learn how to grow barley, which strain to plant on which mountainside, and how to build houses out of mud. At school they don't learn a word about such things. Instead they learn to despise work with their hands.

BPF: I always thought of education as a good thing.

HNH: Yes, but we need a different educational system. Now we are raising money to start our own school in Ladakh. Perhaps the most urgent education that all people need is a thorough understanding of where we're heading. We can use education to raise the status of agriculture. We should remember that the majority of people are still agriculturalists, and the present model of pretending that they can follow in our urban industrial footsteps is a hoax. It can't possibly work. Our model uses more than its fair share of resources.

BPF: Can you tell me about a particular person you know in Ladakh who exemplifies the change you are talking about? Somebody who has left the old ways behind?

HNH: Well, there's Dawa. He was about 15 when I met him, and he was still living in his village. Then when the tourists started coming he became a tourist guide. He used his animals for trekking, as pack animals. He had a warmth and laughter that was very infectious and attractive. His guide business got bigger, and he would get animals from other farms, too.

Then he had a little shop in Leh where he sold antiques to the tourists. At the beginning he was very easygoing about it. He didn't seem much good at making a profit. But he got more involved in buying and selling, until he became quite a businessman, and at the same time, more and more concerned with his appearance. He changed from the traditional clothes, which were burgundy woolen robes, and in which he looked so dignified and for us just really beautiful, into a sort of poor man's shabby imitation of Western clothes. He entered into the whole Western culture at the bottom of the ladder.

BPF: Wouldn't he have had more appeal for the tourists in his burgundy robes?

HNH: Of course, but he didn't know that. And it was clear over the years that he felt more and more of a need to prove himself, to impress you with who he was, when previously there had been no need at all to prove to me or anybody else who he was. Now he has the latest style, you know, blue jean jacket and blue jean

trousers, labels that are meant to be the best, the best running shoes. He has a way of showing his friends he's really cool, he can be a big spender. He has a wife, but he spends much less time with her than he would have traditionally. She's usually in the village working in agriculture, and he's almost always in Leh, which is typical. And he has a child whom he rarely sees.

BPF: Is he involved in the conflicts between religious groups?

HNH: Yes, he's a leader in the Buddhist youth organization, but he has almost no contact with Buddhism as far as practicing various rituals. A few years ago he was actually anti-Buddhist, because he was anti-tradition, but now he adopts the Buddhist platform in a political way. It's so difficult for us to really be aware of our impact on others. We think, for example, that if other people speak English, that's good, for us and for them, because they're educated. But what are we going to do when all we have left is one culture? We think we can travel further and further, and see exotic places, and we don't see how that very process is destroying the places we're looking at.

LADAKH PROJECT, H.N. HODGE

BPF: Do you see any positive aspects of tourism that could help to combat the monoculture?

HNH: Real cultural exchanges can be very beneficial. When the tourists show a lot of respect for the traditional culture, that helps. And we try to facilitate that at the Center. But we can't preserve the traditional Ladakhi culture, and that's a great tragedy. The only thing we can hope for is a compromise, and that compromise could in some ways be quite exciting and perhaps for the Ladakhis superior to what they had. So when I say it's a great tragedy, it's more for us. It's very sad to realize that we've lost the possibility of having such a range of traditional cultures.

BPF: Maybe this is just what happens. One of the teachings of Buddhism, after all, is that everything changes.

HNH: Yes, and the Ladakhi people have as a consequence an incredible tolerance for change. And that works in a wonderful way when they are relating to human beings and to nature. They see that every moment is unique, and that trying to cling to that moment is a big mistake. And the new culture coming in is based on complete ignorance of the basic elements of life, of this moving, shifting reality. It's trying to effect permanence, but in so doing it's actually creating momentous change in natural and human systems.

BPF: But what about the idea of progress? That's certainly a very Western idea.

HNH: Well, the Buddhist world view is talking about spiritual progress. The most important thing is happiness in people's minds. But the Western system is totally ignoring peace of mind.

The Buddha said everything changes. So people think: Here comes change, so it must be OK. But if the change is moving toward more ignorance and destruction, that isn't change that we should be supporting. We're not against change as it was taught by the Buddha. And there's no reason why you shouldn't have some technical improvements.

BPF: Can you tell us something about your work in Ladakh that you feel good about? Something that makes you feel hopeful?

HNH: I think I've helped to create an awareness of the problems by bringing information from the outside world, and the group I've helped to found (The Ladakh Ecological Development Group) is getting very strong now. And the new information we've brought and the new awareness is inspiring leadership there now.

Last summer we had a meeting on agriculture, and we invited people from all over the world to give testimony to the effects of chemical agriculture. And we invited local farmers and all the high level people from the agricultural department. At the beginning of the meeting the Ladakhis were proponents of chemical fertilizers, and by the end of the meeting, having heard reports from around the world, they were saying vociferously to the agriculture department that they wanted minimum use. We've started a similar ecological development project in Bhutan, at the invitation of the government.

BPF: Does your work have implications for Tibet?

HNH: Well, the Dalai Lama himself thinks that our work will be very relevant for Tibet. Even on the part of the Chinese government, there has been an interest in some of the solar technologies.

BPF: Are there other models of "counterdevelopment" in other parts of the world that you see as positive models?

HNH: I don't know of any project that combines the different elements that we do. They're talking about helping the rural poor. But our goal in Ladakh is to do something that should be valid for everyone. We're drawing parallels between pre-industrial and post-industrial societies, and I don't know of any other project which is doing that.

BPF: What about the people in universities and international agencies who are looking at global trends

from an ecological point of view?

HNH: I'm extremely worried about the content of their information. It's a sort of archetypal male approach based on abstract concepts, numbers, computer modeling, extremely far removed from people's lives. It assumes that the way to feed more people in the world is through more research in specialized and far removed laboratory conditions, rather than in diverse ecosystems on the ground. I think my approach is unusual because it's based on experience. I can't so easily fragment things, and my experience keeps my thinking in line with messy paradoxical reality.

In Ladakh I have seen the spiritual wealth of people living in a traditional community, in extended families. Our modern way of life is rather impoverished in spiritual terms, although materially the modern situation is very attractive and very comfortable. We need to find the way to have the essential comfort without the tremendous costs that have been inflicted.

But it's definitely a race against time. Destructive influence is coming very rapidly, and globally I feel a terrible urgency.

We talked in the car on the way to San Francisco, where I dropped Helena off at her dinner engagement. After I had dinner with a friend, I picked her up again and drove her back to Berkeley, and we kept on talking. When we got to the house where she was staying, we sat outside in the car and talked some more, not wanting to disturb the sleepers in the house. We were no longer in a hurry, and now our talk rambled, our voices slowed. The rain had let up and it was a quiet glistening night. And Ladakh didn't seem so far away anymore.❖

TIBET SUPPORTERS MEET IN DHARAMSALA

by Ed Lazar

A town in Asia dedicated to nonviolence and peace — upper Dharamsala, in northern India, is a piece of Tibet in India. The town and surrounding area consists of a population of approximately 5,000 Tibetans and is the site of the exile residence of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan government-in-exile, the Tibetan Children's Village, the Namgyal Monastery, the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, the Tibetan Medical Institute, the Tibetan Central Cathedral and the Temple of the Nechung Oracle. Here one sees hundreds of monks in orange robes, beautiful Tibetan children, women and men, and Lhasa Apso dogs lazing in the sun. The colors are vivid: white snow-covered mountains, blue skies, multi-colored prayer flags flying above houses and in the hills, and patches of yellow mustard in the green fields. Signs and posters in Tibetan, Hindi and English proclaim "Free Tibet," "Independence for Tibet," and "Dalai Lama — Nobel Peace Prize Winner," and are on walls, storefronts, doors, windows, plastered inside small restaurants and stores, everywhere.

I was exhilarated by seeing and experiencing a free Tibet, now hidden away in a corner of India but representative of the spirit which may someday again prevail in an independent Tibet.

A visit to Dharamsala really opens up one's heart to the Tibetan people and to the "rightness" of their nonviolent struggle. I was there for the first International Contact Conference of Tibet Supporters. In recent years, Tibet support groups have been springing up in a number of U.S. cities and in different countries. These groups have sometimes cooperated, but have more often been limited to doing local consciousness-raising work. The conference was proposed to develop an overall organizing strategy in which local efforts would complement one another and contribute to a new stage of national and international support for Tibet.

The Tibetan government-in-exile hosted the four-day meeting, from March 7-10, 1990. They found the response gratifying; instead of the expected 40 to 50 participants, over 250 participants from 26 counties attended, and other would-be participants were turned away for lack of room. Participants came from Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Canada, Mexico, the United States, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, West Germany, France, Ireland, England, Holland, Italy, Spain, and other areas. Tibetan hospitality proved very generous and the handling of difficult logistics for so many visitors was nearly perfect.

In addition to H.H. the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan government was represented by Lodi Gyari, Minister of Information and International Affairs, and by most of the other cabinet and government ministers. There were some well known Western participants, such as Petra Kelly, Richard Gere and Marvin Hamlisch, and there were about 60 representatives of U.S. groups like the U.S. Tibet Committee, the Office of Tibet, the International Campaign for Tibet, Tibet House, the International Lawyers Committee for Tibet, Humanitas and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

With over 250 people, it was difficult to work out an overall strategy — at best, pieces of a strategy were developed. Rather than attempting a formal conference report, which might bore anyone who wasn't there, as well as those who were there, I will limit myself to a somewhat subjective report on the strong impressions I received.

Prior to the conference there was a long-life ceremony for the Dalai Lama attended by the three leaders of the three largest Tibetan Buddhist sects, several hundred monks, early conference attenders and hundreds of townspeople. While we were sitting on the floor, squashed against each other, I felt a hand on my shoulder, and turning around I encountered a very old Tibetan Buddhist monk with a beautifully aged, wrinkled face. He looked into my eyes and said one word in English, "Freedom." When I didn't immediately respond, he again said "Freedom." I repeated the word after him and thanked him, and I turned to the front. I was very moved by this brief contact.

I felt a hand on my shoulder, and turning around I encountered a very old Tibetan Buddhist monk with a beautifully aged, wrinkled face. He looked into my eyes and said one word in English, "Freedom." When I didn't immediately respond, he again said "Freedom." I repeated the word after him...

During the first conference day a monk, Ngawang Toechen, told of the torture he endured during his first two arrests by the Chinese in Tibet, and he spoke about hearing the screams of other Tibetans under torture in the prison. He had wished for a quick death, he said. He escaped immediately after his third arrest which he knew he wouldn't survive. It was excruciating to hear his story, and it made all too real the importance of Tibet support work.

On another day about 100 recently arrived refugees squeezed into the conference room, women and men, most in their twenties and thirties. They had simple, honest faces and each of them had walked through the high icy Himalayan passes. To avoid Chinese patrols, they traveled only at night, melting snow for water, often running out of food; they had survived to be free in India, reunited with other free Tibetans and His Holiness, and free to be with us for a few minutes. Many had tears in their eyes. Their presence had a great emotional effect on the conference delegates — many of us also had tears in our eyes.

The Dalai Lama twice addressed the conference. He said he wanted to move forward this year in finalizing a Tibetan constitution, and recommended consultation between Tibetan, Indian, Japanese and U.S. constitutional experts. The Dalai Lama noted that a new constitution would establish a procedure for selecting a Prime Minister who would then have responsibility, with other elected representatives, for foreign policy. The Prime Minister would be answerable to the Tibetan people.

A number of cooperative efforts were proposed at the conference. Many received approval, and people immediately started working on follow-through. One of these efforts is called Eco-Tibet and brings together Tibetans and others who have information on the ecological despoliation of Tibet. Eco-Tibet will campaign to raise the ecological issue. Other follow-through efforts will be directed toward coordinated media work, increased U.N.-related work and efforts to gain recognition of Tibet as an occupied independent state.

Questions were raised about the current negotiating policy, set out a few years ago in Strasbourg, a policy which represents a compromise of the demand for independence. But conference participants were urged not to discuss what might become a divisive question, and it was stated that Tibet work could be the same whether or not the current policy was changed. This was a point on which I disagreed. Even with such questions raised, the conference was very harmonious, but the attitude of the government-in-exile to potential disagreement reflected a stance that reportedly has hurt the Tibet movement in the past — a policy of discouraging critical analysis of issues and demanding adherence to the established line of thinking.

One of the great pleasures of the trip was simply meeting the Tibetans, and meeting Tibet workers from so many parts of the world. When the conference was not in session, these individual meetings took place in the several very small restaurants which are on upper Dharamsala's main street. Most of these restaurants were dark, lighted only by one or two bare bulbs, and had no more than four or five small tables very close together. They had wonderful names: the Yak Restaurant, the Darjeeling Restaurant, the Tibet Memory Restaurant. Since they used only small gas stoves and prepared everything to order, a meal often required several hours to be served. These hours were passed drinking tea and talking. If you were looking for anybody all you had to do was peek in the door of a half dozen places and voilà, there they would be.

During my first meals I was anxious because of my Western attitude toward the evils of "wasting time." But I quickly shifted into another gear and felt that it was a fine use of time to have long conversations about Tibet and the mysteries of life. After all, this was similar to my picture of the deep late-night discussions held in Parisian cafés of the Thirties. My own favorite eatery was a vegetarian restaurant called the Gakyi. If you're ever in Dharamsala, go the Gakyi and order "pishti" and sweet and sour vegetables with rice, and milk-tea,

and tell them that Ed sent you.

There were special organizing efforts during the conference. One of particular interest to Americans was the meeting organized by Ed Bednar, who works with the Walker Center in Massachusetts. Ed Bednar, with the support of the Central Tibetan Administration and the Office of Tibet, is working with the Tibet-U.S. Resettlement Project to resettle 1000 Tibetans in various cluster communities across the United States. The Tibetan Immigration Act of 1990 has just been introduced in Congress and deserves our support. There are currently only approximately 500 Tibetans in the U.S., and this program is meant to relieve the overcrowding now existing in Tibetan settlements in India — where new refugees continue to arrive — and to help spread the word in the U.S. about conditions in Tibet.

