



TURNING WHEEL

Journal of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship

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Prudence See, *Buddha of Blue Mountain*

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

Growing Organic Rice, Making Maps, Yarning the Redwoods, Retreat on the Street

Interview with Earth First!er Judi Bari

FROM THE EDITOR

On Loitering—

For a long time I've understood my Buddhist practice as a way to learn to live in this moment. I'm beginning to understand it also as a teaching to live in this place. *Be here now.* The here is just as important as the now.

Sometimes I just want to be *there* now. It's a struggle for me to stay still, not just on my zafu, but in my watershed. I love a lot of different places, the smell of them, the light. And people I love live in different places. I use up much more than my fair share of jet fuel.

Environmental activism implies a sense of place. In order to love the whole shebang, it helps to love a particular spot. And in order to love a particular spot, it helps to hang around there for a while.

When I first came to Berkeley 25 years ago, I thought it was ugly. The main street looked like a string of car dealerships. The hills looked brown and dead. Now the hills look golden, and I smell the flowering trees in front of the Toyota dealer.

More and more, I love the ground itself. Maybe it's because of getting older—closer to the time I'll be buried in it, or sprinkled over it. (I haven't decided yet.) Especially in times of grief, my impulse is to lie down on the ground and stick my nose in the dirt. And good old gravity holds me tight. Gravity—Mom Earth's unconditional love, her way of hugging us close all the time, no matter what we do.

I try to hug back. But it gets harder and harder. The ground is so often paved over, or if there's grass, there's dog shit on it. Still, one doesn't require a field of wildflowers. Concrete sidewalks get warm in the sun. And they're home to an increasing number of people. But here in progressive Berkeley, an initiative before the City Council would make it illegal to sit or lie on the sidewalk.

No loitering. Loiter: "to remain in a place for no apparent reason." It seems you need an excuse to stay in one place. The default mode is to keep moving. Move along, move along.

But walking isn't encouraged either. Where we're *really* supposed to be is in a car. Driving. Windows rolled up for the sake of the air conditioning, visor down against the glare of the setting sun.

Technology robs us of a sense of place. Virtual reality replaces reality.

It traps me, too. For exercise I go to a gym where there's a circuit of 15 machines, each one simulating a different kind of outdoor aerobic exercise. I spend two minutes on the swim bench (dry as a bone). When the buzzer buzzes I leap onto the exercycle. I also pretend to paddle a canoe, climb a tree, go skiing. Two minutes each. It's so *convenient*. In just 30 minutes I exercise all my muscle groups, and it's easy to park.

When I was a kid, my friends and I owned the neighborhood. It belonged to us in a way that overrode property lines. My map of the neighborhood would have shown the good climbing trees, the holes in the fences, the places where the sidewalk was pushed up by tree roots so you had to roller skate around them. Kids can't play outside as much anymore. It's not safe. They stay inside and watch TV, play video games—the lucky ones. Or grownups drive them to a special place where they can see nature.

The concept of *habitat* applies to us, too, not just to endangered owls and wolves. We humans think we can live anywhere, swim on a machine, relate to each other by modem. But we need the wetness of water, the firmness of ground.

Let's go out and loiter together. Let's get down. Let's let gravity do its thing to us. Let's sit on the sidewalk and look at the sky for no apparent reason. ❖

—Susan Moon



TURNING WHEEL

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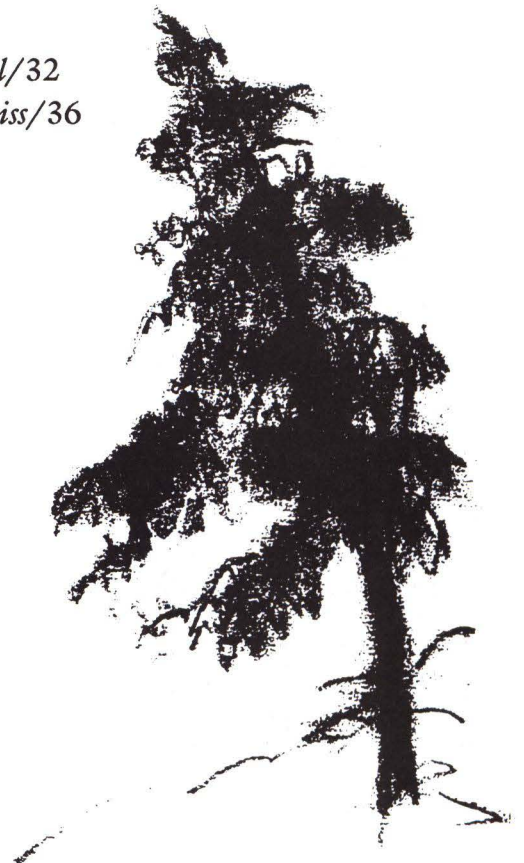
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Rebecca Sutherland

LETTERS

[*Turning Wheel* welcomes letters to the editor. All letters are subject to editing.]

On Education and Spirit

Dear *Turning Wheel*:

Patrick McMahon's education column, "Rock of My Soul," moved me to tears. Thank you so much, Patrick, for bringing spirit back into focus for me. I am in school getting "certified" to teach kids. I am grateful that my program is progressive, even innovative and open-minded. But still I find myself closely wrapped in "good education," and I find myself losing desire and willingness because my heart gets disconnected. Your column helped me engage again with my spirit.

—Nora Ryerson, Santa Fe, New Mexico

On Capitalism

Tyndall Gets the Last Word!

Dear *Turning Wheel*:

I would like to comment on John Azelvandre's letter (Winter '94) relating to my "Buddhism and Capitalism" (Summer '93) and Jeff Kaplan's response (Fall '93).

I take issue with Mr. Azelvandre's assertion that "the market system is based on a theoretical system that clearly denies interconnectedness." It may well be

true, as he suggests, that Adam Smith and the other economists of his day saw the world as composed of discrete, separate and static entities. But that is utterly irrelevant! What is relevant is that today many (if not all) economists recognize the basic interconnectedness of all aspects of life, and it is primarily because of the recognition of the complexity of this interconnectedness in the economic sphere that, almost without exception, they see some form of the market system as the most efficient way of solving the basic problems which any but the simplest of economies must solve. There is no way in which the system, *per se*, denies interconnectedness!

And I must emphatically disagree with Mr. Kaplan's statement that "our economy is predicated on compound interest and compound growth." The capitalist economies of the "Western world" have certainly experienced such compound growth (presumably growth in income or output) in the past, but, given the growing pressure on some of the world's most important natural resources and our belated recognition of the need to attend to ecological problems that we have created, we may well have no alternative but to shift to a no-growth or even a negative-growth economy. However, a "middle way" market system is probably the most efficient system for adapting to such a shift. Certainly a market system is fully compatible with a zero or negative rate of growth provided that the appropriate fiscal, labor, and monetary policies are followed during the adjustment from positive to zero or negative growth.

Finally, let me thank Mr. Azelvandre for his point that greed is [often] an outgrowth of a fear which a regionally based, communitarian economy would reduce. It is an important one.

—Gordon Tyndall, Oakland, California

On Pornography

Dear *Turning Wheel*:

As a heterosexual Buddhist prisoner who has been locked up for five years, I have a particular perspective on pornography. In this situation, porn can become an obsession. But in moderation it can be helpful! As time goes by, it's hard to keep the memories alive that fire the sexuality. But porn that depicts violence to women or anyone else is not proper.

No action is done without prior thought (unless you're completely enlightened). Just as a gun in our hand causes us to think we can kill, violent porn causes us to think we can rape.

Susan Moon says you might be reborn as a banana slug for making dirty phone calls. But what's wrong with slugs? At least they don't rape or build bombs.

—Arthur Weathers, #246107, Central C.I.,
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READINGS

Burma Update

In the latest stage of the Burmese civil war, SLORC [the ruling military regime of Burma] and the government of Thailand have joined forces to neutralize the ethnic-minority resistance movements and pave the way for massive energy and water projects on indigenous lands, funded in part by the World Bank. The ethnic opposition groups on the Thai border are under extreme pressure to sign individual cease-fire agreements with SLORC. In the past, such agreements have weakened local leadership and increased military occupation of indigenous lands.

The Thai government has been pressuring the ethnic groups to complete the cease-fire agreements by ordering the repatriation of Burmese refugees, often relocating them in areas that are extremely vulnerable to SLORC artillery attack, and by threatening to cut off humanitarian aid if they do not cooperate.

Meanwhile, ethnic opposition groups continue to face massacres, rapes, and reprisal raids at the hands of the SLORC army. Villagers are conscripted as porters and slave laborers to work on energy, water, and transportation projects that are supported by Thailand and the World Bank. Households that don't provide laborers are fined. An estimated 21,000-30,000 people are being forced to work on the Ye-Tavoy Railway, which will help SLORC secure the area for the Rangoon-Thaton gas pipeline.

This Thai-Burmese cooperation stems from Thailand's desire for energy and water resources to meet the demands of unrestrained consumption and a massive deforestation-linked water crisis. On the Burmese side, SLORC needs foreign currency to support its ever-growing military budget. At present, military expenditures constitute approximately 50% of the SLORC domestic budget.

While the World Bank claims to have suspended all new aid programs to Burma, it continues to disburse funds for previously agreed-on projects, including the gas pipeline. The World Bank has urged the Thai government to intensify negotiations with Burma regarding the import of gas, and to conclude agreements by mid-1994.

[For a full copy of this report and a list of suggested ways to help, contact the BPF office.]

Save the Ancient Redwoods

In August of 1993, North Coast U.S. Rep. Dan Hamburg, along with 80 co-sponsors, introduced the Headwaters Forest Act, H.R. 2866—legislation designed to protect the last of the old growth California redwoods now in the hands of the MAXXAM corporation. Since its junk-bond financed takeover of the Pacific Lumber Company in 1986, MAXXAM has leveled over 40,000

acres of giant redwoods. Thousand-year-old redwoods are being cut every working day to make monthly payments on MAXXAM's debt.

Logging has left less than 4% of the two million acres of redwood forest that once stretched along the California coast. Native species and coastal salmon runs are disappearing at an alarming rate.

Dan Hamburg's bill authorizes the federal acquisition of 44,000 acres of forest land including the 3,000-acre Headwaters Grove and four other major stands of old growth redwoods. The legislation would prohibit logging old growth trees within the bill's boundaries and set about restoring creeks and replanting the lands damaged by MAXXAM's abuses. The bill has broad support in the House of Representatives but there is currently no parallel legislation in the U.S. Senate.

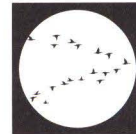
To help save these ancient treasures and their biologically diverse ecosystems please write to your Senators urging them to introduce strong companion legislation to the Headwaters Forest Act, H.R. 2866.

[See articles on pages 16, 22, and 25, this issue.]

Golf Isn't Very Green

Citizens groups from Japan, Thailand, and Malaysia sponsored a conference on golf-course and resort development that attracted delegates from throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting concluded with the launching of a "Global Anti-Golf Movement" to

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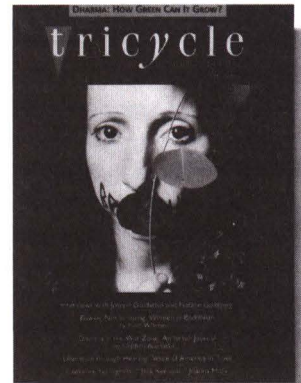
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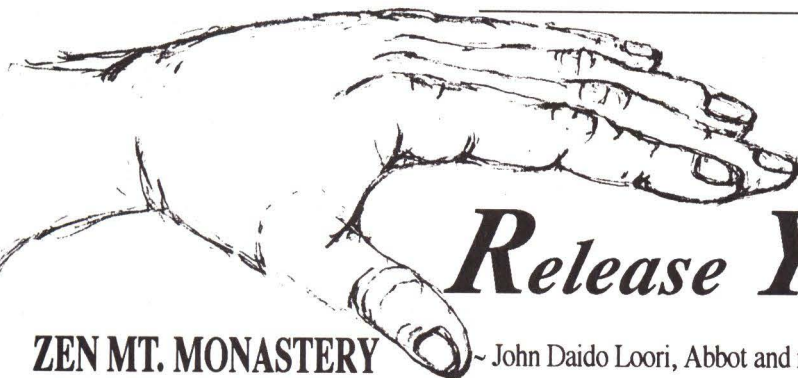
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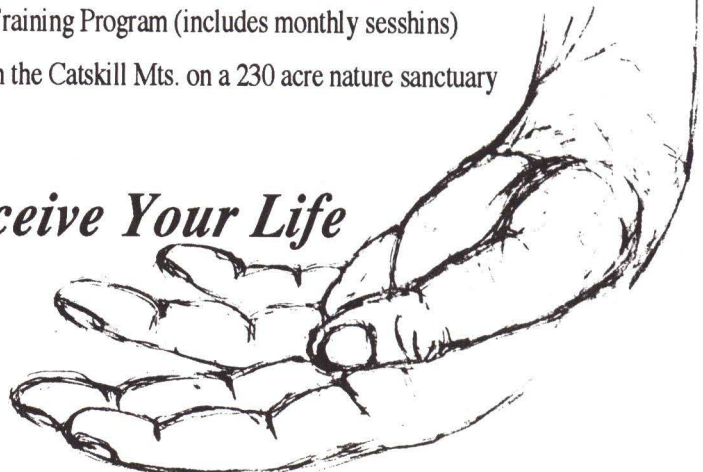
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coordinate opposition to such development.

Golf courses throughout Asia and the world are causing vast environmental destruction. Far too often, precious rainforests are cut down to make way for the imported, non-native soils and grasses that require large amounts of synthetic chemicals. According to Gen Morita, co-founder of the Global Network for Anti-Golf Course Action (GNAGA), an average of 3,300 pounds of chemicals are used on a golf course each year.

Large amounts of water are used up by golf courses as well, sometimes at the expense of the local people's health. According to Chee Yoke Ling of the environmental group Friends of the Earth, the government of Malaysia is paying \$7.8 million for a pipeline that will channel water from the mainland to a golf course resort on the island of Redang, while a group of Malaysians are suffering from a cholera epidemic due to the lack of clean water.

The impact of golf is social as well as environmental. Golf resorts often displace the local populations. For example, in Indonesia, the construction of a golf course in western Java displaced 287 peasants in 1991. Villagers who lost their lands were paid about \$60 per acre by the construction company.

According to Anita Pleumaron of the Asian Tourism Network, golf developments rarely benefit local economies. Instead, the profits go to the investors and multi-national companies. "The big losers are the local people, whose government agencies neglect the social and environmental costs of superfluous golf resorts and even subsidize this fickle business by spending money to promote golf-tourism," she says. For more information please contact: GNAGA, 1047 Naka, Kamogawa, Chiba, Japan 296-01.

Nobel Peace Prize Nominations

Sulak Sivaraksa and Samdech Preah Maha Ghosananda, two members of the BPF International Advisory Board, have been nominated for the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize. Sulak, who was nominated for the prize in 1993 by Nobel Laureate Mairead Maquire, was nominated again this year by the American Friends Service Committee for his commitment to "peace and nonviolence in the fullest sense."

Samdech Preah Maha Ghosananda was nominated by U.S. Senator Clairborne Pell, Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, for his dedication to peace and to the war-time protection of the culture and people of Cambodia. Ven. Ghosananda has established numerous temples in the Cambodian diaspora and co-founded the Inter-religious Mission for Peace in Cambodia. He has also conducted two walks for peace in Cambodia (Dhammayietra) and will be leading a third one to the Khmer Rouge headquarters at Pailin in May 1994. Ven. Ghosananda received the prestigious Norwegian Rafto Foundation Prize for Human Rights in 1992,

and an honorary doctorate of humanitarian service from Providence College in Rhode Island, where he currently resides.

The BPF congratulates these exemplars of compassionate activity on receiving this recognition for their work. May their efforts on behalf of all beings prosper.

Alternative Nobel Peace Awards

The 1993 Right Livelihood Awards, also known as the "Alternative Nobel Peace Prize," were established "to honor and support those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today." They will be shared by five women, or women-led movements, who have made outstanding positive contributions in situations of crisis or conflict:

1. **Arna Mer-Khamis** (Israel) and the organization, **Care and Learning**, which she founded in Jenin (Occupied Palestine) for "passionate commitment to the defense and education of the children of Palestine victimized by military occupation." Recent events offer hope that her work may serve as a contribution for reconciliation between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.
2. **The Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP)** (Zimbabwe), founded by **Sithembiso Nyoni**, "for motivating its million members to choose their own development path according to their culture and traditions, and for its effective response to the most lengthy drought in Southern Africa."
3. **Vandana Shiva** (India), environmental activist, advocate and researcher, for "her pioneering insights into the social and environmental costs of the dominant development process, and her ability to work with and for local people and communities in the articulation and implementation of alternatives." Shiva has done much to place women and ecology at the heart of modern development discourse.
4. **Mary and Carrie Dann** (Western Shoshone Nation of North America), for "their courage and perseverance in asserting the rights of indigenous peoples to their land." For over twenty years the Dann sisters have been at the forefront of their people's struggle against the attempted expropriation of their land by the U.S. Government and its consequent degradation by mining and nuclear testing.

Phra Prachak Works to End Deforestation

In a time when many poverty-stricken people, local timber companies and the government are ignoring Thailand's 1988 logging ban, the Venerable Phra Prachak is working to defend the Thai rainforests from deforestation.

Although best known for ordaining trees as a way of discouraging small-scale logging by poor villagers, Phra Prachak has been exploring other ways to stop the destruction. He has organized local groups of "forest patrols" that have been able to protect areas of forest by



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documenting illegal logging and forming road blockades. Phra Prachak has also led both Thai and Western environmentalists on "Deep Ecology" forest walks and non-violence workshops to raise awareness and explore ways in which they can bring about constructive social change.

Since economic pressures often force the young to seek employment in the cities, Phra Prachak has helped establish several Youth Conservation Groups. By teaching young adults the skills to rebuild their shattered communities and training them in forest restoration, Phra Prachak hopes they will begin to see that life in the countryside is a viable option. His integrated plan for the future includes organic farming, a children's day care center and training the local women to weave silk in order to eliminate the villagers' need to rely on logging for income. In the course of such work, Phra Prachak believes that villagers will be able to slowly regain control over their lives and their community, and demonstrate to the government that it is not only possible, but necessary for humans and the forest to coexist peacefully.

Due to the sharp increase in violence against local "forest patrols," vandalism on temple grounds, governmental harassment, and attempts on Phra Prachak's life, we need to bring world-wide attention and support to help protect Phra Prachak and those working with him.

Please send letters asking that Thailand enforce its logging ban to:

✓ *His Majesty, King Bumiphol Adulyadej, Chitlada Palace, Bangkok 10500, Thailand.*

✓ *Honorable Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister of Thailand, Government House, Nakhorn Pathom Rd., Bangkok 10330, Thailand.*

Donations may be directed to Phra Prachak, c/o the BPF.

[Phra Prachak, along with Phra Paisan Vimalo, a leading Thai social activist monk, will be visiting the United States offering dharma talks, discussion, and several weekend forest walks this coming June. BPF is proud to host them in the U.S. While the precise dates are still tentative, plans include time in the San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle areas. For more information contact the BPF at 510/525-8596.]

New Figures on Homelessness

Homelessness is no longer confined to "skid row." Today, the homeless poor are located in rural and suburban areas as well as in the inner city. The Homeless population includes families with children, people working part-time, people suffering from severe mental illness, people who are homeless on an episodic basis, and veterans of military service.

There are new and alarming statistics on homelessness, at the county, state, and national level. In Northern California, a recent study by the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and Housing shows that in the 1992-1993 fiscal year, 23,847 families in the nine-

county Bay Area experienced an episode of homelessness, an increase of 34% over the previous year. In Alameda County, where the BPF national office is located, the number of homeless families increased by 108%!

In Los Angeles County, according to a 1993 report, between 43,000 and 77,000 people are homeless on any given night. There are less than 9,000 shelter beds in the county. Another related and significant statistic: General Relief in L.A. County has gone down from \$312/month in 1990 to \$212/month in 1994.

Statewide, about 900,000 people have experienced homelessness in California in the past year.

