

TURNING WHEEL

The Journal of Socially Engaged Buddhism



BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP
P.O. BOX 3470
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BEARING WITNESS

On the West Bank • In Colombia

PEMA CHÖDRÖN: Practicing Peace in Times of War

BONUS SECTION: The Definitive Bibliography on Socially Engaged Buddhism

From the Editor

What's bearing witness? Not turning away from suffering or injustice, staying steady, watching, and speaking out. In this issue of *TW*, we hear from Sarah Weintraub and John Barber about bearing witness in Colombia and the West Bank, respectively. They don't call it "bearing witness"—they are too modest—but I do. Most of us don't sign up to go thousands of miles from home into a dangerous situation to stand for peace, but we all cross paths with suffering and injustice. We meet someone who needs help, or who asks us to listen to them.

When Buddha learned that the army of the neighboring kingdom was coming to attack his country, he went out to the border and sat on the ground under a dead tree. The opposing army came on toward him, with their swords raised, and he just sat there. The general said, "Aren't you hot sitting under that dead tree?" Buddha replied, "I'm always at peace in my native land." The general was so moved he turned around and went home. He came back a second time, and the same thing happened. The third time, he didn't turn back. But Buddha sat there, bearing witness anyway.

What's the difference between witnessing and just plain seeing? Witnessing means you take some responsibility for having eyes and ears. You don't pretend it didn't happen. You take a stand. You take the witness stand. If you report child abuse, that's a kind of bearing witness. After you see it you bear the news. You *carry* it, even if it's heavy, and then you share the burden by telling what you saw. (See Mushim Ikeda-Nash, p. 10.) You travel with notebook and camera, metaphorically if not literally.

If you go to a war-torn place to stand for peace, reporting back is part of the purpose of your going. So when we read in *TW* about what Sarah Weintraub and John Barber saw, we are participating in their witness, bringing it to fruition.

Even if you aren't a writer or a photographer, if you see something that shouldn't be ignored, you can tell somebody else about it. This whole world is everybody's world, isn't it? What happens in it belongs to all of us.

And let's not be embarrassed to help each other in public. A friend of mine asked some teenagers on the subway train to turn down the volume on their boom box. A couple of stops later, as they got off the train, they mashed a jelly donut into her gray hair and poured coffee over her head. The car was packed with people and nobody said a word to her. The tears that mixed with the coffee running down her face were not so much because of what the teenagers had done as because nobody said, "Are you all right?" They had not been able to bear witness.

Thich Nhat Hanh suggests that we say to the people around us: "Darling, how can I help?" I want to learn to keep this question ready, on the tip of my tongue. (Sometimes it's better not to say the "darling" part out loud.)

Bearing witness takes courage, and courage is a good old-fashioned idea. Sarah Weintraub was afraid as she rode a mule through the Colombian jungle at night, but she didn't turn back. John Barber was afraid as an Israeli tank turned its gun toward him on the West Bank, but he didn't run away.

We each know what kind of courage we want to develop in order to be able to help. It's okay to start close to home, whether it's saying, "I'm hot—do you mind if we open a window?" to a friend, or getting out of bed in the middle of the night to investigate when you hear shouting on the street. We can work our way up to sitting under a dead tree and facing an army. ❖

—Susan Moon

Next deadline for *Turning Wheel*: June 1, 2004, for the Fall 2004 issue. (No theme.) Send submissions of essays, poetry, drawings, or photographs to *Turning Wheel*, P.O. Box 3470, Berkeley, CA 94703-9906, with SASE; or to <turningwheel@bpf.org>. We also welcome letters. Send to "Editor" at address above or via e-mail.

TURNING WHEEL

The Journal of Socially Engaged Buddhism



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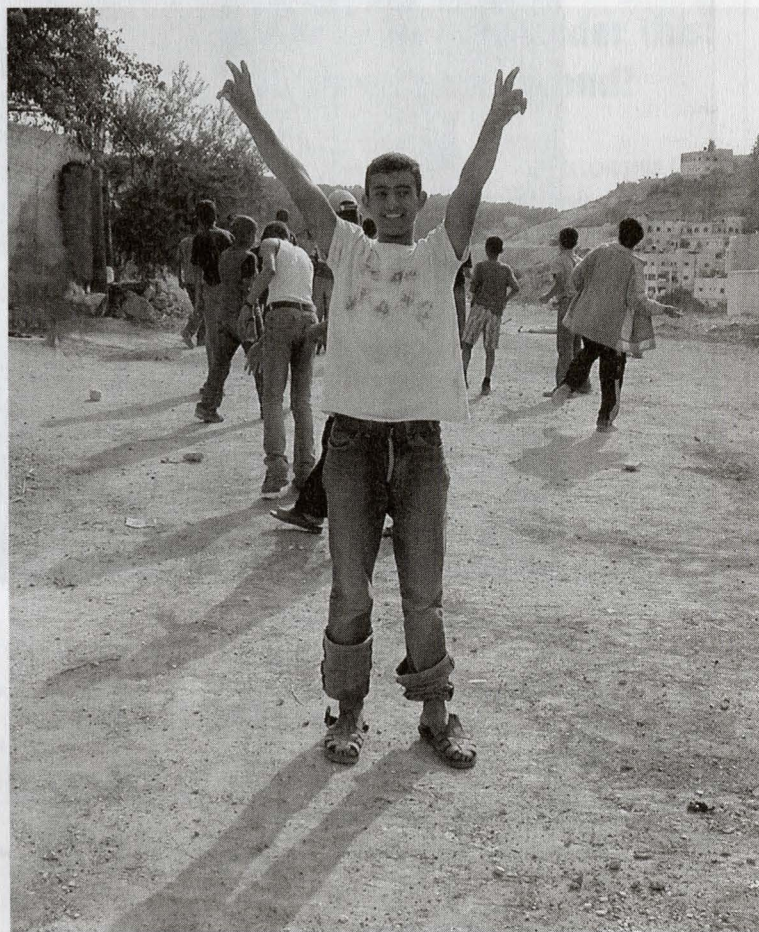
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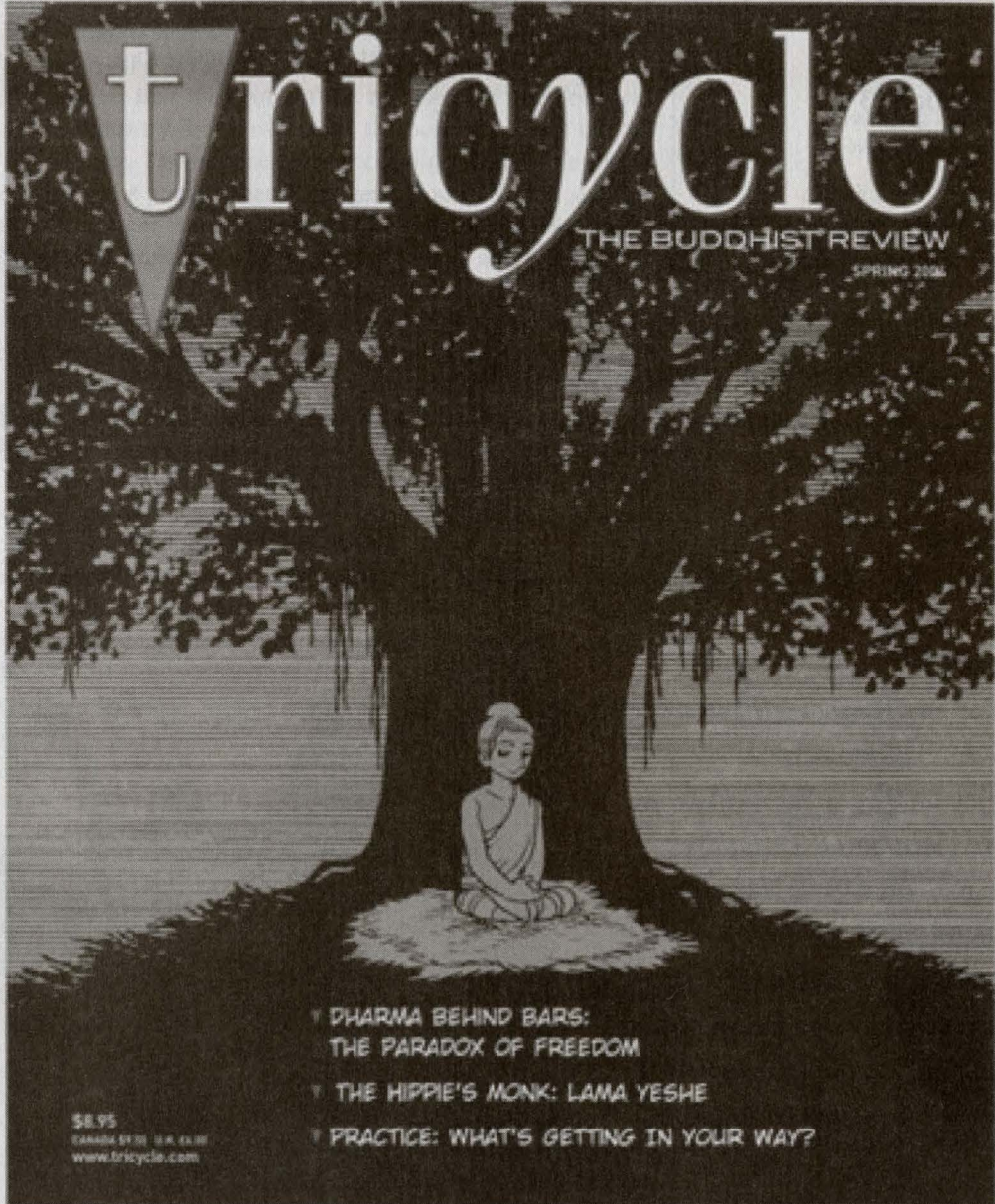
Cover photo by John Barber
On the West Bank, November 2003.

On the West Bank. Photo by John Barber

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Letters

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Eating the Precepts

I very much enjoyed Trena Cleland's article, "Eating the Precepts." For three years I have cooked once a month for Teen Feed, a program in Seattle that serves hot dinners to homeless youth. We always prepare three entrées: one with red meat, one with fish or chicken, and one that is vegan. We make sure the vegan entrée has good protein in it—the teens are often protein-starved. I also like to include a "cheesy" side dish that both the dairy-eating vegetarians and meat eaters will enjoy, like cheesy noodles or cheesy potatoes. We also serve a cooked vegetable, a salad, dinner rolls, milk and juice, and dessert.

I find that by providing both meat and vegetarian or vegan options, we build community and good will between all the different food factions, both among the volunteers and among our homeless guests. It has been my experience that homeless people deeply appreciate the simple gesture of being given a choice. So much of their lives are circumscribed by bare necessity or the blind mechanisms of the system. When we offer our guests a choice, they tend to see this as a respectful and caring gesture.

—Polly Trout

Trena Cleland writes:

"I won't give up on the dharma, but time is running out to transform society in positive ways. What is my role? What can I do to help?"

Enlighten up. I don't remember any teaching about time running out, so I wonder where you get that opinion from. I don't remember any teaching about transforming society. As far as I can (mis)understand at this point, the practice is about trans-forming myself, maybe even un-forming myself.

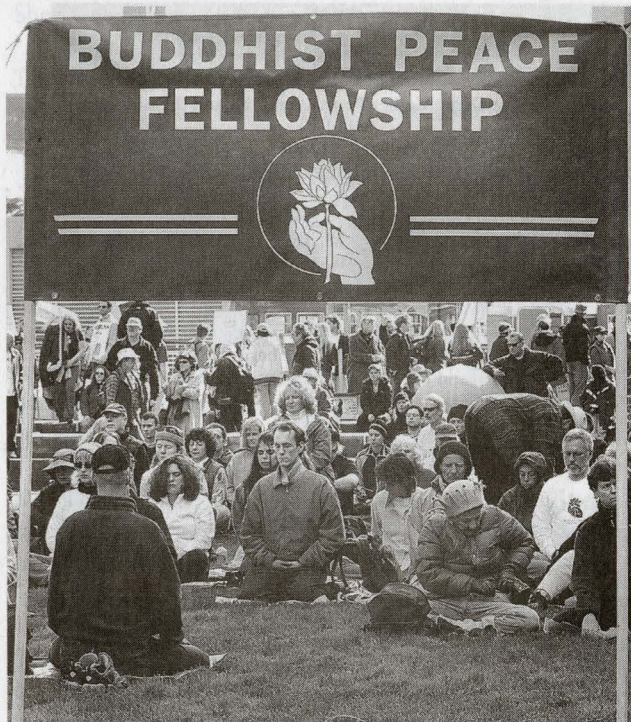
I do share the impulse to want everything to work out in the way I want it to work out. But I certainly don't take that impulse seriously. It's just an idea.

If I reduce suffering in myself, I have, by definition, reduced suffering in the world. Besides, think of all those ripple effects: when I suffer less, everyone I contact suffers less, too.

—Steve Kohn

Craving

A note on the Twelve Steps, mentioned in Linda Hess's article "Craving." Don't taunt the gods by dogging the Steps, still the most successful method of addressing addiction worldwide. It may not have worked for you, but it does for countless others. Unfortunately I hear Buddhists far too often put down this simple, beautiful program.



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On the first anniversary of the war in Iraq, consider this: Will there be a second?

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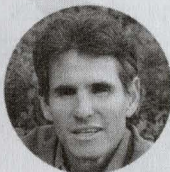
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I work as a correctional officer, and totally appreciated J. D. Barrett Sr.'s article "You Eat What You Get," because he eats what I cook, and, I try to add just a little bit of light to each meal I serve. The used copies of *TW* go to the day room library!

—Augie Kochuten, Alaska

The Food Issue

I was disappointed to see that your latest issue contains several articles that repeat the timeworn but fallacious arguments against free trade in agricultural products.

I share the view of the vast majority of trained economists that free trade, in agricultural products just as in other products, has been of immense benefit to society over the past two or three centuries. Certainly it sometimes creates adjustment problems, but these can be ameliorated by intelligent public policy, and the net benefits of free trade will still be enormous.

—Gordon Tyndall, Ph.D. (Economics), Oakland

Enough Mind

I read in Susan Moon's editorial about "enough mind," and "the eight awarenesses of the enlightened person, including 'knowing how to be satisfied.'"

Can you kindly tell me what are the eight, and where I can possibly read about them?

—Lama Surya Das

Response from Susan Moon, *TW* Editor:

The Eight Awarenesses of the Enlightened Person are:

- 1) Having few desires
- 2) Knowing how to be satisfied
- 3) Enjoying serenity and tranquillity
- 4) Exerting meticulous effort
- 5) Not forgetting right thought
- 6) Practicing samadhi
- 7) Cultivating wisdom
- 8) Avoiding idle talk

This list comes from Eihei Dogen's *Hachidainigaku*, and can be found in *The Hazy Moon of Enlightenment* (published by Zen Center of Los Angeles, 1978), with commentary by Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi and Bernard Tetsugen Glassman. ❖

A special thank-you to BPF's volunteers:

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Indra's Net

Compiled by Annette Herskovits

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

Afghan Women Never Give Up

While the war in Afghanistan continues, and the future of the wounded nation is far from certain, Afghan women continue to show breathtaking bravery.

Indeed, a new international heroine may have emerged at the December Grand Council, or Loya Jirga. This is the second such gathering since the U.S. military forced the Taliban from power. The first one elected Hamid Karzai interim president; this one approved a draft constitution. Though no one is completely satisfied, many hope the constitution is a step toward stability in a nation struggling to recover from 24 years of war in the midst of a new war.