After the conference I had an opportunity to visit the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV). This school for Tibetan orphans and children of destitute families was started by the Dalai Lama's elder sister, Mrs. Tsering Dolma Takla, 30 years ago, and is now directed by the Dalai Lama's younger sister, Mrs. Pema Gyalpo. The school now has nearly 1500 students and some 300 staff, and is located in the hills a few miles above Dharamsala. The Tibetans have a sense of space I have not seen in other parts of Asia. The TCV campus is spread out over a vast area, with a mile between some parts of the school. It was a non-school day when I visited, and the children were out playing everywhere and looked incredibly fresh and healthy.

TCV has a house system in which some thirty students of the same age live together and take their meals together in a house dining area. Older students help prepare their own meals and younger students are completely taken care of. The houses are very simple and only have dormitory beds and locker spaces for personal clothes and belongings; it must be quite cold in the winter. In the nursery house a three-year-old red-cheeked boy took me by the hand and led me over to show me his cot. We passed a bassinet containing the school's youngest resident, a three-month old baby whose mother had died in the escape to India. Westerners who want to contribute to a good cause would have a hard time finding an institution more deserving than the Tibetan Children's Village.

In the center of the main street of Dharamsala there is a small temple surrounded by a walkway. Dozens of Tibetan Buddhist prayer wheels are set in the walls on the inner side of the walkway, and many people walk around the temple spinning each of the wheels before they proceed up or down the street. With the spinning of those wheels they are sending out good messages and prayers to all the rest of us in the world. The spirit and strength of the Tibetan people came through to me while I was in Dharamsala, and even now, thousands of miles away in Northern California, I can feel the spinning wheels and their messages. May the rest of the world hear them too. ❖

Edward Lazar is Co-Director of Humanitas International Human Rights Committee and gives priority to Tibetan Human Rights and Independence work. He made the initial proposal for an international support group meeting in Dharamsala.

EDWARD LAZAR

Young Namsgal Monastery Monk

Support for a single child at the Tibetan Children's Village is $20 per month ($240 per year). To begin to sponsor a TCV child send $80 (four months); checks should be made out to The Tibet Fund (a non-profit, tax-exempt organization), 107 East 31st Street, New York, NY 10016, with a notation that the money is to sponsor a TCV child. Other addresses for follow-through:

Tibet U.S. Resettlement Project
144 Hancock Street
Newton, MA 02166

ECO-Tibet
(Environmental Concern Over Tibet)
c/o Michelle Bohana,
Int'l Campaign for Tibet
1511 K Street NW, Suite 739
Washington, DC 20005.

Buddhist Activists in the Garden of Liberation

by Paula Green

In March 1990, I journeyed to Thailand as a delegate to the second annual International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) conference. Founded by the Thai activist and organizer Sulak Sivaraksa, INEB exists to promote international cooperation among concerned Buddhists for the challenges facing us in the world today. INEB seeks a Buddhist perspective on questions of social and political concern such as human rights, rural development, alternative economics and ecology; it seeks as well to act as a clearinghouse for information on existing engaged Buddhist activities. The organization has been successful in bringing together Western Buddhist practitioners and Asian ethnic Buddhists for networking and direct action.

This diverse group received news of the Buddhist world, most of it focusing on flagrant human rights abuses and economic and ecological exploitation and injustice.

About 75 persons from 20 nations attended the conference, which was held at Suan Mokkha, the Garden of Liberation, a Southern Thai monastery under the direction of 84-year-old Buddhadasa. Buddhadasa is renowned as a monk, teacher and advocate of socially engaged Buddhism. His outdoor 5-7a.m. dharma talks began before the morning light and ended as the creatures of the jungle screeched their welcome to the new day. Imagination could not improve upon the exotica of this setting: crumbling buildings covered with vines, moss-covered Buddhas, barefoot monks on morning alms rounds, and this 84-year-old fountain of wisdom.

Buddhadasa's core teaching for the conference is that craving and greed are the root problems from which all others arise. Everything happens according to causes and conditions, he reminds us: human rights abuses and environmental destruction alike arise because of the condition of selfishness. "The real blame," he says, "is on the increase of selfishness, which is growing much more rapidly than the increase in population. We are slaves of materiality and of the industrial economy, which stimulates desire and keeps selfishness dominant. From this enslavement there can be no peace or conservation."

Into this Garden of Liberation came a Buryat monk from the Soviet Union; Maha Gosananda, a famed peace-making monk from Cambodia; a professor from Hanoi; Laotian representatives and monks; Aachan Sumedo from England; a monk from the Chittagong Hill Tribes; students, monks, and ethnic tribal peoples from Burma; priests from Japanese Buddhist traditions; Sri Lankans, Koreans, Thais, Indians, Europeans, North Americans and others.

This diverse group received news of the Buddhist world, most of it focusing on flagrant human rights abuses and economic and ecological exploitation and injustice. While particular attention was given to Burma, Sri Lanka and the Chittagong Hill Tribes because of their immediate difficulties, the conference also focused on Asia's problems of environmental desecration, mistreatment of women and children, the roles of monks and nuns, and appropriate uses for applied Buddhist social responsibility.

Venerable Bimal Bhikkhu, a Chittagong Hill Tribe monk, reported on the tragic history of his people, who are living in the hills of southeast Bangladesh and being systematically exterminated by the Bangladeshi government. Of a different ethnic identity, religious faith, language and cultural tradition than the Moslem Bangladesh of the plains, these 700,000 tribal hill people may soon cease to exist without pressure and intervention from the larger world.

In Sri Lanka, the war between Tamils and Sinhalese goes on, thousands of lives continue to be lost, and the intense conflict between these two ethnic and religious groups shows no signs of abating. Sulak has quietly fostered reconciliation through retreats and dialogue; Peace Brigades International has sent an unarmed peace team to support peace initiatives and witness abuses, and there have been calls for negotiations from monks and concerned observers. Here as well, more international attention and pressure for reconciliation may pave the way toward settled relationships on this once peaceful island near southern India.

Five delegates from Burma attended the INEB conference: a monk, a young doctor from Rangoon who is serving malaria-ridden students in the jungle, and three men from the various ethnic minority communities who comprise 30% of Burma's population. The situation in Burma is grave, indeed critical; human rights violations there are now among the worst in the world. Because I had personal exposure to the plight of the Burmese, and because the political situation there is currently in an acute phase, I have written a separate article on Burma which you will find in this issue.

Commitments to further investigations and plans for specific direct actions evolved from our five days of shared meetings, meditation and meals. The working committees and the INEB central office in Bangkok will continue to develop procedures for publicizing, monitoring and responding to issues of common concern, such as abuses of human rights and the environment. It is hoped that there will be increased contact and cooperation between INEB and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation through action alerts, nonviolence training, economic sanctions, and education on issues of development and exploitation arising from our home countries.

Equally significant were the networking, community building and personal contact at the conference. The monastic setting and the presence of Buddhadasa and socially engaged monks from many countries added to the feeling that this conference was a realization of the Buddha Way.

PAULA GREEN

Ven. Buddhadasa

Following the INEB conference I had been invited to meet with people in Bangkok, experience a brief tour of Thai development projects, give a lecture on Buddhism and Western psychology at Thamassat University in Bangkok, and travel to the Jungle University on the Thai-Burmese border to work with Burmese students in internal exile. This was a tall order for a brief time, but I did manage to do it and I am eager to share the essence of my observations and learnings with you.

Arriving in Bangkok after the serenity of a monastery, one faces immediate sensory overload. Bangkok teems in every way imaginable: population, pollution, traffic, congestion, noise. This once tranquil, beautiful city now gives the impression of being in a headlong, unplanned and uncontrolled rush to destruction.

It's heartbreaking to witness so much exploitation. I saw sweatshops packed with teenagers at steam irons and treadle sewing machines, 12-year old prostitutes plying the sex-tourism trade, high-rise hotels and multinational office buildings towering over cardboard and tin shantytowns, and the remnants of traditional culture being packaged and sold to tourists at the temples and palaces.

At the same time, I met wonderful people through Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute, whose name translates roughly as "Peace, Public Participation, and Righteousness." It is Sulak's attempt to bring sanity and reason to this rising tide of greed and chaos. Here people are concerned with development, planned change, the preservation of traditional values and lifestyles and the application of the Buddha's teachings to contemporary life. In both city and country one can find women and men who are resisting Thailand's materialistic seduction and who are creating lives of generosity and preservation. Many of them are young, dedicated, and "internationally minded"; they offer hope for Thailand and an antidote to the runaway capitalism and exploitation afflicting the lovely and gentle Thais.

At Thamassat University in Bangkok I spoke to the faculty and students about the relative differences and similarities between Western psychology and Abhidhamma, the traditional Buddhist psychology. In lively discourse, with a Thai psychiatrist as translator, we discussed the complementarity of the two approaches and our mutual concerns about the heavy influence of Western ideas — including, perhaps, Western notions of separateness and individual development — on their culture. It was interesting to be a Westerner reminding Asian Buddhists of the precious wisdom of their highly evolved, 2500-year-old Abhi dhamma psychology.

The exposure tours offered a picture of yet another face of Thailand, a way of life which resists the glitter of the big city and stays in close contact with the earth. In the south, water buffalo, rice paddies, and the harvesting of sugar cane and coconut are still to be seen, as are very traditional silk-weaving, fishing and farming villages and cooperatives. In the north, although the forests are being destroyed by the over-harvesting of teak, hill-tribe peoples in colorful dress live quietly in huts of bamboo and thatch. Throughout the country, senior monks in monasteries and temples preserve and carry forth the religious culture, and young male lay adults join in by ordaining and taking robes for a few months' time in their lives.

During our lifetime, much of this has changed. Rural Thailand is poor by city standards, and as everywhere in the world, it's hard to keep young folks down on the rice paddies. Thus the land is left or paved over, and the city expands again to house another million migrants.

Buddhadasa has a fine teaching parable about progress. For many years at Suan Mokkha there was no highway and there were many tigers. No one got killed. Now there is a highway and there are no more tigers. Many people get killed.

Through the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, there are many people and causes to serve. And in the Garden of Liberation, there is much to be learned. May we serve well and learn well. ❖

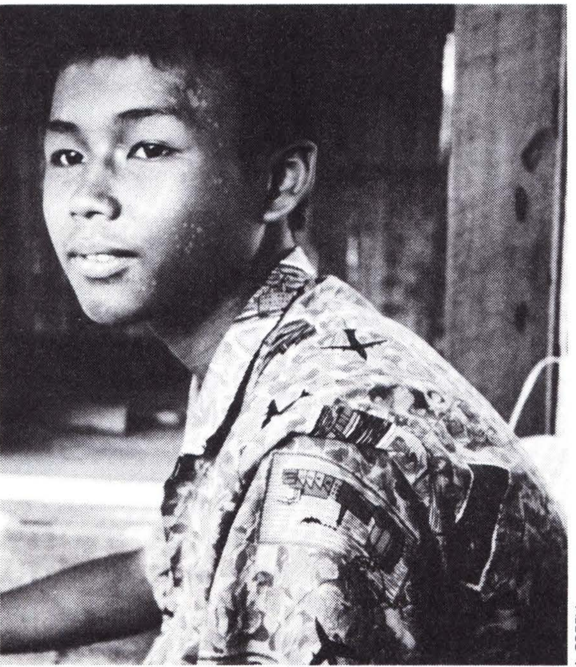
Paula Green, psychologist, activist, organizer, is a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation National Council.

Bombed-out Workshop at Jungle University

by Paula Green

Burma, former rice bowl of Asia. A land once rich in teak, jade, minerals, unspoiled jungles, ancient cities, trade routes, Buddhist temples and ethnic tribal peoples.

Burma today. Declared by the United Nations to be one of the ten least developed countries in the world. Under a brutal military regime for the past 27 years. Arrests, tortures, disappearances, murders. Collapsed economy. Students and workers totalling 100,000 gunned down in the streets in August and September of 1988 for demonstrating peacefully for democracy. 10,000-20,000 students fled to Burma's borders, living and dying in the jungle as internal refugees. Ethnic minorities, 30% of Burma's population, under constant attack and threatened with genocide by the Burmese military. Students and ethnic community members captured, chained like slaves, used as human porters and mine sweeps in the jungles. Half a million Rangoon residents dislocated from their homes and forced to live in malarial swamps far from the city, hundreds of miles from jobs, schools and families. And the last remaining teak forests in the world being sold off to finance the military's continued stranglehold on its people. This is the reality of Burma today.


PAULA GREEN

Student at Manerplaw

I was invited to offer a workshop at Jungle University, which is a creation of the Burmese university students in exile, designed to keep their minds active, alert and connected to the larger world. Jungle University is mobile, constantly moving to new camps as previous ones are shelled into oblivion by the Burmese military. I was travelling with long-time peace activist George Willoughby, and we planned to facilitate a two-day training that would deal with intergroup communication and nonviolent strategies for social change.

Our destination was Manerplaw, a student camp on the Salween and Moie Rivers at the Thai-Burmese border. According to the Burmese we were in Burma; by the measure of the Karen ethnic minority who control that territory and have given refuge to the students, we were in Karen, not Burma. This is an important distinction to the minority populations, who, since the British left 42 years ago, have been fighting with Burma for cultural and political survival.