More numbers from the National Coalition for the Homeless: Nationwide, the largest proportion (45%) of the sheltered homeless population is unaccompanied men. 14% are unaccompanied women. The remaining 40% are members of families. *30% are single parents with children.* One third of the population is mentally ill, and one tenth has a physical disability. One third of homeless single men are veterans. *Fifty percent of homeless women and children are fleeing abuse.*

These strings of numbers represent people who huddle over heating grates in the cold, who look for food in the dumpsters behind supermarkets, and for whom the resources that could help them get out of the downward spiral—housing, employment, recovery programs, job training, health services, public assistance—are diminishing.

For more information, call the National Coalition for the Homeless, 202/775-1322; or the California Homeless and Housing Coalition, at 213/746-7690; or HomeBase, at 415/788-7961. For an exploration of homelessness from another perspective, please see "Diary of a Hungry Ghost," on page 28.

[Thanks to Thelma Bryant for gathering this information.]

Studying Ways For Positive Change

The International Society for Ecology and Culture, (ISEC) the parent organization of the Ladakh Project, has recently established a Study Group Program. Its purpose is to bring people together in local groups to develop an integrated understanding of the root causes of, and systemic solutions to, today's numerous ecological and social problems.

ISEC makes available to each group a range of readings and videos that focus on such areas as traditional wisdom, debunking development, the globalization of the economy, and positive steps that can be taken towards a sustainable future.

The ultimate aim of the study group process is to give people the vision and tools with which to make their communities more compatible with life, nature, and real human needs.

For further information on how individuals or BPF chapters can form a study group call or write: ISEC, P.O. Box 9475, Berkeley, CA, 94709, (510) 527-3873.

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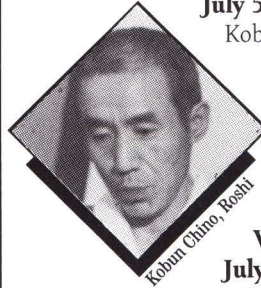
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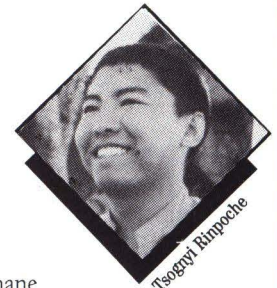
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MAGIC MARBLE

by Patrick McMahon

Crossing my legs in meditation, I feel a small hard lump between my foot and thigh. Not to disturb my neighbors in the meditation hall, I shift my position slightly to relieve the pressure and wait for a break to investigate. What do I discover in my pocket but a marble, a stowaway from the world of Samsara! That's the point of meditation robes, I think: no pockets. But I'd had no time to change, rushed as usual between my classroom and the Buddha Hall.

What to do with it, once on board? Tuck it under my cushion? Shoot it into the woods? Drop it in the recycle container? As I roll it between my palms, considering, it generates a curious warmth—and with it floods, hot as blood, the ache I thought I'd left behind. With resignation I realize there's nowhere to lose this piece of glass, this magic marble. I'm stuck with it.

"Magic Marble" was the name my students had given to our speaking circle. Once a week we'd gather cross-legged on the floor to talk about: stuffed animals, scary movies, birthdays, injuries, illness . . . There was no imperative to speak, but as the marble passed from hand to hand, each had the authority to voice to the group, without fear of interruption, what was in the mind and heart. If nothing came up, one rolled the magic marble around three times between the palms. If still no words came, it passed on. By the time it had gone around the circle, the cold glass was alive with the heat of hands.

I am feeling that heat in the marble now. I recall our recent final discussion, just a week ago, about partings: friends moving away, a parent leaving the family, death. What I'd known then, and they hadn't, was that in a few days I and they would be the ones parting.

For some time now I'd been locked in battle with my principal over the means and ends of education. I had become more and more committed to the vision that each child is by nature intelligent, and impelled out of that intelligence to learn and grow. My job, as I saw it, was to provide implements, like the magic marble, to press on and release intelligence. My program was predictably unpredictable, and our days a steady roller coaster of learning going in 32 directions at any one time. The principal, on the other hand, was dedicated to delivering the curriculum as mandated by the District and the State, and to administering standardized tests. My roller coaster gave her butterflies.

Over the years we'd come to an impasse between these two courses, and she'd put extraordinary pressure on me to conform. I couldn't. Wouldn't. One thing led to another and one afternoon I found myself sitting in her office, hearing that proceedings were underway to terminate me. I could, however, resign at the semester break, avoiding the unpleasant professional repercus-

sions of being fired. As I walked back to my classroom, I knew at last what I had to do. Tired to death of teaching and defending myself, I would jump ship.

But not so easy with 32 shipmates, as I found in the coming week. When I broke the news they nearly capsized. For a good hour we plunged through waves of grief and rage, fear and clinging. The classroom was a wreckage of kleenex. We just managed to get back on keel for lunch. A little recess, a little quiet reading, and we were ready to talk through the intolerable. "The principal doesn't like the way I teach you," I explained. "She hired me, and she can fire me." How well they understood. Their own lives as children, and underclass children at that, had taught them well that the bigger marble wins.

"But we like the way you teach us," they protested. They knew that within the four walls of Room 13, for five months, they'd played another game: one in which there was no right and wrong, no strong and weak, no intelligent and ignorant. They had experienced the magic of speaking in a circle.

What they barely understood was that they had enjoyed a privilege denied to their elders, committed as we were to our positions—cold, glassy, uncompromising positions. For the principal and me there had been no circle in which all points of view—not just hers and mine, but those of other teachers and administrators, parents and community—could be spoken. For us, there had been no magic marble to absorb and give back the heat of human hands.

That's a loss I feel now, hard as the glass in my hands. As I hear the bell calling me back to the Buddha Hall, I roll it between my hands one more time. It presses on my pain, releasing the truth that whatever is openly felt, thought, voiced, is inspiring. This magic marble still radiates the warmth of 32 unguarded hearts. I return it to my pocket. ♦

Now that I no longer have my "own" classroom, I'll be especially curious to know about yours. Please send your stories, reflections and field notes to: 2311 C Woolsey St., Berkeley, CA 94705.

Already at birth
I was parted,
not just from my mother—
but body from mind,
mind from its source—
that's why I take up
this soft blade
of breath
to cut me back into one.

—Peter Levitt

[Reprinted by permission from *One Hundred Butterflies*, Broken Moon Press, 1992.]

CAMPUS ECOLOGY— THE NEXT WAVE

by Stephanie Kaza

“CUPPS! Get your CUPPS¹ cups here—if you don’t have one, you need one!” I regaled the crowds as they left the conference, proselytizing the value of University of Vermont’s trend-setting portable cups. It was a fertile moment, everyone high on Paul Hawken’s inspirational vision of the restorative economy and Amory Lovins’ practical energy designs. Students from Australia, Japan, Ohio, and Minnesota stopped by; they had to have their ecological cups to take home and show others on their campuses. They would be a sign of commitment to reducing waste, to walking one’s talk, to pressing forward with the agenda of the campus ecology movement.

On February 18-20 at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, over 500 students, faculty, and staff came together from all over the U.S. and the world under the generous sponsorship of the Heinz Foundation. I represented the University of Vermont along with two environmental club students, the recycling center staff, and a reporter from the school newspaper. For three days we heard from every green campus program in the country, Tufts CLEAN to “Brown is Green.” Some focused on dorm competitions for energy conservation, others on recycling, and a couple on student-staff research projects. University of Colorado was astonishing with its 36-person staff, 60% campus recycling participation, and 40% diversion of the campus waste stream, saving the equivalent of 89,000 fir trees since 1980. In every example the motivation was clear: the universities should be leading the way towards environmental sanity. How to do this? In every way possible.

Over the course of the weekend, working groups in three tracks prepared a “Campus Blueprint for a Sustainable Future.”² I worked on the section on environmental education across the curriculum—how to radically reorient academic disciplines to train people in environmental systems, policy, and ethics. Our staff joined the group on transforming campus operations—addressing procurement practices, building design, pest management, and solid waste. The students looked at campus organizing—how to raise issues of environmental justice, anti-environmental investment policies, humane food purchase and preparation. The combined declarations formed a sort of Magna Carta for the Campus Ecology movement. Watch out, activists of the 60s—you are about to be outdone!

And thank goodness. We need this, the earth needs this, the young people need this. This is good work, really good work. Environmentalizing the institutions

that pass on our cultural values and intellectual inheritance is absolutely critical to the whole change-over that must happen. If you haven’t read any dire predictions lately, let me tell you, it’s still true—the environment is going downhill at a frightening pace. (See *The State of the World 1994*, by Lester Brown et al. for an update on the cumulative degradation.) Many who live with this stuff day in and day out say we’ve got ten years to turn things around. If the academic institutions drag their feet, it will only hold things up. And given the stodgy nature of tenure and trustees, change may be slow in coming. Enter the campus ecology movement—ready to undertake environmental audits to save money as well as attract environmentally concerned students.

As I left the conference, I couldn’t help feeling elated even in the midst of the despair of it all. The next generation might just save us all. Watch out, presidents and provosts, I think we’ve got a movement on our hands, and it looks really exciting.

1. CUPPS: Can’t Use Plastic, Paper, or Styrofoam.
2. Available from the BPF office.

For Guidelines on environmentalizing your institution, see *Campus Ecology* by April Smith (1993), Living Planet Press, P.O. Box 1679, Venice, CA 90294; and *Ecological Literacy*, by David Orr (1992), Albany: SUNY Press. ❖

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Serving Sentient Beings

In what manner should one accommodate and serve sentient beings? To do so, one should think: Throughout the realm-of-dharmas and the realm-of-space, in the ocean-like cosmos in the ten directions, there are infinite kinds of sentient beings; some are born of eggs, some are born of the womb, of wetness, or of metamorphosis . . . some live by earth, some by water, fire, wind, space, trees, or flowers . . . O countless are their kinds and infinite are their forms, shapes, bodies, faces, life-spans, races, names, dispositions, views, knowledge, desires, inclinations, manners, costumes, and diets. They abide in numerous kinds of dwellings; in towns, villages, cities, and palaces. They comprise the devas, the nagas, the heavenly musicians, the tree nymphs . . . humans, non-humans, beings without feet, beings with two, four, or many feet; some are with form, some are without form, some with or without thoughts, or neither with nor without thoughts. To all these infinite kinds of beings, I will render my service and accommodate them in whatever way is beneficial to them.

Why should we cherish all sentient beings?
Because sentient beings are the roots of the tree-of-awakening.
The Bodhisattvas and the Buddhas are the flowers and fruits.
Compassion is the water for the roots.

—Hua-yen Sutra

A VILLAGE COUNCIL OF ALL BEINGS

Ecology, Place, and the Awakening of Compassion

Upper Indus River watershed, Western Tibetan Plateau, town of Leh,
nation of Ladakh, province of Jammu & Kashmir, State of India.

by Gary Snyder

Helena Norberg-Hodge and the Ladakh Ecological Development Group held a conference called "Rethinking Progress" in Leh in September 1992. Speakers came from Europe, India and the U.S.—Stephanie Mills and I among them. I was asked to speak on "ecology and spirituality." There were some eminent monks in attendance, and a remarkable lay Buddhist philosopher, Tashi Rappes. I felt honored to be given the opportunity to enlarge on what ecological thought and bioregional organizing might offer a Buddhist society under siege from the witless expansionism of the industrial world.

Oecology, as it used to be spelled, is a scientific study of relationships, energy-transfers, mutualities, connections, and cause-and-effect networks within natural systems. By virtue of its findings, it has become a discipline that informs the world about the danger of the breakdown of the biological world. In a way, it is to Euro-American global economic development as anthropology used to be to colonialism. That is to say, a kind of counter-science generated by the abuses of the development culture (and capable of being misused by unscrupulous science mercenaries in the service of the development culture). The word "ecological" has also come to be used to mean something like "environmentally conscious."

The scientist, we are told, seeks to be objective. Objectivity is a semi-subjective affair, and although one would aspire to see with the distant and detached eye of a pure observer, when looking at natural systems the observer is not only affecting the system, he or she is inevitably *part* of it. The biological world with its ecological interactions is *this* world, our very own world. Thus, ecology (with its root meaning of "household science") is very close to economics, with its root meaning of "household management." Human beings, biology and ecology tell us, are located completely within the sphere of nature. Social organization, language, cultural practices, and other features that we take to be distinguishing characteristics of the human species are also within the larger sphere of nature.

To thus locate the human species as being so completely within "nature" is an unsettling step in terms of the long traditions of Euro-American thought. Darwin proposed evolutionary and genetic kinship with other species. This is an idea that has been accepted intellectually, but not personally and emotionally, by most people. Social Darwinism flourished for a while as a popular ideology justifying nineteenth century imperialism and capitalism, with an admiring emphasis on competition. The science of ecology corrects that emphasis and goes a step further. It acknowledges the

competitive side of the process, but also brings forward the co-evolutionary, cooperative side of interactions in living systems. Ecological science shows us that nature is not just an assembly of separate species all competing with each other for survival (an urban interpretation of the world?)—but that the organic world is made up of many communities of diverse beings in which the species all play different but essential roles. It could be seen as a village model of the world.

An ecosystem is a kind of mandala in which there are multiple relations that are all powerful and instructive. Each figure in the mandala—a little mouse or bird (or little god or demon figure) has an important position and a role to play. Although an ecosystem can be described as hierarchical in terms of energy-flow, from the standpoint of the whole all of its members are equal.

But we must not sentimentalize this. A key transaction in natural systems is energy-exchange, which means the food-chains and the food-webs, which means that many living beings live by eating other beings. Our bodies—or the energy they represent—are thus continually being passed around. We are all guests at the feast, and we are also the meal! All of biological nature can be seen as an enormous *puja*, a ceremony of offering and sharing.

The intimate perception of interconnection, frailty, inevitable impermanence and pain (and the continuity of grand process and its ultimate emptiness) is an experience that awakens the heart of compassion. It is the insight of *bodhicitta* that Shantideva wrote of so eloquently. It is the simultaneous awakening of a personal aspiration for enlightenment and a profound concern for others.

Ecological science clearly throws considerable light on the fundamental questions of who we are, how we exist, and where we belong. It suggests a leap into a larger sense of self and family. It seems clear enough that a consequence of our human interdependence should be a social ethic of mutual respect, and a commitment to solving conflict as peacefully as possible. As we know, history tells a different story. Nonetheless, we must forge on to ask the next question: How do we encourage and develop an ethic that goes beyond

intra-human obligations and includes non-human nature? The last 200 years of scientific and social materialism, with some exceptions, has declared our universe to be without soul and without value except as given value by human activities. The ideology of development is solidly founded on this assumption. Although there is a tentative effort among Christians and Jews of good will to enlarge their sense of ethics to include nature (and there have been a few conferences on “eco-Christianity”) the mainstream of Euro-American spirituality is decidedly human-centered.

Asian thought-systems (although not ideal) serve the natural world a little better. Chinese Daoism, the Sanatana (“eternal”) Dharma of India, and the Buddhadharma of much of the rest of Asia all see humanity as part of nature. All living creatures are equal actors in the divine drama of Awakening. As Tashi Rages said, the spontaneous awakening of compassion for others instantly starts one on the path of ecological ethics, as well as the path toward enlightenment. They are not two. In our contemporary world, an ethic of concern for the non-human arrives not a moment too soon. The biological health of the planet is in trouble. Many larger animals are in danger of becoming extinct, and whole ecosystems with their *lakhs* of little living creatures are being eliminated. Scientific ecology, in witness to this, has brought



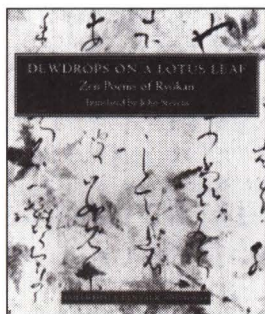
*Shrine of sacred stones and ibex horns, elevation: 14,000 ft., on the trail to the high pasture, Ladakh.
Photo by Susan Moon*

forth the crisis-discipline of Conservation Biology, with its focus on preserving biodiversity. Biodiversity issues now bring local people, industries, and governments into direct and passionate dialogue over issues involving fisheries, marine mammals, large rare vertebrates, obscure species of owls, the building of huge dams or road systems—as never before.

The awakening of the Mind of Compassion is a universally known human experience, and is not created by Buddhism or any other particular tradition. It is an immediate experience of great impact, and Christians, Jews, Muslims, Communists, and Capitalists will often arrive at it directly—in spite of the silence of their own religions or teaching on such matters. The experience may often be completely without obvious ethical con-

Shambhala

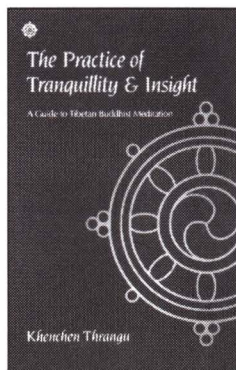
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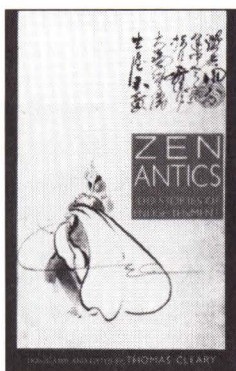
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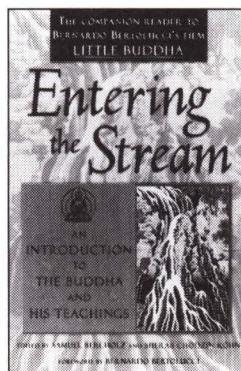
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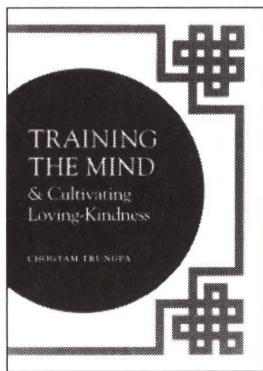
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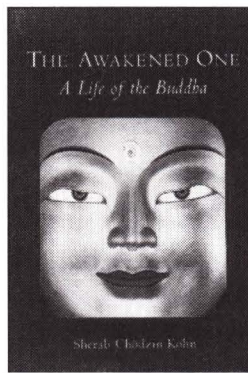
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tent, a moment of leaving hard ego self behind while *just seeing*, just being, at one with some other.

Much of India and the Far East subscribes in theory at least to the basic precept of non-harming. *Ahimsa*, nonviolence, harmlessness, is described as meaning "Cause the least possible harm in every situation." Even as we acknowledge the basic truth that every one of us lives by causing some harm, we can consciously amend our behavior to practically reduce the amount of damage we might do, without being drawn into needless feelings of guilt.

Keeping nature and culture healthy in this complicated world calls us to a kind of political and social activism. We must study the ways to influence public policy. In the western hemisphere we have some large and well-organized national and international environmental organizations. They do needed work, but are inevitably living close to the centers of power, where they lobby politicians and negotiate with corporations. In consequence, they do not always understand and sympathize with the situations of local people, village economies, tribal territories, or impoverished wage-workers. Many scientists and environmental workers lose track of that heart of compassion, and their memory of wild nature.

The actualization of the spiritual and political implications of ecology—that it be more than rhetoric or ideas—must take place place by place. Nature happens, culture happens, *somewhere*. This grounding is the source of bioregional community politics. Joanna Macy and John Seed have worked with the image of a "Council of All Beings." The idea of a *Village Council of All Beings* suggests that we can get specific. Think of a village that includes the trees and birds, the sheep, goats, cows, and yaks and the wild animals of the high pastures (ibex, argali, antelope, wild yak) as members of the community. And whose councils, in some sense, give them voice.

Then to provide space. Any of these Ladakhi and Tibetan village territories certainly should include the distant communal pastures (*p'u*) and the sub-watersheds as well as the cultivated fields and households. In the case of Ladakh, and indeed all of India, when a village is dealing with government or corporation representatives it should insist that the "locally used territory" embraces the whole local watershed. Otherwise, as we have too often seen, the government agencies or business forces manage to co-opt the local hinterland as private or "national" property, and relentlessly develop it according to an industrial model.