To the despair of delegates concerned with democracy and human rights, the neo-Taliban "warlords" who still rule most of the country with their private armies were an intimidating presence. Yet no one dared to call attention to these men who had destroyed the nation and who now promote heroin trading, profit from international aid, and obstruct the freedom of women.

Then a woman, Malalai Joya, rose and, pointing, stated, "These were those who turned our country into the nucleus of national and international wars. They were the most anti-women people in the society. They brought our country to this state and they intend to do the same again."

Her remarks were greeted with cries of outrage and threats. When the chairman (who had earlier announced that the opinion of every man at the conference was worth the opinions of two women) pressed Joya to apologize, she refused, saying her only regret was not having said more. Hundreds of women welcomed her when she returned to her home province, where she helps orphans and provides health care. However, her life remains at risk.

The draft constitution does provide rights and protections for women, and mandates that women make up 25 percent of the parliament—more than are found in the U.S. Congress. Now the task is implementation.

It is hard to imagine calmly standing fast for the truth in the face of danger, as Joya did, but we can learn from her as we face the enormous challenges confronting us now.

There is a tremendous ferment within Islam because of the struggle over women's status. Women the world over can rejoice that the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Shirin Ebadi, an Iranian human rights activist. Sadly, among Ebadi's first tasks after that announcement was investigating the beating death of Zahra Kazemi, a Canadian-Iranian photographer arrested while photographing student demonstrators.

She died following an "interrogation" by Iranian authorities.

Where there is oppression, there will be resistance. There is no doubt that Muslim women will one day be free to be full human beings within the enlightened traditions of Islam.

—Melody Ermachild Chavis

Cambodia: Reviving the Arts and Healing

Arn Chorn-Pond was nine in 1970 when the Khmer Rouge took over Cambodia and forced him, along with 500 other children, to live in a Buddhist temple that had been converted into a killing place. "Every day, I had to kill my own heart, in order to endure," he said. "I still have not had enough time to cry out my feelings."

Arn believes he survived four years as a Khmer Rouge captive in part by playing the flute for camp guards. "It really saved my life. The guy who taught me how to play was killed by the Khmer Rouge [for teaching]."

He fled his captors when Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia in 1979. After reaching a refugee camp in Thailand, he was adopted by an American rescue worker who brought him to the United States. Seeing him struggling with violent rages and suicidal feelings, Arn's adoptive father urged him to speak about his life. Arn slowly began to heal himself by reaching out to young survivors of war, Cambodian refugees and others.

In 1990, I was fortunate to meet Arn during a presentation by Children of War, an international youth leadership program for teenagers from war zones, which Arn cofounded. When Arn first returned to Cambodia in 1989, he learned that its thousand-year tradition of performing arts had nearly disappeared in a generation—nine out of ten performers died under the Khmer Rouge. To help save his country's musical heritage, Arn founded the Cambodian Master Performers Program.

By seeing each performer who has survived as "a living cultural treasure with a unique body of skills and knowledge," the program helps them to reestablish themselves in contemporary society. It envisions a cultural renaissance in 20 years so dynamic that "Khmer arts will have become a wellspring of Cambodian strength and resiliency and a vital source of healing and reconciliation."

Arn, now 38, was the subject of a recent PBS-aired documentary, *The Flute Player*. The lovingkindness teaching of Cambodian Buddhist patriarch Maha Ghosananda has strengthened Arn's dedication to peacemaking: "We follow Maha Ghosananda's footsteps; he is a peacemaker and [takes] no sides," Arn said.

Noting that the actions of the United States and other nations during the war in Vietnam contributed significantly to the rise of the genocidal Khmer Rouge, the program gives U.S. citizens and others outside Cambodia a chance to "contribute to the regeneration of Cambodia's ancient and wounded culture." It organizes two-week trips to Cambodia in which participants meet with masters and students of

music, puppetry, dance, and opera, and learn about Khmer architecture, sculpture, crafts, and nature. For more information, see www.cambodianmasters.org.

—Lyn Fine

A Palestinian School Teaches Peace, Reconciliation, and Democracy

Hussein Issa, a Palestinian Muslim, was born in 1947—the year before his family was expelled by Israel from their home in the city of Lod. He grew up in the poverty of a refugee camp near Bethlehem.

Issa became a teacher with a degree in psychology. Acutely aware of the violence and deprivation marking the lives of Palestinian children, he dreamed of teaching children “the beauty and necessity of peace” in a kind environment.

So in 1984, he and his wife left the camp to found Al Amal (“hope” in Arabic) Center in Al-Khader, a village bordering Bethlehem. They started with child care for 22 preschoolers, then added a primary school, and in 1994, the secondary Hope Flowers School. By 2000, there were 450 students.

Despite encountering hostility from both Israelis and Palestinians, Issa never wavered from the path of reconciliation and nonviolence. “To suffer for peace is much better than to suffer for war,” he said. Israelis and Palestinians “have no choice but...peaceful coexistence.”

He initiated many bridge-building projects—Hebrew language classes, field trips to schools in Israel, classes by Israeli volunteers. Hope Flowers teachers learned about the Jewish

Holocaust. Palestinian and Israeli third-graders built a garden—cleared, planted, tended, and harvested—in a Jerusalem preserve. Issa also emphasized “democracy,” through elected student committees of boys and girls.

In 1999, the Israeli occupation authorities issued a demolition order for the school, claiming it lacked building permits. In fact, they wanted the land for an Israeli settlement. Intervention by U.S. officials and Israeli friends saved the school.

Hussein Issa died of heart disease in March 2000. His widow, son, and daughter have kept the school alive. This has been a difficult struggle, as the second intifada began that fall. The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) repeatedly invaded Bethlehem. Tanks passed through Al-Khader, Apache helicopters flew overhead, and snipers were positioned near the school. Fighting sometimes trapped the children inside. The IDF built a rampart across the road, forcing the school bus to take a long detour on a dangerous, rocky “non-roadway” until international appeals got the roadblock removed.

Field trips to Israel and joint projects with Israeli children were halted. With no work available, parents could not pay school fees and enrollment dropped to 120 students. The children now show symptoms of acute psychological stress, and trauma counseling for students and their families has become an important part of staff work.

In December 2002, the IDF invaded the home of Issa’s son, Ibrahim, and tied him up. When he asked to sit in

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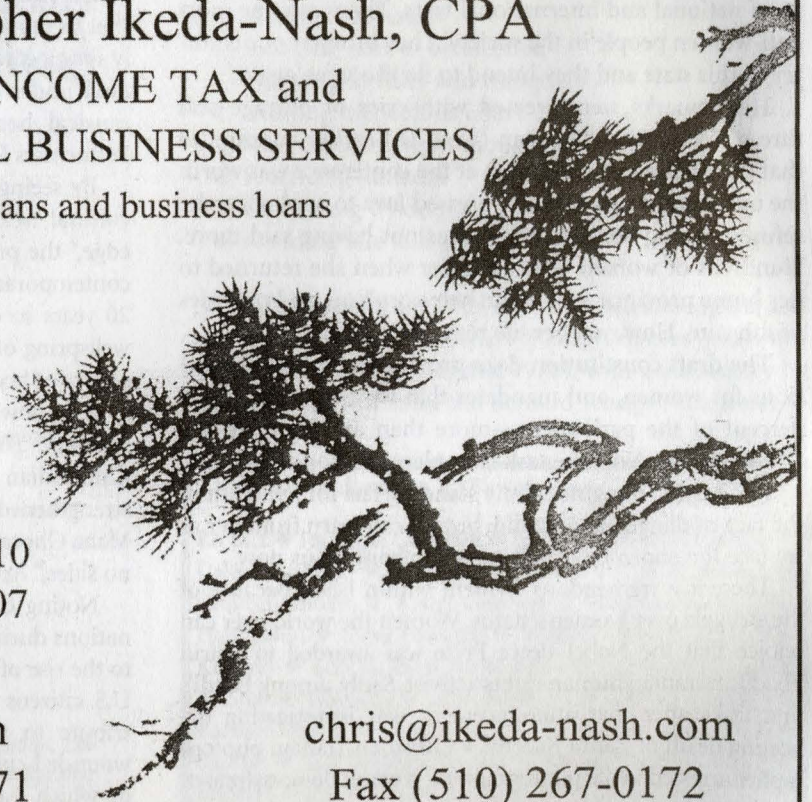
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History

another position, he was beaten. When taken to prison, Ibrahim was interrogated and again brutally beaten because he had unknowingly rented a room to a Palestinian militant. After four days, Ibrahim was released. "My belief in peace never wavered," he said. "On the contrary, I got energy to work for change."

Ibrahim recently traveled through the United States to raise funds for the school. His affecting gentleness bespeaks a profound commitment to nonviolence. The teachers, he explained, tell the children that the current political situation is a temporary obstacle—between governments, not between peoples.

To help, visit www.mideastweb.org or send contributions to OCMEPF (Orange County Middle East Peace Fund), P.O. Box 5891, Orange, CA 92863.

—Annette Herskovits

Meditation with 6,500 Prison Inmates

Imagine an evening breeze carrying meditative music through prison cells. Imagine 6,500 prison inmates dressed in white sitting on grass.

One recent evening when the whole world was busily at work, the Welikada prisons in Colombo, Sri Lanka, held a historic meditation session. "This is the first of its kind in the world. There were many different meditation programs inside various prisons, but certainly not with this number of inmates," said Sam Wijesinghe, former secretary general of the Sri Lankan parliament.

At 4:45 AM sharp, prison wards were opened and prisoners walked silently to the courtyard, sat down, and with closed eyes, listened to serene music.

"When we were told to think of our past and concentrate on our family, friends, enemies, and victims, I could not stop crying. This is the first time I thought of the man I killed and his family left behind and their suffering. I wish I could fly like a bird to my village to apologize and plead for forgiveness from them," said Iqubal, an inmate serving a 10-year sentence.

When the music stopped at 5 PM, there was a deep stillness. Then Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne, founder of Sarvodaya [Sri Lanka's largest peace movement], started the meditation. The wind turned colder but made no noise. Ariyaratne's soft approach taught a new lesson of lovingkindness to those present. "This is the first time someone spoke to my heart. I wish I met you people outside the prison walls before becoming a drug smuggler," expressed Wijeratne from Kandy.

"I want to make sure that these inmates will one day go back to their communities fully reformed and will never again commit crimes," added Romy Marshook, the commissioner general of prisons in Sri Lanka, who orchestrated this historic program.

Sarvodaya has conducted monthly meditation programs for inmates since 2000. ❖

—Krishna, Sarvodaya volunteer

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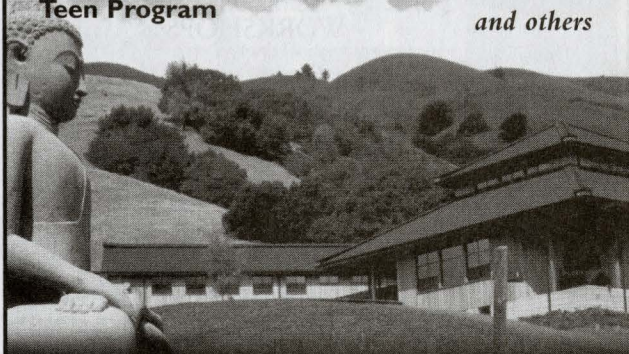
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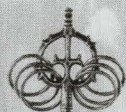
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*Three good friends of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship
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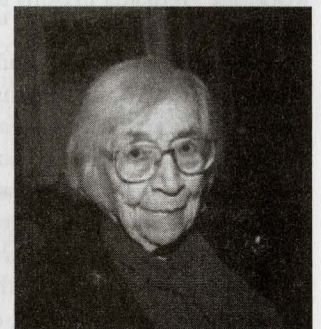


Supaporn Pongpruk 1958-2003

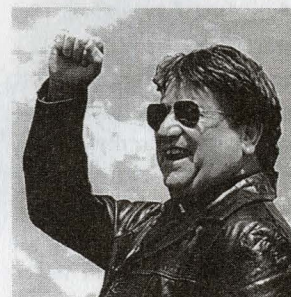
was the executive secretary of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), based in Thailand, from 1991 to 1993. BPF folks from the U.S. and around the world got to know her through attending INEB conferences in Thailand. In 1993 she contracted breast cancer, stopped her INEB work, and began an intensive period of meditation, yoga, and macrobiotics. Her cancer went into remission for 10 years, during which time her story of self-healing became an inspiration. In her last years, she was running workshops with cancer patients on facing death. On October 18, 2003, she succumbed to the cancer. She will be greatly missed by the many people she touched.

Gerda Miller 1913-2003

was a longtime leader of the Berkeley Gray Panthers and an activist for housing, health-care, and education as basic human rights. She became a friend to BPF because for many years, from 1990 to 1997, the BPF office consisted of one small room that we sublet from the Gray Panthers.



Gerda was born to a Jewish family in Berlin, and fled the Nazis in the '30s. She lived in Palestine, England, New York, and Berkeley, and worked for many years as a primary school teacher. She was a wonderful model of a lifetime activist.



Father Bill O'Donnell 1930-2003

a well-known Bay Area peace activist, died suddenly of a heart attack in December 2003. For many years, Fr. Bill was the pastor at St. Joseph the Worker Church in Berkeley, California. He was familiar to Bay Area activists as a leader and speaker at peace demonstrations, particularly at the Lawrence Livermore (Nuclear Weapons) Laboratory, where he was often arrested for civil disobedience. He had recently served time in federal prison for trespassing at the School of the Americas in Georgia. Committed to nonviolence, he was an inspiration to BPF activists, among many others. ❖

Hiomushi: A Buddhist Nun Opposes the Death Penalty

by Diane Patenaude Ames

Through most of the eighth century, Nara, with its ornate, brightly painted palaces and Buddhist temples, was virtually the only oasis of civilization in Japan. Inside the palaces, politics were so Byzantine that nobody was ever sure who was running the country, but everybody was plotting to seize power anyway. There were bloodbaths at frequent intervals.

Meanwhile, inside the temples, the Buddhist establishment was becoming richer by the hour, mostly by promising to soothe the vengeful ghosts of all the aristocrats who had been killed by the aristocrats left standing. Despite the corruption that this engendered, Buddhist learning, Buddhist art, and occasionally actual Buddhist sanctity flourished as if in a hothouse.

In the early 760s, Fujiwara no Nakamura wielded supreme power in the name of his son-in-law, the helpless boy emperor Junnin. However, in 764, a rather slimy Buddhist monk named Dokyo ousted him by jumping in bed with the retired empress Koken. Of course Fujiwara no Nakamura tried to stage a coup. He was defeated, amid much violent death, by a rising young courtier-general named Wake no Kiyomaro. The capital prepared for the usual round of executions that would liquidate what was left of the losing side.

However, Wake no Kiyomaro's elder sister Hiromushi (also known as Hokunni, 730-799) was a highly regarded Buddhist nun. She went to him to plead that such wholesale taking of life was unnecessary and against Buddhist principles. Because he listened to her, the condemned all had their sentences commuted to exile. The precedent proved to be fortunate for Wake no Kiyomaro himself when, a few years later, he ran afoul of the powerful Dokyo and was exiled but not executed. (He was recalled to high office in the next power shift.)