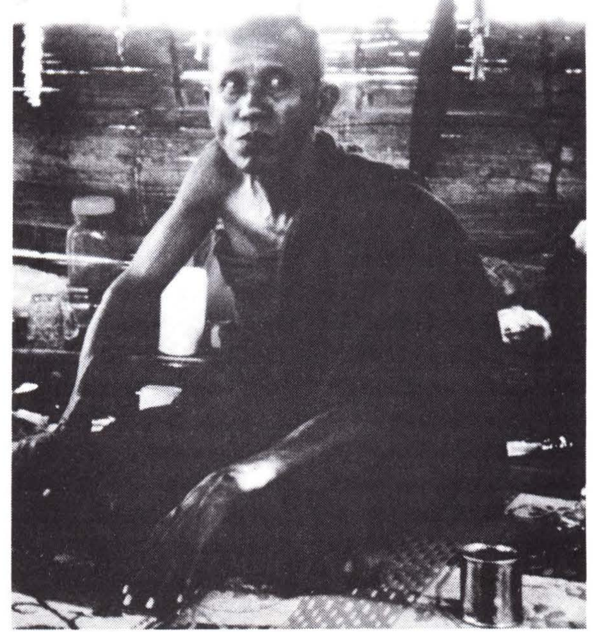
The journey to Manerplaw began with a 14-hour overnight bus ride from Bangkok. Awake most of the night, I watched the fog-covered jungle hills and valleys by the light of a full moon, wondering what strange karma had led me to this remote corner of the world. The bus left us in the town of Mae Srieng, from which our guide negotiated our next transport, a three-hour dirt-road truck ride to the Salween River. By the time we arrived at the river, it looked to George and me as if we had come to the end of the world: jungle behind us, river ahead, and an alleyway of impoverished little shops selling food supplies to riverside villagers. We boarded a hand-hewn wooden boat and headed two hours down the pristine river, making several stops along the way at Karen checkpoints, armed camps at the waters' edge from which the Karen keep out the Burmese military.

Destination attained. We are in Manerplaw, home to several hundred male students aged 14-40, a few young women and one monk. These students, coming from Rangoon and smaller Burmese cities, were hardly more prepared than we would be for life as jungle refugees; it is through the good graces and generosity of the ethnic minorities that the students are surviving at all. The students and the local Karen, Mon, Shan and Kachin are slowly overcoming their differences and prejudices, learning instead to cooperate in their common aim of ending the military rule of Generals Ne Win and Saw Maung.

Adjacent to the student camp is the Karen National Union, a camp of many families living on the edge.

Our host, camp spokesperson Dr. Tuja, is a charming, eloquent Karen medical doctor, who was educated in Rangoon but has been serving his people in the camps for 15 years of revolution and hardship. Dr. Tuja confirms the statistics we have been gathering: all of the students are malnourished, 90% are suffering from repeated malaria attacks and many are dying from malaria, dysentery and other diseases. Approximately half of the 10,000 students who fled to the Thai-Burmese border are dead, some taken by disease, others victims of shelling from military planes or capture by the army, by whom they were tortured, imprisoned, and murdered. The students we spoke to believe they must hold on for five more years in the jungle; given current conditions, however, that is a mighty grim future to contemplate.

There were times in the camp when I could barely believe what my eyes were seeing. For students and ethnics alike, life in the camps is appalling. Students sleep in thatched barracks, lying in two rows of ten abreast, so close there is barely room to turn. There are neither mosquito nets nor blankets, and their worldly possessions consist of one shirt, one sarong and a pair of rubber thongs. I witnessed mealtime at the student camp, an even that happens twice daily and consists of white rice with an occasional hint of sauce or vegetable. Water and sanitation are as problematic as the food supply; the level of cleanliness and sanitary conditions adequate to halt the spread of diseases cannot be maintained in such a harsh and impoverished environment.



PAULA GREEN *Monk at Manerplaw*

The very few medical doctors who have joined the students travel between camps, offering what little medicine they can obtain from international supporters. I conversed with one Rangoon-educated doctor at length; he spoke of his fully westernized medical training and of his need now to learn the traditional preventions and cures of the jungle practiced by his indigenous hosts.

Some monks, having joined the resistance movement, are offering spiritual support in the camps. We drank tea with the monk at Manerplaw, who is part of the recently formed All Burma Monks Union. Traditionally, Southeast Asian monks have been removed from the political and economic struggles of the villagers, so this active engagement is a noteworthy step.

The emotional suffering of these dislocated Burmese students is also severe. There is the wrenching separation from loved ones, with whom there can be no correspondence or communication for fear of detection. Many worry that their families are harassed by a military anxious to determine the students' whereabouts. The students are homesick. These young men and boys are good revolutionaries determined to set aside personal needs for the sake of their larger vision, but just a short time in their camp awakened me to the enormous sacrifices being made for their cause.

The lack of education is another deprivation; there is absolutely nothing to read, no paper or pens, little news of the world beyond the jungle. The cartons of books, journals, paper, pens and markers I brought were hungrily welcomed, as are the infrequent guests who come to teach and share news of the world.

George and I used our first day in the camp to make contact with residents and collect documentation and photos. We slept like the others on the floor of a bamboo hut and woke the next morning prepared to lead our workshop in one of the larger bamboo and thatch longhouses. To our delight, about 40 students of all ages, including three women, arrived on the scene. As co-teachers, we modeled one small revolutionary act of social change: I, the woman, opened the workshop. We began, with the aid of a translator, asking the students to introduce themselves and to tell us why they were in the revolution. The responses were political in nature: "to bring human rights to the people...to establish peace...to end totalitarian rule...to introduce democracy and fair elections."

No sooner had we completed the introductory rounds when a student came running into the longhouse to report that military planes were approaching the camp and we might be bombed in 20 minutes. The students left immediately for their places in the trenches and dugouts, while George and I were taken to a hut at the base of a mountain, supposedly out of bombing range.

I was very frightened. It was my first time in such a war zone and I didn't know if I would be alive in 20 minutes. Thoughts of loved ones and home tugged at my heart. I did not feel spiritual or resigned to death at all; I felt pragmatic, and wondered about escape or

greater safety. At the same time, I realized that if I survived I could leave, whereas my Burmese brothers and sisters had nowhere in the world to go. My "privilege" was both a relief and a discomfort.

No bombs were dropped that day. People waited in trenches and shelters for several hours, after which camp life resumed its normal routines. The workshop energy, however, could not be regathered; the threat of invasion was very present and demanded everyone's attention. What we would have learned, how we might have encountered and gained from one another, I will never know. But what happened at Manerplaw camp was a gift of witness that now commits me to engagement on behalf of justice for Burma and survival for all its peoples. I do not know if Manerplaw and these particular new friends any longer exist; there is no news here of bombing Burmese camps. However, there are thousands of students and ethnic villagers fighting for their lives on Burma's borders, and they need our help.

There are few friends in the world speaking out for Burma. A small country closed to both foreign media and casual tourists for 27 years can be easily forgotten. Burma's abundant natural resources are an enticement that keeps foreign governments and multinational corporations closed-mouthed about Burmese domestic policies. Thailand is supporting the dictatorship with a booming logging business in Burma's teak forests; Japanese trawlers have fishing rights; the U.S. is drilling for oil; and then there is Burmese opium, certainly one of the highest-priced and most sought-after commodities in the world trade market. Against these economic forces, human rights are a small voice.

The so-called "elections," scheduled for May and designed to appease foreign trading partners, will be a farce. Opposition candidates have been under house arrest since last July; students and ethnic minorities cannot vote; Rangoon citizens are being moved out of voting districts; and intimidation, threats, and military presence are everywhere. The unseen military crackdown that met the pro-democracy demonstrations in 1988, and prefigured the widely televised Tiananmen Square massacre, shows no sign of abating. It is pressure from the world community, not unfair electoral practices, that will bring peace to Burma.

Our efforts do make a difference. Your support for human rights, letters of condemnation to appropriate governing bodies and material aid to students are important. In a political situation receiving so little attention, every intervention has significance, every voice counts. Change will come to Burma one day, as it comes everywhere. With the help of concerned and compassionate citizens around the world, perhaps we can hasten that day. ❖

Bringing Peace to Burma: What You Can Do

1. Send donations to purchase food and medicine for the Burmese students in the camps. 100% of this money will go directly to the students through contacts in Bangkok. Make checks out to "Buddhist Peace Fellowship" and mail to:

Buddhist Peace Fellowship
P.O. Box 4650
Berkeley, CA.94704

2. Write to the Embassy of Burma urging that government to end human rights abuses, release arrested students and opposition leaders, grant amnesty to students in the jungle camps, negotiate with ethnic minorities, and martial law. Further ask them to stop the deforestation of the world's last teak forest.

Embassy of Burma
2300 S Street NW
Washington, DC 20008

3. Write to the Embassy of Thailand and the Prime Minister urging them to grant sanctuary to Burmese students fleeing the military and not to repatriate the students to Burma. Also ask them to desist from trading with Burma until martial law is ended, democracy is restored, and the minorities are given rights to cultural survival. Urge an end to cutting of the teak forests.

Embassy of Thailand
2300 Kalorama Road NW
Washington, DC 20008

Prime Minister Gen. Choonhavan
Gov't House: Nakhorn Pathom Road
Bangkok 10300, Thailand

4. Currently there is legislation pending in the Senate and House of Representatives which would impose a ban on importation of all teakwood and seafood products originating in Burma. The bill is sponsored by Sen. Moynihan and Rep. Matsui. It is Senate Bill S 822 and House Bill HR 2578. Send letters in support of these bills to Moynihan and Matsui as well as to your own Senators and Representatives.

U.S. Senate
464 Russell Building
Washington, DC
20008

House of Representatives
2419 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC
20515

5. Read DAWN, the journal of the All Burma Student Democratic Front (ABSDF), available from:

Don Erickson, Synapses
1821 W. Cullerton
Chicago, Illinois 60608.

6. BPF is considering sending a witness team to Burma to aid in relief efforts with the Burmese students, to witness more closely the oppression of the democracy movement and to offer what protection we can to the students and others. Please let the national office know if you are interested.

KHMER BUDDHIST EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Over the last year the Boston/Cambridge chapter has been been involved with a project which will be of interest to other chapters. The Khmer-Buddhist Educational Assistance Project (KEAP) was founded in 1988 to provide educational assistance to the Cambodian sangha living in refugee camps along the Thai border. KEAP is a joint project of the Khmer Studies Institute near Hartford, Connecticut and the American Institute of Buddhist Studies at Columbia University. The objective of the project is to provide audio and video instructional tapes and other educational material for the Cambodian monks, nuns and lay people.

An awareness of the need for this kind of effort grew out of a fact-finding trip by the project staff to the Thai camps in early 1989. Staff members found Buddhism alive, but weakened by the hardships of the past fifteen years. Last year there were about 550 monks, nuns and novices among the nearly 350,000 displaced Cambodians living in the camps. These people await a political settlement to the situation in Cambodia, a settlement which has been years in coming and may still be years away. Their material needs have been taken care of, a least at a subsistence level, by a number of Western relief agencies, but the largely young and untrained monkhood has had difficulty ministering to the emotional and spiritual needs of the community.

The Khmer sangha was almost totally annihilated by the communist Khmer Rouge regime between the years 1975 and 1978. Before 1975, it is estimated that there were nearly 65,000 monks and novices living in Cambodia. Less than 3,000 survived the "killing fields" of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge to return to their damaged temples in 1979. Following the ideas of the Chinese Revolution, the Khmer Rouge aimed to exterminate all religious belief. During this period, more than a million Cambodians died.

Before 1975, as in much of Southeast Asia, Buddhism and the traditions which have grown up around it formed the basis of cultural and social life, in addition to providing religious and moral guidance for the lay community. The monastery, or wat, was the center of the Cambodian village. The lay people supported the sangha materially; the monks practiced and functioned socially as educators, community leaders, counselors and physicians.

In the camps, the monks are often unable to provide support for the people. Most of the monks are 17 to 22 years old. There are only a few surviving elder monks who are qualified to teach the next generation and train them for such a leadership role. Education is made even more difficult by a lack of educational materials.

During last year's fact finding trip, head monks and lay leaders requested help in securing books for teaching Pali, Buddhist scriptures, and secular subjects, including English, math, and science. In addition to printed material, the objective of the KEAP project is to produce audio and video educational tapes of leading Khmer teachers, many of whom now live in North America. The Khmer leadership sees the tapes as a viable substitute for quality teachers, unavailable in the camps and unlikely to emerge in significant numbers in Cambodia in the 1990's. From the donations to date, several teaching tapes have already been produced. This January, the Ven. Hok Savann of the Pagode Khmer du Canada recorded six 30-minute video tapes for the project at the University of Massachusettts in Amherst. As of this writing, these tapes are being delivered to the camps for field testing. In addition to these tapes, KEAP has located a number of Khmer Buddhist texts in France, which are now being shipped back to Thailand for duplication.

Our chapter was approached about a year ago by Phyllis Robinson, co-coordinator of the project, who happens to live here in Eastern Mass. We have assisted KEAP by helping out with mailings for fund raising, and co-sponsoring showings of a documentary video which she has entitled "The Spirit and the Life." The material for the 35-minute documentary was drawn from footage brought back from last year's fact-finding trip, and covers the state of the camps in general, some historical background, and the educational needs of the sangha in particular. The documentary video is available to other chapters, peace groups and mediation centers as a way to build awareness about the needs of the Khmer sangha, the history of Khmer Buddhism, and the KEAP project. Donations received from people who have had a chance to view the video have provided a major portion of the funding for the project.❖ *by Jim Austin, Boston/Cambridge BPF*

If your chapter wishes to sponsor a showing of the documentary "The Spirit and the Life," is available free of charge along with support materials. To obtain the video, or to receive more information about KEAP, please contact either of these staff members:

Phyllis Robinson
KEAP Program Co-coordinator
RFD 1, Box 745
Vineyard Haven, MA 02568
(508) 693-9014

Peter Gyallay-Pap
KEAP Project Director
P.O. Box 229
Amherst, MA 01004
(413) 584-1031.

THE CRY OF THE FOREST

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. CHATSUMARN KABILSINGH

by Stephanie Kaza

Dr. Kabilsingh, professor at Thamassat University in Bangkok, teaches Buddhism, eastern philosophy, comparative religion and a course called "Religion and Social Concern" in which she talks about Buddhism and the environment and also women and Buddhism.

CK: Our project is Buddhism and Nature Conservation, sponsored by Wildlife Fund-Thailand, affiliated with World Wildlife Fund and IUCN, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. Another related project is Buddhist Perception of Nature, organized by Nancy Nash. My job for this first project, as chief scholar, was to work with a group of people to read all the Buddhist texts to see if there are any teachings relevant to conservation. So we actually went back to the texts — all 45 volumes! We combed the Vinaya, we combed the suttas; there is nothing much in the Abhidharma for conservation because it is highly philosophical.