We need an education for the young people that gives them pride in their culture and their place, even while showing them the way into modern information pathways and introducing them to the complicated dynamics of world markets. They must become well informed about the workings of governments, banking,

and economics, those despised, but essential mysteries. We need an education that places them firmly within biology, but also gives a picture of human cultural affairs and accomplishments over the millennia. (There is scarcely a tribal or village culture that doesn't have some sort of music, drama, craft, and story that it can be proud of when measured against the rest of the world.) We must further a spiritual education that helps children appreciate the full interconnectedness of life and encourages a biologically informed ethic of non-harming.

All of us can be as placed and grounded as a willow tree along the streams—and also as free and fluid in the life of the whole planet as the water in the water cycle that passes through all forms and positions roughly every two million years. Our finite bodies and inevitable membership in cultures and regions must be taken as a valuable and positive condition of existence. Mind is fluid, nature is porous, and both biologically and culturally we are always fully part of the whole. This ancient nation of Ladakh has always had such people living in it. Some of the beautiful young men and women here today will master the modern world, keep up the Dharma, and continue to be true people of Ladakh. ♦

Gary Snyder is a poet, essayist, and environmental activist who lives in the Yuba watershed, Shasta bioregion, and serves on BPF's Advisory Board. He was one of the founders of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

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WE ALL LIVE HERE

An Interview with Judi Bari

by Susan Moon

Judi Bari is an Earth First! activist who has been working to defend the forest in Mendocino County since 1988. TW readers may remember that in 1990, Judi was nearly killed by a car bomb while she and fellow Earth First!er Darryl Cherney were in the Bay Area, organizing support for Earth First!'s Redwood Summer. Although the evidence shows that the bomb was hidden under Judi's seat and was intended to kill her, police and FBI arrested Judi and Darryl for the bombing, saying that it was their bomb and they were knowingly carrying it. The district attorney declined to press charges for lack of evidence. The police have conducted no serious investigation of the bombing, and the bomber remains at large. Judi and Darryl are suing the FBI for false arrest and violation of their civil rights.

In February 1994, I went to Willits, in Mendocino County, and interviewed Judi. She lives with her two children in a small cabin in the woods, at the end of a long and winding dirt road. It was a cold day, and she gave me tea and periodically stoked the wood stove. At the end of our conversation, she sang me a couple of songs in her lovely voice—she's both a singer and fiddler—and then some friends of hers arrived with their baby for a visit. As I drove away, I passed Judi's eight-year-old daughter walking home from the one-room schoolhouse up the road, and she smiled at me with a beautiful clear-eyed smile. —SM

Sue: Could you say something about the current status of the FBI case?

Judi: We're kicking butt. We're suing them for false arrest and illegal search and seizure. And we're suing them for conspiracy for a change. We're saying that the reason they violated our rights was that it was part of a larger plan to suppress our First Amendment rights to speak and organize by discrediting us as terrorists. The FBI agent in charge of my case, Richard Held, was a major COINTELPRO operative (Counter Intelligence Program). The FBI tried to get our suit dismissed and the judge ruled against them. Then they filed a motion to reconsider, and they got ruled against the *second* time, so they took it to the appeals court. And the appeals court just ruled against them in a very strong ruling, saying that if what we say is correct then the FBI definitely violated our rights.

We're peeling back the layers of deception, and they're really hiding something big. It's clear that they'd rather be caught in a cover-up than be caught with *what* they're covering up.

Sue: Do you see the lawsuit as an activist tool in itself? It's not just that you're working on your own case?

Judi: Very much so. I don't enjoy doing it. I'd much rather be out in the woods. And it's hurt the forest fight that so many of us have to devote our best energies to suing the FBI.

Sue: But how do you see your lawsuit as helpful to the movement?

Judi: First of all, it's necessary. When people realize what we're up against—that they'll try to kill us and then they'll frame us for it—they get scared. It's important to counter the fear that this harassment puts into the community. The second reason is that when people find out that everybody's involved, that less radical people in the community have been investigated, like the Willits environmental center, it helps to de-marginalize us.

*I don't know why I survived the bombing,
other than that I'm strong as an ox!
I didn't choose this. I was chosen for it.*

Another reason is it creates allies for us. We see that other groups have been attacked in the same way: the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, the civil rights movement, the Puerto Rican Independents. We've built very strong alliances.

It's broadening the movement. I was a revolutionary long before I was an Earth First!er. I've been a political activist for twenty years, and I'm a forest activist because I live here. It's one struggle, many fronts. It's the same injustice that oppresses the people and the earth. So in those ways I think it's a valuable organizing tool. But all in all I'd rather be out in the woods.

I don't know why I survived the bombing—I was clearly supposed to be killed—other than that I'm strong as an ox! I didn't choose this. I was chosen for it. And maybe one of the reasons is that I'm capable of it. I've found strength that I didn't know I had.

Sue: Were there times after the bombing when you didn't think you had the strength? It must have been totally terrifying! Didn't you want to make yourself as anonymous as possible?

Judi: It *was* totally terrifying. That was my first reaction. I said: I'm never going to do another public thing in my life. I've done my share. Then they started slam-

ming me, and it became clear that nobody could speak for me as well as I could speak for myself, and so I said: Okay, I'll just be public until the end of Redwood Summer, and then I'll become a private person again. But whatever compelled me to do this work in the first place compelled me to keep doing it.

Sue: You must have learned quite a bit by now about how to be a public person and how to work with the media in the most useful way.

Judi: I try, but I'm not always good at it. I'm too rowdy. Some individuals like me. Mike Gianella, for example. He's a reporter for the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*. He cried when he first saw me in the hospital. He knew we weren't terrorists.

He wrote very moving articles after the bombing, and he won awards for them and lost his job for them, both. When I got the scariest death threat, the rifle with the cross hairs, I took it to his office. He tried to put it in the paper but his editors wouldn't let him.

I argued with him for years about the timber workers. I said "Every time they close a mill you interview the Sierra Club. Interview the mill workers!" And he finally did. He went out to Covelo when they closed the mill. He just walked into a coffee shop and said "What do you think about the mill closing?" And people said to him "Good riddance to Louisiana Pacific. Corporations have never done anything to help this country. It's the small businesses that build it up." And they don't let workers say things like this in newspapers.

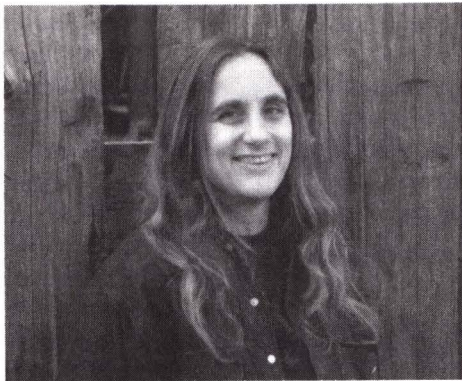
Sue: What about currently? Are you continuing to establish links with timber workers?

Judi: Well, the bombing really put a dent in that. They were just beginning to trust us. And it scared workers a lot, because they have more to lose than some hippie activist. Because you immediately get fired and blacklisted if you speak up. But there are some who speak up. Walter Smith, for example. He's a second-generation Willits logger from an established family.

When I was trying to move back here after the bombing, I got a letter threatening to burn down my "hippie shack" and giving exact directions to this house. They were really terrifying me, trying to keep me from moving back here. Walter Smith went public, he praised the work I had done and made a public offer for me and my family to live with him and his family in Willits, because of the harassment. And that had a lot to do with me being able to move back.

But I had to start from scratch, and slowly build it up

again—our connection with loggers. At the time of the Albion Uprising—that was when we stopped Louisiana Pacific from cutting 200 acres of old growth trees in Albion—there was a lot of underground support from loggers. But it's such an act of courage for a logger to really come forward. Ernie Pardini, a fifth generation logger, came forward and took our side, and defied his family during the Albion Uprising. Ernie is very smart, very articulate, and very unemployed. He didn't even get invited to his family's Thanksgiving dinner. Ernie said, "Loggers know what's going on. They're not stupid. They can see the clearcuts. But they can't come forward because there are no alternatives."



Judi Bari in front of her fence of mill ends from the Mendocino Redwood Co-op

Based on Ernie's vision we formed the Mendocino Redwood Co-op. We tried many times to get sustainable logging rules passed by the state, the feds, or the county, and never succeeded. Now almost all the trees left are private. Corporate lands are almost finished being cut. So Ernie said: Let's get loggers who want to log by sustainable methods to directly solicit landowners who want to treat their land with respect. And because this has to be done on such a small scale, let's do it on a co-op basis.

Sue: Overall is it getting increasingly polarized?

Judi: No, this community has gotten more sophisticated. It was terrifying in '90. It was like being in the Deep South. In fact we used to say that in California, the further north you go, the deeper south you get. It was very tense and it was very divided.

But after a while people looked around. The trees are gone, the companies are shutting all the mills, and we've stood up to everything with nonviolence and without hatred.

Sue: Have you made clear statements of nonviolence to the community?

Judi: Oh, absolutely. And we've proved it over and over, and that's even more important. At its simplest level it came down to loggers shouting "Fuck you!" and hippies yelling back, "We love you!" Responding to hatred without hatred—it sunk in after a while.

This is a rural community. There's something about a rural community that you can't understand in the city. We all live here.

We have a logger-Earth First! party every year, and they're really fun. They get bigger every year. We meet all these people we wouldn't meet otherwise.

They say to me, "We know that a local didn't bomb you, because if a local bombed you, we'd know. We know everybody here." But it's hard for them to deal

with the next question, which is if a local didn't bomb me, and I didn't bomb myself, who did? And that's why it's so suppressed.

Sue: What about for your kids. Is it hard for them?

Judi: Not so much for my younger, because she goes to school right here, and we all know each other. But the older one goes to junior high in town. And she's had kids tease her about me, and say, "Oh, your mother blew herself up!" I told her I wouldn't be insulted if she started using her dad's name, that she didn't have to use "Bari." And she said, "No, I'm proud of my name." I guess it's formed her into a stronger person.

When I was going to drop out, it was partly because of my children. At the time of the bombing, Jessica was 4, and Lisa was 9.

I was empty. I just wasn't there any more. Everybody kind of filled in and held me up when I couldn't hold myself up, in a collective process. At one point Lisa came in and said to me, "I don't want you to quit." And that made a big difference in my ability to go back to it.

Sue: How do you see being a woman as fitting into the work you do?

Judi: I'm as much a feminist as I am an ecologist. It's a major part of my being and of my political basis. I'm an eco-feminist, which I didn't used to know what it meant because eco-feminists use all these big words. But once I finally figured out what it meant I realized that I *am* one.

Before I had children I believed that all the differences between men and women were societal. After I had children I realized that it just happens too early—there are biological differences between girls and boys beyond what the society creates. But the society takes these real biological differences, and exaggerates them beyond all reason, and gives value only to male things of conquering and dominance. The female things of nurturing are assigned no value. So a woman like myself who's aggressive—I've always done male jobs, like carpentry foreman, I was the truck unloader at the post office—I can be valued for that. But when a man or a woman does the female things it's invisible and not valued. I think this society is very unbalanced, and it results among other things in the rapping of the earth.

Sue: Do you feel like you have a spiritual base?

Judi: I do. We've been having very introspective talks about Earth First! lately. Earth First! was never just this macho stuff. Some men in the early days used to make fun of the spirituality, but I think earth-based spirituality is one of the reasons that Earth First! has survived. Because it's really a need that humans have, especially as the earth is dying.

As people defend the earth they become really close to it. These trees protect me, they embrace me. And Earth First! also has developed its own rituals. I think people

need ritual. Even though I feel uncomfortable with them, I think that's a lack in myself, based on my upbringing.

Sue: I know what you mean. I have the same resistance.

Judi: Yeah, I feel *silly!* But I observe that it really fills a need, and it's something that holds people together.

Sue: What are some of the Earth First! rituals that have developed?

Judi: There are the songs, of course. And circles. It's pagan-based and it's goddess-based. But the thing that became the signature of the Albion Uprising and the local Earth First! movement—which is different in many ways from the national movement—the one tactic that we invented in Albion is called yarning.

When we started the Albion Uprising, the first two tree-sitters were lesbians. But still, there weren't a lot of women in the movement. They said, "Well, it's not as easy for us as the men. We have children, and we can't just show up on a minute's notice. We have to arrange child care. We're single mothers; we can't abandon our children. We need to do some kind of effective action without risking arrest."

I told them about the Chipko tree-huggers, and people were going *Wow! That sounds just like us!* And I told them the story about the sacred threads, how the Chipko women walked into the forest with lanterns and they each tied a sacred thread between themselves and a tree. We decided we were going to go out there with yarn and weave it in and out and in and out and in and out of the trees. We were very excited. I couldn't go because I can't walk around in the woods, but they just yarned the shit out of the whole woods. They said this is the web of life.

Sue: Did it look pretty?

Judi: The first ones were just kind of random, but there have been beautiful, wonderful webs. It turns out that you can't cut a web with a chain saw. It winds around the chain saw and stalls it out. You can do it with a logger's ax but it bounces against the yarn, and you can do it with a knife, but it gets dull really fast. The fastest way to get through yarn is with scissors, which is so un-macho, they hate it. They hate yarning.

The tactic of Earth First! is direct action at the point of production. It's the same reason a union has power. So we block production at the point of production. We don't block it forever! If you sit in a tree, eventually you come down. But we slow them down. We slow them down so much they can't ignore it, and eventually they make political concessions. Yarning is a wonderful way of doing that. It's become our signature.

Sue: It reminds me of the tree ordinations being done in Southeast Asia by Buddhist monks who are trying to stop the cutting of the teak forests. They put sacred robes around trees and ordain them as priests.

Judi: That's great! When Cal Trans cut down five big old redwoods to widen Highway 101, a lawyer up here filed a wrongful death suit on behalf of them. It didn't work but it was a good idea.

Sue: Do you have connections with groups working on urban environmental problems?

Judi: No, and I think that's one of the biggest lacks that we have. I think that was one of the flaws in the original conception of Earth First! The destruction of the wilderness is one part of the cycle, but the dumping of the toxics in the cities is the same cycle of destruction. I don't think we have a chance until we deal with that.

The reformist attitude doesn't go far enough—groups like the Citizens' Committee for the Reduction of Hazardous Waste. Reduction of hazardous waste?!? *Excuse me!* We shouldn't even be producing this stuff in the first place.

How are we going to stop this? The corporations have the physical power. The only way I think it can be stopped is by noncooperation—if the workers in the factories refuse to produce the toxics. That's the difference between a reformist movement and a revolutionary movement. I'm a revolutionary, and I do not think the system can be reformed. I think the system is *based* on the destruction of the earth.

Sue: And we have to change the way we think about the toxics that already exist. We have to take care of them.

Judi: I agree. It's not just that we need a different economic system. We need a different morality. We need a really profound change. Some say this change has to come from within. Others say it has to be an external change, a political change. I think it's both.

Relating to the urban groups is really important. For one thing, 80% of the people live in cities. These little urban groups that go out to the country to defend trees and then go back to the city—that's not a long-term strategy at all. It allows the corporations to say, "It's our community against the outsiders," instead of the corporations being seen as the outsiders.

The alternative culture exists here side by side with the old logging culture and with the much older Indian culture, and these are all really important elements in making this area what it is. The loggers have been here for five generations, and if the forest speaks to us in one generation, it certainly speaks to them in five. They love the land, too. They're caught in a contradiction.

The elements of a resistance movement are all here. It's not a coincidence that this movement has risen up here. It's because of the land. I have a lot of hope for it, because I have a lot of belief in the strength of the land.

Sue: Tell me about your health.

Judi: It sucks, and it's declining. I don't know why I lived through this—I was clearly supposed to die. My backbone really hurts, every second of every day. My foot is paralyzed. Genital feeling is gone. All that got taken away from me. And then I have this nerve damage, and when I get tired I get these nerve zaps that feel like electric shocks. It's slowly getting worse. I don't have a full life left. I know that.

Sue: How limited is your physical activity?

Judi: I can walk about an eighth of a mile. I can't sit or walk or stand indefinitely. I have to move around.

Another bad thing about the pain is that it affects my relationships with people. People feel guilty that they can't do anything about it. I have to suppress it, or people leave, because they feel uncomfortable. A level of pain that used to lay me flat I can now endure without changing my expression. I'm just telling you because you asked!

Sue: It sounds like you've had some real meditative training.

Judi: Well, the whole thing has really changed me, and it's certainly made me more meditative. It's made me deeper, somehow. Why did it happen to me? Why did I survive it? Why do I have to live on in this kind of pain? They're not easy questions to answer. It's really changed me. I'm still arrogant and flippant and stuff like that, but I'll never be as arrogant and flippant as I used to be. I wish I could!

Sue: Where do you get your strength from?

Judi: I don't know. I get it from somewhere. In the hospital, they kept sending me psychiatrists. But what does a psychiatrist learn in school that's going to make them be able to understand what I'm going through? I said, "I don't want to talk to a psychiatrist, I want to talk to a Salvadoran peasant!"

I get strength from other people who have stood up to greater hardships. One of them is John Trudell from the American Indian Movement—awesome poet. He gave a speech in Washington, and he burned a flag in front of the BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] office. And when he went home his family had been murdered: his wife, his mother-in-law and his three children. He wrote a poem about it. When I listened to it I just poured out crying, and I listened to it over and over. One of the things he says is, "People tell me I'm strong to survive. I'm not weak, I'm not strong." And that's how I feel—I'm just here. What else can I do? I can't turn my back on the struggle and say, "Okay, you bombed me, you ruined my life, so I'm going to go away. And thank you for not putting me in jail." I can't do that. I'm compelled to do something about it. ❖

*You can't cut a web of
yarn with a chain saw. It
winds around the chain
saw and stalls it out.*

ON LOOKING AT LANDSCAPE

by Norman Fischer

The landscape is talking to me. I am hearing voices. They are not speaking words in the usual sense; they are speaking words of another order, impressions more powerful and moving than ordinary words, a singular, symbolic, terribly precise communication, as if a dream, that is rearranging my internal apparatus. My intentions are changed. My motivations are completely altered. My perspective is, literally, changed. The history that I thought I had is not now my actual history; an identity wholly other than the one called up by my name is insinuating itself into my most subtle feelings.

I hardly understand, consciously, as it happens. But underneath the play of my ceaseless thinking, which gradually becomes less compelling, and then finally stops altogether, I can sense it. Because I don't really know it is happening I do nothing about it. I don't evaluate it or wonder about it. Consequently, I am open to the landscape; I do not grapple with it; rather, my mind and heart receive it in an empty condition. It is a liberating and a calming experience. I am renewed, magnified.

I am walking up the steep hillside behind my house. Ahead of me I can see layer on layer of hills, *gray-brown and green*, covered with scrub. Above that the sky is full of dense, slate-colored clouds over the ocean, with open patches blazing sunlight on the water. It is winter. The fallen stalks of hemlock slash against the earth-colored hills. Mostly I don't understand the landscape, don't know the names of the plants or the natural history of what surrounds me. I used to know more but I've forgotten. Knowing the names of things, I relate to them more closely and they appear to me more as individuals. My relationship is warmer. But after a while, my desire to know more about them, the feeling that I know them because I know their names and something of their histories, blunts my relationship to them. I want to protect them or love them, and I have less ability to be unknowingly influenced by them. Maybe that is why whatever I have known or now know about them so easily falls from my mind and I walk around in the weather like an idiot or an animal.

A sense of place escapes me. I do not know what that would feel like. I am not a regionalist, if that means using a place, belonging to its specifics, identifying with that place as though it were my own, affecting it, being affected by it in ways that I can understand.

Every place on earth has a long geological history. These hills were at one time at the bottom of the

ocean. I say "these hills," but when they were at the bottom of the ocean they were not these hills. Their shape, the earth and rock that form them, the vegetation that grows on them, were at one time all completely otherwise. And this coastline is drifting slowly north, a few inches a year. So when I think of this place, what of all that do I mean? All of it shifting, past and future present now.

I am nowhere when I am here, or I am everywhere. Hard to name any of it. But I can sense something about which I cannot speak.

In the High Sierra, a place I like to go and that has influenced me as much as any place on earth, you can stand in a completely silent place, a place that feels ancient, eternal, and you can know that a devastating event happened in an instant a long time ago. A tree suddenly uprooted by lightning or the weight of snow. A burst of lava shooting out of the earth. The rocks speak of it.