Little else is known of Hiromushi, beyond the facts that she was the daughter of a powerful chieftain in what is now Okayama Prefecture (Japan was still basically tribal in its social and political organization) and that she had this illustrious brother. However, it was also noted that she arranged care for a number of peasant children who had been orphaned by famines. In a time when most Buddhist temples did not even allow the oppressed masses to enter their precincts, and when preaching to peasants was suspect behavior, this was unusual. However, it was far from unique. From the time that Buddhism reached Japanese shores, its teachings of universal compassion moved at least some devout Buddhists to try to help the poor, even though this was unconventional behavior in the brutally hierarchical society in which they lived. ❖



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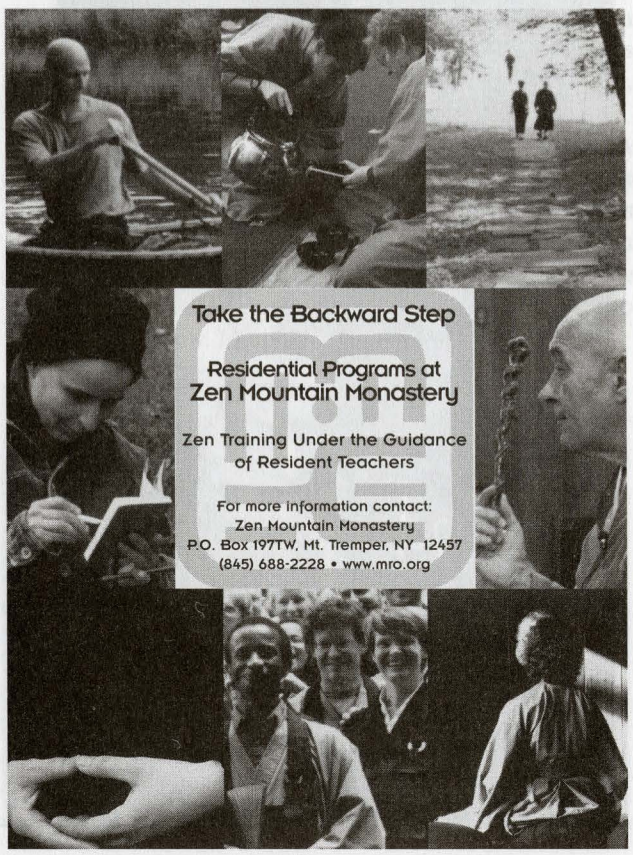
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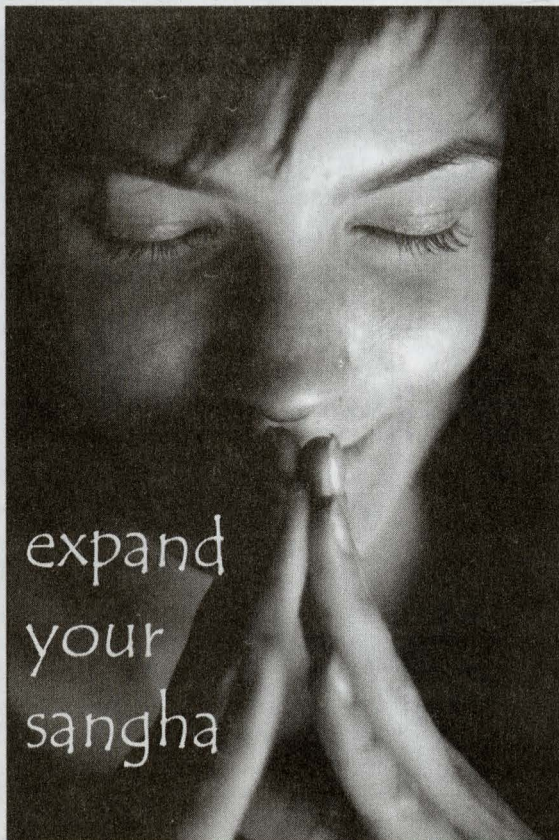
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Family Practice

Family Secrets: The Price of Denial

by Mushim Ikeda-Nash

*Even as a mother protects with her life
her only child,
so with a boundless heart
may I love and protect all living beings.*

—Buddhist teaching on lovingkindness

Math has never been my forte, so it took me years to realize that when my parents got married my mother was already pregnant with me. My parents never celebrated their wedding anniversary until their 25th, when their children were grown. They didn't show us their wedding photo, and when I was five my mom cut down her wedding dress and gave it to me to wear on Halloween; she wasn't a sentimental person. By the time their family secret became known, it didn't seem like a big deal to anyone.

Other secrets are different. Last fall, I heard my husband Chris talking to one of his old friends on the phone. Afterward he looked shaken.

"Harry is in prison," he told me. "He was molesting Erica, just like you guessed."

It had been many years since we had visited Chris's old friends for Thanksgiving and met Harry, a relative of theirs. Harry and his wife had been in prison for attempted homicide during a bar brawl. That Thanksgiving, they seemed to be living quietly and taking care of the two children, a nine-year-old daughter from Harry's wife's former marriage, and their baby son. We met the children on a couple of social occasions, and after observing the little girl, whose behavior was sometimes sexually provocative, I was worried. I told Chris: "I strongly think that she's been sexually molested, and a logical suspect would be her stepfather. I would like you to tell your friends to look into this."

Chris talked to his friends, who at times had had temporary custody of the two children, but they said, "We don't think so. Harry's joined a church and is trying hard to turn his life around." Chris's friends both loved the children, and it would have been very painful for them to believe that such terrible things were going on in their own extended family.

When I heard the news so many years later that Harry was a child molester, I felt as though my heart were being shredded with a knife. Though our connection to him and his family was distant, I went over and over again in my mind what I could have done differently that might have spared the little girl any of her suffering and made it easier for her to speak up to sympathetic adults who would believe her. Selfishly, I felt relief that my own child was safe. I experienced intense aversion to the whole situation, and wished we had never come into even peripheral con-


tact with Harry, his wife, and their children. And I was angry at Chris's friends because it felt as though we hadn't been taken seriously when we voiced our concerns. They had lived with the little girl themselves.

I talked about it with my 14-year-old son. "They knew what was happening; they just closed their eyes," Joshua said bitterly. "Some people would stay inside a burning house even if you yelled 'Fire!' at the top of your lungs."

I think that for a family to wake up together, we need to do away with secrets and extricate ourselves from the sticky karmic bog of denial. Naturally, some kinds of information require privacy, and when children are young they have developmentally appropriate boundaries. But the longer a harmful secret is kept, the more it tends to build up a kind of force field of communal silence around it. Adults learn to walk around this elephant in the room, pretending it's invisible, and children copy them. And though most of us might agree that more candor is needed, applying this theory to real-life situations can be difficult and confusing, or can even create more pain. In the words of one friend who, along with her father and brother, did an unsuccessful intervention on her alcoholic mother: "We were never told that it might not work. We went through this horrific experience, and Mother continued to deny everything."

The First Precept, not to harm but to cherish all life, is a lifetime practice. Some situations are much more ambiguous than the one I've described here. My Zen practice tells me that the best I can do is to observe carefully, clarify my thinking, consult others, make my wisest decision, then accept and learn from the consequences if I'm wrong. It's not magical or glamorous, it doesn't involve psychic power, but it's where Buddhism has brought me so far.

I'm determined to learn from what has happened. A psychotherapist friend told me, "Most counties have a child abuse hotline. If you suspect or know that a child is being abused, you can call and talk to someone who can advise you on what action is possible to help the child be safe." If it happened again, would I have the guts to do that? I don't know. I hope so. ❖



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Ecology

Defining the Good Life

by Stephanie Kaza

As the world struggles with the occupation in Iraq and other war zones, many commentators make comparisons with Vietnam. That war was clearly a significant turning point in ways we are still sorting out. Corresponding with an INEB (International Network of Engaged Buddhists) colleague from Thailand, I have bumped into yet another consequence of that war. While Vietnam was being torn by civil war, Thailand (or Siam, the non-Western name Sulak Sivaraksa and others prefer) was launching itself into the global marketplace. Under the "domino theory" of foreign policy, the United States government feared that Vietnam's neighbors, including Siam, were in danger of going communist.

To prevent the dominos from falling, the U.S. sent American "experts" to advise key Thai government departments. These delegates strongly suggested that Thai officials urge the Buddhist establishment to ban any religious teaching on contentment (*santosa* or *santutthi*). Determined to encourage economic development, the government was persuaded that moderation and contentment were obstacles to its program. Unfortunately, most of the Thai Buddhist establishment acquiesced to this request, conditioned as it was to maintain the status quo and not cause conflict. One prominent teacher, however, had the vision to see the long-term impact of undercutting this teaching. Ajahn Buddhadasa openly challenged the government, pointing out that greed, selfishness, and wastefulness were much more harmful than contentment. He felt that a healthy economy should be based on wholesome rather than unwholesome principles; this was his philosophy of "Dhammic Socialism." Buddhadasa warned that if the government pursued these pro-development policies, it was likely to do more harm than good in the long run.

It took awhile for Buddhadasa's teachings on contentment to arrive in the mainstream Western discourse. I may

be jumping to conclusions, but I believe that the destructive effect of consumerism is the take-home message of the *State of the World Report 2004*. In an unusual break with tradition, the Worldwatch Institute decided to focus the entire 2004 report on the theme "The Consumer Society." Chapter after chapter lays out core areas of global consumer impact: energy, water, food production. The last chapter, "Rethinking the Good Life," considers how consumption levels could be based on quality of life rather than the accumulation of goods. The authors propose well-being as the primary measure of "the good life," defining a satisfying life as one based on strong networks of family and friends, fulfilling work, and good health.

Although it is not exactly the same as the spiritual practice of contentment, "well-being" seems pretty closely related. And it gives us something to actually work with as a concrete goal for improving society. Several global documents use the term in laying out their policy goals, and Canada's legislature recently passed a Well-Being Measurement Act. Definitions of the term generally include:

- the basics for survival: food, water, shelter, work
- good health, for both individuals and the environment
- good social relations
- security for personal safety and possessions
- freedom to develop one's potential.

While the poor certainly are often short of these basic factors, the wealthy do not necessarily report any more satisfaction based on well-being. The 2004 report gives examples of countries, cities, and non-governmental organizations raising issues around well-being and trying to actually change lifestyles and social infrastructure to support more well-being. This, the authors argue, may be the most effective way to slow down rampant consumerism.

The link with Vietnam may seem distant, but the last thirty years have shown nothing but nonstop acceleration of consumerism and its attendant dissatisfactions. For me, it is deeply heartening to see a mainstream publication such as the *State of the World Report* taking up the values of contentment. These ideas will go out through their web site links and translated volumes (over 20 languages distributed globally) and will be of use to people everywhere trying to find an appropriate and satisfying life. Please take a look for yourself and tell me (and *Turning Wheel*) what you think. The website is www.worldwatch.org and report excerpts can be found online. The Worldwatch Institute is envisioning a different kind of leadership for the future—one I imagine Buddhadasa would think well worth pursuing. ❖

Stephanie Kaza is an associate professor of environmental studies at the University of Vermont.



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Practicing Peace in Times of War

by Pema Chödrön

War and peace start in the hearts of individuals. Strangely enough, even though all beings would like to live in peace, our method for obtaining peace seems over the generations to be not really effective, because we seek peace and happiness by going to war. This can occur at the level of our domestic situation, in our relationship with someone close to us. Maybe we come home from work and we're tired and we just want some peace; at home all hell is breaking loose, for one reason or another, and so we start yelling at people. What is our motivation? We want some happiness and ease and peace, but what we do is we get even more worked up and we get everyone else worked up too. This is a familiar scenario in the workplace, in our homes, in our neighborhoods, when we're driving cars. We're just driving along and someone cuts in front of us and what happens? Well, we don't like it. Sometimes we roll down the window and scream at them.

It seems like war is the result of hardening our hearts. We harden our hearts really easily—in minor ways and then in quite serious, major ways, such as hatred and prejudice—whenever we feel uncomfortable. It's so sad, really, because the motivation for hardening our hearts when things aren't going our way is our wanting some kind of ease or freedom from the distress that we're feeling.

Someone gave me a poem the other day and it had a line in it that I thought was a definition of peace: "Softening what is rigid in our hearts." And you could say that the definition of what causes war, of what plants the seeds of war, is hardening our hearts. We can talk about ending war and we can march for ending war, we can do everything in our power to end war, but war is never going to end as long as people's hearts are hardened against each other.

What happens is a chain reaction, and I'd be really surprised if you didn't know what I'm talking about. Something occurs—it can even be a mosquito buzzing—and you tighten, and if it's more than a mosquito—or maybe a mosquito is enough for you—something starts to shut down in you and the next thing you know, imperceptibly the chain reaction of misery begins: we begin to fan the grievance with our thoughts. The thoughts become like fuel that leads to war. War could be that you smash that little teeny weensy mosquito. But I'm also talking about war in domestic situations, war at the office, war on the

streets, and also war between nations, war in the world.

We talk about other people's fundamentalism. But when the heart hardens there's an uneasiness and then tightening, a shutting down, and then the next thing we know, the chain reaction begins and we become very righteous about our right to kill the mosquito or yell at the person in the car or whatever it might be. We ourselves become fundamentalists, which is to say we become very righteous about our view.

Jarvis Masters, who is a prisoner on death row, has written one of my favorite spiritual books, which is called *Finding Freedom*. In his story "Angry Faces," Jarvis has his TV on in his cell but he doesn't have the sound on because he's just using the light of the TV to read by. And every once in awhile, he looks up, kind of sees what's going on, then he yells to people down the tier to ask what's happening on the TV.

So the first time, they say, "It's the Ku Klux Klan, Jarvis, and they're all yelling and complaining about how it's the blacks and the Jews who are responsible for all these problems." About half an hour later, he yells down again, "Hey, what's happening now?" And they yell back, "Hey Jarvis, that's the Greenpeace folks. And they're demonstrating about the fact that the rivers are being polluted and the trees are being cut down and the animals are being hurt and our Earth is being destroyed." Some time later, he calls out again, "Now what's going on?" And they say, "Oh, Jarvis, that's the U.S. Senate and that guy who's up there now talking, he's blaming the other guys, the other side, the other political party for all the financial difficulty this country's in."

Jarvis starts laughing and he calls down, "I've learned something here tonight. Sometimes they're wearing Klan outfits, sometimes they're wearing Greenpeace outfits, sometimes they're wearing suits and ties, but they all have the same angry faces."

I remember reading in the *San Francisco Chronicle* when I was out here, about a peace march. When one group was coming back from the march, some people started cutting them off and blocking them; everyone



Photo by Brian Spielmann

Let's say you hit your children and it's habitual, but then you make a vow to yourself: Whatever happens, I'm not going to hit them!

started fist-fighting and hitting each other! I thought, "Wait a minute, is there something wrong with this picture?" Clobbering people with your peace sign! The next time you get angry, check out your righteousness and check out your fundamentalist view that is supporting your right to be angry at this one, because this one really is bad. This politician, this leader, the ones who are the head of these big companies! Or maybe it's anger at an individual who has harmed you personally or harmed your loved ones. What I mean by fundamentalist mind is a mind that becomes rigid. The heart becomes hardened, then the mind becomes hardened into a view, and you can justify your hatred of another human being because of what they represent and what they say and do.

If you look back at history or you look at any place in the world where religious groups or ethnic groups or racial groups are killing each other, or families have been feuding for years and years and years, you can see—because you're not particularly invested in that particular argument—that there will never be peace until somebody softens what is rigid in their heart. So you just have to take a big perspective on your own righteousness and your own fundamentalism when it begins to click in and you think you're in the right.

I try to practice what I preach; I'm not always that good at it but I really do try. The other night, I was getting rigid, hard-hearted, closed-minded, and fundamentalist about somebody else, and I remembered this expression that you can never hate somebody if you stand in their shoes. And right there on the spot, I realized that I was so angry at him because he was holding this rigid view. In that instant, I stood in his shoes and I thought, "He is just as riled up about this as I am and I just feel his righteousness and self-righteousness and his closed-mindedness and stupidity." Then I thought, you know, "Look at me. I'm exactly in the same place!" And the more I hold my view, the more polarized we two will be, and the more it's just mirror images—two people with closed minds and hard hearts who both think they're right, screaming at each other. It changed for me because I suddenly saw it from his side, and all that I saw as closed-minded and self-righteous and ridiculous was exactly how he was seeing me.