WILLIAM R. BAER

We found many messages in these texts which were very helpful. Surprisingly no one had done anything like this before. Traditionally the Buddhist texts were preserved in Pali and only the monks had access to the teachings. But now that the world is suffering so much from the ecological crisis, it is time that we look more carefully at these teachings.

Thailand is a Buddhist country, but surprisingly in the last twenty years our forest has disappeared very rapidly. Twenty years ago 80% of our land was covered with trees but now only 16% is forested. To think that within our lifetime it's going so fast! What happened to Buddhism? Is Buddhism doing anything? Is Buddhism responsible for it?

So we wanted to know — is there any connection with Buddhism and conservation? We are not teaching our people anything about conservation; and we are not very strong in our Buddhist education. Ninety-four percent of the people in Thailand are Buddhist, and in rural areas they still carry on their Buddhist practice and have a great deal of Buddhist faith. So we hope that if we start talking to them about conservation through the teachings of Buddhism, we'll somehow reach these people. The term conservation itself is very new and they link it to science and technology; that is something very far away from them. We try to speak the Buddhist language that links it to something they are already used to.

BPF: How long ago did you begin this work?

CK: We began the research in 1986 and completed it in 1987. The teachings are published as simple stories taken from Buddhist texts. *The Cry of the Forest* includes both Thai and English versions of the stories with lovely pictures. Right now we are at the stage of looking for funding to publish enough copies to send them out to all 30,000 of the Buddhist temples.

BPF: What are the main conservation problems in Thailand?

CK: The rainforests, primarily. But pollution is also quite bad. Last year we had a very bad flood. They had cut down the trees on the hills and then left the logs on the hills. With the heavy rainfall, the rain washed down the logs, mud and all, and we lost about 900 lives. The government came up with the idea of closing down the forests and stopping logging. But just before the decree came out, the logging companies who knew the law was going to be passed, started cutting down the trees much faster.

BPF: Who owns the major logging companies?

CK: I don't have the details on this, but I believe it is partly Japanese, partly Thai.

BPF: Are most of the logs shipped for export?

CK: Yes. Right now the local people cannot afford to build a house out of teak any more. Teak is out of

the question, it is so expensive. We just use ordinary wood, and we have to buy it from Malaysia. Once we were supposed to be the richest nation, and right now we don't have anything for our own use. When I was little we never had to suffer; we lived so happily. But now you hear so much about growing enough to export, and all the very rich get richer, while the poor get even poorer. The income figures the government gives out are higher than is actually real because they average the incomes of rich and poor.

BPF: Are there programs or plans for reforestation?

CK: The government is talking about these things, but I don't know how much they have been able to accomplish so far.

BPF: In Costa Rica, the local people learn how to grow trees in small nurseries. Most of the big government replanting projects have not used native trees because Costa Ricans and other forestry advisors trained in the United States learn mostly about pines and eucalyptus.

CK: These also are the main trees planted in Thailand. It is a shame when there are so many beautiful native trees in Thailand.

BPF: Of the stories in your book, which do you think will be most effective in influencing people's actions regarding the forest?

CK: The message in the Buddhist texts is very clear. For example, the monks are not supposed to cut down trees or anything green. If you have taken shade from a tree and then start to cut the tree, you are an evil person because you are not grateful to the tree.

BPF: In Costa Rica, many people cut down the forest because it is home to animals they are afraid of — snakes, stinging insects, other poisonous creatures. Do people in Thailand also act out of fear of the forest?

CK: No, we act differently. We have stories about big, huge trees. Some villagers have invited the monks to ordain a local big tree, to give ordination to the tree. The tree becomes the Grandfather who will now protect all the other trees in the forest from being harmed by people, thus protecting the people from being harmed by the animals in the forest. If you do something against the tree, you will be punished for your actions. This ordination was reported on television news and I am hoping to videotape the next such ceremony.

Before Buddhism, it was traditional in Thailand to believe that all big trees have a spirit living in them that protects them. We always hear the stories about people who cut down trees and had very bad afterbirths. People are afraid to cut down trees, especially big trees. On my campus we have one very big tree where you can see different color cloths around the tree. People come to pray or ask for something — for good fortune or to pass their exams. If they are successful, they will come with an offering for the tree. The tree's cloths changes every day with all the people that come.

The early Buddhists were a community of forest dwellers. The attitude that the Buddha taught them is that we are forest dwellers and that the animals are also forest dwellers; we share the forest. So therefore when you meet a snake, what are you to do? Generate compassion. If you are going to live peacefully with the animals in the forest, you cannot eat your children. You can generate compassion only when you really care.

The early Buddhists were a community of forest dwellers. The attitude that the Buddha taught them is that we are forest dwellers and that the animals are also forest dwellers; we share the forest. So therefore when you meet a snake, what are you to do? Generate compassion. If you are going to live peacefully with the animals in the forest, you cannot eat your children. You can generate compassion only when you really care.

BPF: How much contact is there between temples in Thailand? How much influence does one have on another?

CK: Very little; they are very local. What we are trying to do in this project on Buddhism and Nature Conservation, is to approach the Sakuraja, the Patriarch, and get him to write a message. Then we can pass it down to all the monks in the rest of the country and let them know that this is approved by the head monk. So then you as a small monk can go on with the project with no problems with the authorities. Next year we will try to have a seminar with the monks who are already active in conservation.

BPF: What are these monks doing?

CK: One of them in the north is trying to save the forest, to save the water resources. There are some other people polluting the water and he literally fenced the forest to keep them out. But he also had lots of people against him. Some people snuck in and burned down a hundred acres.

BPF: You need more voices so you are not so alone in these things.

CK: Yes, we don't want to leave him alone. We want to get other monks involved in conservation in different areas. We hope that in each monastery, they will try to grow more trees or get the villagers involved in the project. We want to have seminars so they will be strengthened by coming together, and each will learn from the other how to do certain things and how to overcome problems by talking together. If they need some funding, I think we could get some to support them.

BPF: It would be very good if the monasteries

could take on the nursery work of raising small trees from seeds, getting local children to collect the seeds and learn how to recognize the different species. Because of the monks' regularity of practice they could easily take care of the small tree seedlings. If the monasteries became centers of reforestation, it would be wonderful.

CK: This could be done easily in our country, because in our country the monasteries and schools all live together. When you set up a monastery, there is always a school attached to it. Actually the school is named after the temple. So when you get the monks involved, it is easy to get the headmaster involved and the children.

BPF: In Costa Rica there is a small group called Arborfilia that is linked up with the San Francisco-based group Rainforest Action Network. On their catalog of t-shirts and posters, they offer a way to send money directly to Arborfilia to help them grow trees for their local reforestation project. If there is some way to make a direct link to the monks growing the trees in Thailand, then that is something we can ask Buddhist groups to contribute to over here. If funds can go directly to individual temples growing trees, then they can directly benefit reforestation of the rainforest. This can help local monasteries grow native trees, not pines and eucalyptus. At monasteries in the areas where the forest has not yet been cut down, the monks can be collecting the seeds and sending them to other temples to grow them. They just need to learn how to grow these trees of these very unusual forests. This is a wonderful vision — to have the monasteries take the lead in reforesting Thailand.

CK: And there won't be many expenses. The monks only need to tell the villagers that they will be making merit if they do this, and the whole village will come.

BPF: Yes, it is so easy. You just pick the seeds off the ground and you can do it in such quantity so easily. This is a great way to pay homage to the Grandfather trees in the area. You know, the rainforest is in the news all the time here and we generally hear more about the problems in Central and South America because they are closer to us. But the story of Thailand's deforestation is one of the worst, and it is one of the most beautiful forests. It would make sense for the American Buddhist community to take on this issue in Thailand and offer some help.

CK: I think we also need someone to write a children's book on how paper is made, so people will save on their use of paper. That is how they can actually help save the trees. It doesn't mean you have to literally stop cutting down trees, but it's the way you live your life that can help by being less extravagant with paper.

BPF: The United States has a reputation internationally for being the most wasteful country. We can use help here from other countries; we are rather insulated. We need to hear other countries asking us, why are you Americans so wasteful? We need to know that it is not just environmentalists in this country that are raising these questions, but that they are also being raised from people outside our country. We need to feel the pressure from other countries saying this is not acceptable any more.

CK: Among Third World countries, Thailand is number one in garbage dumps. We cannot get rid of all the dumps because they are so full of plastics. We need ecologists to write about how dangerous excess use of plastic bags could become. Everything you buy is in plastic bags. By the time you have your lunch, you can have five bags. In one day, we use ten or fifteen bags for just one person! A friend of mine studies garbage dumps. She said that in India everything is recycled. Women and children go to the garbage dumps, searching for everything. Nothing is left at the dump itself because there are so many groups of people looking for things. Even though people do this in Thailand, there is more plastic than they can use.

BPF: Many of the Buddhist teachings are oriented toward the individual or family in the local village, but some environmental problems are cumulative — like the ozone layer, global warming, acid rain. How do we apply the Buddhist teachings to these social problems that a single individual can't correct?

CK: We can look to the teaching of interrelatedness — you do one thing and it's going to affect something else. These environmental problems are the result of our behavior. We have to be careful. This is even more important for the king, for the government. If they do not act righteously, it is going to affect the climate and the atmosphere of other countries.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama teaches that the most important issue of the environment is right here inside ourselves. If you are purified inside, then can you help others to purify the outside. It's important to see that it's related. Whether you are a minister, king or village person, it's all related. The more responsibility you have towards the people, the more you have towards the environment. ❖

Note from Stephanie Kaza: It would be very exciting if the Buddhist Peace Fellowship could be helpful in funding Dr. Kabilsingh's book, *The Cry of the Forest.* It offers a way to take responsibility for the disappearance of the rainforests with direct action. To contribute to this project, donations may be sent to the BPF National Office; checks, payable to BPF, should be marked "Kabilsingh book fund."

Stephanie Kaza teaches environmental ethics at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley and at GreenGulch Zen Center, and conservation education at U.C. Berkeley. She is a Zen student of Kobun Chino.

Emptiness as a Basis for an Environmental Ethic

by Stephanie Kaza

"There are mountains hidden in treasures. There are mountains hidden in swamps. There are mountains hidden in the sky. There are mountains hidden in mountains. This is complete understanding."

How can the Buddhist teachings of *sunyata* (emptiness) and *paticca samupadda* (co-dependent origination) serve as a philosophical basis for our actions and standing with the environment? How do we apply these ancient teachings to the most fundamental practice arena — the world in which we live? Aldo Leopold in his much-quoted essay, "The Land Ethic" (1949), offers this starting point: "An ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence." Limitation on actions, the exercise of restraint, is common to all ethics; criteria for these limitations provide a way to act pragmatically in the everyday world. "Struggle for existence" defines the arena for actions: our biological, animal world, that which supplies us with our basic needs for water, food, air, and shelter — i.e. the environment.

In many discussions of environmental ethics, criteria for action often revolve around the question: action toward whom? Guidelines for action are set up as different for ecosystems, species, populations, individuals, genes. For example, in California children are taught not to pick individual poppies (the California state wildflower) as a practice of restraint, yet the species as a whole is nowhere near rare or threatened. The last of the great condors are very closely managed as an endangered species, but the ecosystem that supports them receives relatively little attention. Laws protecting wildlife and the environment reflect an evolution in environmental ethics at the regulatory level. The Marine Mammal Protection Act (1972) and the Endangered Species Act (1970) were aimed at species; the later Ocean Dumping Act protects marine ecosystems. One bill is under consideration to address protection of biodiversity at the genetic level.

But clearly the arena of action is bigger than the object of the action, i.e. the given species or ecosystem. Doer and deed are mutually conditioned, both empty of a separate self. This means that choice of action can be based on how the action affects the actor as well as the object of the action. While we know relatively little about most species or plants and animals, and even less about their complex interactions, we can know quite a lot about ourselves as doers. We can observe carefully how our actions affect us and the environment and how the quality of our conditioned ideas affect our actions. In taking the Middle Path, the doer (which includes society) takes responsibility not just for the results of the actions in the environment but for the mental conditioning that determines the nature of these actions.

We can begin by practicing radical restraint at the source of false understanding — the point of attachment. If our ethical behavior is directed only toward those species or habitats we like or that serve us in some way, then we have already made a fundamental error. These elements of the environment are mutually conditioned by non-preferred elements and therefore cannot be separated out for exclusive focus. If we direct our actions only toward the physical parts of the system (i.e. plants and animals) without attention to the processes that shape that system, we again miss the fundamental truth.

Radical restraint at the point of attachment means to "just see" without judgement, reaction, attachment, or dualistic separation. Then, the self is completely available to all aspects of the environment — from the beautiful and sustaining to the detrimental and degenerative. Dogen-zenji summarizes: "That the self advances and confirms the myriad things is called delusion; that the myriad things advance and confirm the self is enlightenment."

A true understanding and experience of emptiness and conditioned existence naturally generates compassion and concern for other beings. We see that we cannot act without affecting other living beings, that we cannot live outside the web of interconnectedness. This is the beautiful Jeweled Net of Indra, with many facets all reflecting each other. Our sense of self does not reside in the conventional "I" but in the infinite flow of beings throughout time and space.

Included in this understanding through direct seeing is compassion for ourselves and our limitations. As a culture we have rationalized a great degree of insensitivity to plants, animals, landforms and waterways, causing considerable damage to the health of many species and ecosystems. Yet within the truth of co-dependent origination lies the possibility for tremendous positive effort. The practice of "just seeing" can begin anywhere, including within the difficult pit of economic greed and rampant materialism. Leopold's

"ecological conscience" translated into Buddhist terms is the compassion and insight that motivate ethical action regarding the environment.

The ecological self is the inclusive self, recognizing conditions and causes that bear on its relative existence. Moral or ethical actions are then inclusive actions. Every action of body, speech, and mind can be a point of ethical inquiry. Every species and ecosystem is seen as part of the whole. Which actions support a context that sustains life? We can evaluate each aspect of our lives to see what contributes to the causes and conditions of a degenerating environment. Does the growing of this food we eat add poisons to the soil or replenish it? Do our words encourage or discourage a reified separate self? Does our work contribute to or drain the ecological support systems?