I first came to California driving West from Iowa City. I remember the journey as if it were a dream, mile after mile of prairie, then mountains, desert, mountains again. I had never seen such vistas of open space, where you could look at the skeleton of the earth, where you could feel the past so graphically, where the human was so dwarfed and irrelevant. This landscape exposed you on all sides. There was no shelter. It was at once frightening, exhilarating, and comforting.

Looking at a river flowing by is a particular kind of communication. There's a sense of urgency, of restlessness. The sunlight sparkles on the rippling water. If you throw something in, it vanishes downstream right away; in this way you can feel the speed and the power of the river that otherwise seems motionless in its constant motion. Night and day it never stops; sometimes muddy, sometimes clear; powerfully destructive in winter, inviting and cool in summer.

I grew up on a river. I crossed it by bridge almost every day and looked down on the wide expanse of moving water. The river received the force of all my moods and purged me of them. Walking across the bridge, I imagined that unexpected things were possible. That between the west side of the river and the east, some ultimate, life-changing event might happen, and might happen today. I have never gotten over this. Sometimes I think it is a childish notion, one that only a lonesome boy in a very small town would dream up. Other times I know it is really true, and that my experience has proven it. The river is not stupid.

*To be a regionalist, to be too tied
to a place, seems narrow-minded.*

There are many places . . .

To be a regionalist, to be too tied to a place, seems narrow-minded. There are many places, each with its charms and influence, and we need to be open to them all. To be too tied to one place is to neglect the relativity of things, to be closed to the unexpected. Humankind grew up, advanced and changed in places that allow great commerce with other people, the great seaports or river ports, the crossroads. Maybe we are or can be citizens of the earth.

And yet, do we ever escape our region? Is this a possibility? Intellectuals from New York, the Bay Area, China, Germany are all different in their points of view. What influences that? Though the landscape is covered with asphalt and the sky obscured by tall buildings, what is it that gives rise to all the words that are uttered in parlors and cafes, written down in books and periodicals? We imagine that we have ruined or will destroy or save the earth, as if we possessed a consciousness that had a view of the earth. I sometimes imagine that the reverse is the case: that we are in fact products of the specific regions we inhabit, expressions of the stones, the waterways, the soil and air of our regions, for the amusement and curiosity of all. No region can be defined or exactly located.

Seeing mountains from a distance. Approaching the foothills from the plain. Looking at a lake in the early morning. Surveying the lowlands from the top of a mountain. Viewing the ocean at sunset, at twilight, at noon.

When I first moved to California I had two ambitions: to live in a redwood forest and to spend a lot of time looking at the ocean. I was fortunate to be able to do both. I wanted to do these things because I felt that the world and myself were broken. I had been involved in politics and had come to a kind of inner and outer chasm over which there was no passing. I felt, unconsciously, that the redwoods and the ocean would heal me. This more or less worked. I went to live first in an abandoned sawmill in the middle of a redwood forest. It was cold and damp. Every day I went out to walk in the forest. I spent a long time looking up at the sky, sighted along the trunks of the tall trees. A redwood forest is very quiet, cathedral-like. Now and then a shaft of sunlight shines through a gap between the tall trees onto the thick carpet of needles underneath. Only a few plants grow, and not much wildlife.

At the ocean, later, I watched the powerful movement of the water, restless, unsettling. Here was something foreign. You can walk up and down the beach for a long time, your thoughts seeming to roll and repeat themselves like the water. The ocean mirrored my inner confusion; it increased it, stirred it up, I think. Through the living room window of my friends' house we could see the expanse of ocean as we talked. The

water's movement dwarfed our words and our emotions. When there was a storm over the ocean, it was impossible to talk at all. There was just the storm.

It is the imagination, not the intellect or the emotions, that responds to the landscape. Intellect and emotions react to what is present or to what is desired, what is possible but not present. Hand and mind define and alter things, and heart loves it or hates it and complicates it in the loving and hating. But we have unrealizable goals, impossible, undefinable, even shocking desires. And it is to these desires that the imagination responds, as if the imagination were a *supra physical* sense of which our ordinary self can't be entirely aware. Imagination doesn't proceed from us directly; it seems to come as a song or as speech emanating from someone else. It's as if we overhear its communication from a distance. Imagination makes something out of us and

out of the immediately present world that releases the tension produced by these unrealizable goals. Imagination, play, receptivity, the power of the unknown. That is why the encounter with landscape is a personal encounter. Landscape

doesn't exist outside our mind; it is the shape of the mind, the shape of the imagination.

Suppose that human development proceeded in a spiral, passing through the same point at each higher revolution. At first the personal, the individual—what are these hands and feet, these eyes and ears; then the interpersonal, out of which comes our language and a deeper, more perplexing sense of who we are: knots and snarls, wishes and dreams. And perhaps a further quite natural development—the healing development, beyond which there can be no other—is into the *supra personal*, the undefinable, the realm touched only by the imagination, into which ordinary language, senses, and emotions are powerless to travel. Landscape. Our relationship to the non-human.

*A white bark pine at the top of a mountain
Dead manzanita bushes like dark tortured arms in
the moonlight*

*A quiet lake in the evening, vapors and trout gently
rising*

*Straw-colored hills dotted with Coast Live Oaks
A quick white stream far down at the bottom of the
canyon*

*First view of the ocean
The sky at night*



[Reprinted with permission from *Five Fingers Review*, 1993.]

Norman Fischer is a poet and a Zen priest at Green Gulch Farm in Northern California. He is currently teaching high school.

*Landscape doesn't exist outside our
mind; it is the shape of the mind,
the shape of the imagination.*

DISTRIBUTION OF OLD GROWTH CONIFEROUS FORESTS IN THE MATTOLE RIVER WATERSHED

by Freeman House

Freeman House is a bioregional organizer who lives in the Mattole Valley of Northern California, Shasta Bioregion. He is a cofounder of the Mattole Restoration Council. Original copies of the map described here can be purchased from the Council for \$2.50 postpaid at P.O. Box 160, Petrolia CA 95558.

[The following is excerpted from "Watersheds as Unclaimed Territories," in *Boundaries of Home: Mapping for Local Empowerment*, ed. Doug Aberley, New Society Publishers, 1993.]

The Mattole Restoration Council was created to establish a forum for the kind of watershed-wide decisions that would need to be made as habitat rehabilitation programs were designed.

Whether you are designing a rehabilitation plan or zoning for the enhancement of biodiversity, the obvious first step is to find out what's there now. When we began to inquire into the actual extent of the logging in the valley and the amount of old growth remaining, we quickly found that nobody knew. The large industrial landowners were foggy on the concept; the smaller landowners hadn't the time or money to monitor systematically, and the state acted as if no one had ever asked the question before. If we really needed to know, and we did, we would have to do the mapping ourselves.

The project presented itself as an opportunity to deepen, systematize, and share our collective local knowledge and skills. We became determined to make two maps: one of the watershed in 1947, before any large-scale industrial harvest had occurred; and one for the present, to show how much of the original ecosystem was left intact.

We divided the 300-square mile watershed into twelve groups of tributaries, each less than 50,000 acres. In most areas, we were able to locate one or two local inhabitants who were familiar with the landscape surrounding their homes. We acquired for them aerial photos of the watershed shot by an Oregon survey corporation.

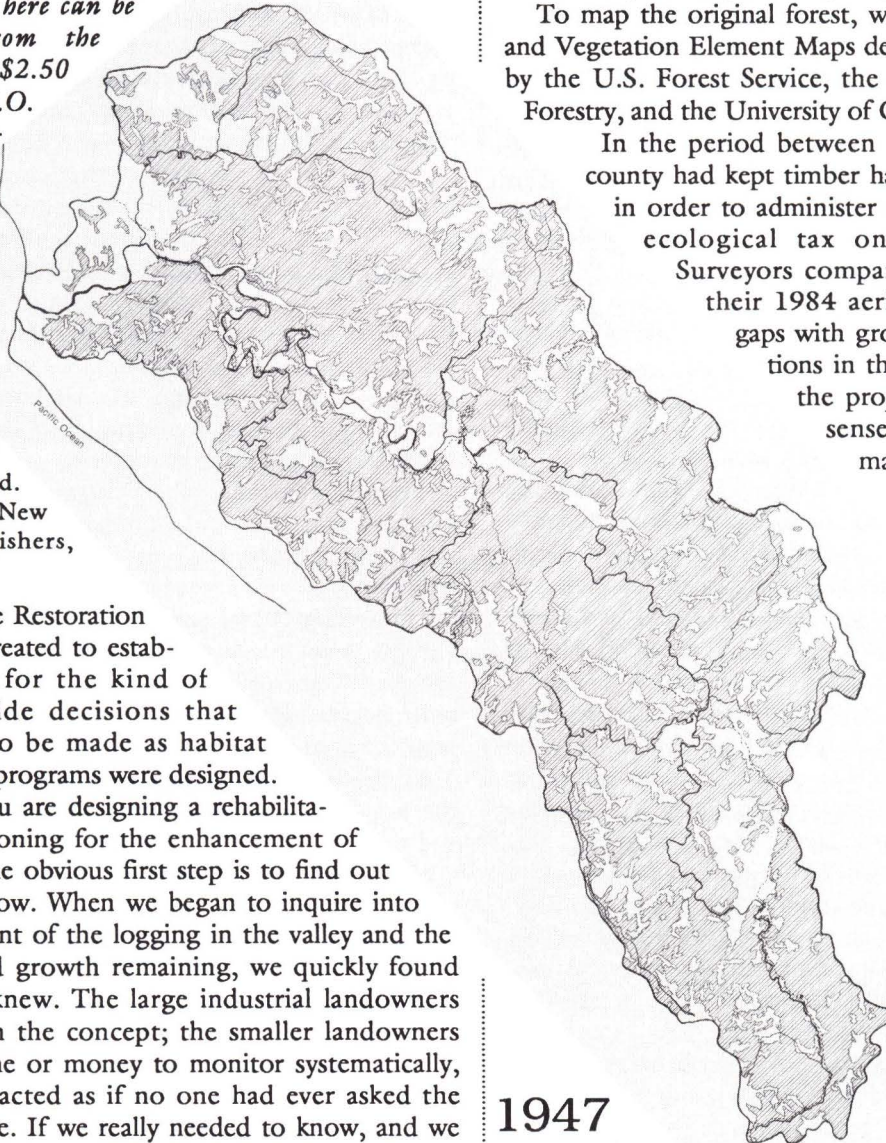
To map the original forest, we used Timber Stand and Vegetation Element Maps developed in the 1950s by the U.S. Forest Service, the State Department of Forestry, and the University of California.

In the period between 1960 and 1972, the county had kept timber harvest inventory maps in order to administer an onerous and anti-ecological tax on standing timber.

Surveyors compared these maps with their 1984 aerials and filled in the gaps with ground-truthing expeditions in the field. This phase of the project was filled with a sense of discovery, as the map filled in like a particularly challenging jigsaw puzzle laid out on a very large table.

There followed a tedious period of preparing the product for print. A small cadre of artists, enthusiasts, and road-runners struggled with standardizing various notetaking styles.

Computerized geographic information systems didn't exist. Early in 1989, we were ready for the printer and out of money. Local tributary stewardship groups dug into their meager budgets, and some surveyors kicked back their stipends to allow us to print a poster of the map, in two colors, and mail it to every resident and landowner in the watershed, as well as to all the regula-



tory agencies which had anything to do with logging in the Mattole.

There can be no doubt that the map was a powerful tool. A durable watershed-based community has emerged in the empowering process of developing the information it needs to understand its situation. Two thirds of the old growth areas identified in the 1988 map have been afforded some measure of protection, and the disposition of the remaining one third continues to be debated.

Systematic survey and notation has become a habit of mind for many local residents.

Write-in-the-Rain notebooks and cameras have become as important a part of some canoe trips and creek hikes as sandwiches and canteens. ♦

MIND MAPS

by
Stephanie Kaza

Mapping, the way Freeman House describes it, is good training in systems thinking. It is also good training in *paticca-samuppada*, the Law of Interdependence. One quickly finds, in a most non-theoretical way, that everything is in fact connected to everything else. But that is too glib. Actually, specific parts of the everything are connected in specific ways to specific other parts. The mapmaker's challenge is to name the parts and track the relationships. No abstractions here. One walks from river valley to ridge top surveying the lay of the land and the shape of the forest, checking for what is called "ground truth." These days most maps are based on pictures from space which are good at the overview but may miss critical details of the local structure. Ground truthing means checking your (mapmaking) assumptions and watching for accuracy in communication.

Maps reflect the perceptions of the mapmakers. If one is inclined to fragmentation, the map can appear to be a collection of interesting but detached objects that happen to all reside near one another. But if one sees relationship instead, a map becomes a mantra, a way to perceive reality in a more integrated way. For example, a new map of the East Bay Creeks of the San Francisco Bay area shows the

creeks as running continuously from the hills to the Bay. The above-ground stretches are in blue and the culverted sections are in red. Still, the lines are connected. One begins to imagine the water's journey, seeing the landscape from a gravitational point of view. Seeing the buried creeks there in red, one thinks—ah, to liberate them! What joy! And thus is born another urban creek activist group. These things are possible; the map helps us see it.

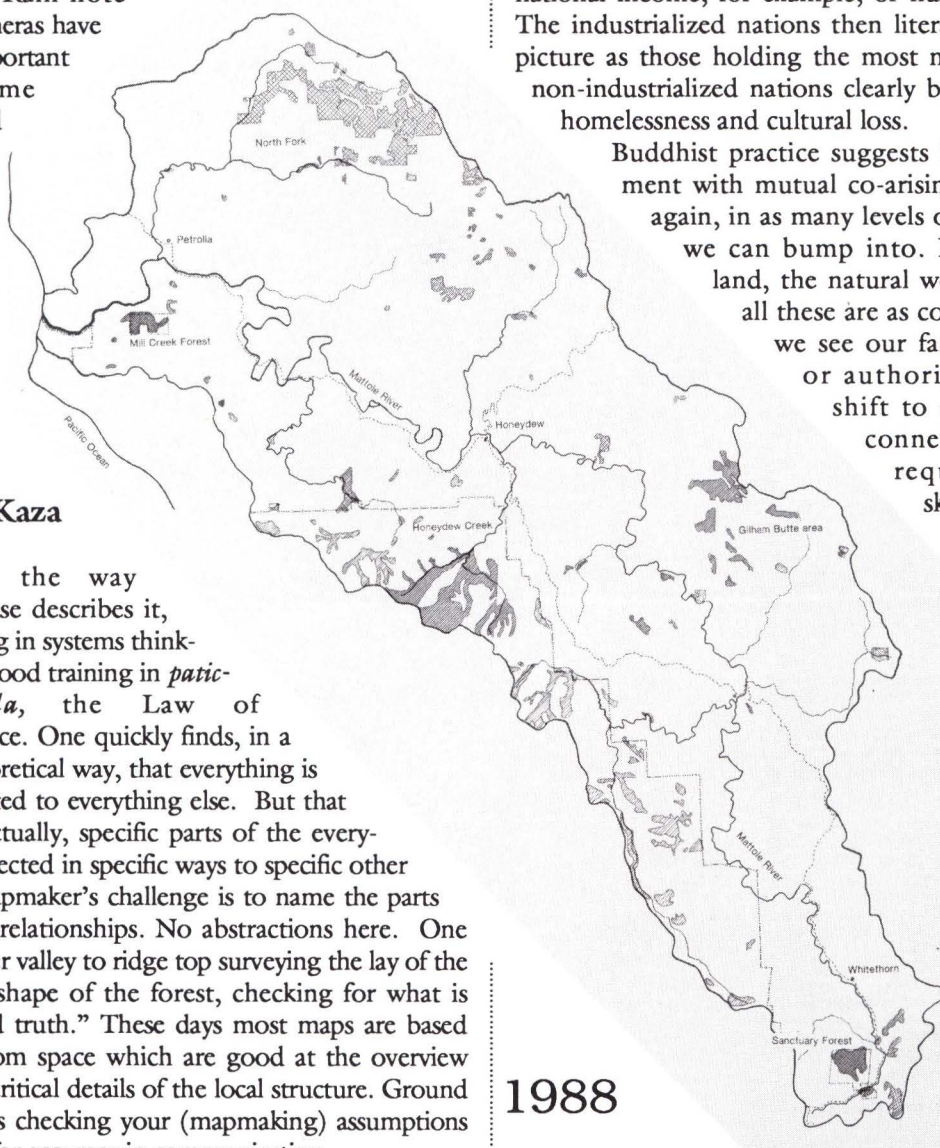
Another collection of maps, *The State of the World Atlas*, takes on established assumptions of power and physical presence in the world. The mapmakers shrink or swell each country according to its relative size of national income, for example, or number of refugees. The industrialized nations then literally dominate the picture as those holding the most money power; the non-industrialized nations clearly bear the weight of homelessness and cultural loss.

Buddhist practice suggests in-depth engagement with mutual co-arising, over and over again, in as many levels of conditioning as we can bump into. How we see the land, the natural world, the forest—all these are as conditioned as how we see our families, emotions, or authority figures. The shift to a systems-interconnected orientation requires effort and skill building. It is

not a mere matter of picking up a new belief. Westerners have centuries of philosophical, theological, scientific, and moral conditioning which favors a fragmented, mechanistic angle on the world. It takes real

1988

work, real practice to untangle these thought patterns and build up some new ones that actually help us put the pieces together. Understanding the shape of the landscape as a whole increases the odds that we might be able to respond as whole beings, with heart and soul and body arising out of that land. Mapmaking is a good place to begin. ♦





Davis TeSelle, "Pilgrimage"

FOR THE TREES

by Peter Levitt

If a tree falls in the forest, and there is no one there to hear it, does it make a sound?—question asked by the humans after they stopped living in forests.

*

If a tree falls in the forest, and there is no one there to hear it, *it makes a sound.* (How could there be no one there to hear it?) That sound is heard simultaneously in all places around the earth and into the heavens, by all things. In that moment when the tree falls, it is the sound of our world.

*

If a whole forest falls in the forest, the sound it makes is unbearable—so unbearable we pretend we can't even hear a single tree when it falls, and ask about it, lowering the two bats of our eyes.

*

If a child falls in the forest, any child, your child, your sapling of a girl or boy, or one you are fond of, if this child falls, scraping a limb, perhaps, and cries out, and there is no one there to hear it, the sound never leaves you, but flies through the air of you like a wild parrot, repeating its cry. The forest is filled with the parents of these ones—the mothers and fathers who have come there for the comfort, the advice, of their elders, the trees, and to find their fallen young. After a while, these parents become birds themselves. You can hear them calling with a two or three note song:

Who's there? Who's there?

Is it you? Is it you?

*

When we enter a forest, we are entering the body of a living being. A kind of sacredness is there. Who has not felt the silence move through them like a fragrant ghost, rising from their first steps on the forest floor? Rare is the person who has truly been there and not, in some way, offered a bow.

Here is a story given to us from the ancient forests of India, though it could easily happen right here, say, among the last old-growth stands hugging our Pacific shore:

One day the Buddha was walking through the forest with some good friends. Suddenly he stopped and pointed to the ground. This would be a good spot for a sanctuary, he said. Indra, who was known as the Emperor of the gods, took a blade of grass and stuck it into the ground. The sanctuary is built, he said. And all of them smiled.

The sanctuary is already built. The sanctuary inherent in the smallest green shoot. The sanctuary of our

elders' strong-hearted lives, rooted in the earth's deep bed. This sanctuary is built. Built from beginningless time. And isn't that why we go to the forest? To enter the sanctuary, to walk within it, to breathe its air, to hear its sudden, its subtle sounds, or the long weaving sigh wind makes high in its branches, needles and leaves, to find that part of ourselves we did not even know we had lost, to ask about ourselves: *Who's there? Who's there? Is it you? Is it you?* To do all of this—isn't that why we go—and to remember?

How do we remember? How does the forest help us stitch and weave until the fabric of our memory is made whole again? We once lived in forests. Do you remember? It was a life before this human one. We were minerals. We were sunlight on the forest floor. We were spore, fungi, bacteria, plant-life, insect. We were the green leaf, the red vein. We were chlorophyll, photosynthesis. We were snowdrift. We were the sound of rain. It is in us. Do you remember? We once lived

Do you remember? . . .