If you have a bird's-eye perspective on the Earth and you look down at all the conflicts that are happening, all you see is two sides of a story where both people think they're right. So the solutions have to come from a change of heart, from softening what is rigid in the heart.

One of the most beautiful modern examples that we have of this is the civil rights movement. I was recently reading the writings of Martin Luther King Jr. and I saw that the whole movement and the training

of everybody was love. This is also the Buddhist idea of love, which is love that is all-inclusive and doesn't exclude anybody. By holding this view, you want everybody to be healed. Now the activist might say, "OK, but nothing will ever change just by holding that view."

But the truth is, when you take that view and you begin to practice that way, at the level of your own heart in your own everyday life, something begins to shift very dynamically, very dramatically, and you begin to see things in a whole different way. You begin to have the clarity of being able to see injustice happening and you can see that injustice, by its very definition, is harming everybody involved. It's harming the people who are being oppressed or abused and it's harming those who are oppressing and abusing. And from a Buddhist point of view, those who are being oppressed have a chance, just as people did in the civil rights movement, to be purified by what is happening to them. They have the opportunity to grow in love and compassion and to try to bring about change by nonviolence and nonaggression. They have a chance to actually transform themselves. In other words, they have a chance to soften what is rigid in their hearts and still hold the view that injustice is being done and work towards unwinding that injustice or that cruelty.

But those who are oppressing are so committed and rigid in their minds that there's very little opportunity to actually grow and learn from it. So they're the ones who potentially suffer the most, because their own hatred and anger and prejudiced mind grow. There is nothing that causes more pain and suffering than to be consumed by prejudice, to be consumed by hatred and anger.

So war and peace start from the human heart. Whether that heart is open or whether that heart closes has these global implications.

Recently, I was teaching from a text called *The Training of the Bodhisattva*, training of the ones who dedicate their lives to trying to alleviate suffering and bring benefit to sentient beings. This was composed in the eighth century in India by a Buddhist master called Shantideva. And he has a very interesting point. The first thing he says is something along the lines of, "If these long-lived, ancient patterns of mind,"—he's referring to patterns of closed-heartedness—"if these patterns of mind, that are the well-spring of unceasing woe, that lead to my own suffering as well as the suffering of others, if these patterns can find their lodging safe within my heart, how can joy and peace in this world ever be found?"

So he's saying that as long as we can justify our own hard-heartedness and our own fundamentalism and our own self-righteousness, joy and peace cannot be found. We point our fingers at the wrongdoers, but

we ourselves are mirror images; everyone is outraged at everyone else's wrongness.

And then Shantideva makes a really interesting point. He says: you know, these people who we get so upset at, they pass away, they die. And likewise, with nations that fight each other, time passes and either the nations no longer exist or they shift alliances and enemies become allies. You see how it all shifts around with time. So he says all of that passes. But the seeds that it leaves in us, the fact of our hatred and our anger against them, we're still left with that pattern, and it's very long-lived. Why so? Because as long as we keep strengthening it by acting it out with our minds and our words and our actions, it's never going to go away. It's not going to just stop as long as we're feeding it and nurturing it. It's like we become expert at our habits of hard-heartedness, our own particular brand of rigid heart and closed mind.

So what I'm advocating here is something that requires a lot of courage, and this is the courage to have a change of heart. The reason it requires courage is because when we don't do the habitual thing, which is hardening our heart and holding tightly to certain views, then we're left with the underlying uneasiness that we were trying to get away from. Whenever there's a sense of threat, we harden. And so if we don't harden, what happens? We're left with that uneasiness, that feeling of threat, and then that's when the real journey of bravery and courage begins. This is the real work of the peacemaker, to find the soft spot and the tenderness in that very uneasy place and stay with it. If we can stay with the soft spot and stay with the tender heart, this is where the seeds of peace come from.

I think to do this kind of work it's very helpful to take some kind of personal vow with oneself. You make it clear in your own mind what you really wish for and then you make a vow about it. For instance, let's say you hit your children and it's habitual, but then you make a vow to yourself: *Whatever happens, I'm not going to hit them!* You seek help and you look everywhere for ways to help you not hit them when that uneasiness arises in your heart and everything in you wants to go on automatic pilot and close your heart and close your mind and do the thing that you always hate yourself for doing. You vow that to the best of your ability, knowing that sometimes there's going to be backsliding, but nevertheless, to the best of your ability, you vow to not cause harm to yourself or to anybody else, and to actually help yourself and everybody else that you meet.

This kind of vow should be put in words that are meaningful and true to you so they aren't somebody else's good thoughts but actually your own highest, heartfelt wish for yourself. Your motivation behind the vow is that you equate it with the ultimate kind-

ness for yourself, not the ultimate punishment or the ultimate shaping up, like "I'm bad, I need to shape up." No, the basic view is that there's nothing wrong with you or me or anybody else.

It's like Suzuki Roshi, the wonderful Zen teacher who was here in San Francisco and founded the San Francisco Zen Center, said. One time he looked out at the audience and he said, "All of you are perfect just as you are, and you could use a little work." That's how it is, you know? You don't start from the view of "I'm messed up and I'm bad and therefore I have to whip myself into shape." It's more like, the basic situation is good, it's sound and healthy, and noble, in fact, and there's work that we need to do because we have these ancient habits that we've been strengthening for such a long time that it's going to take awhile to unwind them.

Living by vow is very helpful, and actually it's Jarvis who caused me to think about this. His Tibetan teacher Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche went to San Quentin and through the glass, talking through the telephone, did an empowerment ceremony for Jarvis in which Jarvis took the vow to never cause harm and to the best of his ability to try to help. He has so earnestly lived by these vows, and when you read his book, sometimes you just laugh out loud at the extremes to which he has to go to not cause harm in a place like San Quentin. To avert some guards being killed, for instance, he had to talk all the inmates into flooding the tier because they needed some way to express their rage. He was afraid that if he didn't come up with something, they were going to stab the guards. So instead he said, "Listen, the whole thing is, you don't need to kill them. You just need to make them stay late." And everyone bought it, so they flooded the tier.

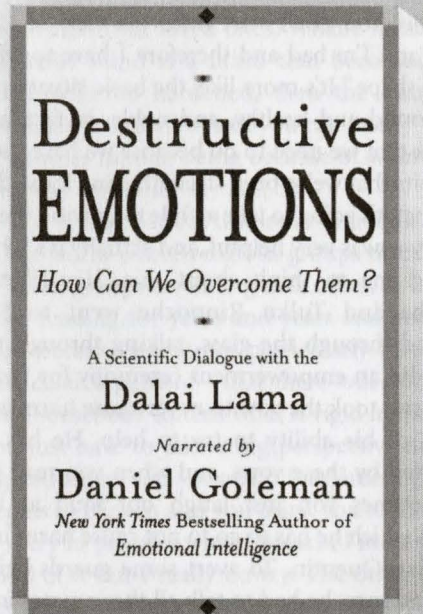
One of my favorite stories from Jarvis was about his connecting the other inmates with the absolute, vast quality of our minds. They say that behind all hardening and tightening and rigidity of the heart, there's fear. But if you touch fear, behind fear there is a soft spot. And then, if you touch that soft spot, you find the vast blue sky. You find that which is ineffable, ungraspable, and very vast, and that which supports and nurtures us at all times. And somehow Jarvis, in this story of trying to avert harm happening, conveyed this to the other inmates.

There was a seagull out on the yard in San Quentin. It had been raining and the seagull was in the yard, paddling around in a puddle, and one of the other guys just picked up something in the yard, like a stone or something, and he was going to throw it at the bird and kill it. Jarvis, involuntarily, because he had taken a vow to try to stop any harm happening, he didn't even think about it, he put out his hand to stop the guy. So of course, that escalated the guy's

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aggression tremendously and he started yelling, who the hell did Jarvis think he was, and that Jarvis cared more about some blankety-blank bird than he did about him. He was really enraged.

Then a very typical thing happened, which is that everyone started coming around, circling around, just waiting for the fight. The guy was screaming at Jarvis, "Why'd you do that? Why did you do that?" And out of Jarvis's mouth came the words, "I did that, man, because that bird's got my wings." Whooooo. That just stopped it. Everyone got it. And they didn't fight anymore. It just stopped everyone's minds, softened everyone's hearts, and then they all started laughing and jiving him, and he said even now, years later, they say, "What do you mean, Jarvis, that bird's got my wings?" but at that point, everyone got it.

If we begin to take responsibility for ourselves, it leads to empathy. Here's one more Jarvis story to illustrate this. A man came up to him on the yard. Many of the prison guards in San Quentin are very kind and helpful but some of them get really mean and unreasonable and take it out on people. That day, there had been a lot of that and tempers were short. The man came up to Jarvis and he asked, "Is that your Buddhism that keeps you so calm, Jarvis? How can you stand it when these guys are giving you such shit?" And then you know what Jarvis said? He said, "Oh, it has nothing to do with Buddhism. I just think that if I retaliate, they're gonna go home and beat their kids." And he said, "I don't want that to happen to any of those little kids." The other guy got it completely. That's empathy, and our own innate intelligence; our own wisdom begins to come forward so that we're not clouded by our rigid views or our closed heart and we can see. Almost like common sense. "If I retaliate, then they're gonna go home and beat their kids, and I don't want that happening to any kids." So in terms of war and peace, I'm talking about the power of softening what is rigid in your heart.

There are a lot of stories, but the basic message tonight that I'm trying to convey is that to the degree that each of us is dedicated to wanting there to be peace in the world, then we have to take responsibility when our own hearts and minds harden and close. We have to be brave enough to soften what is rigid in our hearts and find the soft spot and stay with the soft spot. We have to have that kind of courage and take that kind of responsibility. That's true spiritual warriorship. ❖

[Based on a talk given in San Francisco in August 2003.]

Pema Chödrön is the abbess and teacher at Gampo Abbey in Nova Scotia. Her most recent book is Comfortable with Uncertainty: 108 Teachings on Cultivating Fearlessness and Compassion (Shambhala, 2003).

The Practice of Growing

by Valerie Linet

[Farming] is also a practical religion, a practice of religion, a rite. By farming we enact our fundamental connection with energy and matter, light and darkness. In the cycles of farming, which carry the elemental energy again and again through the seasons and the bodies of living things, we recognize the only infinitude within reach of the imagination.

—Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America*

I grew up in Brooklyn where the seasons only related to my life in an offhand way. A few years ago, I was drawn to grow food for people, and I began to feel Nature's shifts in my own bones. When I try to understand what brought me to farming and what I love about it, I can't help but think about Zen practice and my relationship to it.

In an unexpectedly strange and wonderful way, farming addresses some of the same life-and-death questions that Zen practice does. The roots of both run as deep as the need to fully experience, celebrate, and express this life and at the same time come to terms with the loss and suffering within it. Zen gave me a way to approach farming as spiritual practice.

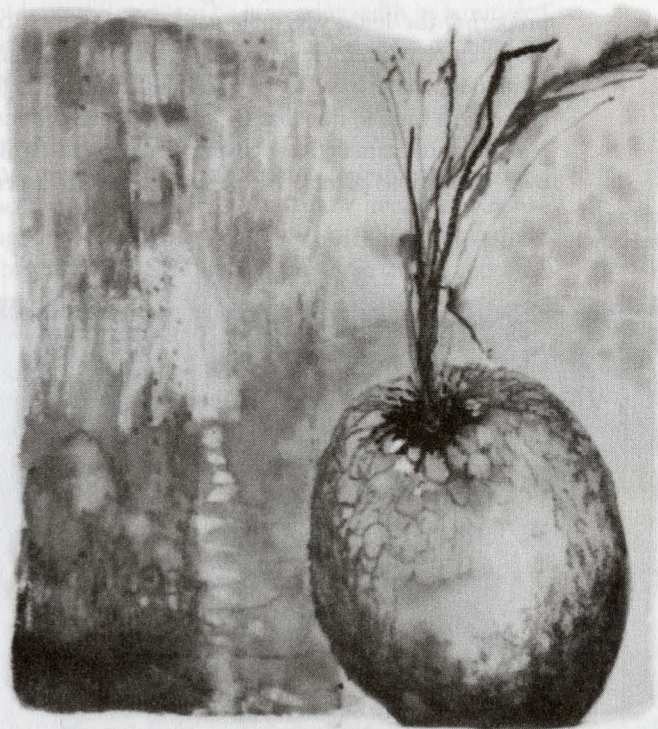
In 2000, I spent a year working on an organic community-supported farm (CSA) in New York, and in the middle of the growing season the question of why I farm hit me full force. Once it came, it would not let me rest. Suddenly, I wasn't satisfied with just doing the work of growing food. I felt the need to understand and express my desire to rise early and hoe arugula beds. I knew it was somehow important. I was reminded of a similar place I had come to in my Zen practice, almost a year earlier, when I was in residency at the Zen Mountain Monastery in the Catskill Mountains.

I had been practicing for five years and hadn't yet taken student vows in the Mountains and Rivers Order, but at a certain point the hunger to do so started burning in me, fast and furiously. I was encouraged by the monks and teachers at the monastery to clarify my motivations. I spent most of my first weeklong sesshin sitting with the question of what this practice means to me. The answer still continues to evolve as I discover new things about myself. Though the reason for practice is inexpressible, I was grateful to have the Guardian Council (a group of senior monks) prod me into exploration, and to hear my heart as it fumbled toward expression. Since there is no Guardian Council of farming, I turned to writing, as I often

do, in order to help clarify my feelings. These are excerpts from my journal:

The growing season has moved into a time of great abundance of both crops and field work. I sometimes get lost in the daily imperatives of caring for the living body of the farm (feeding and watering the animals, maintaining machines, responding to the endless call to weed, etc.), forgetting to really explore what draws me to this land. Why do this? Why work a hard, dirty job when I could do something nice and clean that pays the bills? What can I offer the world by hand-weeding carrots?

CSA farming satisfies some of the need I feel to heal and nourish the earth, myself, and others. Together, we are taking part in the work of sustaining ourselves by connecting our hands and minds to the soil that provides for us. We are healing the earth by refusing to buy into the myth of the "perfect vegetable" (one without any insect holes or blemishes), and we are interested in accepting a naturally grown tomato as it truly is. The farm is a place where we can look around and see the ways in which we are all dependent upon one another and this land for our very lives.



Mollie Favour, L.A. Seedpod #42

There is a Buddhist chant, a gatha, which is recited before taking meals. The first line is: "72 labors brought us this food. We should know how it comes to us." I want to experience each one of those 72 labors: In the rain, in the heat, at 6 AM, with a few amazingly dedicated farmers who spend their days working for this small piece of land and all it represents. When I really think about it, the labors that bring us our weekly box of food are far greater than 72.

"We should know how it comes to us..." I often think about that when I need inspiration. Where does my food come from? Across the ocean, from the other side of the country, losing nutrients and consuming resources along the way. Meanwhile, farms in the Hudson Valley disappear every year. What will I do?

Is it possible to describe the nourishment we receive from participating in the labor that food production requires of us? Our factory farm-oriented society assumes that we want nothing to do with this dirty treacherous labor. But is this true? I believe that this work, the work of our lives, has the potential to create a healthier, saner, more balanced world.

After three fairly abundant seasons on the farm, I realized that Winter has historically depressed me. Watching things die and expose their bare frames has never been easy. Naked trees and frozen colors have always been unsettling to me and it is also hard on the farm.