Radical restraint and deep compassion are two practices for understanding the inclusive or empty self. By seeing deeply into the nature of attachment and exercising restraint from acting out of desire, aversion, or ignorance, we become free to act out of the experience and insight of interrelatedness. By acting out of deep compassion, we acknowledge this extensive, pervasive sense of relationship, the relative existence of all phenomena. We become the inclusive self, sensitive to the great losses and great resiliency of the environment.

The qualities of our thoughts and actions are inextricably linked and have powerful impact on the environment.

"Suppose a pool of water, turbid, stirred up and muddied, exists. Just so a turbid mind is. Suppose a pool of water, pure, tranquil, and unstirred, where a person sees oysters and shells, pebbles and gravels, and schools of fish. Just so is an untroubled mind."

—Gautama Buddha

It is actually right in this muddy water that the lotus blossom blooms. An environmental ethic is not something we apply outside ourselves; there is no outside ourselves. We are the environment, and it is us. The work of mindfulness then is not a mystical search for an essence or an absolute, but an attempt to perceive things as they have come to be. Seeing how things are, we can begin the work of environmental restoration. And that work is possible, starting right where we are — in the blooming thicket of causes and conditions.❖

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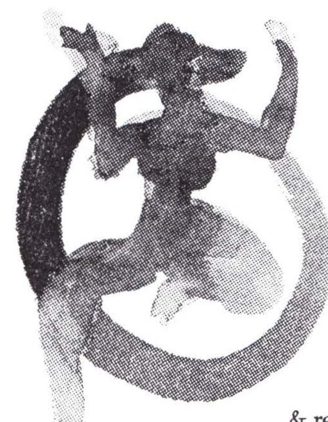

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THE LOS ANGELES RIVER ?

by Tensho David Schneider

You can rent the Los Angeles River for $300. People have done it for years — to film car chase scenes, horror scenes, fantasy scenes, to practice taxi driving, to test-drive new vehicles, or to teach bus drivers how to go in reverse. The river bed was an ideal site for these activities because it was paved, fenced off from the surrounding city, and for most of the year, dry as rock. But since 1985 things have begun to shift. Again.

DAVID BOLLING

To contemplate the condition of the Los Angeles River, and the extraordinary fact that it *is* a river, we need a history.

In 1900 the stream — which ran from the confluence of the Bell and Calabasas Creeks down to Long Beach — was the entire Los Angeles water supply. As such, it presented big problems. Like any Southwestern river it ran dry in the dry season, and flooded like hell when the rains came. It was also unpredictable in terms of where it ran. Given varying rain and runoff patterns, as well as man-made changes to the landscape, the river meandered over a range of territories on its way to the sea.

In 1912 the LA Aqueduct was built, to bring citizens water from the Owens Valley. People ignored the now-dispensable river with a vengeance.

The zenith of this ignorance period took place in the 1930's when the Army Corps of Engineers, charged with a mission of Flood Control, approached the Los Angeles River. This was the Corps' second flood project: they straightened the river in places, deepened it in others, and they kept the concrete coming. Always the concrete, coating the banks, coating the bed, until 3 million barrels of concrete later, 50 of the river's 55 miles were "channelized." The Corps achieved their ironic goal of getting water out of LA (which by any ecological standards is a desert) quickly and predictably. Of course, they had to re-pave the river continuously, because flowing water will eventually erode just about anything.

In the 1980's two significant things happened to the river: the first was the completion of a huge tertiary water-treatment plant, and the second was that Mr. Lewis MacAdams moved to Los Angeles.

First the plant. A group called Heal the Bay sued Los Angeles to stop rampant dumping of sewage into the Santa Monica Bay, and won the case. The result was the construction of the Donald C. Tillman Water Reclamation Plant, which together with the old Hyperion plant, pumps 60 million gallons per day of treated effluent. That water — almost drinking quality — had to go somewhere, and it went into the river, like most things no one knew what to do with in Los Angeles. With a steady stream of clean rich water, plant and insect life began to thrive; birds and fish also came to the feast. Again ironically, Los Angeles now has the only year-round Southwest freshwater river.

The ironies are not lost on Lewis MacAdams, writer, artist and yogi-disciple of the late Ven. Kalu-rinpoche. "In the Southwest, in a living desert, people should worship water. Instead, they treat it like an enemy."

MacAdams, a native Texan, has long been interested in the troublesome intersection of water rights, environmental concerns and personal and political greed. Before moving to LA, he wrote a series of works on the Bolinas watersheds, and participated vigorously in Marin County environmental battles. In 1985 MacAdams and friends mounted a work of performance art called "Friends of the Los Angeles River," and the hook was in. "It's become a genuine obsession for him," his wife Joanne concedes, referring to the endless, unpaid work MacAdams does in service of the non-profit group, Friends of the Los Angeles River.

MacAdams, however, maintains a healthy, upbeat attitude. "I think of it as a 40-year art project. I wanted to do something that would allow patience," he says. "It was a way to take an extremely complicated social, political, and ecological situation, and hit it from unexpected angles, constantly. Being a 40-year artwork allows for creative solutions, fresh angles — and artists are the masters of creative solutions.

"Calling it an artwork, we can do anything. It intrigues people. All we need is for a person to have one thought about it, and they're in. We've got them."

While a wide array of citizens has indeed rallied to the cause — botanists, ecologists, poets, painters, performance artists, ordinary janes and joes, architects, students and politicians — not every person who had that "one thought" about the river had the same thought.

State Assemblyman Richard Katz, for instance, thought it would be great to have another expressway down in that unproductive space. As Chairman of the State Assembly Transportation Committee, Katz got the LA County Transportation Commission to appropriate $15,000 to study the idea. The Commission report predicted increased traffic, air pollution, noise and glare, but left unanswered the question of who would be liable should the river jump its banks. (The expressway would occupy half the river bed. The river would be further channelized, at a cost of about a half billion dollars.) To study this question, the Commission appropriated another $100,000.

DAVID BOLLING

Mayor Bradley and Deputy-Mayor Gage ardently oppose the Katz Truckway. They have hired a specialist named Wendy Harmon to work full time on river issues, and the Planning Commission has hired another specialist named Delora El Asad. Katz, on the other hand, assumes Bradley and Gage "are kidding," with their announced goal of increasing the water flow, greening the river, creating ponds with inflatable dams for rafting, beautifying the banks and providing park space for biking and hiking. (Los Angeles, at present, has less parkland per capita than New York City.)

The battle over the LA River is just beginning, according to MacAdams, though the major media have already jumped on the story. The LA Times, the Wall Street Journal and National Public Radio, among others, are covering it. MacAdams' personal strategy is a simple one. He walks up and down the river banks (even though it is illegal) with anyone who wants to discuss the project; photographs taken of him for the project show the river in the background. His patience and his walking — in the tradition of a ***padyatra***, or holy walk — are beginning to bear fruit. "It's our only real victory so far, making people aware that there is a river here.

"We want to put forth the image of a living river. We are going to keep putting forth the image of something beautiful, and hope people pick up on it."

Even without Mr. Katz and his freeway proposal, Friends of the Los Angeles River have plenty to worry about. Seven hundred storm drains open directly onto the river; the sewers at every street corner in town feed into these drains. What goes into the sewers is totally unregulated. After a storm, when the river has thundered through the city, moving three times as fast as the Mississippi, garbage can be found hanging in the branches of river willows.

Another frustration is that no one person on either side really knows much about the river. The Army Corps of Engineers, for instance, has had four different heads of its river project in the last 10 years. MacAdams recalls, "When I began research on the performance piece, I kept thinking I would find someone who could tell me all about the history — the old man of the river. As far as I can see right now, I'm him."

But this lack of history and structure provides MacAdams and cohorts with a sense of tremendous openness. "Everyone who gets involved thinks that there will be some authority who will tell them what to do. Then we all find out that we have to make it up ourselves.

"Our emblem is the sycamore, which represents full-growth Southwest river ecology. When the yellow-bill cuckoo is singing in the sycamores, and the steelhead trout are running up the river, the 40-year artwork will be done."❖

If you'd like to get involved, contact:
Friends of the Los Angeles River, P.O. Box 292134, Los Angeles, CA 90029; 213-663-7331.

ZEN MASTERS REMEMBERED

Maurine Stuart-roshi

AMIE DILLER-KILMER

Maurine Stuart-roshi, — d. Feb. 26, 1990

Homage to Maurine Stuart-roshi

Only gratefulness rang true
as the 108 bells and bows
filled the green gulch on
the morning of February 26.

Maurine planted a seed
inside this whole body.
With the eyes, ears, and heart
I received a shout, a sense of joy,
joy for life and for the
practice of ZEN!

"Oh! We love this ZEN STUFF!" she said.

To live a whole life, to take care
of the whole body, to move on,
and to move out, without hesitation.

"Wonderful peace, no one there," she said.

—Jude Anderson

The Complete Teachings of Maurine Stuart

One day Maurine was having tea with friends at her home in Cambridge when the telephone rang.

"Do Buddhas wear toe-nail polish?" a seven-year-old caller wanted to know.

"Are you wearing toe-nail polish?" Roshi responded.

"YES!" shouted the little girl, and hung up.

—Basya Petnick

Dainin Katagiri-roshi

Dainin Katagiri-roshi, Zen teacher and abbot of Minnesota Zen Meditation Center and of Taizoin temple near Tsuruga, Japan, died at 2:45 A.M., March 1st, in his home in Minneapolis, of cancer. He was 62. Katagiri-roshi was one of the pioneer teachers of Zen Buddhist practice in America. He was born in Osaka, Japan, on January 19, 1928, and grew up in the city of Tsuruga, on the Japan Sea.

In September of 1946 he was ordained a Zen Buddhist monk by Kaigai Daicho-roshi, then abbot of Taizoin temple. Subsequently he trained for three years at Eiheiji, a traditional Zen monastery founded in the 13th century. Then he attended Komazawa University, where he received his master's degree in Buddhist Studies.

Katagiri-roshi came to America in 1963 when he was assigned by Soto Zen headquarters in Tokyo to the North American Soto Zen mission in Los Angeles. In 1965 he was appointed assistant to Shunryu Suzuki-roshi in San Francisco. There he served as priest to the Japanese-American congregation at Sokoji temple, and helped in the early formative years of the San Francisco Zen Center. In December of 1972, invited by a number of Twin Cities residents interested in Zen, he moved to Minneapolis with his wife, Tomoe Katagiri, and his sons, Yasuhiko and Ejyo. At that time there were in Minnesota individuals and small groups practicing Zen meditation without a trained teacher. These groups came together to form the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center when Katagiri-roshi arrived.

During the seventeen years that followed, Katagiri-roshi developed the Zen Center on Lake Calhoun, Gansho-ji, as a temple for daily Zen practice for metropolitan residents. He also inspired and guided the construction of a Zen monastery, nestled among hills and woodlands near the Mississippi River in southeastern Minnesota. At the monastery, named Hokyo-ji, he led two-month long, intensive training sessions for student priests and lay people from all over the country.

Until his illness, which was diagnosed in January 1989, Katagiri-roshi practiced zazen (sitting meditation) daily with his students, morning and evening. He led frequent meditation retreats and was available at all times for private interviews and counseling. The lecture hall on Lake Calhoun was always filled on Saturday mornings for his lectures.

Katagiri-roshi's teaching and example were simple and deep. In the later years, respect for him spread across the American continent as well as in his native Japan. He was known as a true monk, a Master who in mind and body expressed the authentic spirit of the Buddha. Of the hundreds of Americans who learned the

practice of meditation from him, many remarked that they were influenced as much by observing the extraordinary completeness of movement when he walked and bowed, his awake presence in everything he did, as they were by his lectures on the teachings of the Buddha.

In the early years, meditation groups in Omaha, Iowa City, Milwaukee and Manhattan, Kansas, asked him to teach and lead meditation retreats. Later, regular requests began to come from Alaska, Missouri, California, North Carolina and Ontario, Canada. He honored all these requests. By the 1980's he was on the road a good part of every year. He was asked to represent the Zen tradition at major conferences of inter-religious dialogue between Christians and Buddhists.

A book of Katagiri-roshi's lectures, ***Returning to Silence: Zen in Daily Life***, was published by Shambhala Books in May 1988, and has been widely read.

MZMC

"Many people will remember Katagiri-roshi for the way in which he helped people see the depth of their lives, and life in general — to a degree people found quite startling," said Michael O'Neal, president of the Zen Center. "He was completely wholehearted about this and had a lifelong dedication to it. He affected many people's lives. At the same time, he was a warm person, very kind-hearted. He was a delight to be with because he was so alive and cheerful. People were drawn to his brightness — a kind of dynamic awakeness."

Three months ago, assisted by three priests from Japan, Katagiri-roshi officiated in the long, traditional ceremony of Dharma Transmission, marking the completion of training for twelve Zen priests — one Japanese and eleven Americans. These women and men had studied with him and with other teachers for between 10 and 20 years.

Katagiri-roshi is survived by his wife, Tomoe; sons Yasuhiko and Ejyo and grandson Daisen, all of Minneapolis; and four brothers and two sisters living in Japan. For those moved to offer a memorial, Minnesota Zen Meditation Center is preferred, for the continuance of Katagiri-roshi's life work:

3343 East Calhoun Parkway,
Minneapolis, MN 55408;
612-822-5313.❖

—Tyrone Cashman

From* Returning to Silence, *by Dainin Katagiri, ©1988 Shambhala Publications Inc., 300 Mass. Ave, Boston, MA, 02115

"We are always trying to fix the surface or object-discriminating aspect of the human world. In this aspect of the world there are countless holes through which ideas are leaking — the idea of nuclear weapons, the idea of peace or no-peace, the idea of armament or disarmament. But if we want to fix some aspect of the world, if we want to have a peace movement, it is necessary to remember that armament and disarmament are the same thing in a sense; they are a principle or doctrine created by human ignorance. If we attach to the idea of disarmament we create a problem. On the other hand, if we attach to the idea of armament we create still more problems. Look at both sides. Which is better? Temporarily we use disarmament as an idea through which we can approach real peace. But this disarmament is just an idea. We cannot hold on to it as opposed to armament, because if we do, finally under the beautiful flag of disarmament we fight — about the idea of peace, we fight. What kind of peace is this? It is nothing but an idea. So why don't we see the idea of peace as just an idea that can be used temporarily in order to approach real peace. There is no other way to approach peace.