We were the green leaf, the red vein . . .

We were the sound of rain.

there. I know we can remember because just as we once were the life of the forest, the forest is still alive in us. Can it be that forests are lawyers, baseball players, poets, astronauts, loggers, school teachers, doctors, mathematicians, car mechanics?

Trees of the old-growth are the great-great-great-great-great grandmother/grandfathers of our world. Elders. The ones we go to so that we may learn from the long and broad lives they've lived, for our forests are tellers of part of our own history.

If a forest is whole, (and this means that if, as part of the life of the forest, it is logged by women and men who see with the eyes of the forest itself), it is a model of compassionate provision for the lives of squirrels, birds, snakes, bear, coyote, deer, elk and humans. It is the natural way of forests to give us our lives, purifying and protecting the air of this breathing world. It is their natural way to nourish the soil, even as they are nourished by it, to provide food for millions of species, to become clothing, home to the marmot, woodpecker, wolf. It is their nature to offer their own lives for all the family of living things to thrive, each according to its various needs and way. It is their natural way to serve. Isn't that what true elders understand? But it is not part of their natural way for entire forests to be cut

down. And it is not part of our natural way to cut them down. Not natural, not needed. It does not serve.

If each of us were to arrange to go to the forest, and live beneath a tree, as an apprentice, for a cycle of just four seasons, we would learn—it would come back into our hands—how to serve. The tree would give us back to ourselves. We would emerge like bright seedlings, carrying the essence of our ancestors. All of this with the fresh green moistness of new life.

*

Whatever befalls the Earth, befalls the sons and daughters of the Earth. —Chief Seattle

Beside me, as I write this, there is a picture postcard. A miniature from our world. In the midst of the lush foliage of a forest, seven human figures have thrown their bodies in despair over the huge stump of a tree. By the size of the stump it is clear that this tree lived hundreds of years before it was felled. The circular cut of the stump they weep upon is so broad that their outstretched hands don't even approach the central birth-ring of the tree. And, there are no other ancient trees in view. On the back of the card it says this:

If trees could scream no one on earth would sleep peacefully again.

The picture is from a painting by Jane Evershed, called *Mourning in the Rainforest*.

The scream of the trees is everywhere about us. It's in the way we turn from each other's eyes when we meet. What kind of light might we find arcing between us if we were to risk a look?

Because entire mountainsides are marked for the cut, it is easier for young gang members who have never been to a forest to cut each other down. The colors they wear, signifying their tribe, mark them for "the cut" as well. Doesn't *slash and burn* feel almost identical with *search and destroy*? The violence of the clearcut and the violence which keeps us cowering behind the walls of our rooms, afraid to go out into the open air, are based on the same thoughtless, wasteful, delusion-centered mind. Every forest creature knows what happens when the machinery of the cut, carrying the full weight of its intention, dozes its way into the sacred body of the forest. It shakes the ground.

And our ground is shaking. I don't mean only the literal soil in which the forest community has taken root and grown, matured, propagated and re-propagated again and again for millions of years, but the deeper, more extensive ground of being, the *root of the root*, until that shaking can be felt and is known everywhere, in each cell of the larger organism we call Earth, our home. That ground is shaking with a devastating fright. Because it is wanton, this destruction. It is wanton, to massacre the forests. Without true necessity. Ignorant. Ignoring.

Recently a rabbi friend of mine told me that it is part of mystical Jewish thought that when we do not

acknowledge and honor our relationship to the Source, when we defile the sacred ground of our existence, we are not the only ones whose lives are diminished, but that the *ground* itself—the Source—diminishes as well. I was shocked. Could it be so? Do we really have that kind of effect? To answer that question we only need to look carefully at our present world. Are we heading for a time when we will have cut down all the trees? A time, therefore, when we will no longer be there to hear the last tree as it falls, and will ourselves make no sound—our no-sound the final soundless scream of all the trees? Please look with me. The evidence is everywhere around.

Don't massacre the trees. ♦

[Excerpted by permission from *Beloved Of The Sky, Essays on Clearcutting*, edited by John Ellison, Broken Moon Press.]

Peter Levitt is a poet living in Santa Monica. His last two books of poetry are *One Hundred Butterflies* and *Bright Root, Dark Root*, from Broken Moon Press.

FULL, AS IN GOOD

by Nina Wise

I ask him his name.

"Boonchan," he says. "It means full moon."

"Which word is which?" I ask.

"Chan is moon. And boon is . . ." He hesitates and a broad grin of perfect teeth spreads out across his face. His hair falls almost to his shoulders in soft lines, and he has the kind of full cheeks that make you laugh inside. He is delicious without his shirt, like Thai iced coffee. We are having breakfast—curried vegetables in coconut milk, brown rice, and deep orange papaya cut into thick wedges.

A cool breeze welcomes the morning in this modest dining area, shaded by an overhead room that serves as the office for Wongsanit Ashram, a center for Buddhist activists located a few hours outside of Bangkok. The ashram was founded by Sulak Sivaraksa, a Buddhist activist who has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize two years in a row. I was there to participate in a conference on how to protect Thai culture and language.

"Boon means full, but more like good, or . . ." Boonchan hesitates again. "When a Thai person makes an offering at a temple or does a good act, they call it making boon."

Boonchan is 29. He left his village, Ban Srithani, in the northeast of Thailand, ten years ago to study economics at the university in Bangkok. After three years, he dropped out of school.

"It didn't make any sense," he says. "My professors only talked about profit, profit, profit. I was working as a bartender in a five-star hotel and as a maitre d' at a

good restaurant. I was making a lot of money, but my life was empty. I went back to my village.”

Boonchan tells me he was a buffalo boy when he was young. He would wake up early, before dawn, climb on top of his water buffalo, lie back, and watch the sky turn from black to pink to blue. He smiles when he remembers the sky. Then, he says, he would lie on his belly and stretch out his arms to hold onto the water buffalo’s horns. He would fall asleep, rocking on the buffalo’s back, as they plowed the fields. The buffalo knew his way around the rice paddies, so Boonchan could rest. After a few hours, they would stop to swim together in the river.

“I loved my buffalo,” Boonchan grins shyly. “And the buffalo loved me.”

When a water buffalo dies, the family comes together for a ceremony, because the buffalo is like a member of the family. They bury the buffalo in the earth and a monk chants the traditional funeral prayers at the grave site. The family then plants lantorn, the flower of sorrow, on the grave. The sweet-smelling white flowers draw the spirits to the earth.

“A year ago, the farmers in my village began to use

Boonchan was a buffalo boy when he was young . . . He would fall asleep, rocking on the buffalo’s back, as they plowed the fields.

iron buffaloes. Now at dawn the roar of the motors chases the birdsong from the trees. The farmers sit behind the steering wheels, staring at the ground, and don’t see the sky anymore.”

Boonchan tells me his mother was very disappointed when he returned to the village.

“Didn’t your mother miss you when you were gone?”

“Of course. I am her only son. But in Thai society, the parents want their children to become more successful than they are. Then they are so proud. They tell their friends ‘Oh my son works in an office. How I long for him, but look how successful he is.’ ”

Boonchan had read Masanobu Fukuoka’s book, *One Straw Revolution*, and wanted to employ this radical Japanese farmer’s techniques—no weeding, no plowing, no chemicals—in his family’s rice paddies. His family argued vehemently against these ideas.

“You’ve gone to the city, learned stupid ideas, and you’ve come back when you should have stayed. Now you want to ruin our farm. We depend on our crops to support our whole family. You have gone crazy.”

Boonchan stood his ground.

“Let me try these methods on a small piece of land,” he persisted. “If it doesn’t work, it won’t cost us

so much. And if it does work, we will have healthy food that doesn’t poison our water and our fields.”

Boonchan’s mother allowed her only son to experiment on a tenth of one of their four farms.

“The rice I grew using Fukuoka’s organic techniques produced 115 kernels per stalk. The chemically assisted rice produced only 85 kernels per stalk,” Boonchan grins. His enthusiasm is contagious. A warm glow spreads across my skin. “The rice is stronger because it has to survive on its own, competing with the wild grasses. The other rice takes 45 days to plant. But the natural rice, because you don’t have to plow or fertilize, takes only five days.” He makes a tossing gesture with his bare muscular arm, like the movement I’d learned in African dance class, evoking the age-old planting of seed.

Boonchan’s next battle was with the buyers. The merchants who purchase the rice are also the merchants who sell the fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. They were worried about losing their profits.

“Your rice is too tough,” they told Boonchan, and offered him a very low price for his crop.

“They weren’t concerned about the health of the villagers, of even their own children. The fertilizers and pesticides go into the river. The fish have a skin disease from the poisons. The people still eat the fish because it is the basis of their diet.”

Despite the obstacles, Boonchan’s crop was so successful that his family agreed to cultivate an entire field this year using Fukuoka’s techniques. Next year, they will expand to two of their four fields. But even more remarkable was the response of the villagers. They were so impressed with Boonchan’s success that this year over half of the village of 1,000 farmers are converting to organic methods.

“How did you have the courage, the inspiration, to do this?” I ask this radiant young man.

“I was on a bicycle tour of Thailand. Alone. Sleeping in the countryside, by waterfalls. I met people—farmers. They talked to me about their lives. At night I watched the sky turn pink and then blue like I did when I was a buffalo boy. I was fasting. And something happened to me. I can’t explain. I fell in love with the people I met—and with the land. And I understood that this love was the most important thing in my life. So I did what I knew in my heart was right.”

“You have been named perfectly,” I say.

He blushes and looks down at his now empty plate. A rush of emotion surprises me. Maternal pride, awe at his beauty, jealousy of his youth, and finally, the joy of hope. Tears rise in my eyes as I smile in the light of this good moon. ❖

Nina Wise is a Jewish-Buddhist practitioner with a Hindu guru, a performance artist and writer, and the Director of Motion Studio. She will be performing in Brazil and Ireland in May. She consults with people preparing performances and presentations, and can be contacted at 415/459-3766.

DIARY OF A HUNGRY GHOST

by Robert Joshin Althouse

Every time I see someone without roots, I see him as a hungry ghost.

—Thich Nhat Hanh

Last summer, I traveled from my home in Hawaii to participate in a street retreat with Tetsugen Bernard Glassman Sensei. Tetsugen Sensei is the Abbot of the Zen Community of New York and director of the Greyston Foundation and he is committed to working with the disadvantaged in his community.

Tetsugen Sensei says that three things are necessary to bring people off the streets: jobs, affordable housing, and day care centers. He has managed to provide all three in his community. He began by starting the Greyston Bakery which has supplied well over 200 homeless people with jobs. Then he renovated an old building nearby and converted it into low rent housing with a day care center next door. It is an approach which is holistic in nature and seeks to raise self esteem through helping the homeless help themselves. By setting up a broad network (mandala) of nonprofit organizations offering a range of services, as well as businesses that provide jobs, Tetsugen is pioneering a unique and skillful approach for dealing with the root causes of homelessness.

The street retreat was another aspect of that same effort. This was the second retreat of its kind—a sort of floating sesshin in which homelessness is the central practice. What follows is my journal of the four days I spent on the streets of New York.

Sunday, July 11, 1993

It was a sweltering, muggy day in Yonkers when the ten of us set out to practice living on the streets of New York City. Emerging from the subway into Manhattan, I was overwhelmed with the noise, the fast pace of the street, the constant barrage of stimulation. I felt oddly liberated, walking out into the streets with nothing but my clothes, ten dollars in my back pocket, a social security card (in case I got arrested), and a plastic bag in which to carry a water bottle. I soon scavenged an abandoned back pack with a few holes and dumped the plastic bag in it.

Almost immediately, I was set upon by someone asking me for some spare change. I said "no" and walked on, noticing as I did my feelings of discomfort, embarrassment and shame. The next time someone panhandled me,

I gave him a quarter, but I still felt uneasy at the interaction, and strangely separate. This wall of fear that separates us from one another was evident to me everywhere I went. One of our retreat participants, Hans, a wonderful, kind and gentle man, said he thought this chance to engage people was like a "scrimmage line"; we could pull away in fear or we could open ourselves up to these encounters and learn from them.

Begging became a teacher for me during this retreat. Traditionally, Buddhist monks practice *takuhatsu* or begging each day to collect enough food to eat. It is an institution in Asia, and this was my first chance as an American Buddhist to taste *takuhatsu* practice in an American city.

In a sense, my begging practice began several months before the retreat actually started. Tetsugen had asked us to raise \$1,000 in sponsorship for each day we were out on the street, and many generous people sponsored me on the retreat. I raised close to \$3700 for Tetsugen's Greyston Foundation, and another \$1700 for feeding homeless people through the Hawaii Island Food Bank.

But begging on the streets was something else entirely. That more traditional form of *takuhatsu*—importuning strangers and having to accept their charity, indifference or hostility—was a more severe and instructive master.

Monday, July 12, 1993

After riding the subway train from one end of New York to the other until early dawn, trying unsuccessfully to sleep, we all collapsed on some park benches. I woke up and was dismayed to learn that it was only 11:00 in the morning. How slowly the time seemed to be passing.

We ate at food kitchens, and walked everywhere, filling up our water bottles every chance we could. My baked feet seemed to swell from the heat of the concrete.

Now I was at the other end of the begging exchange: trying to get some spare change for myself. You wouldn't think the lines would be so difficult, but I found myself rehearsing them over and over before I could work up the courage to actually stick out my hat and say, "Could you spare some change?" No reply. No eye contact. No recognition that I had just completely humiliated myself before a fellow human being, asking for a measly few cents.

My humiliation grew as people continued to pass me by without saying a word and never looking at me. Occasionally, some kind soul would give me a quick

I had finally come full circle with the awkward begging exchange.

There was no white liberal guilt.

There was no separation.

glance or mumble something to me; though they hadn't given me a cent, I felt much better. The next time someone panhandled me, I was careful to make eye contact with him and say something like, "I'm sorry."

I soon discovered that collecting recyclable aluminum cans for five cents apiece was much more reliable as a means of income and immensely less damaging to my pride. I joined the ranks of thousands of other homeless people who were helping recycle the waste of others.

We sat meditation twice a day in a park where people sold and used drugs such as crack and heroin. Someone was sprawled on almost every available bench, sleeping, hung over or just passed out. We were told the park was dangerous at night, so we only went there during daylight hours.

There was a sunken basketball court in the middle of that park. Forming a circle in the middle of the court, we sat meditation. I took off my shoes and used them as a cushion against the concrete. We followed our meditation with a service in which we invited all the hungry ghosts; then we raised the Bodhi Mind and fed that to them.

In Buddhism we have the image of the hungry ghost as a being undergoing great suffering. Hungry ghosts have long, narrow throats and bloated stomachs. They are filled with desire and are always trying to eat, but they are never satisfied because they can't swallow the food—their throats are too narrow.

We are all hungry ghosts in a way, never really satisfied. Even though the United States is a rich country

with abundant resources and a high standard of living, many Americans feel poor. We have more appliances on average than our parents ever had. Most houses have refrigerators, toasters, stoves, freezers, TV's, VCR's, and more. It is really a question of subjective perception. When our life style doesn't meet our high expectations, we feel impoverished. A consumer economy based on the assumption that desires and resources are inexhaustible leaves us hungry for the next quick fix.

Buddhism teaches that such desire will never satisfy us. To end suffering we must let go of grasping to a false self. When we really do this, naturally and spontaneously, a more genuine sense of being arises, and we begin to awaken to the world around us in a new way, not colored or filtered by the demands of "me."

Tuesday, July 13, 1993

We walked down to visit some shanty towns of homeless people who were living under a bridge. During this walk we met an engaging man named Larry, living by the river in a small shack. Larry was homeless by choice and appeared to be quite content with his condition. An African American veteran of the Vietnam war, he no longer wanted to be part of the system—after all, he had river-front property.

When Larry heard we were eating at soup kitchens on the Bowery, he schooled us: "Shit man, you can eat better than that. I never eat there." He proceeded to describe how he waited outside a pizza place when they closed at



Elly Simmons, "Street Hunger #4," stone lithograph

night to retrieve left-over pizzas.

Wise and funny, Larry entertained us for several hours. He said that people don't like to see homeless people living too well. If they see them fixing up their own shanty towns too nicely, they tear them down. If you are homeless, you've got to fit the stereotype and live in filth.

Larry had a friend with him who could see right away that none of us in our group of ten was at all homeless. So he immediately set to work on us with a smooth rap, pan-handling each one of us. He came up to me and said, "Hey brother, I'll take plastic or a personal check: Visa or Master Card." When I told him I didn't even have a wallet or a driver's license, he didn't believe me.

I forgot to be ashamed or uncomfortable. I was hot. I was sweaty and beginning to walk bowlegged. I hadn't showered in three days, and I was tired. I checked inside my burlap bag and made a quick calculation; looking him in the eyes I said, "I'll give you ten of my cans." I knew I had just made a generous offer. Ten cans is worth 50 cents, and I hardly ever give anyone more than a quarter when they ask me for change. He responded with

Looking him in the eyes I said, "I'll give you ten of my cans." I knew I had just made a generous offer. Ten cans is worth 50 cents.

an exaggerated look of indignation on his face: "I don't know why I'm talking to you!"

That was it. I had finally come full circle with the awkward begging exchange. There was no white liberal guilt. There was no separation.

Wednesday, July 14, 1993

We were beginning to really look homeless, and smell like it, too. On one of our many walks a member of our group, Tom, told me there was an air-conditioned mall nearby with a large clean bathroom in it. I realized that my lack of a bowel movement since the beginning of the retreat might explain why I was feeling so glum, and we both made a bee-line for the facilities.

As we entered the mall carrying burlap bags and leaving behind us the ripe smell of the grime and sweat of the street, Tom said to me, "You know, if we were black, they wouldn't let us in this place."

We went directly to the bathroom, passing a maze of glittering shops in a surreal daze. I immediately filled up my water bottle with some cold water and went into one of the twenty stalls. After a good shit I felt like I was in heaven. I was feeling at once grateful for the small things, and unable to make any sense of all the shops in the mall. Why would anyone want to buy something in one of those places

when they could enjoy a good shit instead?

As I savored the moment, my thoughts turned to what I must look like. I had not seen myself for days, and I imagined that I must be looking pretty funky by now. So as I emerged from the stall, I walked up to the mirror to have a good look. Kids were running by behind me and I could see them in the mirror, but I was in for a real shock. I could see no Joshin. I wasn't there. I looked again and felt for my body, which was apparently with me, but Joshin was still nowhere to be found in the mirror. Perhaps I had finally attained a rainbow body.

Then I realized to my disappointment that there was in fact no mirror before me at all. What I had thought was a mirror was simply a very large divider separating two parts of the restroom, with stalls behind me and urinals in front on the other side. The kids I had thought were in the mirror were actually running by in front of me. I wonder what expression crossed my face as this all dawned on me.

I stumbled out of the restroom and located Tom out in the mall where he proceeded to show me the fine art of picking out left-over salads from garbage cans. I said I couldn't do that and I didn't, but I was soon sharing his salad and exclaiming at how good it tasted.

* * *

We ended our retreat one day early, as many of us were sick and dehydrated. One member had left the night before from constipation. No one seemed to share my enthusiasm about spending a final night at Port Authority.

I left with a deep appreciation for my dharma brother Tetsugen Glassman and the skillful work he is doing in Yonkers to end homelessness. Homeless people are just like you and me. They eat, sleep, and sometimes even take a shit. All the stereotypes we use to dismiss homeless people as worthless, insane, and addicted keep us from remembering this.

I saw many hungry ghosts in the city of New York. I saw homeless women selling their bodies for their next hit of crack. I saw well-dressed people rushing by on Wall Street, faces tight with tension, intent on going somewhere. It's ironic that the very individualism that has given our society so much abundance has left us unable to enjoy it. We may succeed in blocking out everyone who upsets us. We may succeed in ignoring the suffering around us until it touches us directly, but we achieve our isolation at such a tremendous cost that the victory feels hollow.