Frost came early that Fall, so I spent two or three days with Laura and Kate (two growers on the farm), preparing the main vegetable garden for its first big blow before Winter. We knew our eggplants, basil, and tomatoes would have to be sacrificed, but foresight allowed us time to do what we could to save peppers, parsley, and cilantro. Row covers were spread tightly over vulnerable plants. We patched holes in green-

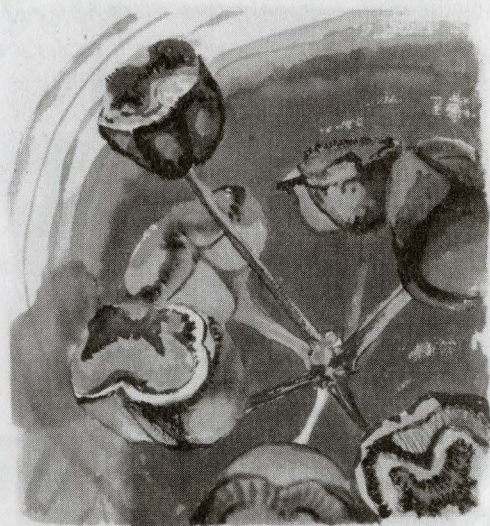
house plastic, protecting the crops inside, and picked all the less hardy vegetables in the field one last time.

My experience surveying the fields the morning after the first frost illuminated the reality of impermanence for me in a way that nothing else really had. It's easy to be intellectual about these things, but my heart dipped and turned when I saw how the Rosa Bianca eggplants—those round, pale, pinkish-purple jewels that had hung heavy on strong stems (seemingly forever)—had transformed into brown, wilted creatures. And no matter how much I had heard about it before, I suddenly felt bitten by the truth of taking something so short-lived for granted, and then being shocked and saddened by its departure. It had gotten below freezing, but I half expected the basil to still be giving off its incredible green aroma. I felt cheated. The seeds I had known, sown, and nurtured as they grew had turned into barely recognizable remnants of life. Right there, though, in those moments, I felt a resonance—this feeling was not just about the farm, it was a way (*my way*) of meeting and resisting the world. The practices of Zen and of growing seemed to me then to be complementary and solid teachers. Both were pushing me to look at the fact that one day something I love and care about is a living part of this world, and the next day it's gone. Before, there had been no room in my summer mind to believe that winter would come.

Zen practice and the insistent return to the breath in *zazen* beckons me to accept life as it is. It is in the small moments of letting go of thought that a universe of clarity is revealed (before the mental fray begins again). This is how I am slowly learning to trust myself. Nature has its own powerful wisdom that I also need to trust. Cold weather arrives in time for earth to rest and lie fallow, rejuvenating itself for new growth in the Spring. Death makes space for new life. Looking around the frostbitten farm, I recognized in myself the fear of laying low that Winter demands. There are periods in life that call for hibernation, reassessment, quiet, and subtle movement.

Over the past few years, the vow to nourish and protect life has deepened in me, but it now manifests in a different form. These days, I work with people, not plants, and we explore the cycles that move through their hearts and minds. I counsel clients on respirators and spend time with people who have other disabilities, but the practice of growing is the same. An exchange of energy, moment by moment; full of surprises and the recognition of loss and abundance at the very same time. ❖

Valerie Linet is a poet, freelance writer, and Jewish Zen Buddhist living in New York's Hudson River Valley. She is earning her master's degree in social work, but hasn't forgotten how to pick beans.



Mollie Favour, L.A. Seedpod #45

A Day of Relative Calm

by John Barber

For the first two weeks of November 2003, I was in the northernmost region of the West Bank in Palestine. My home base was a two-room converted office in the city of Jenin, where the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) has established an ongoing presence. I was one of nine activists from five countries who were staying in the apartment and sleeping on the roof of the five-story walk-up. We came from different backgrounds, but we were all in Jenin to work for a common goal. ISM's purpose is twofold: to dismantle, through nonviolent resistance, the occupation's ability to control all aspects of Palestinian daily life, and to show the Israeli military that there are limits to their ability to exploit the use of force. ISM is a Palestinian-led organization and is completely committed to nonviolence. I was attracted to the group because of their willingness to stand on the front lines of resistance, peacefully. This story takes place during a so-called "lull" in Israeli-Palestinian violence. It is not an extraordinary story; it is a story of daily life in the Occupied Territories.

* * *

*Willing to die,
You give up your will.
Be still
Until
Moved by that which
Moves all else
You move.*

—Wendell Berry

When we learned that the neighboring village of Yamoun had been invaded by the Israeli military, we piled into two taxis and went to the village.

I stand in the middle of an intersection of an alleyway and a street, looking up the hill at an occupied house. Israeli soldiers have locked 15 family members in one room and taken over the upper floors of the home. Steve, a fellow activist, is standing nearby, interviewing a volunteer with the Red Crescent Ambulance Corps. On the top floor of the house I see the curtains being drawn aside and two soldiers' faces appear. Simultaneously, a third soldier appears on the balcony. He walks quickly to the railing, and without hesitation raises his gun to his shoulder and fires two shots at me. One bullet kicks up dust at my feet; one ricochets off the wall behind me. I jump out of the intersection and out of the soldier's view. Steve's interview is abruptly ended.

At the sound of the shots, about 40 Palestinian boys

who have been milling about rush toward the intersection I have just vacated. They taunt the soldiers in the house above, who continue to fire sporadically at the kids. Steve and I and the Red Crescent volunteer walk down to the main intersection of the village, hoping the kids will follow us rather than play "chicken" with the soldiers, most of whom are just a few years older than the oldest stone throwers.

In the middle of the street a man reaches for a young boy. The boy cowers, shamed in front of his comrades, as the man smacks him, grabs him by the collar, and directs him home. For once, I don't need a translation. The boy has obviously been warned against stone throwing, and has been caught red-handed by an elder. I fear it will not be long before he finds his way back to the violence.

In the main intersection a tire is burning, sending clouds of noxious smoke into the air. Rocks, concrete blocks, two-by-fours, and a couple of trash cans litter the street. The kids are busily gathering up stones in preparation for the next pass of army jeeps. One boy, about 13, drums on a street sign with a metal bar; others, holding up stones, want their pictures taken, and push and shove to place themselves in front of our cameras. One boy pleads, "Picture! Picture!" as he holds up the necklace he is wearing, with its laminated picture of his martyred friend, who, like most boys on the street, is no more than 12 years old.

I am unsure of my next step. I have been in the Jenin region for almost two weeks, and nearly every day I find myself in this uncertainty. Is our presence here encouraging the boys to be more reckless? Are we angering the soldiers, at least one of whom shot at me? Obviously the shots enticed the kids back to the alley.

Boys and tank on the West Bank.
Photo by John Barber



Is our presence adding to the violence or reducing it? Moments ago, as army jeeps raced down the street and kids pelted them from all sides, the soldiers didn't shoot. Was that because two middle-aged internationals stood among the children? I have no answers.

*Now, in the alley, as machine-gun fire fills the air,
I have the overwhelming thought that I may not
return to my family.*

Suddenly, whistles and shouts fill the air, and the kids scatter. An enormous Caterpillar D-9 bulldozer barrels through the intersection, followed by an armored personnel carrier (APC) and a tank. Steve, the paramedic, and I stand against a building, not moving. We have nowhere to go. The noise is deafening. Rocks pour like rain from the sky, crashing down on the vehicles as they move past us and down the road. The D-9 and the APC turn the corner and disappear. The tank stops in the intersection. The kids reemerge and continue their barrage on the tank, all the while taunting the soldiers to shoot. The soldiers respond, sending volley after volley of machine gun fire toward the kids. Each time, the kids retreat and as soon as the shooting stops, they resume their offensive.

Three weeks ago I was sitting in sesshin in Florida. Tenshin Fletcher (the abbot of Zen Mountain Center, in Idyllwild, California) said, "What is required is spaciousness—so you catch the lessons when you are present in them. Like when someone throws something at you, you move effortlessly and without thinking, out of the way. The natural response arises. Otherwise, you just react to situations like a toy robot, repeating the same actions over and over. You need to be in the center, living life fully, right now." Anticipating my trip to the Middle East I asked, "What if you are not meant to move out of the way? What if it is necessary to stand firm, right where you are?" Tenshin said, "Fine. Stand there fully, not denying the experience of fear, if that is what arises."

Now, looking first at the boys and then the tank, my impulse is to flee. My thoughts, like a raging river, strengthen my impulse. I think: "Obviously we are not helping here," "It's useless," and even, "These kids are bringing this on themselves." My hands shake and my heart pounds. I stand motionless in the middle of the street, rocks whistling by and machine-gun fire punctuating the air. Beyond my thoughts and emotions, something else is happening. Or perhaps a better word than "beyond" is "permeating." Permeating the chaos of my mind and the street, there is the entire universe, turning. I just stand there, open. What can I do but open? In this one moment there are no distinctions, no good or bad, no enemy.

Suddenly, the roar of engines interrupts my thoughts. The tank and APC have reversed direction and are coming back toward us. Steve and I and about 10 kids move into a short alley that houses the Red Crescent clinic, but medics grab the kids by the collar and drag them back towards the street; the clinic is not a refuge for stone throwers. As I move behind a car to protect myself, I notice a Red Crescent volunteer in an orange vest standing at the entrance to the alley, refusing to cower before the tank, doing what he can to protect the kids and the clinic. I join him, and we stand shoulder to shoulder as the tank and the APC churn past us, shooting sustained bursts of machine-gun fire over the fleeing children's heads. There is no return fire, only kids throwing stones. The tank stops in the intersection. Swiveling its turret back and forth 180 degrees, the machine gunner fires indiscriminately down the side streets.

When I woke this morning, I thought of my wife and young boy, and the home I will return to in two days. Now, in the alley, as machine-gun fire fills the air, I have the overwhelming thought that I may not return to my family. And I recognize that I am on dangerous ground by not being present. I need to be home wherever I stand. I have no choice but to stand fully right here. Bursts of fire from the tank continue to ring out, but the frequency is diminishing. I peer out around the corner, only to see the barrel of the tank swivel around and take a bead on me.

As I back further into the alley, a door opens and a man signals to Steve and me to enter. Inside, babies are playing and two women sit talking in a sheltered courtyard. The man leads us to a small balcony overlooking the street. From this vantage point I see that the tank is still there, and that soldiers are moving from house to house, ordering people out of their homes. Each family is forced to sit outside on the ground as the soldiers carry out their search, destroying possessions and pouring the families' foodstuffs on the floor. They are searching for "wanted men." No one is allowed to leave the area.

After two hours that seem like forever, people begin moving past the tank—a child with her bicycle, a man on a donkey, a father with his three young sons. I tell Steve it is time to go. Thanking the man who shared his home, Steve and I leave the alley and follow a Palestinian man up the street, attempting to pass the tank, but when we get within 10 feet, the turret spins around and we are looking down the barrel of the tank. The gunner raises his head and one hand from the turret, yelling at us in Hebrew and waving us away. We duck down another alleyway and watch the tank move past us, closely followed by the APC. Finally the soldiers are leaving. We walk back toward the street, and when we are almost at the corner,

another volley of shots rings out, a final good-bye from the APC. A young stone thrower, about 12 years old, comes around the corner into the alley screaming in pain and stops in front of me. Blood pours from his shin, down over his foot, and splatters on the ground.

In sesshin, Tenshin Fletcher, speaking on the Heart Sutra, said, "Avalokiteshvara. This is your name. How do we translate this off the cushion? The key is appreciating this life with wholehearted effort. We waste our efforts aiming at what we will become in the future—that great person who can't be touched by outside things, when the real effort is life going on right now. Can you value this place?"

As I reach for a shirt from my backpack in order to stop the bleeding, an older boy scoops up the injured child and runs. In his panic he is running the wrong way. When he stops to turn I catch up with him. Blood spurts rhythmically from the bullet hole, arcing in the air to the dusty ground. I wrap my shirt tightly around the wound. Then the older boy takes off again, back the way we came. Miraculously, a Red Crescent ambulance appears and the child is loaded in. Children fill the street, surrounding the ambulance, pushing up against the windows, trying to see what's going on inside. In minutes the ambulance is headed to the clinic.

We return to the intersection. The children, spent, sit in small groups on curbs and walls, or stand amongst the rocks and debris that litter the torn-up road. Another battle is complete. Two wounded; none dead. I wonder about the blood on my hands, the young boy, the soldier who shot him. I feel stripped, raw, but I stand firm.

A few hours later the army packs up and leaves Yamoun, the operation over.

On December 25, six weeks after I returned home, a suicide bomber struck in Tel Aviv, killing himself and four Israelis. Our national media spoke of the "end of the relative calm in Middle East violence," and questioned whether this was the end of any hope for peace in the region. But contrary to the media's claim of "calm," it was actually a period of intense Israeli military violence throughout the Occupied Territories. One hundred and seventeen Palestinians, 23 of them children, were killed between October 4 and December 25, and 486 homes or apartments were demolished, leaving thousands homeless.

Construction of the "separation wall" continues on expropriated Palestinian land, separating people from

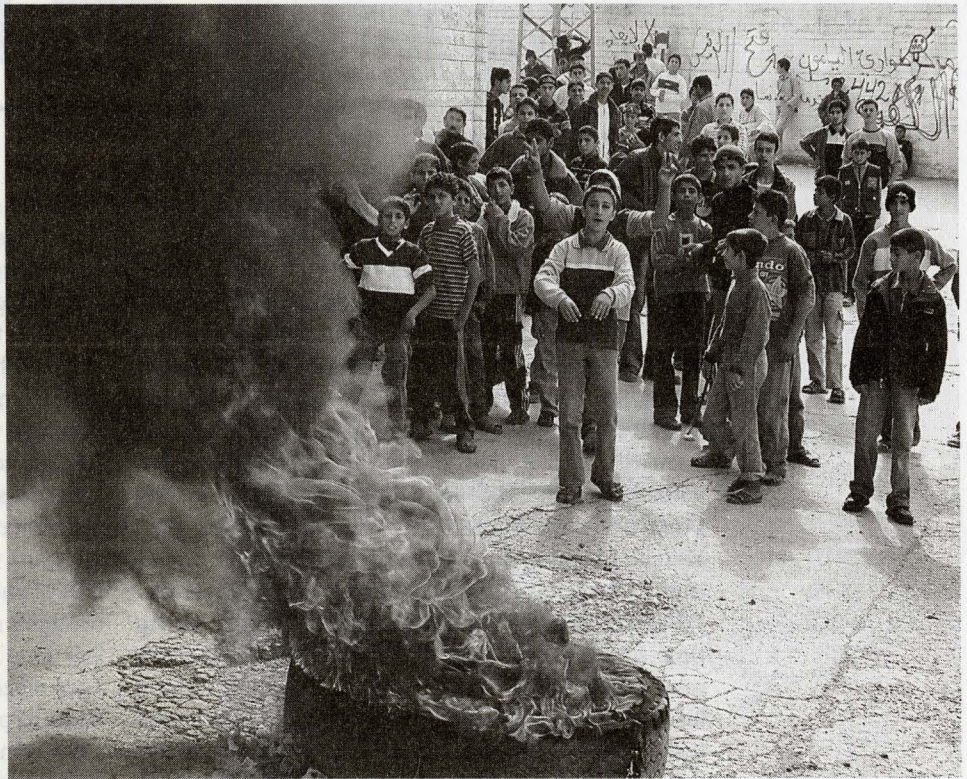


Photo by John Barber

schools, medical facilities, olive groves, farmland, water resources; separating mothers from children, brothers from sisters. Curfews, closures and incursions continue unabated.

For me, the questions change. The question is not whether I am useful; it is a question of choosing where I stand. What is my responsibility, and how can I exercise this responsibility to the best of my ability in this brief lifetime? How can I express my being fully, here and now? How deeply do I trust in the intimacy of the dharma?