"To approach real peace requires a very strong, stable spiritual commitment, a vow. Just take a vow. Make a commitment toward real peace . . . But remember, even though we do make a commitment toward real peace, there will be many individuals who don't accept our way. So finally, where can real peace be found? With us. We ourselves must remain with peace. This is pretty hard, but we cannot stop . . . This is our sitting.

"The more we sit like this, the more we realize the strength of human ignorance. There is no reason why we create this terrible situation, but we do, constantly. When we make a spiritual commitment toward real peace, day by day, we have to go beyond whether people accept peace or not. This is not a political matter. It is a spiritual commitment toward peace. We have to taste it and digest it, constantly. Next we have to live it. This is pretty hard, because the more we taste and chew real peace, the more we realize human ignorance. But the more we realize human ignorance, the more we cannot stop teaching real peace, living real peace."❖

A Step Along the Path

by Margo and Gordon Tyndall

In late October-early November 1989, we had the privilege and pleasure of spending two weeks in Nepal. We had many memorable experiences, but we want to tell you about just one, because it led to what we believe is the most important outcome of our trip: the Tashi Palkiel Children's Project, a project to provide improved educational opportunities for the children of Tibetan exiles in a refugee camp in western Nepal.

During our stay in Pokhara, a small town in western Nepal and the starting point for treks into the Annapurna range, we decided to take a fairly ambitious day-hike up the spine of one of the long ridges that stretch up from the valley floor where the town of Pokhara is situated. Our goal was to reach Sarangkot, a small village where the ridge levels off. We had been told that it offered a spectacular view of Machapuchhare and the various peaks of the Annapurna range. It was a warm sunny day and a stiff climb, so we were glad to stop from time to time at points where we could enjoy the sight of those majestic peaks.

TYNDALL

Children of Tashi Palkiel

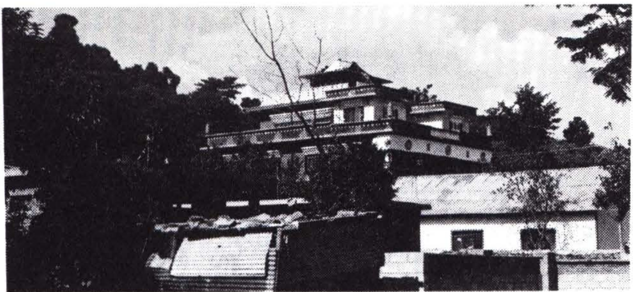
Each time we did this, our eyes were attracted to a cluster of white dots far below us, lying between the rushing Sete Khola river and the base of the ridge we were climbing. Finally we asked Raju, our pleasant 12-year-old guide, what the arrangement of dots was. He explained that it was a Tibetan Refugee Camp. Then something happened! We both knew — there's no other word for it — we ***knew*** that we must spend the next day, our last in Pokhara, making a visit to that refugee camp. We still don't know why; perhaps because an encounter of the previous evening lingered in our minds.

We had been strolling by a small lake at sunset when a young girl approached and asked if she could show us the trinkets she carried in a shoulder-strap bag. Yeshi had the quiet gestures and beauty typical of these mountain people, and we were saddened she was on the streets at nightfall. When we asked if she went to school, she said she had longed to do that, but the family never had enough money. Her father was dead; what little she and her mother could earn was used for food, and to send her younger sister to school. She told us about the camp where she lived, how cold it was in winter, and how scarce warm clothing was. Margo immediately thought of the extra woolies she had stashed in her duffel bag, so we walked with her to our hotel. Gordon had further opportunity to chat with her on the street while Margo searched for the clothing, because propriety evidently forbade her from coming up to the room with guests. After giving her some warm socks and pants and buying a few simple necklaces, we gave her our address and said a sad goodbye.

Whether it was our memories of Yeshi, or the books we'd been reading about the Tibetan people and their religion and culture, we were up early on the morning of November 1 headed for Tashi Palkiel, the refugee camp. We took a taxi along the dusty gravel road that parallels the Sete Khola until we reached a barricade. A little unsure of our destination we began hiking along the broad new road leading to the Tibetan border. Coolies hurry along bent under huge sacks of rice. Shaggy yaks carry more loads. Trekkers swing along accompanied by their sherpas and porters laden with the latest in camping gear and their own ragged bundles. Almost immediately a young man jumped out of a passing truck, asked where we were going, and cheerfully offered to lead us to the camp.

He told us his name was Richo, that he had been born in the camp a few years after his parents had fled from Tibet following the Chinese invasion in 1959. It quickly became apparent he was well-educated, and we found him to be a charming and gracious host. As soon as we arrived at the Camp, he invited us into his home for a cool drink. The house consisted of one room about eight feet by ten. The walls were of stones embedded in a whitish clay. The floor was pounded dirt, three narrow beds stood against the walls, and one small table completed the furnishings. In one corner an altar held several silver objects of worship, and a large picture of the Dalai Lama hung on the wall opposite. Above a tiny wood-burning stove, neatly arranged cups and dishes and a few pots and pans filled several shelves.

After pleasant conversation about his wife and one-year-old son, about his parents who lived next door, and about our own interest in Buddhist practice, he took us on a tour of the camp. Rug manufacture,


TYNDALL

New Monastery at Pokhara

which seems to be the sole income-producing enterprise of the camp, employs many of the men and women of Tashi Palkiel. We visited the weaving and dyeing factories where people smiled and spoke to us. Some were singing and laughing as they worked with their brilliantly colored yarns.

On the far side of the camp, abutting the base of the steep ridge which we had climbed the previous day, stood their imposing new Monastery. Since it was still under construction, we were unable to go inside, but we watched three young student monks on the steps at the entrance keeping a small ball in the air with their feet. They pretended not to notice us, but we felt they enjoyed having an audience. In an adjacent area, a number of somewhat older saffron-robed students were tearing up and down the field kicking a soccer ball.

Next we saw the primary school where children of the camp go for the first three years of education. For schooling beyond third grade they must walk to a school in Pokhara. The required fee of 50 rupees ($2 U.S.) per month plus books and materials is prohibitive for most families.

Then came the high point of our visit to Tashi Palkiel: time with the 30 or 40 children in the nursery daycare program. At a single soft-voiced instruction from one of the two women in charge, most of the little ones trooped into a low roofed shelter, where they took their places on threadbare straw mats to smile and laugh at us while Richo told us a little about the program. Soon they were allowed to run back to their play. There were no toys to give us a clue to the games in progress, only a slide and one piece of climbing equipment, which they seemed able to share without pushing or shoving and without needing hovering adults to prevent disaster.

As we began our walk back to Pokhara, we talked about the undaunted spirit of these people so long deprived of their homes and way of life in Tibet, and with so little to hope for by way of material well-being in the future. We both sensed that we must make an effort to raise funds to provide basic equipment and supplies for the childcare program and to find ways to meet the costs of post-third grade education for the children of those families unable to bear the cost.

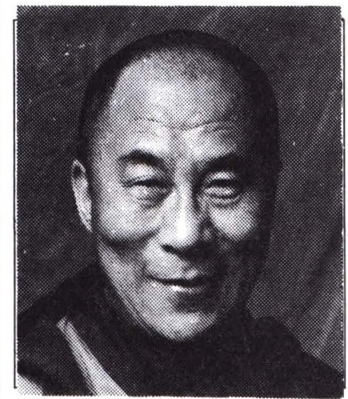
Since returning to California we have been in correspondence with Richo and other leaders in the camp regarding the needs of the children. We also received a Christmas (!) card from Yeshi and, more recently, a letter in which she told us of a fire in their home which had destroyed many of their belongings.

When we told the Steering Committee of the East Bay Chapter of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship about our experience and our wish to develop an ongoing project to provide improved educational opportunities for the children of Tashi Palkiel, they enthusiastically supported the idea and made it an official Chapter project. With their approval, we sent out a fundraising letter to some 540 people on BPF's Northern California mailing list. The response has been very gratifying, and we have recently sent a modest check to Tashi Palkiel to permit the purchase of some supplies and equipment for the Childcare/Nursery Program. We will shortly be receiving a list of names of children who need sponsors for post-third grade education, and we will match this list with those who have agreed to be sponsors. Yeshi and her sister will certainly be among those sponsored.

We hope that you will agree that this is a worthy project for a BPF chapter, and we would like to suggest that other chapters explore the idea of similar projects for other Tibetan refugee camps. Anyone who wishes to make a contribution to the Tashi Palkiel Project should send a check payable to BPF to us at :

88 Clarewood Lane, Oakland, CA 94618. We also welcome any comments or suggestions. ❖

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE



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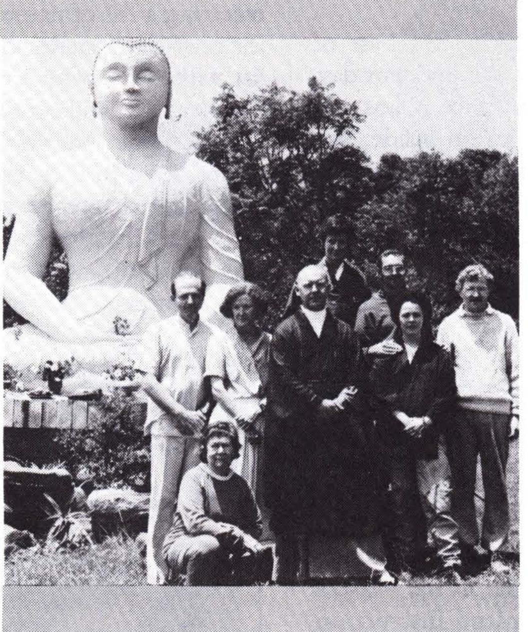
Images of Power: A Buddhist Views South Africa

by Kijun Steve Allen

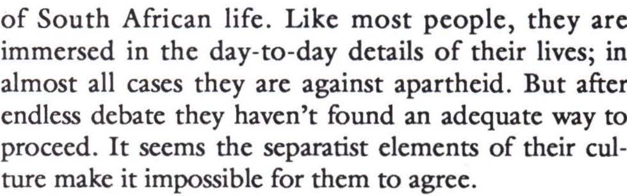
When I arrived in South Africa in the Fall of 1986, I felt I had passed "through the looking-glass" and entered a territory of unknown but familiar images. American winter occurs simultaneously with South African summer; because of a 10-hour time difference, the U.S. day occurs during South African night. For months I couldn't orient myself. I kept feeling that the sun was rising from the west and setting in the east. Invariably I would start in the opposite direction from where I wanted to go. It was surprisingly easy to meditate there, however, and to do retreat; in fact it was so easy and smooth that I began to wonder if something were wrong.



I had been invited to lead a six-week retreat program at the South African Buddhist Retreat Centre in Ixopo, a small African town in the Natal. The Centre had been operating for six years; it is within walking distance of a small Zulu village, and overlooks the beautiful green hills of QuaZululand. They invite teachers from different Buddhist traditions, mostly from the Theravadin tradition of Sri Lanka, which is their closest contact with a Buddhist culture. I was the first representative from the Zen schools, and everyone there was excited (and somewhat anxious) about my arrival. There seems to be a mystique about Zen and sometimes I felt I was being watched like a strange animal, brought for amusement.

Because of its central location in South Africa, the Retreat Centre is ideal as a place for people interested in Buddhist practice to meet. I had an excellent opportunity to meet with people from all parts of the country and to discuss with them questions about Buddhist practice as well as their deep concerns for the future of South Africa itself.

I met with businessmen, teachers, therapists, doctors, and craftsmen. In most cases they felt that "we" (the rest of the world) do not understand the realities



of South African life. Like most people, they are immersed in the day-to-day details of their lives; in almost all cases they are against apartheid. But after endless debate they haven't found an adequate way to proceed. It seems the separatist elements of their culture make it impossible for them to agree.

It appears that there are not only nine black tribes in South Africa, but at least four "white tribes" as well: Afrikaners, the present ruling tribe, are of Dutch descent; the Liberals are of English descent; the Immigrants, who came after the Second World War, are of European descent, and the Israelis are of Jewish descent. Each of these groups maintains its identity in the midst of this confusing welter of cultural differences.

Part of the dilemma is that there is no horizontal dialogue in process, only the "vertical" dialogue between Europe and Africa, which ends up in hierarchical discussions of better and worse, advanced and primitive, right and wrong. No country I have visited so vividly reflects the contrasts and conflicts of human life. I think this is why we have trouble understanding what is happening in South Africa.

South Africa is an experiment superficially similar to, but deeply and drastically different from America. Most South Africans I talked with felt a deep interconnection with the United States. Before the sanctions they respected our advice. Since sanctions were introduced there has been an increasing bitterness and resentment towards the U.S. and a sense of being misunderstood and misjudged.

The people I met held an understanding quite different from the government's and were proceeding on a deliberate course to enact social change. This change was actually developing, even four years ago, but in the economic and social sectors of society, and not yet at the political level.

This real change was reinforced by the considerable involvement of American and European companies in South Africa. Now that they have left, the country is driven to a more drastic solution. We are

unknowingly supporting a climate of social revolution that can only bring further suffering. The answers to the problems of South Africa cannot be won by violence. Only when the many sides of South African society accept the differences that surround them every day will they find the ground to solve conflicts.

(I hasten to add that I deeply respect Nelson Mandela, and I understand his call for continued sanctions, though I disagree with it. In my view the sanctions put pressure in the wrong place. The current government is so stubborn, it will destroy the country before yielding to economic pressure. With an economy in shambles, the very mechanisms for lasting change, and the populace affected by that change will be severely weakened.)

We naively think we understand the issues, because they look familiar to us. Bringing diverse cultures together in one society is very different in South Africa than in our own country. This is what was making me uneasy about my stay. I began to feel that the problems exploding over the past few years were not the real issues, but were the shadows the world cast with its (simple-minded) gaze on South Africa.

The deeper issues flow from divergent ways of life, completely distinct world views and radically different understandings, forced into proximity — each wanting to change, but each caught in a fabric of assumptions.