This is our world. We are responsible for all of it. Wisdom begins with thinking of others before ourselves. If we really lived our lives this way, then even the hungry ghosts would laugh again, and play. ♦

Robert Joshin Althouse lives on the island of Hawaii, where he is the teacher at the Hawaii Zen Center in Waimea.

CLOUDS AND WATER

by Patrick McMahon

For years I'd wanted to meet Daito, the 14th century Japanese Zen monk who had, according to legend, lived under the bridges of Kyoto with the other homeless, and who later became abbot of Daitokuji, one of the great monasteries of the nation. Anyone, I figured, who could drift between such valleys and mountains deserved the traditional title given to monks: *unsui*, "clouds and water."

And then one day I came upon the Old Guy himself on one of my lunchtime walks.

At the time I was working in downtown Osaka, while studying Zen at Daitokuji. Opportunities during my work day for seated meditation were limited, but I'd discovered that I could do walking meditation along the nearby river without drawing attention. During this period the river bank provided me many mindful steps, and an intimate sidelong view of urban Japan: the office workers on break, ties loosened, playing softball; the

*The homes here were packing boxes, shoes
neatly arranged outside.*

school children in their same-colored caps, easels propped on their laps, drawing some famed view; the lovers on benches under the cherry blossoms, in silent libidinous heat; and the bums under the bridge. At this point in my walking meditations my steps would slow further still: there was a particularly laden atmosphere to soak in here, like that of Daitokuji itself, where I'd often felt through the ancient paving stones under my feet the ground of practice itself, and not just the approach. On my riverside ambles, in the shadow of the bridge with a great commercial city crossing overhead, I came to understand why Daito took up residence in such a place: there was nowhere else to go.

The homes here were packing boxes, shoes neatly arranged outside. If it was raining the residents would be at home, brewing tea, listening to the radio (the civic authorities had apparently run electricity to them via long orange extension cords), or sweeping with short-handled brooms the packed dirt in front of their dwellings. In fair weather the men would be out, washing clothes under the public tap, taking the sun on benches, chatting, reading castoff newspapers and paperbacks. On very hot days they would swim out into the Oe river, bracing themselves against the bridge supports as the water slipped around and cooled them.

In my mind these men recalled the *unsui*, the clouds

and water monks of old. They mingled among the office workers, the schoolchildren and lovers, but did not touch. They shadowed the apparently solid world of places to go and things to do. Daito, I guessed, had hung out under bridges, not so much out of his vow to save beings, as to let them save him from his own delusions of fame and gain.

The old bum was seated on a park bench, reading a newspaper, while a man in a dark suit crouched at his feet. As I watched, the suited figure moved to another position, froze, repositioned, froze again. Some esoteric form of prostration? As I neared I saw the camera in the man's hands and heard the repeated clicks of the shutter. Looking to his subject I could see why he was so fascinated. The face at first glance was just another bum's, darkened by sun, lined with sorrow, stubbled. But looking again I glimpsed an unforgettable impassivity. I was reminded of the indifference of my own teacher: I could take a moment or an eon to come home, it was all the same to him. Likewise old Daito ignored the photographer's attempts to capture his secret. There was the empty sky overhead to attend to, and the river slipping by.

To know the mind of clouds and water, I thought, as my steps took me back into the city, one must have lived under bridges a long time. ❖

Patrick McMahon is a teacher, writer, and gardener.



Davis TeSelle, *Kuanyin sits on the home altar*

PARLIAMENT OF WORLD RELIGIONS: ONE PILGRIM'S IMPRESSION

by Pamela Meidell

I don't know when I first heard of the Parliament of the World Religions—the second one. I knew about the first one, a hundred years ago, because I had seen a photograph, an old black and white, of all those men (they were mostly men) gathered together in Chicago in 1893 from most of the religious traditions of the world. I remember hearing once that D.T. Suzuki's first trip to the U.S. was to attend that gathering. Was it true?

Now, a hundred years later, I am going. When I receive my registration materials, I look in amazement at the schedule: pages of small print describe over 700 workshops, art exhibits, performances, interfaith dialogues. Three hundred religious leaders and spiritual teachers from all over the world will be gathered together in a special assembly to consider statements on religious tolerance, a global ethic, and violence and nonviolence.

But I also have my own agenda and my own questions. Many presentations celebrate the spirit of interreligious dialogue that began 100 years ago. But it takes careful hunting to find any workshops that seek to foster a dialogue between spirit and politics. What will the religious leaders gathered here teach us about how to live with each other—without nuclear weapons, without violence? What can we teach each other about living in community on our small and fragile planet? Will there be any prophets among us? Will we listen to them?

A friend arranges for me to stay at an Episcopal guest house within walking distance of the Palmer House, site of the Parliament. Another friend and coworker, Alyn Ware of the Lawyer's Committee on Nuclear Policy and activist for the World Court Project, will join me halfway through the Parliament. Our goal: to focus the attention of the Parliament on the issue of nuclear weapons.

Day One: Saturday, August 28

The Parliament opening gathers leaders and practitioners together for blessings and prayers from all the traditions. Thomas Banyaca, Hopi elder, asks the aid of the invisible forces, and calls for rain to bless this gathering.

I arrive early for the evening plenary and find a seat near the front, directly behind a man in saffron robes. Later I learn that he is H.H. Swami Chidananda Saraswati, also known as the St. Francis of India. During the half hour before the program starts, many people come up to greet him, to talk, to receive a blessing. I have the best seat in the house because I see the faces of all the people as they approach him: they

are beautiful—completely unguarded, full of love and curiosity, a bit awkward and unsure of how they might be received. I find myself hoping that we all approach the Parliament in the same spirit.

Later, at the guest house, I try to distill the day's events. I have brought a small tin of watercolors with me and a slim book bound in green silk to record my impressions. Saturated with the first day, I decide on a minimalist approach: to paint a border of the colors of each day, write a haiku to capture the day's heart, and in telegraphic flashes catch the day's events and images.

Colors: browns, yellows, reds, oranges.

*All earth's traditions
honoring each other's ways—
what will happen here?*

Day Two: Sunday, August 29

Earth receives rain. Gerald Barney (author of the Agenda 2000 report prepared for President Carter) inspires us. His talk, one day after the 30th anniversary of the March on Washington, is the planetary equivalent of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. He asks all of us: Will you devote the next seven years (until the new millennium) to help six billion of us to learn how to live sustainably, justly and humanely on the earth? We are a people without a vision. Our most desperate need is to acknowledge this failure and dream a new dream. Will you help the earth to dream a new dream?

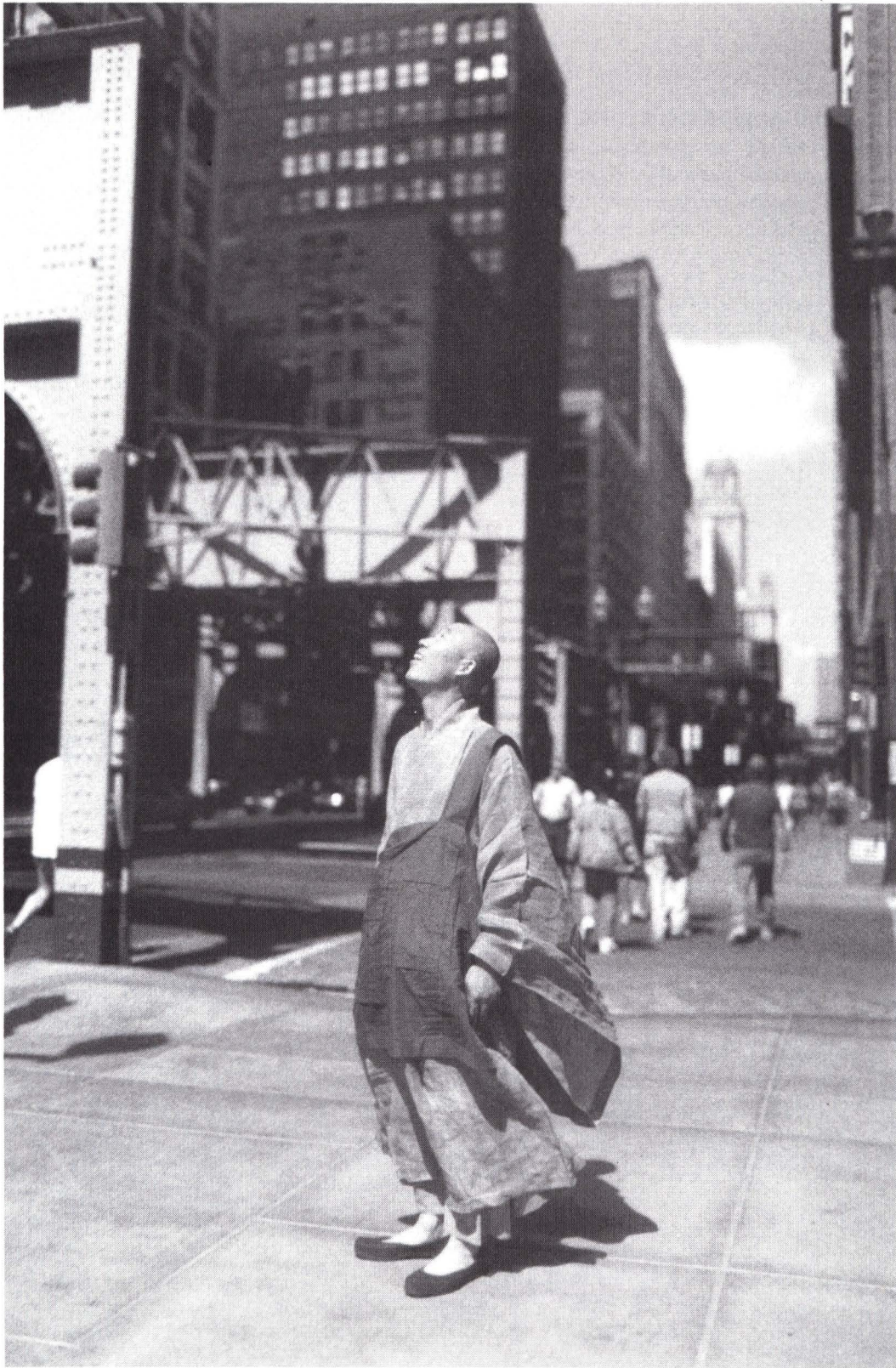
Colors: greens, yellow, blue.

*New millennium
visions of life and healing—
singing . . . rain . . . dance . . . growth*

Day Three: Monday, August 30

A day of extreme rhythms. Listening to the "Voices of the Dispossessed" this morning, we hear people from Haiti, Kashmir, Laos, Liberia, Tibet, Afghanistan, Guatemala and the Punjab speak to us out of their pain and strength of spirit. Yet even here, in a planned time and a protected place some people try to drown out the speakers with their own shouting. In my head I hear the voice of Pauline Esteves of the Western Shoshone Nation telling how her people learned that nuclear testing had begun on their land. In 1951, a hunter, returning to a known area, is prevented from entering by a chain link fence mounted with "No Trespassing" signs.

I feel dislocated and lightheaded—there's hardly any time to eat. What am I doing here? I need to focus my intentions. I walk outside to buy fresh fruit and feel better.



*Korean Zen Master Samu Sunim outside the Palmer House in the Windy City.
Parliament of World Religions, September 1993. Photo by Jacques Oule.*

Later, my spirit is renewed with the help of Al Huang's tai chi dancing. He invites us all to be part of the breathing body of the fiery tiger universe, and to remember our cool mountain solidity. In rooms throughout the Palmer House, we all move as one body, one breath.

Colors: black and orange verticals, blue and green horizontals.

*Rhythm of the Day—
Embrace the fiery tiger,
Return to mountain . . .*

Day Four: Tuesday, August 31

First day of full schedule. After so much breathing in, we finally have a chance to breathe out. During the Parliament of the People (the grassroots forum open to all 7,000 of us), 300 of us gather together in our first opportunity for a structured conversation. People's emotions run high—we fight in our small group, showing shadow side first.

When Alyn arrives at day's end, I am grateful for a known face and a friend to talk to.

Colors: brown, green, yellow, red.

*Emotion's flowers
blossom in each encounter—
anger, love, sorrow . . .*

Day Five: Wednesday, September 1

Weather shifts and cools—I eat my first breakfast in days—muesli, fruit and a great latte. See Kaz Tanahashi in cafe, and talk about his brush performance tomorrow: the largest single brush stroke in the world that will encircle all of us.

Morning workshop with Peter Dougherty who talks about the "Theology of Trespass" and the crossing of lines. I have contemplated this subject many times, crossing over the cattle guard onto the Nuclear Test Site in Nevada. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." After lunch outside, we spend all afternoon in the press room, drafting resolutions calling for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and supporting the World Court Project. Home to guest house for late night felafel and iced tea.

Colors: red, orange, yellow, sky blue.

*Walking to breakfast—
Cool breeze lightens my spirit
opening new doors . . .*

Day Six: Thursday, September 2

Lobbying day in earnest. In separate circles, we bring both nuclear resolutions to the Parliament of the People where they are accepted. Walk through the Art Institute past Chagall's American Windows to the old Stock Exchange Room where the Assembly will open. In the balcony with photographers, we witness the calling of the roll of delegates by different categories: age in decades,



At the World Parliament of Religions. Photo by Jacques Oule.

religious traditions, professions, continents. In the roll call of the regions of the earth, the Pacific is not included. Why? Because it is not a continent? If something doesn't fit the categories we have created, is it invisible?

Color: indigo blue.

*Chagall's blue windows
bring serene indigo peace
to a hectic pace.*

Day Seven: Friday, September 3

Morning Panel of Engaged Buddhists—Dai-en Bennage, Ariyaratne, Sulak Sivaraksa, Sr. True Emptiness, Stephanie Kaza. I feel calm and grateful. As I walk in, I hear Sister True Emptiness say, "It is because we cling to our small self that we feel fear." She is talking about how she responded when she learned that two of her fellow social workers in Vietnam were murdered. "During that moment, I only dwell in my breath, calming, releasing . . . All night long I did walking meditation, because of course you can't sleep when your friends die like that . . . But the murderers are also future Buddhas. Poor murderers, we have to help them understand." I find a seat, suddenly aware that I have been standing since I entered.

Noon. At the end of the press conference with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Holiness addresses himself directly to the media representatives: "Our beautiful planet is suffering from many crises. This is not the time for a pretense of being good—we have to deal with the problems," he says. "People must cultivate a positive state of mind. And you in the media have a big responsibility. How can people have a positive state of mind when they read what is written in the papers every day?"

Colors: red, yellow, blue.

*Beautiful Buddhists
sound the bell of my heart/mind—
awakening who?*

Day Eight: Saturday, September 4

Morning of pandemonium—many switched rooms and confusion. Out of the chaos, I find myself in a small tatami room drinking a bowl of tea with Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, listening to water sing in the kettle. We appreciate the precise choreography of the tea ceremony, harmony in the midst of seeming chaos. In this beautiful oasis of peace, we hear the sounds of ecstasy: Hindu Bhakti songs in the next room.

In the afternoon, we print out clean copies of our two resolutions about nuclear weapons and hand them to the delegates as they enter the door to the Assembly. We still don't know if the Assembly will consider any resolutions. A group of people prays outside the doors. At 4 p.m., our resolutions are introduced by Yogi Bhanjan and seconded by Dr. Ariyaratne. When the Assembly adjourns, we learn that the delegates agreed on a "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic," but did not pass any resolu-

tions. Still, our work becomes part of the proceedings and will be forwarded to the United Nations. Yes!

Afterwards we join the parade of peace ribbons to Grant Park. Kenny Loggins and Arlo Guthrie sing in a bowl rimmed by skyscrapers. In the final address of the Parliament, under a darkening sky in the open air, H.H. the Dalai Lama addresses us: "Spiritual Colleagues, brothers and sisters . . . Now our ideas must be implemented and transformed into action—that's the important thing, and also the more difficult . . . Our determination must be quite firm. . . . As for a spirit of pluralism and harmony: is it possible? My answer is definitely Yes! Yes! Yes!"

Music and dancing from all traditions bring up the full moon. Bambi Baaba, an Indigenous Spiritual Elder from Uganda, walks across the stage, kneels down and lays his head in the lap of Parliament Executive Director Daniel Gomez Ibanez in gratitude. It is the sweetest, most spontaneous gesture of the week, and he does it for all of us. Four hundred African American school kids send us out singing.

Colors: red, orange, yellow, green, aqua, blue, violet.

*Singing up the moon
in the rainbow assembly—
we all receive blessings. ❖*

Pamela Meidell is a long-time student of Zen and tea. She is the Director of Nevada Desert Experience, and is coordinating BPF's weekend witness trip to the Test Site on Buddha's birthday.



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"In your daily life, please
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-Zen Master Taizan Maezumi, Roshi

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AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE: *Maitri AIDS Hospice*

by Pamela Weiss

In the fall of 1987, the Hartford Street Zen Center, led by Issan Dorsey, opened Maitri AIDS Hospice in the heart of San Francisco's gay community. Issan Dorsey, aka Tommy Lee, drag queen, junkie, hippie and Buddhist priest, was by all accounts a remarkable person. [See book review, next page.] He refused to be conveniently boxed or labeled, consistently blurring the edges of our most commonly assumed distinctions; between male and female, sinner and saint, patient and caregiver, self and other.

Issan died in 1990, but Maitri AIDS Hospice and the Hartford Street Zen Center (HSZC) are his legacy, simultaneously sustained and plagued by his best and worst qualities. The friendly, casual environment at Maitri and HSZC exude Issan's heart, his all-embracing kindness. And at the same time, both struggle with Issan's intentional lack of structure.

Maitri began when Issan, then the head priest at Hartford Street, took in a sangha member dying of AIDS. It was a simple, appropriate act; the heartfelt response to an obvious need. In Issan's words: "I think of compassion as being endless dimensions of this moment. So if I cut my finger, I put a bandage on it—and if you fall down, I help pick you up." He was responding to what was in front of him, doing what needed to be done.

Soon more people with AIDS were taken in, the Zen Center expanded into the building next door, and the eight-bed hospice that exists today came into being.

In the early days, the temple and hospice at 57 and 61 Hartford Street were not distinct. Zen students who came to live and practice with Issan lived together with hospice residents. Maitri was not a traditional hospice but, as one student expressed it, "a Zen center and home, where some of us have AIDS." In his inimitable style, Issan pushed the meaning of hospice beyond its original mission: from providing care for the dying in a home-like environment to providing a home for people to live and die together, consciously minimizing the distinction between "us" and "them."

Since Issan's death, Maitri and HSZC have struggled to keep Issan's vision alive. In his absence, the lack of clearly defined roles and goals has provided ample fuel to fire ongoing conflict and confusion. Issan himself clearly understood the importance of a charismatic leader. Reflecting on the difficulty of his own early days at Tassajara, he said: "It was the hardest thing I ever

did in my life. I hated it. . . If it hadn't been for Suzuki-Roshi, I wouldn't have made it."

Maitri, dubbed "seat of the pants hospice" by a past Director, continues to provide care to terminally ill people with AIDS. It is run by a small, dedicated staff who work in partnership with Visiting Nurses and Hospice of San Francisco, and is overseen by a Board of Directors. The relationship between Maitri and HSZC is complex. Although the temple and hospice continue to share space, the crossover between the two groups is limited. Few individuals who are part of the Maitri community practice sitting meditation, and only a minority of the Hartford Street sangha participate in caring for the residents living at Maitri.

Yet visiting Maitri, one cannot help but be moved. There is something disarmingly real about it. Supposedly a place where people come to die, Maitri is utterly alive. There are numerous stories of residents who, thriving in Maitri's life-affirming environment, have lived long beyond their "six month" diagnosis, while others have moved out entirely and continue to live. Current residents live in private rooms personalized with their belongings, wear their street clothes, and mingle with staff and visitors. There are no restrictions on visiting hours for friends, family or lovers. And there is a palpable sense of community, of family, of home. Every day hospice residents, staff, volunteers, Zen priests, and old and new friends of Maitri meet around the communal dining table for delicious, home-cooked meals—a mundane daily event that manifests Issan's radical inclusiveness and matter-of-fact, intimate compassion.