*We have this way of talking, and we have another.
Apart from what we wish and what we fear may
happen,
We are alive with other life, as clear stones
Take form in the mountain.*

—Rumi

Can I find the way to live just this? ❖

John Barber lives with his wife and children in Boca Raton, Florida. He's a member of the Southern Palm Zen Group, the Three Treasures BPF chapter, and FOR (Fellowship of Reconciliation). Last year he went to Iraq with Voices in the Wilderness a month before the war began.

He is currently fundraising for another trip to Palestine, and possibly to Iraq as well. He hopes to distribute disposable cameras to teens in Israel, Palestine, and Iraq, and to present a photo exhibit with the results.

An Entomologist's Dilemma

by Margaret Erhart

Every day this Buddhist kills something. Many things. And not just thoughts. Creatures. Sentient living beings. Butterflies. Robberflies. Beetles, wasps, bees, spiders, anything soft-shelled or hard that flies, creeps, scuttles, or runs for its life. If I can catch it I do, in order to kill it. In order to record what lives here, and in what numbers, and what it's eating, and what's eating it. In the interest of science, I carry a special jar for killing—a killing jar, it's called. (When it comes to language, I feel the least I can do is not equivocate.) The jar contains ethyl acetate. Cleaning fluid. I put the hard-bodied insects in the jar and usually I watch them struggle and die. I'd rather not watch them. But it seems the wrong time for that particular preference. Watching them causes me sadness and regret, yet this is a death I have brought them. Chosen to bring them. It seems vital (exactly that word) to witness the consequences of my actions. Catching them also causes me sadness, to arrest motion and then life. The soft-bodied bugs like spiders, or the aquatics like water striders or backswimmers, I put in a small vial of ethyl alcohol. The butterflies, skippers, and moths go in little waxed envelopes after I've caught them in a net. I catch them and squeeze the thorax, which is the center section of their three-part bodies. I squeeze gently but firmly

with the nails of my thumb and forefinger. For the butterflies and small moths this isn't difficult. I feel something in there break (I imagine a tiny rib breaking, though of course butterflies have no such thing), and then the creature is dead, I've killed it. Sometimes nothing happens in me and sometimes something does. Something always happens in me when I kill skippers, which, like butterflies, have clubbed antennae but bodies that are large and mothlike. Most of us would just call them butterflies and never know the difference. Except when it comes to killing them. They are hard to kill, hard to squeeze. They have tough bodies and there is seldom the pop of that imaginary breaking rib. Instead they wiggle their antennae and legs long after I've put them in the waxy envelope. Even when I squeeze them again they still wiggle. I've taken to placing the envelope inside the killing jar for a few minutes, and even then they are sometimes still moving when I pull them out. Movement I assume to equal life. But does it? The philosophical questions don't interest me while I'm in the middle of killing something. I feel a need to enter right into the killing, yet at the same time I long to keep it separate from me. The use of equipment, the refinement of the method of death, the moving away from causing death with one's own hands—all of this is part of the desire to separate. Just as the remarkable and beautiful face of a butterfly is not called "face," because we want what we kill to be separate from us, not to share this intimate and human feature. The first time I took a long look at a bug's face was four years ago, downstream from Lava Falls on the Colorado River. A tiger beetle. The man who brought it to me (alive) wore thick glasses that enlarged his eyes. The faces tell mind-boggling evolutionary stories, as do the wings, the colors, the mouth parts, the barbed stickiness of the legs. Dragonflies, incredible predators that they are (and hard to catch—they seldom succumb to my predation), have mouths, in their nymph stage, that under a microscope look like earth-moving machinery. The jaw unhinges to accommodate large prey objects. Eat what you can, catch what you can, live while you can. Dragonflies are, for me, the most difficult to kill. More difficult than the most beautiful butterfly. Though I notice in the bug-hunting world the same emotional law as in the bird-and-mammal-hunting world: The larger it is, the harder it is to take its life. As if more size equals more life. Easier, then, to kill a child than an adult? Easier to kill a fetus than a



Girl selling beetles in a market in Cambodia. Photo by Susan Moon

child? In the bug world, the large insects and spiders are harder for me to kill, and the small, numerous drab ones are almost easy. Like shore flies and mosquitoes. Though not ants. I remember the first time I took a good look at an ant. The house that summer was overcome with ants. Some were eating our sugar—not an insoluble problem—but another hidden species was down in the darkness below our feet, chewing away at the house's foundation. So the exterminator came. He brought pamphlets showing how the poison would work its way into the colony and kill it. Pink arrows flowed toward the nest where cartoon ants lay on their backs, feet in the air. When he left I felt unsatisfied. I felt the way I do when I read a newspaper that's too conservative or too liberal. The facts were skewed. The sugar-eating ants were going to die along with the foundation-eaters, and this felt wrong to me. It made me angry. I decided to see what an ant was, before there weren't any left in the house to see. To my astonishment, when I picked one up and put it on a piece of paper and watched it move around, it looked like a tiny horse. It lifted a front leg. It reared back. It settled and put its head down and raised it and did the whole dance again. Tiny horses. I can no longer kill an ant. I've caught dragonflies in my hands when they were trapped inside the house trying to get out. Is this what makes them hard to kill? The contact? The touch relationship? Or is it their prehistoric nature, the sense of killing elders, killing wisdom, killing continuity? Butterflies are younger. They are a much younger life form. But I've been places where they landed on me (one *Vanessa cardui*, common name Painted Lady, stayed for more than 20 minutes on my right thigh as I walked up and down a water-filled culvert) and killing would have been impossible. And unnecessary, as the killing's purpose is to record what lives here. "Collecting" is killing for science, but when science lands on your thigh and you can identify it without question, you can record without killing. But "without question" is an ideal, especially for those who classify bugs. Taxonomists, as they are called, are said to believe only a specimen. A photograph, an eyewitness account, an educated guess—often these won't do. When it comes to bugs, the internal characteristics are where the distinctions are made between one subspecies and another. The shape of the reproductive organs is what you have to look at to see what you've actually got. And what do we gain from knowing that this and not that lives here? That this used to live here and no longer does? That that which was scarce is now abundant? The pulse of the environment, that's what bugs are. The patient is healthy, the patient is not. Look at the bugs. They shed light on evolution, genetics, social behavior, geography. They tell us how the land used to look, where old inland lakes used to lie.

The killing I do has a purpose and logic to it that most of the time I can live with. But logic is one thing, connection another. My heart still sinks to watch life beat its wings against the glass of the killing jar and die. I hope my heart will always sink. I hope I will always take notice of these moments of transition, to know that the Great Matter is at hand. I am utterly uncertain that it is right to kill, even knowing why I kill and what these bodies are for and how difficult it is to hear what they have to tell us, exactly what species or subspecies they are, without the convenient stillness death provides. Connection lives outside of logic. Connection, compassion, is in its own way an outlaw activity. To engage in it is to take on relationship, and relationship to what we are about to kill is, as any hunter knows, confusing, strong, both power-ridden and helpless, regretful, gratifying, frightening, mind-opening, heartbreaking, and transformative. ❖

Margaret Erhart is a novelist who lives and catches bugs on the Colorado Plateau in northern Arizona.

White Apple

The cow with a hole in its side listens,
the new baby is crossing the road.
Where they've put the ground he steps
lightly: one tree, a long row of vineyard,
one belt whirring "grapes, grapes, grapes."

Every night he takes the steps inside.
When the night comes up it casts the moon
out in front of the baby, and he is like
a scrubbed piece of moon, light in the dark
as the future comes up out of the ground.

Men in lizard skins have gone on
the long way before him, leaving milk.
They went on into the rest of time
but they saw the hunger making milk.
Now anchors from the rest of time

hold the morning underneath the earth.
Stars are shining. Food is shining.
In the chill grey of faint dawn
the new baby stirs. He is the white apple
broken loose falling a long way.

—Dennis Saleh

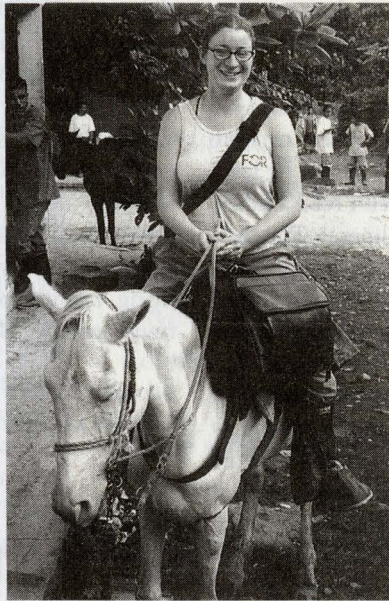
Present Moment, Wonderful Moment: Life in a Peace Community in a Colombian War Zone

by Sarah Weintraub

I wake up this morning to the mist, the chickens picking across the grass, and the first strains of *vallenato* music from someone's radio. I lie in bed thinking of what I need to do today—sweep the house, gather my clothes from the clothesline, enter my budget calculations for February into the computer, reserve a plane flight for my team member, cook, clean out the tank where we store water, write a report about our encounter with the police yesterday—an odd mosaic of chores. Some of them everyone else in this rural Colombian village is familiar with—we all have to wash our clothes by hand, we all have to cook every day since no one has a refrigerator. Others are specific to the work I do here, specific to being an international accompanier providing protective presence and observation to this peace community in one of Colombia's most brutal conflict zones.

It's been almost nine months now that this slanted, grassy clearing in the mountains has been my home. For nine months I have been shaped by the heat of the tropical morning sunshine and the afternoon downpours, shaped by the tangled jungle paths that scramble between the settlements and out to the banana and cocoa fields, and shaped by the sound of the *triple*, a double-stringed guitar that my neighbor plucks in front of his house. I have also been shaped by my constant monitoring of the movements of the three armed groups in this area—the army, the paramilitaries, and the guerrillas—and I have been shaped by the dreams of the *campesinos* who have carved this space out of the jungle. They dream of living in peace, respected as civilians, claiming all of their human rights.

Colombia has been torn apart by civil conflict for over 50 years. The main armed groups are the leftist guerrillas, who have almost entirely lost the socialist ideals that spurred them to begin fighting; a network of far-right paramilitary groups, who have committed the most horrible atrocities; and a weak army with deep links to the paramilitaries.



The war has a logic of its own. A tangle of reasons inspires the groups to keep fighting—ideology, history, and politics all play a part, but desire for economic control is the strongest factor. No one wins or loses, but they all have enough money and enough desperate recruits to continue fighting. The continuation of the conflict ensures that some people, in Colombia and outside, will keep benefiting from the country's resources while most Colombians live in poverty and fear. Colombia is fertile—not just for its famous cocaine but for bananas, coffee, and chocolate—and beneath that fertile soil there is a wealth of oil, minerals, and water. Colombia's location is also strategic—it touches Central America, has Pacific and Caribbean coasts, and borders four other South American countries. Although they state different reasons for fighting, all three armed groups have violated human rights on a massive scale and all three groups have used the civilian population as battlefield, shield, and booty. All three grip each other in a struggle that feeds on itself.

In the northwestern region of Urabá, one of the areas of the country hit hardest by the conflict, a thousand peasant farmers stand up against the logic of the conflict and refuse to engage in it in any way. From the perspective of the armed groups there is no such thing as being neutral; each operates with the understanding, "If you are not with us, you are against us." The peace community of San José de Apartadó is at the forefront of a movement of communities who declare themselves to be civilians, deserving of all the rights of civilians in a conflict zone. They have declared their land—a strategic corridor between guerrilla- and paramilitary-controlled regions—a community in resistance. They forbid the armed groups to enter. They refuse to sell supplies or food to fighters. They participate in community work together. They do not pass information to any of the armed groups. They do not keep any weapons. They will not participate in the war, nor will they leave their contested land for the larger cities as internal refugees.

Photo by Jutta Meier-Wiedenbach

They practice radical, direct nonviolent civil disobedience on a daily basis.

Their civil resistance has not been respected by either the guerrillas or the army-paramilitary. Since the founding of the peace community of San José de Apartadó in 1997, over a hundred community members have been killed or have “disappeared,” many of them leaders of the community. In 2002, by invitation of the community, the Fellowship of Reconciliation started an international accompaniment project in solidarity with the community. International accompaniment works on the principle of dissuasion: international volunteers live in the community, sharing daily life with the local people. We accompany them to work in the fields or go into town and are present in the settlements. The accompaniment project has a grassroots support network in the United States and relationships with Colombian and international authorities. The idea is to make the cost of attacking the community so high that it is not worth it for the armed groups to do so. We threaten them with shame, the damage of their image worldwide, and the reaction of our government. We breach the impunity that they are used to—what we see we will tell. As outsiders we have more of a chance of being heard and believed than the local people do. International accompaniment has been used as an effective tool to protect the lives and work of human rights defenders all over the world.

I am part of FOR's team of three in La Unión, one of the rural settlements of the peace community. The community members are experts at everything from how to trim the banana trees so that they will produce more fruit to how to keep your balance on the slippery paths to how to survive with dignity as human beings while the currents of war and greed rage around you. We live with them. We learn from them. We try to support them. We try to make a little bit more space for them to live their lives the way they choose to—outside of the armed conflict.

After our team had been in La Unión for three weeks we had to leave for a period of ten days to attend meetings and workshops in the capital, Bogotá. Those first few weeks had been very calm. I was adjusting to life in the Colombian countryside and all of the joys and inconveniences that it entails—the quiet nights, the sound of horses eating the grass outside my bedroom window, the storms that would knock out the electricity and phone line for a week at a time, the bucket showers when the water pipe would clog. During that time, I hardly felt like I was living in a conflict zone. Although I constantly heard stories of the atrocities the people had suffered, my daily reality was quiet. I know now that these times of calm, followed by times of tension, followed by calm again, are



part of life here. The situation is always shifting—from calm to calamitous, from no soldiers for weeks to 60 soldiers walking down the main path of the settlement at six in the morning.

After our 10 days in Bogotá we came back to San José, the central town of the community, to find that everything had changed. When we left, people had been saying, “It is so calm. It is too calm.” But when we came back the stories were different—soldiers had come into the community a few times trying to buy goods and asking the children where the community leaders lived; paramilitaries had been seen on the road between San José and the nearby city of Apartadó; helicopters had been passing over all of the settlements. When we left we had been just settling in, just figuring out how to live in the countryside and what it meant to be international companions. When we came back to the community we had to be ready to act. In a meeting with community leaders in San José it was quickly decided that I would go home to La Unión while my two partners would stay for a few more days in San José.

With three community leaders I left San José for La Unión as the sun was setting. The road between San José and La Unión is steep and muddy and takes about an hour and a half to traverse on foot or on *bestia* (the all-purpose name for mules, horses, or donkeys). As we started the journey, I held tight to the reins of my mule, feeling my fear beginning to blossom. There were so many things I was afraid of. I had never ridden at night before and was afraid that either my mule would trip and fall or I would fall off as it bounded up the steep road. I had never traveled that path at night and it looked unfamiliar in the dark, with the palm fronds looming over me. Thick vegetation carpets both sides of the path, thick vegetation where anyone could hide, waiting to jump out and kidnap a foreigner or assassinate a community leader. It all felt very close and very possible. I was in the Colombian jungle

A *campesina*, and member of the peace community, cooks on a *fogon* (clay oven). There are no gas or electric stoves in La Unión. Photo by Jutta Meier-Wiedenbach



Rice harvest near La Unión. Members of the peace communities go out in work groups for security reasons as well as to build community. Photo by Carin Anderson

at night and I felt like anything could happen.

As a rule, we don't travel at night. But part of our project is flexibility, and that night it was necessary. Although the situation was tense, and I am living in a part of Colombia where terrible things happen, neither I nor the community members were really in extreme danger on that occasion—if we had been we would not have gone. What I was dealing with on that journey home was the spiraling nature of my own fear.