The black tribal peoples who are now finding their way in an alien urban environment are caught between worlds: they have left the security of the tribe, and connection to their cultural identity, but have not yet found security in an urban world. The White tribal peoples are lost in the clouds of modern technology, unable to share the roots of their experience and cut off from the land that supports them.

These issues in South Africa will not go away with external solutions. If we want to help, we must ask what is needed. We might help through our support— not support for apartheid, but support for real social change at the economic level. We need to support all members of the human family in finding the reconciliation in the framework of their daily lives. We need to support all sides in overcoming fears and resentments about differences between them that won't go away. When we stop casting the dark shadow of our power over her, South Africa will more clearly be able to see what needs to be done. I sense that the newly emerging dialogue with Buddhism can be a harmonizing influence for many people.

During my last trip to South Africa, in January of this year, I began to understand some of my feelings for the country. I knew it had given me an excellent opportunity to share my love for Buddhist practice with a group of people who could be helped by its guidance, and that my own meditation practice was deepened in the process. But it didn't occur to me until this time that the land itself is conducive to trance states of various kinds.

During hikes I made into the Drakensberg mountains on my first trip I discovered caves containing Bushman cave paintings. The simple and direct lines fascinated me, and I began to research them. In Cape Town I found a book by David Lewis-Williams and Thomas Dowson called *Images of Power, Understanding Bushman Rock Art*. This book convincingly shows that most Bushman art depicts a variety of trance states. Even the earliest inhabitants had felt the power of this place and depicted their experiences with it in graphic detail. I had also experienced this gentle pulling inward into another world, just below the surface. In this light trance, surface issues looked different and less personal.

As strange as it might sound, I believe there is something about the land of South Africa that is conducive to trance states, and that consequently it is a place where many unconscious or not-quite-conscious activities arise and play out. This is not a rational description, but a metaphor that captures the phantasmagoric quality of much South African life as I experienced it — both black and white. ❖

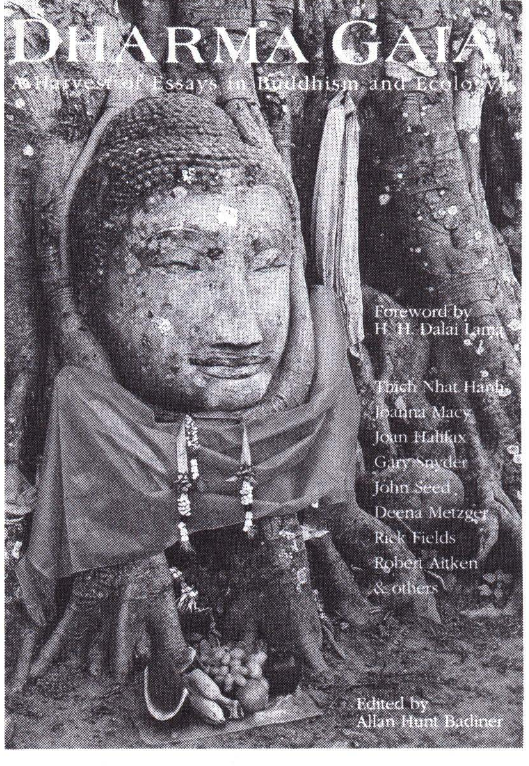
—Kijun Steve Allen is a Director of the MAITRI Hospice

If you are interested in knowing more about Buddhism and South Africa please contact Steve through the Hartford Street Zen Center:

57 Hartford Street
San Francisco,CA 94114
415-861-6779.

GLIMPSES OF *DHARMA GAIA*:
A HARVEST OF ESSAYS IN BUDDHISM AND ECOLOGY

We present a (short) selection from the new **Parallax Press** book, edited by **Alan Hunt Badiner**. A kind of cream of the crop.



From *The Greening of the Self*, by Joanna Macy

...increasingly it is being recognized that a compassionate response is neither craziness nor a dodge. It is the opposite; it is a signal of our own evolution, a measure of our humanity. We are capable of suffering with our world, and that is the true meaning of compassion. It enables us to recognize our profound interconnectedness with all beings. Don't ever apologize for crying for the trees burning in the Amazon or over the waters polluted from mines in the Rockies. Don't apologize for the sorrow, grief, and rage you feel. It is a measure of your humanity and your maturity. It is a measure of your open heart, and as your heart breaks open there will be room for the world to heal. That is what is happening as we see people honestly confronting the sorrows of our time. And it is an adaptive response.

The crisis that threatens our planet, whether seen from its military, ecological, or social aspect, derives from a dysfunctional and pathological notion of the self. It derives from a mistake about our place in the order of things. It is a delusion that the self is so separate and fragile that we must delineate and defend its boundaries, that it is so small and so needy that we must endlessly acquire and endlessly consume, and that it is so aloof that as individuals, corporations, nation-states, or species, we can be immune to what we do to other beings...

The awakening to our true self is the awakening to that entirety, breaking out of the prison-self of separate ego. The one who perceives this is the bodhisattva—and we are all bodhisattvas because we are all capable of experiencing that—it is our true nature. We are profoundly interconnected and therefore we are all able to recognize and act upon our deep, intricate, and intimate inter-existence with each other and all beings. That true nature of ours is already present in our pain for the world...

Please note this important point: virtue is not required for the greening of the self or the emergence of the ecological self. The shift in identification at this point in our history is required precisely because moral exhortation doesn't work, and because sermons seldom hinder us from following our self-interest as we conceive it.

The obvious choice, then, is to extend our notions of self-interest. For example, it would not occur to me to plead with you, "Oh, don't saw off your leg. That would be an act of violence." It wouldn't occur to me because your leg is part of your body. Well, so are the trees in the Amazon rain basin. They are our external lungs. And we are beginning to realize that the world is our body.

From *Ecocentric Sangha*, by Bill Devall

...I suggest that in North America, as well as in Europe and Australia, Buddhists will develop an ecocentric Sangha, an international community that practices the Way together. An ecocentric Sangha is not human-centered, but centered in the biosphere. Participants will be dedicated to self-realization for all beings, not just human beings. The Sangha is a witness for the bioregion, engendering new growth and affirming the rights of other species.

In an ecocentric Sangha we are members, not stewards or master elites, in the land community. Each bioregion is graced with sacred places. Each bioregion exists beyond artificial boundaries of counties, states, or nations. Mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers.

Mountains and rivers are becoming realized beings.

There is a Sangha in every bioregion, perhaps marked by a specific mountain, forest, section of coastline, or watershed. The ecocentric Sangha encourages service to the place wherein all beings dwell. Members serve in order to maintain a continuous harmony within the place. Out of this wider responsibility comes great expansion of self into the greater Self of the bioregion.

From *Animal Dharma*, by Mobi Ho

Passing a Dead Animal on the Highway

your corpse, small friend,
is a bell of mindfulness
returning me to my breath
reminding me to drive mindfully
and to renew my vow
to protect all living beings

From *An Intimate View*, by Peter Levitt

There is a teaching in Buddhist tradition which tells us that each atom of the universe, at one time or another, has been our mother. And that we have been the mother of each atom as well. Each atom has brought us into being, given us life. Each atom has nourished us, and we have done the same for every atom in the never-ending continuous moment we call our lives. To grasp even a little of this teaching makes quite a difference in how we move through the world; seeing what we see and hearing what we hear. It changes our touching and how we touch, our knowing and how we know.

Usually, when we think of where we came from, our human root, we think something like, Oh, my mother gave birth to me. We think that's where it starts, with birth. But recently I've been thinking something different: I used to live inside my mother. I lived there, inside her body for nine months. Can you imagine if somehow you were suddenly transported inside of somebody and lived there for nine months right now?

When I lived inside the body of my mother, she was the entire world to me. She was my Earth, and she was my sky. She was my rivers. She was the weather. She was the sun. She was my absolute physical world. And, of course, even more. But while I was living inside her body, she was living inside the body of the world. The body of the world was her Earth, and her sky. Her rivers. Her weather. Her sun. And, though I was me, living inside of her, two bodies, somehow there was one body there at the same time. When I look deeply I see that this very same thing was true for my mother, living in the body of the world. There were also two bodies, but, at the same time, somehow there was only one.

From *Earth Gathas*, by Thich Nhat Hanh

(turning on water)
Water flows from the high mountains
Water runs deep in the earth.
Miraculously, water comes to us
and sustains all life.

(washing hands)
Water flows over my hands.
May I use them skillfully
to preserve our precious planet.

From *The Perceptual Implications of Gaia* by David Abram

I have suggested that the most radical element of the Gaia hypothesis, as presently formulated, may be the importance that it places on the air, the renewed awareness it brings us of the atmosphere itself as a thick and mysterious phenomenon no less influential for its invisibility. In Native American cosmology, the air or the Wind is the most sacred of powers. It is the invisible principle that circulates both within us and around us, animating the thoughts of all breathing things as it moves the swaying trees and the clouds. And indeed, in countless human languages the words for *spirit* or *psyche* are derived from the same root as the words for *wind* and *breath*. Thus in English the word *spirit* is related to the word *respiration* through their common origin in the Latin word *spiritus*, meaning *breath*. Likewise our word *psyche*, with all its recent derivations, has its roots in the ancient Greek *psychein* which means to *breathe* or to *blow* (like the wind).

If we were to consult some hypothetical future human being about the real meaning of the word spirit, he or she might reply as follows: Spirit, as any post-industrial soul will tell you, is simply another word for the air, the wind, or the breath. The atmosphere is the spirit, the subtle awareness of this planet. We all dwell within the spirit of the Earth, and this spirit circulates within us. Our individual psyches, our separate subjectivities are all internal expressions of the invisible awareness, the air, the psyche of this world. And all our perceiving, the secret work of our eyes, our nostrils, our ears and our skin, is our constant communication and communion with the life of the whole. Just as, in breathing, we contribute to the ongoing life of the atmosphere, so also in seeing, in listening, in real touching and tasting we participate in the evolution of the living textures and colors that surround us, and thus lend our imaginations to the tasting and shaping of the Earth. Of course the spiders are doing this just as well...❖

The Social Face of Buddhism
by Ken Jones,

Wisdom Publications, 1989.

reviewed by Donald Rothberg

With the publication of Ken Jones' rich and often inspiring book we have the fullest inquiry to date into the nature of Buddhist activism. There are chapters on the fundamental Buddhist understanding of the individual human predicament; on the social manifestations of greed, aggression, and ignorance especially in contemporary political, and ecological crises; on the social dimensions of karma; on the Buddhist questioning of ideologies and polarization; on Buddhist social values and principles; on the limits of the main secular approaches to social liberation; on the dangers of Buddhist social engagement, particularly over-dependence on secular values and understandings; on Buddhist ethics and precepts; on violence, nonviolence, and conflict resolution; on Buddhist tendencies toward quietism and lack of social engagement; on the various forms of engaged Buddhism in Asia, particularly since the Second World War in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, and Japan; and on the prospects for, and the Buddhist role in, fundamental "psycho-social" transformation in the West.

Given so many themes, and so many "heavy" ones, a book like this might have contributed more to bondage than to liberation. But this hasn't happened. Jones' writing flows well; his approach is down-to-earth and closely related to practical issues. At times he suggests exercises for the reader. Humor, stories, poems, and helpful metaphors abound. The book is stimulating, and each chapter yields provocative ideas.

Jones' guiding insight is that spiritual and social transformation are not two separate projects, nor does the one require the completion of the other in order to proceed. Jones questions incisively the claims that it is necessary to wait for full awakening before becoming socially engaged, or that it is necessary to wait for the full realization of justice for all before undertaking spiritual development. Instead, Jones maintains that authentic resolution of social crises requires going to the roots of the human predicament, in fear, greed, and ignorance. Social changes in this sense require spiritual transformations. Likewise, all of us already live our lives in various social contexts; the question is not whether to bring spirituality into these contexts, but how to live socially with more wisdom and compassion.

Jones believes that Buddhist social analysis and activism must rest on the "root Buddhist teachings". Keeping the perspective of these teachings is the best way to avoid, or minimize, what Jones takes to be the danger of letting secular values predominate, often with the (unconscious) motivation of seeking legitimacy from secular sources of power. He questions the tendency, found both in Asia and in the West, to reduce Buddhism to various secular movements and concepts, in which Buddhism is taken to be fundamentally "scientific," or "democratic," or "socialist," "rational," or "ecological." The point is not to deny important affinities between Buddhist and modern secular understandings, but rather to frame the internal and external dialogues so that there is not a loss of spiritual energy.

The existential human condition (ignorance, fear, craving) is prior, Jones claims, to other social conditions of repression, domination, or exploitation, and in fact it is they that provide the basic energy of social injustice. Social hierarchy, polarization, and exclusivity, like the individual self, are constructs that help us avoid our actual existential situation, our actual vulnerability, fear, and confusion. Instead of confronting fully our actual conditions, which are the starting point for lives of freedom, we organize our selves and our societies around attempts to satisfy an endless round of limited desires. From such desires arise the need to acquire, to achieve, to belong, to identify with roles and personae, to be recognized, to dominate, to manipulate, to believe in this and not that, and so on; from the polarization of desire and aversion are born the various social forms of opposition.

Jones reminds us how the accomplishment of tasks or projects in organizations is invariably complicated by unrecognized emotions and needs that express our own ignorance and compulsive desires. Whether such organizations are dedicated to social change or spiritual transformation often makes little difference.

Jones suggests that this whole situation, while difficult, is workable and indeed actually inescapable.

Like Thich Nhat Hanh in his formulation of the Tiep Hien precepts and Robert Aitken in *The Mind of Clover: Essays in Zen Buddhist Ethics*, Jones wishes to extend the meaning of Buddhist training precepts beyond personal relationships to a more explicitly social and global sense of interrelationships. This requires that we be active in and well-informed about the world. But Buddhist training also has the potential to balance ideas about "outer" situations with awareness of the "inner" forces influencing activists.

Jones suggests Buddhist values that are broadly

democratic, egalitarian, pluralistic, and decentralist. Cooperation, nonviolent conflict resolution, social service, and simplicity are primary values, seen as integral to spiritual awakening. For Jones, these social values are fundamentally at variance with both capitalist and communist collectivist systems. Thus it is no surprise that Jones finds considerable resonance between Buddhist activism and the aims of the Greens, who also position themselves in ways that claim to be neither "left" nor "right."