Today Maitri faces a new, externally imposed challenge: licensing requirements. Until 1992, the State of California did not have a licensing category for hospice care in residential settings. But, ostensibly to prevent abuse and to secure adequate fire safety, the Department of Social Services created a new licensing code, "Residential Care for the Chronically Ill" (RCFCI). RCFCI includes physical plant requirements that make it impossible for Maitri to continue legally in its current setting. For example, it requires that care be provided in "residential" settings constructed of concrete and steel—a far cry from the lovely old Victorian houses at 57 and 61 Hartford Street. In short, the code requires that a home become an institution.

RCFCI makes it illegal for people to care for anyone other than a family member or "significant other" in their homes, and threatens the continued existence of all hospice programs in non-institutional settings in

California. Maitri is actively investigating strategies to make its continuation at Hartford Street possible. And so far, no one has been willing to go through the bureaucratic nightmare and potential political embarrassment of forcing it to close its doors. But it may happen.

In many ways RCFCI reflects the collective desire to hide what we fear behind steel and concrete walls. Maitri represents Issan's opposite approach. Not only did Issan refuse to hide behind walls of illusory distinctions, he knocked them down. Not only was he willing to look issues of sexuality, illness and death in the eye, he was willing to walk right in, sit right down, and become them.

In a Zen story a monk comes to his teacher and asks: What is the teaching of a whole lifetime? And the teacher replies: An appropriate response. Maitri, Issan's "appropriate response" to the AIDS epidemic, manifests the teaching of his whole lifetime. In light of the

current threat to its continuation, how can each of us respond appropriately?

We can be outraged. We can write letters, make phone calls, offer to lend a hand. There is no single "right" answer. But following Issan's lead, we can begin by having the courage to look—at our fear, at our denial, and at our assumptions of separateness. And then, if we dare to follow his example to its limit, we can walk in, sit down, and fully, wholeheartedly, outrageously become ourselves. ♦

If you would like to make a donation, are interested in volunteering, or want to help support Maitri in any other way, please write or call: Maitri AIDS Hospice, 61 Hartford St., San Francisco, CA 94114. 415/863-8508

Pamela Weiss is a Zen practitioner, bodyworker, and writer, who lives in San Francisco.

Street Zen



THE LIFE AND WORK OF
ISSAN DORSEY

David Schneider

"A fascinating book. I think Issan's story contributes significantly to the history of the gay community, and its response to AIDS, as well as to the history of Buddhism in America."
—M. J. Ryan, *San Francisco Chronicle*

Street Zen: The Life and Work of Issan Dorsey

by David Schneider

Shambhala, 1993.

\$13.00

Reviewed by Keith Abbott

Issan Tommy Dorsey used to tell a tale about being one of Shunryu Suzuki-roshi's students. One day he saw Suzuki walking while carrying a teacup. For him it was a quintessential moment in their relationship, but all Issan could say was, "He was carrying a teacup." This instant became for Dorsey one more bond to Suzuki and simultaneously to the path of Buddhism. It parallels an earlier moment when Dorsey stopped shooting speed and decided, "I'm going to try doing everything the best way I can." A commitment to each moment eventually translated Dorsey from a street gypsy into a Buddhist priest.

In David Schneider's engrossing account, Issan's moment of simplicity occurs inside a remarkably complex life. Issan's journey was extraordinary, a tale of a soul carrying out its orders to be a drag queen, junkie, alcoholic, commune leader, Buddhist teacher and AIDS hospice founder. Accounting for such disparate traits is a daunting task for any biographer. Schneider largely relies on interviews, splicing in contemporary and often hilarious commentary with factual summaries, adding his personal experiences at the San Francisco Zen Center with Issan-roshi. Issan's life necessarily is presented as a collage, rich with camp gossip,

religious scandal, and personal courage, amidst the mores of San Francisco Gay culture and recent American Buddhist history. If at times the collage seems a patchwork, it is largely because the personalities and events are so wide-ranging that the clearest course is to present contradictory situations, letting them stand side by side for the reader's discernment.

More importantly, this collage mirrors Issan Dorsey's persona. As Schneider points out, idiosyncratic qualities that made Dorsey a remarkable commune leader, female impersonator, and dope fiend were the same qualities that connected him to his sangha: his ability to accept himself, to accept other people and situations, and to work with them. Issan's teaching was to extend American Buddhism into the street, to those who had not been previously invited into the sangha. "For Issan, creating a hospice was inseparable from Zen practice," Schneider notes, and quotes Issan's favorite teaching: "The Path is under your feet." Such expansion was not without its problems, but Issan's common sense and humor provided a useful example for others to follow.

This is no small matter. And as Issan's life amply demonstrates, not a dry, narrow, ascetic path, either. Such engagement can be a big juicy mess that sometimes manages to live in one teacup. While Issan was dying from AIDS in the hospice he founded, he described his cup of tea this way: "What I keep doing in my mind, when I have these anxiety attacks, small ones, I keep trying to back up and do it all over again. You know: 'Oops I slipped, I better go back.' [laughing] But you can't do it, you know what I mean? Or sometimes I look out the window and see people running, laughing, having a good time, acting in a way I can't do now. But we have to own these things." ♦

Keith Abbott is a poet, novelist, translator, artist and calligrapher. He divides his time between Berkeley, California and Boulder, Colorado, where he teaches at the Naropa Institute.

DOCUMENTARY VIDEO REVIEWS

Ancient Futures:

Learning from Ladakh

Produced by John Page and The International Society for Ecology & Culture

60 minutes

Available from Video Project, (800) 4 PLANET. \$39.95

Satya: A Prayer for the Enemy

Produced & directed by Ellen Bruno

28 minutes

Film Library, 22-D Hollywood Avenue, Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey 07423. (800) 383-5540

Available both on 16 mm and video, for rental or purchase. Special discounts for non-profit groups. Especially appropriate to show at benefits for groups working for Tibetan rights.

Reviewed by Joan Starr Ward

Both of these beautifully filmed videos sharply illuminate the shadow of progress. The impact of the loss of our natural sense of interconnectedness is vividly depicted through clear narrative and excellent editing.

Ancient Futures, based on the book of the same name by Helena Norberg-Hodge, portrays the people and culture of Ladakh, in their stunning Himalayan desert landscape, before and after the introduction of Western development. By looking closely at the experience of Ladakh in the last 20 years, we can discover the root causes of the problems we face in the West.

In our own culture, where we idealize individualism, it is easy to believe that our sense of disconnection and ineffectiveness arises from individual failure. This film convincingly explains that it is rather the larger forces of modernization, particularly the trend toward a global economy, that are destroying our inherent sense of belonging.

Norberg-Hodge's message is not one of anti-technology nor of an idealization of tradi-

tional life. Her genius lies in the deep understanding of the importance of the scale of life. This film graphically illustrates the disastrous consequences of relinquishing local self-determination to distant decision makers, both corporate and governmental.

Further north and east on the Tibetan plateau, we find extreme consequences of the drive for modernization. Chinese policies are systematically and brutally destroying the traditional Tibetan culture in order to impose their version of progress.

In *Satya*, Ellen Bruno offers us a poem-painting of personal stories of nuns in Tibet who felt called to publicly demonstrate for cultural and religious freedom. With impressionistic strokes of narrative and color, we are given an intimate glimpse into their experiences of imprisonment, torture, and rape. Through all these horrors, their faith in compassion and forgiveness deepens. They pray for their tormentors to acquire the wisdom eye to see what is right and what is wrong.

"The Chinese say religion gets in the way of progress," the sweet voice of the narrator informs us. The truth of the matter is that progress has blinded our wisdom eye and tricked us into forgetting our relatedness.

What both these films teach us we know in our bones to be true: people need to feel connected to one another and to the earth we inhabit. Invite your friends, sangha, and local politicians for viewings and a discussion of how to revitalize our connections and communal creativity. May the wisdom eye in each of us be opened. ❖

Joan Starr Ward is a member of the Marin County chapter of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.



Scene from *Satya: A Prayer for the Enemy*

Writing for Your Life: A Guide and Companion to the Inner Worlds

by Deena Metzger

Harper San Francisco, 1992. \$13.00

Reviewed by Sandra Butler

Deena Metzger takes the wisps and images that appear in our dreams seriously. And the ways the unconscious emerges into daily life. The associations, word plays, pauses, repetitions—the hungers, demons, terrors and yearnings. In *Writing For Your Life*, even the title has the urgency we have come to expect from her poetry, plays and novels.

The book is divided into four parts: “On Creativity,” “On Story,” “The Larger Story: Archetypes, Fairy Tales and Myths,” and “Writing as Spiritual Practice.” There is also an Epilogue called “Living The Story.” In this wide-ranging sweep, Metzger has created a shape deep and broad enough to encompass the range of disciplines and practices that shape her life.

When and how does knowing begin? She answers this in her range of generative exercises that help the writer see what has been overlooked, impermissible, dangerous.

When you think you have nothing to say, when your life feels dull and tedious, try writing: Things I didn't see today.

Metzger is not sentimental. She understands both the pleasures and terrors of consciousness. Each section is designed to lead the writer/reader through exercises created to deepen the questions we ask about our lives, to invent the forms in which we embed the answers, and to craft the our words with grace.

From the first page she cajoles, teases, tugs, insists. She dares us to write what we didn't know we knew. She urges us to allow our words to leap unbidden onto the page. She challenges us to let the words take us forward, beyond certainty.

Focus upon a moment in your life that you do not fully understand. Tell it as if it were a fairy tale.

Meditate for a few minutes until you are calm. Write for the same length of time. Meditate again. Write again. Meditate again. Write again. Let the silence refresh you. Allow the silence to enter the piece. Discover what can emerge from this emptiness.

Write something that you never thought you would believe, understand or see.

She is a demanding guide, asking the deepest questions, suggesting the most unexpected directions to turn for answers, and inviting us to shape our images and dreams into startling configurations.

She is unwilling to succumb to artificial divisions between political and spiritual; her exercises, her storytelling and her life all fold like origami into a shape that is uniquely her own. With great intellect and tender-

ness she offers us a path upon which we can discover our own shapes, our own stories, our own lives. *Writing For Your Life* leads us from silence to the ability to “jump, not onto the page but into our own lives. Not only to write about it but to live it.”

Write the story one cannot bear to remember, let alone to record. Afterward tell your story slowly. So slowly that you hear it and feel it. So that you experience it, perhaps for the first time. Tell it first for yourself. Second, so that it will not fester within you. Third, so others will help you bear it.

We bear our lives alone. And we bear them, too, through acts of witness, in community. Living with consciousness is itself a spiritual practice. Writing with that same consciousness is an act of prayer.

Image (or remember) a journey that has taken you far from yourself. Where did you go? What compelled you to leave? What do you need to do to come home?

We are all, in some ways, far from home. The loneliness of such exile exacerbates the longing to speak. And then to be heard. We need, as Metzger reminds us, “the solid ground of the inner world under our feet.” As we journey home, *Writing For Your Life* will be a patient and encouraging companion. ♦

Sandra Butler is a teacher and writer living in Oakland. She is the author of Conspiracy of Silence: the Trauma of Incest and Cancer in Two Voices.

Wild

*That night cry
of a woman in the hills
is only a cougar,
the shadow
in the heart of the meadow
is the bobcat, awake.
That slouch of fur amidst
the stammering of trees
is the wild
coming down
to my palm, at last.*

—Deena Metzger

From *Looking for the Faces of God*, by Deena Metzger, Parallax Press, \$8.00. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this book are donated to the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

by Stephanie Kaza

Spirit and Nature: Why the Environment is a Religious Issue, edited by Steven C. Rockefeller and John C. Elder. Beacon Press, 1992, \$16.00.

A lovely collection of essays from talks given during the Middlebury College *Spirit and Nature* symposium in Fall 1990 (covered in an excellent PBS documentary with Bill Moyers). The Buddhist essay is by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama; other essays are by leading Native American, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish religious leaders with concluding commentaries by Steven Rockefeller and John Elder. The text is complemented by selections from an international art exhibition organized to accompany the conference.

Buddhism and Ecology, by Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown. Cassell Publishers, 1992, \$9.95.

This is one book in a very useful introductory series on world religions and ecology which also includes volumes on Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and Ecology. They have been produced by World Wide Fund for Nature to encourage discussion on principles, doctrines, and applications of religious approaches to environmental problems. *Buddhism and Ecology* includes chapters on Buddhist sutras, Ladakh, the Tibet zone of peace proposal, Thailand forest monks, Sarvodaya self-help movement, Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Earth Summit.

Nonviolence to Animals, Earth, and Self in Asian Traditions, by Christopher Key Chapple. State University of New York Press, 1993, \$14.95.

A collection of seven essays on Jain, Buddhist, and Hindu approaches to nonviolence as it applies to human-animal interactions. The first essay provides scholarly background on the development of *ahimsa* through the religious texts, showing the important role of the Jains (which is often interpreted as more marginal). The author focuses on vegetarianism, respect for animals, and animal rights. Of interest to hospice workers, he also describes in detail the Jain practice of nonresistant death, a 28-day voluntary fast to reduce harm to others in the final stages of dying. One of the strongest essays is on the Jain seven-fold analysis of reality (three more stages beyond Nagarjuna's four). In Jain philosophy, each person's truth is only partial, so no one statement can ever account for the totality of reality. Thus it becomes important to seek out diverse points of view.

Cultivating the Empty Field, Zen Master Hongzhi, translated by Taigen Daniel Leighton with Yi Wu. North Point Press, 1991, \$10.95.

A beautiful and inspiring translation of writings by Hongzhi, twelfth-century Chinese Zen master and predecessor of Zen philosopher Dogen. Leighton provides

a thoughtful, in-depth introduction to the primary themes and questions in Hongzhi's texts, focusing on "the silent illumination." Like Dogen, these texts are meant to be understood by direct grasping rather than intellectual cogitation. Many of them center around references to the natural world, going beyond the reductionist approach of metaphor to a true illumination of the nature of clouds, pearls, grass, moon, pines. A truly refreshing and deeply moving gift from one who sees clearly "the liberating eye's authentic view."

Ethics of Environment and Development, by J. Ronald Engel and John Gibb Engel. University of Arizona Press, 1990, \$29.95.

A superb collection of papers addressing the global challenge of development: Can it be sustainable? And what will that take? Authors from all continents respond with well-developed essays illuminating their own faith traditions and how they apply to issues of international development. I found the sections on African land ethics and Islamic environmental ethics especially illuminating. There are also strong articles from Norway's Arne Naess, Thailand's Sulak Sivaraksa, and eco-feminist Ariel Sallah. For a broad international view of applied environmental ethics, this is the primary reference to date.

Ecofeminism and the Sacred, edited by Carol Adams. Continuum, 1993. \$24.95 hardcover, \$14.95 paper.

With this volume we finally have an in-depth scholarly collection to build upon the two other eco-feminism anthologies (*Healing the Wounds* and *Reweaving the World*). The authors from diverse religious perspectives (Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Native American) have undertaken the serious task of evaluating their faith traditions from an eco-feminist point of view. Each article contains references to sacred place, religious ritual and practice, and alternatives to patriarchal forms. The underlying theme in the volume is that religious traditions are part of the anthropocentric mental conditioning that has promoted the parallel domination of women and nature for the last several millennia. These essays are some of the most stimulating I've read, guaranteed to challenge your most dearly held assumptions.

Other titles of interest in this area:

Radical Environmentalism: Philosophy and Tactics, by Peter C. List. Wadsworth, 1993, \$15.95.

Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology, edited by Michael E. Zimmerman, J Baird Callicott, George Sessions, Karen J. Warren, and John Clark. Prentice-Hall, 1993, \$26.00.

Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought, edited by J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames. State University of New York Press, 1989, \$49.50.

Dharma Gaia, Essays in Buddhism and Ecology, edited by Allan Hunt-Badiner. Parallax Press 1990, \$15.00.

For A Future To Be Possible

by Thich Nhat Hanh and Others

Parallax Press, 1993. \$16.00

Love in Action

by Thich Nhat Hanh

Parallax Press, 1993. \$13.50

Reviewed by Jonathan Watts

It had been a while since I had read any Thich Nhat Hanh, perhaps a year or two, and upon reading these two volumes, I was reminded that I need to read him more often. Many Buddhist texts, especially ones focusing on the core of the dharma, require slow and intense concentration to fully grasp. Whether bushwhacking my way through philosophical explanations or unraveling Zen koans, I find that concepts and ideas are often sealed in a hard outer layer of technical terms and non-linear progressions. Consequently, it is surprising and refreshing to find a teacher like Thich Nhat Hanh, who expresses the full profundity of Buddhist teachings in a clear, contemporary, and wonderful style. I found myself gliding effortlessly through *Love in Action* and *For a Future To Be Possible*, almost as if I was reading a novel. Then suddenly a certain point or anecdote would hit me very deeply.

For a Future To Be Possible is Thich Nhat Hanh's reformulation of the *Pancasila*, or Five Precepts, for our modern world. As Sulak Sivaraksa has pointed out, such endeavors as this are vital for Buddhism to have any meaning in today's world. Thich Nhat Hanh's deep understanding of the precepts and his actual contact with today's suffering make these reworkings profound. What struck me as most essential were these insights: In practicing one precept, we practice them all; the precepts are not just for the personal realm, they are for society as well; when others suffer, so do we, and each person's suffering has a direct impact on all of us.

The second half of *For a Future To Be Possible* is a collection of short commentaries on the precepts by a group of renowned Buddhists and spiritual leaders from various traditions, speaking in their own voices. On the whole, I find the book loses some energy here. First, the clarity of Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings is a hard act to follow. Second, the commentaries lack cohesion. There are, however, a number of excellent individual essays, such as Stephen Batchelor's, and other readers may enjoy the pastiche effect of different points of view, from Richard Baker's to Maxine Hong Kingston's.

For a Future To Be Possible finishes with more teachings by Thich Nhat Hanh on the Three Jewels as an integral part of practicing the *Pancasila*. Although these are written in the same beautiful style, they are sometimes repetitive of the earlier commentaries on the precepts.

In the past year, I have become increasingly interest-

ed in Vietnam, most particularly its unique form of Buddhism and the rise of socially engaged Buddhism there in our own time. Unfortunately, this interest has been hard to satisfy as the number of works on these topics are few. Parallax Press has seen that it is not only important to publish Thich Nhat Hanh's religious teachings, but also his and others' (Sister Chan Khong's *Learning True Love*) writings on Vietnamese Buddhism's complex and intimate relationship with the state and society.

Love in Action consists of a collection of articles, speeches, and sundry writings collected from over the past 30 years. These articles offer important writings by Thich Nhat Hanh during his campaign against the Vietnam War in the 1960s. The collection also includes more general essays on nonviolent social action and a few essays on world crises such as the Gulf War. The articles flow together well, and each one makes a specific contribution to the whole. In sum, these essays form a very nice anthology of Thich Nhat Hanh's thought on social engagement since his emergence as an engaged Buddhist leader 30 years ago.

Love in Action and *For a Future To Be Possible* are both excellent new books to add to the Thich Nhat Hanh collection. It is always an educational pleasure to read Thich Nhat Hanh. His compelling style and profound insight set him apart as a teacher, not just for Buddhists but for all humankind. Parallax Press also deserves accolades for its efforts to publish his teachings on such a grand scale. ♦

Jonathan Watts is a North American currently living in Japan, where he works with the International Network of Engaged Buddhists.

*In the autumn,
on retreat at a mountain temple—*

Although I try
to hold the single thought
of Buddha's teaching in my heart,
I cannot help but hear
the many crickets' voices calling as well.

—*Izumi Shikubu*

—translated by Jane Hirshfield and Mariko Aratani

Reprinted by permission from *Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women*, edited by Jane Hirshfield. Harper-Collins, 1994.

Coordinator's Report

COMING HOME FROM INEB:

Will the Circle Be Unbroken?

There's an old southern song that most of us have heard. It asks, "Will the circle be unbroken?" In this world there are countless circles. Sometimes, if we practice the perfection of patience along with the other *paramitas*, we can just make out that each circle is already unbroken.

Five years ago in Japan at Rinso-in, the temple of my root teacher Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, I saw an old photo taken early in World War II, on the day that the temple's ancient bells were collected to be melted down for guns and bombs. With the old bells arrayed before them, Suzuki Roshi and his community were grim-faced. I can't tell you how often I have recalled this image, with sadness for their loss and with gratitude that they could keep faith and practice in the face of war, and that this practice is now in our hands.