First I tried to convince myself not to be scared. I thought about one of my team members and how I knew that if he were in my place he wouldn't be scared at all. (There *are* things that scare him, but very different things than those that scare me.) I knew if he were riding that bestia instead of me he would be joking and chatting with the community leaders, not imagining people with guns leaping out from behind the ferns. I felt a little better picturing him and knowing that he wouldn't be scared. But I still had the same tightness in my chest, the same alertness in my body, the same violent images whirling through my thoughts. I knew that I had to give my mind something to focus on, that if I didn't it would just keep on imagining all of the horrible things that might happen to me. So I sang to myself a song that I learned long ago when I was a little girl and my parents took me to a Thich Nhat Hanh family camp. I used to sing it when I was scared and couldn't sleep. "In, out, deep,

slow. Calm, ease, smile, release. Present moment, wonderful moment."

"Yes," I told myself, just as I used to years ago when I would lie in bed scared to go to sleep but scared to get up. "This moment is a wonderful moment. Nothing bad is happening to me right now. I am OK."

Singing that song reminded me of my parents, who are both Zen Buddhist teachers at the San Francisco Zen Center. The day I left to come to Colombia they took me to the airport at four in the morning. In the car, in the dark, it occurred to my mom to do a traditional chant used at Zen Center for protecting life and asking for help. It's in Japanese: "*Kan ze on namu butsu yo butsu u in yo butsu u en bup po so en jo raku ga jo cho nen kan ze on bo nen kan ze on nen nen ju shin ki nen nen fu ri shin.*" It's traditional to repeat this chant seven, or nine, or twenty-one times in a row. My parents chanted it twenty-one times for me while we drove to the airport—over the Golden Gate Bridge, through Golden Gate Park, under the streetlights. When they first started chanting it I didn't think I knew the words. To my surprise, after they had gone through it only once or twice I realized that I did. The words to this chant, like so many other aspects of Zen Buddhism, had soaked into me, slowly but deeply, through my years of growing up at Zen Center. Months later, on the bestia, riding up to La Unión, I was glad for my Buddhism-through-osmosis, glad that I had that chant as one of my tools, to calm myself and to ask something, somewhere, for help. I chanted to myself nine times, but then I liked the rhythm so much that I kept on going without even meaning to.

Besides being afraid, I was hungry and tired. So while I tried to calm my fear I also planned out what I would do when I got home: "I won't talk with anyone. I am just too tired and too hungry. I'll go straight to my house and cook something quick. Some pasta maybe. And then I will go right to bed." I wanted to talk to the people of La Unión, who had been so wonderful to me during my first three weeks there, but I was just too exhausted. I would tell everyone how tired I was and I would have lots of conversation in the morning.

But that was not how it worked out. As soon as I got into La Unión I was surrounded by such deep and thorough welcome that I couldn't have gone straight to bed and I didn't want to anymore. Jimmy helped me down from my bestia and carried my bags to my house. Aureliano offered me a cup of the weak, sweet coffee that they love here. "Welcome home," he said. "We are so glad that you are back. I am so happy to see you." While I sat drinking the coffee Jhon Jairo invited me to his house for dinner. So much for my anticipated pasta alone—instead I sat in the kitchen with his wife, Aurora, while she heaped my plate with fresh

rice, a piece of pork, and boiled yucca. While I ate she poured me a glass of lemonade and we talked about everything that had happened in La Unión since I left. And there was so much that had happened, besides the movements of the military. There was so much other life going on. There had been a big birthday party where they killed a pig and everyone danced until four in the morning. La Unión had won one soccer game against a nearby village and lost another. A neighbor's cow had given birth. I left Aurora's house full of the food she had given me and full of energy, too. On my way home another neighbor stopped me on the path, an old man who lives across from the house I share with one of my team members and who always blesses us with gifts of whatever his fruit trees are giving, warm corn drinks, and meat from the mountain pigs he hunts. He hugged me and then stood there squeezing my hands. "I'm glad you're home," he said. "It's so different when you're here. The atmosphere is completely different."

I came into my house not scared, not hungry, not tired, but smiling. I am wanted here. I am doing work that is needed in the world. In the face of the powerful economic interests and deep societal patterns that drive Colombia's war it's easy to feel small and ineffective, to feel that my little drop of water will evaporate before it even lands in the bucket. But even though I have only my one very small life, I am using all of it right now to support something I believe in, and that matters. I live here. I love here. I have turned my life over to this place and these people—because I believe in what they are doing, I believe in nonviolent civil resistance, and I want to be a part of it. I am a tiny part, but a part that makes some difference, that makes people at least feel a little safer, maybe a little happier.

Glancing outside my window, I see that life in La Unión goes on as usual. A skinny dog sniffs the ground. My neighbor chops wood to use in the cooking stove. Three young men sit in front of a house sharpening their machetes, talking, their feet in rubber boots propped up on extra chairs in front of them. It is windy today and the leaves of the banana tree and the flags of the peace community, of Colombia, and of FOR ripple in the wind. A little girl has just wandered into my living room asking me for a piece of paper and to borrow my crayons. Across the street, an old woman sneezes and then laughs at how loud the sneeze came out. The war goes on in Colombia but life also goes on here in La Unión. With my whole heart I am glad to be here. ♦

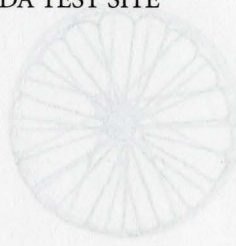
Sarah Weintraub is a human rights observer with FOR's Colombia Peace Presence. She will be in La Unión until July 2004. To find out more about the project, please go to www.forusa.org.

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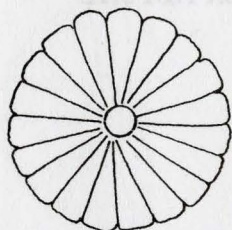
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Resources

on Socially Engaged Buddhism

Compiled by Donald Rothberg



This listing of resources has been limited to English-language books, journals, organizations, and websites. The listing rests on an understanding of socially engaged Buddhists as typically connecting “inner” spiritual practices with “outer” activities, ranging from the direct helping of others to efforts to transform institutions.

In some cases, names of publishers have been shortened and book subtitles have been omitted, to save space. A more extensive listing will be posted on the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF) website (www.bpf.org).

* = good first texts to read

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INTRODUCTORY AND GENERAL

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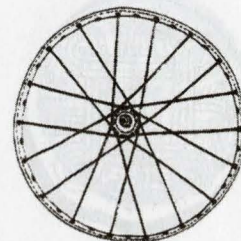
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SPECIFIC FIELDS AND THEMES

6) Environmental Issues

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FURTHER RESOURCES

14) Educational and Training Programs in Socially Engaged Buddhism

- Amida Trust (Narborough, Leicestershire, U.K.): Fully Engaged Buddhism Program <www.buddhistpsychology.info/dip_feb.html>.
- Naropa University (Boulder, Colorado, U.S.): M.A. Program in Engaged Buddhism <www.naropa.edu/engagedbuddhism/index.html>.
- Spirit in Education Movement (Bangkok, Thailand):

- <www.sulak-sivaraksa.org/network23.php>.
- Webster University (St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.): Spring Semester in Engaged Buddhism (in Thailand) <www.webster.edu/intl/sa/thailand.html>.

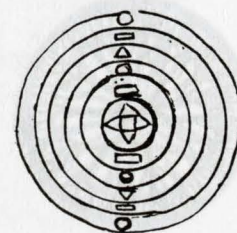
15) Journals on Socially Engaged Buddhism

- Bearing Witness: The Online Magazine of Spiritually Based Social Action and Peacemaking* (online at <www.bearingwitnessjournal.com/archive.html>).
- BODHI Times* <www.ecotimecapsule.com/bodhi/bodhitimes.html>.
- Boston Research Center for the 21st Century Newsletter* <www.brc21.org/news.html>.
- Indra's Net* (journal of the Network of Engaged Buddhists, U.K.) <www.engaged-buddhist.org.uk>.
- Journal of Buddhist Ethics* (online at <jbe.gold.ac.uk/>).
- The Mindfulness Bell* (journal of the Community of Mindful Living) <www.iamhome.org/cml_mindful.html>.
- Prison Dharma* <www.prisondharmanetwork.org>.
- raft: Journal of the Buddhist Hospice Trust* <www.buddhisthospice.org.uk/>.
- Sakyadhita Newsletter: International Association of Buddhist Women* <www.sakyadhita.org>.
- Seeds of Peace* (journal of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists) <www.bpf.org/html/resources_and_links/think_sangha/ineb/ineb.html>.
- SGI Quarterly: Buddhist Perspectives on Peace, Culture, and Education* (journal of Soka Gakkai International) <www.sgi.org/english/Features/past.htm>.
- Think Sangha Journal* <www.bpf.org/think.html> (available from BPF).
- Turning Wheel: The Journal of Socially Engaged Buddhism* <www.bpf.org/html/home.html>.
- Yasodhara: Newsletter on International Buddhist Women's Activities* (Thailand) (available c/o Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, Bangkok 10200, Thailand).

16) Organizations and Websites: A Selection

(descriptions given through the words of the organizations themselves when possible)

- Ambedkar and His People** <www.ambedkar.org/> (India): comprehensive website on the work of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891–1956) and ongoing work with India's "untouchables."
- Amida Trust** (U.K.) <ai.iit.nrc.ca/~andre/amida>: "develops humanitarian projects on Buddhist principles to help overcome suffering in the world."
- Angulimala: The Buddhist Prison Chaplaincy Organisation** (U.K.) <www.angulimala.org.uk>: provides chaplaincy in prisons, resources.
- Aung San Suu Kyi's Pages** (Burma) <www.dassk.org/index.php>: a website with news and links to other sites related to Burma and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the nonviolent move-



ment for democracy in Burma, and Nobel laureate. **BODHI** (Benevolent Organization for Development, Health, and Insight) (Australia, U.S.) <www.eco-timecapsule.com/bodhi/act.html>: an aid organization with social and environmental projects in Asia.

Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (U.S.) <www.brc21.org/home.html>: “an international peace institute that fosters dialogue,” founded by Daisaku Ikeda of Soka Gakkai International.

Buddhist AIDS Project (U.S.) <www.buddhistaidsproject.org/>: “serves anyone living with HIV/AIDS”; provides information and Buddhist teachings.

Buddhist Hospice Trust (U.K.) <www.buddhisthospice.org.uk/>: “provides compassionate care for the living, the dying, and the bereaved.”

Buddhist Peace Fellowship (U.S.) <www.bpf.org/>: founded in 1978, its mission is “to serve as a catalyst and agent for socially engaged Buddhism,” through programs such as BASE, a “volunteer service and activist training program”; the Prison Program; and its quarterly journal, *Turning Wheel*.

Buddhist Peace Fellowship Bangladesh (Bangladesh) <www.suanmokkh.org/ds/bpfb1.htm>: “works to unite all Buddhists—in cooperation with the other religions of our country,” committed to peace work in relation to the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Buddhist Perception of Nature Project (Hong Kong): coordinated by Nancy Nash, 5H Bowen Rd, Hong Kong; 852-252-33-464 (tel.).

Community of Mindful Living (International) <www.iamhome.org/>: supports the practice and teachings of mindfulness of Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh.

Dharmanet/Buddhist Peace Fellowship Socially Engaged Buddhism Resources (U.S.) <www.dharmanet.org/engaged.html>: lists of socially engaged Buddhist organizations and websites.

Earth Sangha (U.S.) <www.earthsangha.org/>: “a Buddhist environmental nonprofit committed to practical environmental action.”

Engaged Zen Foundation <www.engaged-zen.org/>: founded by Rev. Kobutsu Kevin Malone, fosters meditation practice and human rights in prisons.

European Buddhist Union “Buddhism and Education in Europe” Project and Working Group (International) <www.sbg.ac.at/budd/edu_e.htm>: deals with Buddhist education of young people in Europe today.

Forum on Religion and Ecology: Buddhism (U.S.) <environment.harvard.edu/religion/religion/buddhism/>: a website based at Harvard University, includes extensive bibliography on environmental issues, list of environmental projects, and web links.

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order Right Livelihood Businesses (U.K. and International) <www.fwbo.org/rightlivelihood.html>: “team-based” businesses, including whole foods shops, vegetarian restaurants, and gift shops that offer a “training ground for developing awareness.”

Gay Buddhist Fellowship (U.S.) <www.gaybuddhist.org/>: based in San Francisco, “supports Buddhist practice in the gay men’s community.”

Golden Buddhist Centre (U.K.) <www.buddhism-now.com/goldenbuddha/goldenbuddha.htm>: “provides facilities for retired or older Buddhists to live a Buddhist way of life.”

Green Sangha (U.S.) <www.greensangha.org/>: based in the San Francisco Bay Area, “brings spiritual practice and environmental work together.”

International Campaign for Tibet (International) <www.savetibet.org/>: “promotes human rights and self-determination for Tibetans.”

International Network of Engaged Buddhists (Thailand) <www.bpf.org/html/resources_and_links/think_sangha/ineb/ineb.htm>: founded in 1989, networks its members in 33 countries; organizes conferences and trainings, publishes books and a journal, *Seeds of Peace*.

The International Women’s Partnership for Peace and Justice (Thailand): a Buddhist women’s activist network directed by Ouyporn Khuankaew, offers trainings and workshops in women’s leadership, empowerment, and nonviolence. P.O. Box 3, Maerim Post, Maerim, Chiang Mai 50180 Thailand; 66-53-376-103, 66-53-892-507 (tel.); 66-53-376-103 (fax); <mindfulliving@hotmail.com>.

Jamyang Foundation (U.S. and India) <www.jamyang.org/>: an education project for Himalayan Buddhist women, directed by Karma Lekshe Tsomo.

Jungto Society (South Korea) <www.jungto.org/english/index.html>: founded by the Ven. Pomnyun Sunim “to attain the pure heart, good friends, and clean earth,” with projects in South and North Korea, India, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Karuna Center for Peacebuilding (U.S.) <www.karunacenter.org/>: based in Massachusetts, founded and directed by Paula Green, offers international training programs in reconciliation.

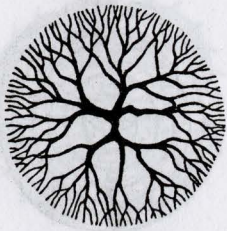
Karuna Hospice Service (Australia) <www.karuna.org.au/>: assists terminally ill people and their families at home.

Karuna Trust (India) <www.karuna.org/>: organizes education projects for Buddhist ex-untouchables.

Khmer-Buddhist Educational Assistance Project (U.S. and Cambodia) <www.keap-net.org/index.htm>: connected with Maha Ghosananda, supports projects for the recovery of Cambodia through trainings and linking donors and projects.

Manzanita Village/Ordinary Dharma (U.S.) <www.manzanitavillage.org/>: founded by Caitriona Reed and Michele Benzamin-Miki, offers classes and retreats in Southern California, “based on mindfulness practices and nonviolence, for the celebration and healing of the individual, society, and earth.”

The National Buddhist Prison Sangha (U.S.) <www.mro.org/zmm/rightaction/nbps.html>: offers



“spiritual guidance and support to prison inmates.”

Network of Engaged Buddhists (U.K.) <www.engaged-buddhist.org.uk>: integrates spiritual and social concerns, publishes journal *Indra's Net*.

Nipponzan Myohoji (Japan and International) <www.dharmawalk.org/index.html>: carries on the legacy of Nichidatsu Fujii (1885–1985) “through walks, construction of pagodas dedicated to peace, and the constant practice of prayer.”