The virtues of Ken Jones' book are its breadth, vision, considerable detail, and its ability to inspire. The second, more practical part of the book on "Action," and particularly the chapters on engaged Buddhism in Asia and on "Violence and Creativity," provided more continuity and depth than the other chapters. In fact, I found myself drawn to the second half of the book first, coming back with some delight later to the first, more theoretical treatment.

Several significant areas are treated only in passing. There are only a few short (though useful) references to the Buddhist dialogues with feminism and ecology. (I gather from the epilogue, written just after the accident at Chernobyl in April 1986, that the book was written by early 1986, although published in late 1989.) Similarly, the discussion of Buddhism and psychotherapy is somewhat abbreviated and dated. Jones presents only brief discussions of the need for new organizational forms for Buddhist communities in the West. There is little sustained inquiry into questions of the nature of authority in Western Buddhist communities, questions which have arisen in the context of "scandals" concerning sex, money, and power.

Jones has given us excellent points of departure for further inquiry on a number of these questions: are societies (or ecosystems, or the planet as a whole), like individuals, "beings" aspiring toward awakening? What are the practical implications of such understandings? What is the relationship of spiritual authority and democratic governance? When, if ever, are more hierarchical social and spiritual relations appropriate?

There are perhaps no clear answers to such questions. Perhaps we should be somewhat suspicious of clear answers, while respecting and following the questions. The great contributions of the Buddhist tradition to social transformation may thus go beyond giving us an understanding of suffering, its causes, and a vision of liberation. A core contribution of Buddhist activism may also be, as Jones suggests, to emphasize the process of inquiry and the process of action, in which there is close examination of one's motivation, conditioning, and lived experience, an acknowledgement both of ambiguity and of a sustained commitment to act.❖

Donald Rothberg is currently on the Board of Directors of the BPF and the faculty of the Saybrook Institute.

"Feminist Perspectives on the Dharma" An Evening with Joanna Macy, Charlene Spretnak, Susan Griffin.

The panel discussion BPF hosted on March 16 was a rich, three-hour evening. The discussants spoke from their own experience as they brought together original insights, understanding, questions and humor. From the quality of attentiveness and the questions, it seemed the audience was touched deeply. The panel was asked to answer several questions: what follows is an excerpt from their responses to a question concerning the body/mind split and the view of world as illusory.

Joanna Macy: My thesis here is that [the body/mind split] comes from the imprint of patriarchal cultures which the Buddhadharma has tried repeatedly to shake off. It relates to patriarchal "takes" on reality in which there is a tension between mind and nature — or as my friend Bill Thompson says, tension between crotch and crown. The world is only seen as an illusion when you posit something else as more real, when you posit an absolute Brahma realm, and this Buddha refused to do. Again and again, when you read the scriptures you see the core teaching of dependent co-arising. It was what he called the Dharma.

Most of my scholarly work has gone to counter the view that the world is illusory, because I see that view as very dangerous. It fosters a fear and loathing of our world and that can do us in. In early ages, it was a philosophical mistake to erase the world. But with our technology now we can *really* do it. I think that that fear and loathing of the phenomenal world of matter and body is certainly related to the extraordinary technical devices that we have developed to wipe life out. I see it therefore as a spiritual trap which cuts the nerve of compassionate action.

These traps often appear in familiar forms: the phenomenal world of being is less real, its pain and its demands on us are less real, than the pleasures and aloofness we can find in transcending them; suffering is a mistake; any pain we may experience in beholding the world derives from our own cravings and attachments — a peculiar but widespread interpretation of the second noble truth. The ideal of nonattachment, instead of referring to the ego, is taken to refer to the fate of all beings.

A kissing cousin of this is the idea that we create our world unilaterally; that our subjective thoughts can take material form — and therefore to confront, really to look at the injustices and danger of our world is to think negatively, and perpetuate them. Any of that sound familiar? Then there is the corollary, that the world is already perfect when we view it spiritually and we feel so peaceful that the world itself will become peaceful without our needing to act.

I love finding in the early texts, in the words of the Buddha — he gets kind of abrupt at times when he is correcting these views — wonderful passages about this. He said, "When did you hear me *ever* say that consciousness was independent of the bases of consciousness? The fear and loathing of the body? It's like a dog being tethered to the stake, running around trying to get away from the body and getting roped tighter and tighter." He's got wonderful views on this and I believe that our task as feminist thinkers, men or women, is to bring these teachings forward now for the sake of all beings.

Charlene Spretnak: When you begin a meditation practice, you turn away from the favored mode in the West of knowledge as power, which is seeing. In starting a meditation practice you close your eyes, and you step out of that mode into different ways of knowing.

As far as the split between mind and body, I thought immediately of the common ground between radical feminist spirituality and the dhamma on this question. Buddhism is often misunderstood because there are many passages in the texts that tell you how not to get obsessed with the body, or obsessed with the body who lives across the street. And the people who just read the texts will think this is the core of Buddhism.

But the practice, the practice is *so* body-oriented. The Buddha didn't say, "In order to escape mental anguish and to be free of hatred, greed and delusion, just sit down here and pretend you don't have this awful thing called the body, and we'll transcend it." He didn't say that at all. He said sit down here and observe the breath going into the body and out of the body and observe it with more and more precision and subtlety till you notice everything about the breath traveling into the body and out of the body. And then he taught to go inside the body and observe the micro-events and all the sensations arising in and on the body with great subtlety and all the contents arising in the mind — and from this comes opening, awareness and realization of the nature of reality.

I was thinking about that and the heady days of radical women's spirituality when there was so much energy: we had drifted out of patriarchal religions and were trying to find our own authentic spirituality. There was a great deal of celebration of nature and of our bodies, which the culture we had grown up in had never done. There were a lot of rituals, and interest in the old religions, goddess— and earth-oriented religions, and a lot of expression in the arts about honoring the female body.

But I kept wishing there were a conceptual framework so we could understand what was happening. Thinking through what those conceptual frames might be, I thought of body parables, the inherent experiences women have in women's spirituality that are teaching us about the nature of reality, teaching the bodymind totality.

One is reclaimed menstruation, where we pay attention to the soft-boundary feelings; also the post-orgasmic state, when you feel that flooding oceanic boundary-less feeling and you see that boundaries are arbitrary. Boundaries are important, but what is primary is the oneness that is our shared ground of reality. In pregnacy, natural childbirth, nursing, motherhood, it's always this understanding of boundary and oneness that are great lessons. They are inherent, I feel, in sexual experience.

I wanted to point out this common ground for both spiritual feminism and the dhamma — the body, by which I mean the body-mind totality. It doesn't start by denying the body, it starts by going deeply into the body. Unlike many, many other spiritual choices around us, the body is the site of revelation.

Susan Griffin: I thought I'd give you some other questions for which I don't think there's an answer. These are questions that playfully pose a challenge to certain approaches, certain teachings of Buddhism (with which I have a quarrel) on this issue of mind-body split or the idea that reality is in any way an illusion. Here's how the questions would go:

Does the tree exist to make blossoms? Do blossoms exist to make plums? Do the plums exist so that other plum trees will exist and grow from the seeds of the plums? Do the seeds of the plums exists so that other plum trees will exist? Do the trees exist to make blossoms?

Maybe what I'm getting at with these questions will become clearer when I talk about plum jam. Very often it's taught — I've heard it in Dharma lectures and I've heard it from teachers I love and from whom I've learned very much and to whom I feel grateful —it is very often taught that, say, you are sitting in a chair and suddenly have a desire for a piece of toast with plum jam on it. You are then entering the circle of samsara. You go and you get the plum jam and you eat the plum jam and sit down again, and then you are going to have some other want and it's just endless.

So you are supposed to see the futility of plum jam, or of desiring plum jam. That's where I get off the ...I don't get out of the circle of samsara at that point, I get off the train of thought. Because I love plum jam! I love desiring it. I love getting out of the chair and going to the kitchen and making a piece of toast and putting it on the toast. I love the feel of it in my mouth. I love eating it. I love it in my bloodstream. And I love remembering it afterwards.

Transcribed and edited by Margaret Howe & Will Waters

Tapes of the event are available from the BPF office for $16 (two-tape set; includes postage).

National Coordinator's Report

The environmental mailing — packet and poster — occupied a great deal of our time and energy this past quarter (see p.3.) In March we also hosted an inspiring and very important evening with Joanna Macy, Charlene Spretnak, and Susan Griffin on Feminism and Buddhism.(excerpts this issue)

This summer we are hosting two all-day workshops in the Bay Area, as part of BPF's commitment to provide trainings in engaged Buddhism, nonviolent living and social action:

Nonviolence; Deepening the Roots — June 16, with David Hartsough

Conflict Resolution - in July, w/Rosalind Diamond. Contact the National Office for further details.

We are planning a training institute for the summer of 1991 which will extend and intensify the training in engaged Buddhism. Please contact us at the National Office with thoughts, ideas, suggestions for this.

Besides networking within our own organization, we are working more with other groups on different projects, among them Death Penalty Focus and the Foundation for a Peace Tax Fund.

As you can see, the National Office is bustling these days with many projects. Don't forget the **Annual Meeting, September 22-23**, in Cambridge; mark your calenders. I'd like to offer special gratitude to our new office assistant— Will Waters — and to those who work with us: volunteers Felicia Fields, Sandy Hunter, Alice Rubenstein, and the East Bay Chapter, for their enthusiasm and unending energy.

East Bay

Our most recent project has been to gather aid for Tibetan refugees in Tashi Palkiel, Nepal. The project began in February with letters to 540 people on BPF's Northern California list. The response was very encouraging, and we have been able to send a generous donation to provide greatly needed supplies for the Tibetan childcare program in Tashi Palkiel. Soon we will be sponsoring a number of children to enable them to attend school (see article in this issue).

Another new undertaking in February was a study group on nonviolence. We met with Maylie Scott for eight weeks and considered ways to bring about change by nonviolent means. Our own experiences and the writings of active pacifists like Gandhi and Thoreau provided the basis for some searching discussion.

Enthusiastic participation in the work of the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant continues, led by Sandy Hunter. On March 24 several of our members, displaying a BPF banner, took part in the "Archbishop Romero Commemoration March to End the U.S. War in Central America" in San Francisco. Following the march, two members gathered signatures on a petition protesting our aid to El Salvador and promptly delivered it to Senator Pete Wilson's office.

Sponsoring Hungry Families, coordinated by Therese Fitzgerald, continues its dedicated work to help victims of poverty and famine in Vietnam. Another hundred parcels were sent in March.

The Steering Committee of the Chapter meets monthly with a regular attendance of 9-12 members. Some of our members also attend a Mindfulness Vigil at the Concord Weapons Station. The work of the organization on the level of stuffing envelopes and wrapping packages helps strengthen the sangha network. Assistance is needed from time to time. If you wish to volunteer, or attend a meeting, call Contact Person Margo Tyndall at (415) 654-8677.

Gratitude

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship Board gratefully acknowledges generous contributions above and beyond membership since the beginning of 1990:

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THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD is a compilation of artwork and short essays by children, on the topic of how to bring our world to peace. The project was initiated in hope of future publication, in order to share the children's views with others, of all ages, throughout the world: "We live in a world of many problems, such as hate and war. Can you draw me a picture and/or write me a story of how we can make our world a better place to live, a world without war, a world where we can all be happy and love one another, a world at peace?" Age range: 5-14 yrs. Essays: maximum 150 wds, no minimum. Artwork: preferably 11 in. x 14 in. (28 x 36 cm), any medium (watercolor, oil, fingerpaint, pencil, crayon, cut and paste, other imaginative). Deadline: July 1, 1990. All submissions should be titled. Release forms must accompany all submissions. Send to: Robert Cliff Harper, P.O. Box 3873, Beverly Hills, CA 90212 (714) 521-2188

A slide-lecture by Ida Salis, director of the Tibet Resource Center, on Thursday, May 17 in San Francisco: ***Facts about the Land and People of Tibet — Their Religious and Political History.*** The talk is at 5:00 PM, at the Commonwealth Club, 595 Market St. (tel. 415-543-3353). Proceeds benefit the dormitory being built at Drepung Monastery's Govo Kangtsen. Contact: TRC, 30 Locust Ave. #2, P.O. Box 831, Larkspur, CA 94939, (415) 924-9139.

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Artists imagination is called upon for how to share the wealth of advanced nations with the rest of the world. It is difficult to be unaware of the extreme inequalitites of consumption and possession of resources among nations. How can we redistribute our privleges voluntarily and creatively in order to alleviate the suffering of others? In this weekend with master calligrapher Kazuaki Tanahashi, and musician and psychotherapist Edie Hartshorne, participants will be asked to contemplate this issue while doing breath and body exercises, meditation, singing and performing, and creating visual art. Cost: $175, includes meals.

Please contact **Ojai Foundation,** (805) 646-8343

Volunteers are needed to help protect human rights lawyers in Sri Lanka. As part of the **Peace Brigades International** team, you would shadow these peaceworkers to help keep them safe and alive. Write: Peace Brigades International 4722 Baltimore #2, Philadelphia, PA 19143.

For Sale in BPF office: T-shirts with the BPF logo in turquoise or white, $12. S, M, L, XL.

Two 90-minute audiotapes: "Feminist Perspectives on the Dharma" from the panel discussion with Joanna Macy, Charlene Spretnak, and Susan Griffin. $16.

Earth Day Poster - A beautiful 24" x 33" two- color poster (see illustration on page 3). $7.

Earth Day Packet - A 25-page resource packet with readings, activities, and bibliography on Buddhist approaches to environmentally sensitive living. $2.

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❖ To make clear public witness to Buddhist practice as a way of peace and protection of all beings;

❖ To raise peace, environmental, feminist, and social justice concerns among Western Buddhists;

❖ To bring a Buddhist perspective to contemporary peace, environmental, and social action movements;

❖ To encourage the practice of nonviolence based on the rich resources of traditional Buddhist teachings;

❖ To offer avenues for dialogue and exchange among the diverse American and world sanghas.

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