This particular circle was completed for me in Thailand several weeks ago, where I went to attend meetings of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. At Dawn Kiam, a branch of the late Ajahn Buddhadasa's forest monastery Suan Mokh, I saw a hanging bell that looked like a bomb. I asked about it and learned that the best-sounding temple bells are in fact made from U.S. bombs left from the Vietnam war. They are most plentiful in Northeast Thailand, where B-52s embarked for deadly missions over Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Now one of these bells, a seventy-five-pound gift from an activist Thai monk friend, hangs by my door at the Berkeley Zen Center. My friend Phra Suthep painted on the words, "Turning Bombs into Dhamma Bells." And this seems a perfect message to carry with BPF to the Nevada Nuclear Test Site next month.

Reflecting on the rich time and close friendship I found working last month with INEB, taking part in a workshop for ordained sangha at Suan Mokh and the INEB conference at Wat Samakkhi, an hour from the Cambodian border, I am reminded of other circles—circles in which the suffering of Asia and America is intimately linked, past and present. A few examples suffice.

Dating back to U.S. presence during the Vietnam War, Thai prostitutes outnumber monks. Now along with an industry of so-called sex tourism, AIDS threatens these young women and an entire generation of Asians. Cambodians still suffer death and dismemberment from millions of land mines sown across fields, forests, and roads, the leavings of an internecine war that we once fostered in our own "national interest." Several weeks back, Clinton lifted our bitter embargo against Vietnam, and on the very first day of U.S. trade,

the newspapers announced a "cola war" between Coke and Pepsi. What we lost in the rice fields twenty years ago will be won in the boardrooms of multinational companies in years to come. The riches of Burma's oil fields, timber, and untamed rivers go to any bidder willing to turn a blind eye to the imprisonment of an entire nation—and bidders from Japan, Thailand, and America are not in short supply. And here in the U.S., whole industries go in search of lower wages and higher profits in less "developed" nations, leaving behind an economic and social desperation that creates a third world reality right in the midst of seeming plenty.

These are some of the musings I carry back from my time in Thailand, along with many old and new Dhamma friendships, a bell made from a bomb, and a list of commitments and plans that include the efforts outlined below. I wish I had space to spin more of the stories from INEB.

A New Focus on Weapons Control

There are countless weapons in this world: handguns in our streets; land mines that kill after the combatants are long gone; nuclear weapons stockpiled for scenarios of oblivion; harsh words inspiring hatred and revenge; racism that shapes a permanent underclass; weapons of mis-education, environmental degradation, sexual oppression, economic exploitation, consumerism, and cultural arrogance. Some are more obviously weapons than others, but all are weapons.

BPF has long been feeling the lack of a domestic program to match the support we have been able to offer internationally. At our last board meeting in late January, we decided to focus on weapons control and nonviolence, so as to address some of the national and international concerns I spoke of above and in my column last issue. We don't take this responsibility lightly or expect our understanding to be immediate. This is work that will unfold over several years and we need your experience to guide us.

We are starting with next month's Witness at the Nevada Nuclear Test Site, and a package of study materials to accompany this action. We are also developing a bibliography that you can send for, and we plan to encourage local study groups that will lead to local actions. We are also working on the idea of "listening projects," to educate ourselves and our wider communities—Buddhist and non-Buddhist—about setting down all the weapons we carry, weapons that fail to protect us from real harm.

A Buddhist Volunteer Corps

The Catholic Worker model has inspired many of us who believe in spiritual community and social action. Two years ago at the last BPF summer institute, the idea of community for engaged Buddhists was put forward strongly and discussed for months afterwards. Last year, Diana Winston, a BPF friend, came to us

with a good proposal for a Buddhist Volunteer Corps, embodying practice, community, and social action. Over the last few months Diana and the BPF board—led by Margaret Howe, who has herself recently moved into the Salinas Catholic Worker House—have been refining this proposal and allotting seed money to get things rolling. We'll be talking with other organizations similarly engaged, and we hope to begin a modest project by the end of the year. Your participation, thoughts, and suggestions are strongly encouraged. ❖

—Alan Senauke

CHAPTER NEWS

Apologies for such a short section of Chapter News this issue. Because of the shorter lead time (two months instead of three) and my trip to Asia, I didn't solicit news as widely as usual. More next time.—AS

Cherry Blossom Chapter (in the D.C. area) continues to meditate, study, and have a potluck lunch at its monthly meetings. Some members are looking into the possibility of taking meditation instruction into the District of Columbia correctional system, where there is great interest but a lack of resources. Members have been invited to train with the Alternatives to Violence Project, a spiritually-based program for prisoners and community members.

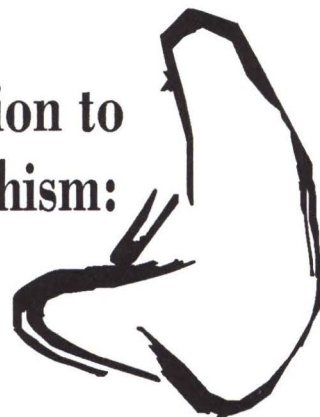
We are happy to introduce a new international affiliate: **Buddhist Peace Fellowship of Bangladesh**. This small group of friends is trying to build bridges among the different ethnic groups that traditionally practice Buddhism—Chakmas, Baruas, Rakhines, and others. They also hope to have dialogue with Muslims, Christians, and others who make up the greater part of Bangladesh's population. For more information, contact Maung Than Aye at the address on our chapter page.

Thelma Bryant from the **East Bay Chapter** (California) writes:

"At our January meeting we discussed homelessness with Deena Lahn of the Emergency Services Network of Alameda County, a coalition of organizations working to prevent/eliminate homelessness and hunger. Due to severe budget cuts, ESN has had to make unfortunate cuts in staff. The Chapter voted to join this coalition and support their work.

"In February we had a potluck dinner meeting with John Castelfranco, coordinator of the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, working primarily with people from Central America. We discussed pending state legislation that would ban essential services for undocumented immigrants. Several BPF members attended an all-day 'Interfaith Witness for the Rights of Immigrants' in Sacramento, opposing proposed punitive legislation." ❖

Introduction to Zen Buddhism: A Video



John Daido Looi, Abbot of Zen Mountain Monastery, in a richly detailed tour of the Zen tradition, traces the spirited evolution of the "Practice School" of Buddhism throughout Asia and into its current expression in the West. Topics covered include: "skillful means," the Four Wisdoms, the Eightfold Path, and emptiness. These teachings awaken questions about the nature of being itself, and offer inspiration to discover for oneself the clarity and compassion that is every individual's birthright. \$29.95 plus \$5.00 s/h



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ANNOUNCEMENTS & CLASSIFIEDS

Announcements

THE BALKAN PEACE TEAM hopes to establish a long-term presence of international volunteers in crisis areas of former Yugoslavia. Members of the team will identify possibilities for dialogue between the different groups, serve as a channel of independent and non-partisan information from the region, contribute skills in such areas as mediation and nonviolent conflict resolution, and serve as third party observers at the scene of incidents or potential flashpoints. six-month commitment. Information: Balkan Peace Team, c/o Christine Schweitzer, Luetzowstr. 22, D-50674 Koeln, Germany. Fax +49. 221: 240. 1819.

CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Perspectives from the Grassroots, sponsored by the Overseas Development Network—a student-based nonprofit organization dedicated to raising international issues on college campuses. It will focus on the links between development strategies, personal choices, community organizing, and the global economy at this time of growing backlash against immigrants around the world. April 8-10, 1994 at Stanford University, CA. Information: ODN at 333 Valencia St., Suite 330, San Francisco, CA 94103, 415/431-4204.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED in Guatemala. The Jaguar Project of the Seva Foundation (an international non-governmental, non-religious, progressive, development organization) is now recruiting volunteers to provide accompaniment and support for returned Guatemalan refugees. A commitment of at least 3 months is necessary, as well as good health and proficiency in Spanish. Volunteers finance their own travel; Seva pays in-country expenses. Information: Seva Foundation, 38 Village Hill Rd., Williamsburg, MA 01096. 413/268-3003.

VIETNAM PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP TOUR. Global Exchange is arranging a tour of Vietnam from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh

City for citizen peace makers. Discover the rich culture and history of Vietnam as you meet with people from all walks of life. Learn about Vietnamese culture, internal politics, and prospects for future relations between our countries. Tour dates are from July 28 to August 14, 1994. Information: Global Exchange, 2017 Mission St. #303, San Francisco, CA 94110, 415/255-7296.

BUDDHIST WITNESS AT THE NEVADA NUCLEAR TEST SITE *April 7-10, 1994*

Buddhists and their friends and relatives will gather to celebrate Buddha's Birthday with a weekend visit and demonstration at the Nevada Nuclear Test Site.

The weekend will include a tour of the site, a meeting with Western Shoshone leaders, nonviolence training, meditation, a Dharma talk, a ceremony at the test site gates, and whatever (optional) direct action the group agrees upon. Guest speakers include Tenshin Reb Anderson, Bas Bruyne, Pamela Meidell, and Mayumi Oda.

Cost for the weekend is \$60. Financial assistance is available. To reserve a place, write or call the BPF office 510/525-8596.

Sponsored by Nevada Desert Experience and the BPF.

THE 2ND ANNUAL International Race "Through the Native Land of Ghengis Khan," July 2-9, 1994. From Khar-Khorum, the ancient capital of Mongolia, to Ulaanbaatar, the modern capital. For more information, contact: Association of Mongolian Runners, P.O. Box 596, Central Post, Ulaanbaatar 13, Mongolia. Fax: 976-21-05211.

PRISON DHARMA NETWORK is a nonsectarian Buddhist support network for prisoners interested in Dharma practice and study. PDN emphasizes the discipline of sitting meditation as a practical approach to dealing with the day-to-day stress of prison life. PDN

especially welcomes the contribution of dharma books you do not wish to keep in your personal library (and some you do!). For information or to send materials, contact: Prison Dharma Network, P.O. Box 912, Astor Station, Boston, MA 02123-0912.

NEEDS OF HOMELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Can you help with donations of such items as toothbrushes, toothpaste, cereal/soup bowls, plates, kitchenware, kitchen towels, and toilet articles, for homeless women and children at a center in Berkeley? Information: 510/548-6933, or 510/524-2468.

INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CHILDREN'S RELIEF PROGRAM seeks sponsors for needy children in Sri Lanka, India, and Chile (\$16/month). Contact them at 1511 Alencastre St., Honolulu, HI 96816, 808/593-6515.

DHARMA GAIA, an INEB affiliate, would like to start contacts with BPF members, particularly in Europe, and would like to offer hospitality for short visits (5-10 days with a contribution to food expenses and housework) to share experiences and meditations. Write to: Dharma Gaia, attn. Sergio Orrao, Vico Hanbury 3, 18030 Latte (IM), Italy.

REFUGIO DEL RIO GRANDE shelters refugees fleeing persecution in the Rio Grande valley. It provides a place of rest to people who urgently need that refuge to consider the next step in organizing their lives. The Refugio is urgently in need of both courageous volunteers and money—to buy mattresses, to build, to buy food, to keep the camp open. Please send donations or requests for more info to: Refugio del Rio Grande, P.O. Box 3566, Harlingen, TX 78551; or call 210/425-9416.

GAY BUDDHIST FRATERNITY publishes a monthly newsletter, with information about their activities in the S.F. Bay Area and longer articles on topics of concern to gay Buddhists generally. \$15/year. For subscriptions or information, write GBF, 2261 Market St. #422, San Francisco, CA 94114; or call 415/974-9878.

SULAK SIVARAKSA, Thai social critic and founder of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), is involved in what will certainly be a lengthy court case (see Summer 1993 *Readings*), and needs money for this purpose. If you would like to help, send a check payable to INEB and marked "Sulak/lese majeste." Sulak will be told the names of contributors but not the amounts. INEB, P.O. Box 1, Ongkharak Nakhorn Nayok, 26120 Thailand.

CHUSHI GANGDRUG is the organization that escorted the Dalai Lama and others in their flight from Tibet. Chushi Gangdrug is making an appeal for funds to build a home for 75 elderly Tibetans in Dehra Dun, U.P., India, and to establish a stipend fund for another 100 who do not wish to move to the home. The two year project will cost more than four million rupees. To help with a donation, please write to Chushi Gangdrug Defend Tibet Volunteers Assn., 39 New Tibetan Camp, Majnu-Ka-Tilla, Delhi 110054 India.

Classifieds

MEDITATION AND LIBERATION one-day retreats for people of color sponsored by the Interracial Buddhist Council. Sunday, April 24, 1994, in Berkeley, CA with Ralph Steele and Norman Fischer; and Sunday October 9, 1994 at Spirit Rock Center in Woodacre, CA with Michelle Benzamin-Masuda and Jack Kornfield. Information: 510/644-144; 2422 McKinley St., Apt. C, Berkeley, CA 94703.

CREATE HOME TOGETHER: Semi-shared mountain spirit space, views, redwoods, meadows. 26+ acres north Santa Cruz. \$60,000-120,000. Financing. Sahm, P.O. Box 983, Boulder Creek, CA 95006. Welcome Home!

PLEASE HELP US QUALIFY the California Health Security Act (Single Payer Plan) for the November 1994 ballot. We need money and help with our petition drive. Send checks to: Californians for Health Security, 1144 65th St., Oakland, CA 94609. Phone 800/525-0101 for information.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED to work with INEB-Nepal coordinator Stella Tamang in Kathmandu. Assist with correspondence and school program in

exchange for room and board. Contact Alan Senauke at the BPF for further information: 510/525-8596.

BPF IS LOOKING FOR a volunteer or group in the U.S. to coordinate support for young girls rescued from prostitution in northern Thailand on the Burmese border. We are also looking for a young person fluent in Thai and English who might like to work on related issues in Thailand. Contact Alan Senauke at the BPF for further information.

DHAMMAYIETRA—WALK FOR PEACE in Cambodia, May 1994. Led by Ven. Maha Gosananda, who has just been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to bring peace and national reconciliation to war-torn Cambodia. For information, contact Liz Bernstein, Coalition for Peace & Reconciliation, P.O. Box 144, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Fax: 855-232-6400.

THE CONCH-US TIMES, the journal of the Dead Buddhists of America, is for those appreciating both Grateful Dead and Buddhist cultures. Winter issue features Tibet, the new Karmapa, Yogi Chen, the Tashi Targay, Dead lyrics and the dharma, the end of legal herbs and vitamins, and much more. \$8 a year U.S. \$10 outside U.S. payable to Ken Sun-Downer, Box 769, Idyllwild, CA 92549.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES in the Rockies! Unique degree program combines Ecology, Horticulture, Anthropology and Native American studies with Effective Action and Contemplative Training. The Naropa Institute, Dept. W, 2130 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80302. 303/444-0202.

THE HARBOR SANGHA is a small Zen group in San Francisco. Our teacher, Joseph Bobrow, received permission to teach from Robert Aitken-Roshi in 1989. Weekly sittings are offered every Monday evening, and day-long retreats every other month. Beginners are welcome to attend. The opportunity to practice more intensively and do koan study with Joe is also available. For more information, contact the Harbor Sangha at 415/241-8807.

THE INFLATABLE ZAFU is actually an inflatable beachball inside a

fine quality zafu cover. Lightweight-Convenient-Guaranteed. Colors: Plum, Burgundy, Navy, Royal, Green, Black. Cost: \$22 postpaid. Meditation supplies. Free brochure. Carolina Morning Designs, Dept. BPFN, P.O. Box 2832, Asheville, NC 28802. 704/683-1843.

BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGE-walking meditation in forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Experienced practitioner will guide pilgrims on a moderately strenuous day-long trek from Pema Ösel Ling to Land of Medicine Buddha via Nisene Marks State Park. Groups depart mornings from PÖL on the following Saturdays: 2 April, 16 April, 30 April, 14 May, 28 May. Overnight stay recommended. Contact: Pilgrimage, c/o Arya Marga Institute, 2130 Fillmore St. Suite 124, San Francisco, CA 94115; 415/435-8696.

GRATITUDE

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship gratefully acknowledges contributions above and beyond membership between December 15, 1993 and February 15, 1994:

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♦ Thank you! ♦

Back Issues of *Turning Wheel*

Following is a catalogue of the last four years of *Turning Wheel*. Copies are \$5 postpaid from the BPF National office (\$4 postpaid for orders of 2 or more).

Spring '90: Earth Day Issue. Galen Rowell on The Agony of Tibet; Emptiness as an Environmental Ethic; Interviews with Helena Norberg-Hodge on Ladakh and Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh on Buddhism and Ecology in Thailand; Feminist Perspectives on the Dharma.

Summer '90: Buddhists and Native Americans: An Interview with Peter Matthiessen; A Ritual for Aborted and Miscarried Children; Theater Work with Young Cambodian Refugees; Thai Buddhist Women; Green Gulch Earth Day Ceremonies.

Fall '90: Special Feature: Disability and Buddhism; The Dying of Issan Dorsey; BPF Statement on the Persian Gulf Crisis; Compassionate Listening; Report from Asia Watch and Review of the Situation in Burma.

Winter '91: Special Sections on: War and Peace; the Nuclear Guardianship Project; Trees. Features on Burma and the Tibetan Refugee Project.

Spring '91: Special Focus: Buddhist Teachers and Sexual Misconduct. Personal Responses to the Gulf War; Children and Buddhist Practice. Articles on INEBs; Dharma and Draft Counseling.

Summer '91: Thich Nhat Hanh on the Gulf War; Guidelines for Preventing Misconduct; the Kalachakra Mandala Incident; Prostitution in Thailand.

Fall '92: First Meditation in Action Institute: excerpts from Robert Aitken, A.T. Ariyaratne, and others; Sanctuary Movement; Thubten Chodron on Conflict Resolution.

Winter '92: Buddhist Practice in Prison; views from the inside and out; Robert Thurman on Tibet and the Mother of the Buddha; Diana N. Rowan on The Kalachakra for World Peace.

Spring '92: Community—What Is It? A look at this question from the point of view of the homeless, an ex-untouchable in India, the Catholic Worker movement, and others. A report from the international conference on Buddhist Women.

Summer '92: Indigenous Peoples: Native Americans speak out about the Columbus Quincentennial; a Buddhist pilgrimage to the Nevada nuclear test site; Buddhist peace work in Israeli-Occupied Palestine; the uprising in L.A.

Fall '92: Gays and Lesbians in Buddhist Practice; interview with Bobby Rhodes, story of a gay wedding, the loneliness of gay teenagers; Robert Aitken on the perfection of giving.

Winter '93: Animal Rights: Views on the first precept by Tenshin Reb Anderson and Thich Nhat Hanh; food and farming, vegetarianism and classism from a Jodo Shinshu perspective; special eyewitness report on the Burmese resistance movement.

Spring '93: Racism and Buddhism/Racism in Buddhism: voices of Asian American, African American, and Latino Buddhists; Carl Anthony on eco-justice; unlearning racism; Sokka-Gakkai International; the Buddhist Churches of America; honoring the Asian source of Buddhism.

Summer '93: Money and the lack thereof: Robert Aitken and Suzuki Roshi; Buddhism and Capitalism, money in prison; interview with Mayumi Oda; prostitution as livelihood; Gary Snyder on crawling; Maha Gosananda and the Cambodian Peace Walk.

Fall '93: Profiles of Engaged Buddhists; remembering Bikkhu Buddhadasa; after Malaysian monasticism; deep ecology; women and HIV.

Winter '94: Right Speech: Robert Aitken, Norman Fischer and others on free speech, harsh speech, pornography, storytelling, and gossip; interview with Sister True Emptiness; Kaz Tanahashi and Plutonium Free Future; the Nevada test site.

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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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BPF membership requires only a commitment to the general spirit of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Please see Statement of Purpose, at left. A year's membership & subscription to *Turning Wheel* (four issues) is \$35 for U.S. residents, \$40 elsewhere. Subscriptions help to support the work of BPF. (A low-income rate of \$20 is also available.) Please make checks payable to "Buddhist Peace Fellowship." Contributions are tax deductible.

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