Peacemaker Circle International (International) <www.peacemakercircle.org/bw.htm>: founded by Bernie Glassman and others as an “evolving network of people working for social change” in 14 countries.

Prison Dharma Network (U.S.) <www.prisondharma-network.org/>: an “international nonsectarian contemplative support network for prisoners, prison volunteers, and correctional workers.”

Rigpa Fellowship Spiritual Care Program (International) <www.spcare.org/>: founded by Sogyal Rinpoche, to offer Buddhist teachings to those facing illness or death and to their caregivers.

Rokpa International (U.K., Switzerland) <www.rokpauk.org/>: founded by Akong Tulku Rinpoche and Lea Wyler, to “improve the quality of life of the poorest peoples around the world,” with projects in Tibet, Nepal, South Africa, Zimbabwe.

Sakyadhita: The International Association of Buddhist Women (International) <www.sakyadhita.org/>: “a network of communications for Buddhist women throughout the world.”

Sarvodaya (Sri Lanka) <www.sarvodaya.org/>: founded in 1958 by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, “an independent development and reconstruction movement, active in thousands of villages.”

Sathirakoses-Nagapradeepa Foundation (Thailand) <www.sulak-sivaraksa.org/>: a network of organizations and projects founded by Sulak Sivaraksa, “committed to social justice with ecological vision and based on engaged spirituality.”

Soka Gakkai (Japan and International) <www.sgi.org/>: “advances peace, culture, and education, centered on the humanistic philosophy of Buddhism.”

Spirit Rock Diversity Program (U.S.) <www.spiritrock.org/html/diversity.html>: contains resources and links related to Buddhist practice and diversity.

The Tara Project (Australia) <ourworld.com-puserve.com/homepages/TheTaraProjectAustralia/>: “embraces a diverse range of welfare projects” in Australia and Asia.

Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development <www.sulak-sivaraksa.org/network21.php>: “involves Buddhist monks and nuns in issues of ethics, environmental conservation, and other relevant socio-economic and political issues.”

Think Sangha (International) <www.bpf.org/think.html>: “a socially engaged Buddhist think tank” coordinated by Jonathan

Watts, based in Japan.

Tibet Justice Center (U.S.) <www.tibetjustice.org/>: formerly the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet, “advocates self-determination for the Tibetan people and promotes human rights, environmental protection, and peaceful resolution of the situation in Tibet.”

Tzu Chi Foundation: Buddhist Compassion Relief (Taiwan) <www.tzuchi.org/>: entering 35th year, the organization “works in the missions of Charity, Medicine, Education, and Culture.”

Upaya Zen Center (U.S.) <www.upaya.org/>: “a Buddhist study center [in New Mexico] offering courses and retreats on engaged spirituality,” guided by Roshi Joan Halifax.

Vallecitos Mountain Refuge for Environmental & Social Activists (U.S.) <www.vallecitos.org/home.html>: a wilderness retreat center in New Mexico seeking to support nonprofit leaders and advocacy organizations.

Ven. Mother Park Chung Soo Won-Buddhist Relief Ass'n (South Korea) <www.motherpark.org/english/index.html>: carries out humanitarian work in South Korea and many other countries.

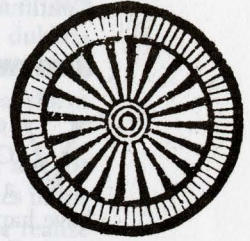
Vipassana Hawaii MettaDana Project (U.S.) <www.vipassanahawaii.org/mettadana/index.htm>: “helps the people of the Sagaing Hills” (Burma), “focuses on primary school education, public health, and support for monasteries and nunneries.”

Women Active in Buddhism (U.S.) <members.tripod.com/~Lhamo/>: a “comprehensive collection of resources on contemporary Buddhist women.”

Zaltho Foundation (U.S.) <www.zaltho.org/index.html>: founded by Claude AnShin Thomas and “committed to ending violence by...establishing socially engaged projects in schools, communities, organizations, and families.”

Zen Environmental Studies Institute (U.S.) <www.mro.org/zesi/programs>: based in New York state, “conducts wilderness exploration programs, teachings in Buddhist environmental ethics, and research on water, air, and earth pollution.”

Zen Hospice Project (U.S.) <www.zenhospice.org/>: based in San Francisco, provides “residential hospice care, volunteer programs, and educational efforts.” ❖



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Please send comments, suggestions, and updates to Donald Rothberg at <drothberg@saybrook.edu>.

Book Reviews

Thomas Merton and Thich Nhat Hanh: Engaged Spirituality in an Age of Globalization

by Robert H. King

Continuum Publishing Group, 2003, 216 pp., \$19.95 (paper)

Reviewed by Diana Lion

Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh and Catholic monk Thomas Merton met only once, for a few hours in 1966. We can only guess what might have happened if Merton had not died unexpectedly and tragically two years later, at 53.

At Thich Nhat Hanh's suggestion, retired academic Robert King has chosen to present these two highly regarded figures through the lens of his own evolving practice. His straightforward prologue tells of his own spiritual journey from liberal Protestant to Christian member of a Zen group. He then presents an account of the meeting between Merton and Nhat Hanh at Merton's Kentucky monastery, Gethsemani—a meeting that almost didn't happen because Nhat Hanh was ill. The remainder of the book describes each man's life and spiritual trajectory.

Using writings by the two men and those who knew them, King pieces together a fascinating investigation into the roots of today's engaged spirituality and interfaith dialogue. I

found myself glued to each page as I read about the wisdom and life experiences of these two contemporary contemplative activists.

When Merton and Nhat Hanh met, interfaith dialogue was far less common than it is now. Both men were partly responsible for the flourishing of this dialogue, a potent force for peace and justice (and against the death penalty, nuclear weapons, and globalization). Both were monastics, steeped in the liturgy and practices of their particular traditions. Both faced major political and religious challenges that they addressed through committed practice. Both wrote prolifically, although Merton more transparently: his extensive writings include many years of daily journals, while only recently have parts of Nhat Hanh's journals been published, allowing us to see some of his internal struggles in the 1960s. And, possibly most important, both were pivotal in pioneering and deepening the role of contemplatives in political engagement.

A typically compelling passage cites a 1958 letter from Merton to renowned Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki. Asking Suzuki to provide an introduction to a collection of the Desert Fathers' sayings, Merton writes of his own growing fascination with Zen:

Time after time as I read your pages, something in me says, "That's it!" Don't ask me what. I have no desire to explain it to anybody, or to justify it to anybody, or to analyze it for myself. I have my own way to walk, and for some reason or other Zen is right in the middle of it wherever I go....If I could not breathe Zen I would probably die of spiritual asphyxiation.

King also describes a dialogue between activist priest Daniel Berrigan and Nhat Hanh that demonstrates the Vietnamese master's grasp of Christian theological nuance. King writes:

What I find so interesting about this particular exchange is that the Christian offers a contemplative interpretation of Jesus and the Buddhist an activist interpretation of Buddha—not what one would expect in either case, and certainly not the traditional interpretation of either religious figure.

King's account of the two monks' evolution over the years is stimulating and inspiring. Merton, for example, shed his feelings of superiority about his own religious tradition, and, by his own account, experienced much growth from his contact with Zen and Tibetan Buddhist traditions.

The book's major weakness is its treatment of globalization, which is promised in the title but only briefly mentioned in the text.

This shortcoming aside, I highly recommend King's study. It will engage any reader with an interest in interfaith dialogue or a desire for more information about the roots of Buddhist and Christian engaged practice. ♦

Diana Lion is the founding director of the BPF Prison Project. She is inspired by the work of interfaith contemplative activists, in whose footsteps she is gratefully walking.

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The Great Awakening: A Buddhist Social Theory

by David R. Loy

Wisdom Publications, 2003, 320 pp., \$16.95 (paper)

Reviewed by Roy Money

David Loy prefaces this book with a quote from Gary Snyder's 1968 essay "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution": "The mercy of the West has been social revolution; the mercy of the East has been individual insight into the basic self/void. We need both."

When I first encountered this statement several decades ago, it felt like an important marker on my path, but the trail beyond it was not well defined. (There were additional markers, such as the formation of BPF in 1978, but I was not aware of BPF until much later.) As BPF Senior Advisor Alan Senauke subsequently wrote, "We need a critical understanding of interbeing as detailed and various as the maps of individual consciousness we use in our spiritual practices." In this book, David Loy has endeavored to sketch just such a map. (And Ken Jones's *The New Social Face of Buddhism* provides a different but complementary perspective for our journey.)

David Loy is known to many readers of *Turning Wheel*, and his writing is well represented in the Think Sangha section of the BPF website. A professor at Bunkyo University in Japan, he is a longtime social activist and much published author.

Loy's newest book shows how a Buddhist perspective can help contribute to a fuller understanding of many distinctly modern issues, including globalization, terrorism, biotechnology, and the ecological crisis. In analyzing a variety of complex social problems, he outlines the contours of a Buddhist social theory. One of his fundamental points is that the modern world is so different from the world of Shakyamuni Buddha that we need to think in broader social terms than individual psychology alone.

The social theory proposed by Loy applies the Four Noble Truths to the nature and cause of social *dukkha*. Just as the cause of individual suffering can be linked to the three poisons of greed, ill will, and delusion, so, too, social *dukkha* arises from the collective manifestations of these mind states. While these collective manifestations are created by the actions of individuals, they acquire a life of their own and become embodied in the social context. So, for example, racism manifests itself not just in individual attitudes but as a whole social system that grants privileges and extracts penalties based on skin color.

Much of what Loy writes in these essays is based on the concept of "lack" that he developed in his two previous books: the idea that our ungroundedness (as in incompleteness, impermanence) is experienced as a deficit rather than a source of mystery and possibility. So we engage in all

manner of individual and collective practices to achieve an illusion of self-sufficiency and control over what is other than our imagined self—and we construct dualities in the process.

The delusion of dualism that Loy describes is similar to the Buddha's teaching of no-self. Loy identifies this continual struggle with a subject-object dualism as one of our main sources of suffering. The ending of social *dukkha* would require a process of realizing our "interpenetrating nonduality with the world." Only then could we transform our dualistic and *dukkha*-producing institutions.

That's a tall order. And it's something we do, not for others, but to live fully in the present. As Loy writes in his last sentence, "The world begins to heal when we realize that its sufferings are our own."

Each of his chapters offers many insights and formulations that merit reflection. The book is a challenging read, but it amply rewards the extra attention it requires. It will undoubtedly become an important marker on the path of engaged Buddhism. ❖

Roy Money is active in the Connecticut chapter of BPF. In the face of proliferating devastation and the heartaches of a new imperialism, he is continually challenged to be present without being overtaken by the circumstances.

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Meena, Heroine of Afghanistan: The Martyr Who Founded RAWA, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan

by Melody Ermachild Chavis

Foreword by Alice Walker

St. Martin's Press, 2003, 208 pp., \$19.95 (hardcover)

Reviewed by Alan Senauke

The tragic lives of women under Afghanistan's Taliban regime were an open secret that the world ignored before the tragedies of 9/11. The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, or RAWA, used every available medium to get the word out to a world that chose not to listen.

After 9/11 and the subsequent war in Afghanistan, however, many of us realized two things about RAWA's prophetic warnings. First, if heeded, they might have helped us see the coming disaster and avoid it. And second, life for Afghan women is still desperate.

Melody Ermachild Chavis, a Bay Area private investigator working on death penalty appeals, decided to do something about this. In the winter of 2002, with support from many friends, including the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Melody journeyed to Pakistan and Afghanistan to research the work of RAWA and the life of its founder, Meena. She was accompanied by Afghan American peace activist Latifa Popal.

For those of us who know Melody's writing, her undertaking came as no surprise. Her numerous articles in *Turning Wheel* and her previous book, *Altars in the Streets*, testify to her passion for social justice and to the depth of her practice. Both lead her to meet suffering where it arises.

This book, the fruit of Melody's travels and research, is the first biography of Meena, who founded RAWA in 1977, as a 20-year-old college student, and was assassinated 10 years later, probably by agents of the Soviet occupying force. (Her husband, with whom she had three children,

had been tortured and killed by fundamentalists a year earlier.) Although born to an illiterate mother and weakened by a bout with typhoid at 12, Meena hungered for knowledge and longed to change the plight of Afghan women. Encouraged by her parents and teachers, she went well beyond the bounds of ordinary life to gain a first-rate education—very rare for an Afghan woman at any time—and to renounce the privilege she might have enjoyed in order to found RAWA and work for the well-being of all women. In Buddhism, we would call this the Bodhisattva's path.

Melody's biography skillfully weaves together Meena's tragically brief history and the lives of other Afghan women who came to discover their strengths through RAWA. Moving gracefully back and forth in time, the book tells a story that is both inspiring and unfinished, tragic and courageous. It's written in an accessible style, so that adults and young people alike can come to understand how events half a world away have affected our lives and continue to affect us. ♦

Alan Senauke is BPF's senior advisor. He is a father, a musician, and a Zen priest—not always in that order.

A Mighty Heart: The Brave Life and Death of My Husband, Danny Pearl

by Mariane Pearl

Scribner, 2003, 320 pp., \$25 (hardcover)

Reviewed by Lucien Nasiri

Mariane Pearl has been a member of Soka Gakkai International (SGI) for nearly 20 years. She is also the widow of Daniel Pearl, the journalist who was kidnapped and brutally murdered in Pakistan in February 2002. Mariane has recently published a riveting account of her experience of Daniel's kidnapping and brutal murder. Although she does not discuss the specifics of her faith in her memoir, she does talk about how her practice of Buddhism sustained her while she was waiting for news of her husband's fate.

I call my older brother Satchi, in Paris. "It's over." I say. Satchi reacts as I did. "No, we can't give up, it's not true. We just need the whole world to chant with us." All over the world Buddhists have been chanting for us. Most belong to the lay organization Soka Gakkai International. SGI is a network of people at once remarkable and ordinary, headed by Daisaku Ikeda, a fighter for peace. Members spontaneously started chanting for us some weeks ago, and soon—as in a relay race where you hand the baton over to the next runner—they ensured that 24 hours a day, through all time zones, people were chanting for us.

In January 2002, terrorists with alleged ties to Al Qaeda

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kidnapped the journalist Daniel Pearl, who was on assignment from the *Wall Street Journal* in Karachi. Mariane had accompanied Danny to Pakistan. She was six months pregnant. The kidnapping took place the day before the couple was set to leave Pakistan.

Mariane describes in vivid detail the terrifying range of emotions she experienced throughout her ordeal. I found myself weeping and laughing with her as I read. She has not set out to indict any specific person or group, but to explore with complete candor what a person goes through under such circumstances. She describes Daniel's professionalism, his compassion for those he was writing about, and his love for his wife and their unborn child. Some of the authorities in Pakistan tried to blame Daniel for the kidnapping, saying he had been reckless. But Mariane demonstrates how cautious he really was, how he painstakingly drafted a training manual for journalists reporting in the middle of armed conflict.

Mariane uses a lot of SGI language when discussing her views. She repeatedly mentions her wish to use "dialogue" to overcome religious and racial hatred. She and Daniel viewed themselves symbolically as a bridge between different races and religions. Daniel was Jewish, of Iraqi and Israeli descent; Mariane, who is French, is the product of an Afro-Cuban mother and a Dutch Jewish father. They decided to name their son, who is now one year old, Adam. As journalists, both Mariane and Daniel viewed themselves in the crucial role of giving expression to those who do not have a voice on the international stage. This dream is also one of the main aims of SGI, which seeks through Buddhism to bring people together in dialogue to work for world peace.

Mariane describes herself as sometimes feeling suicidal, and says she was brought back from the brink of despair by her Buddhist faith and her hope for her unborn child. Being part of a congregation doing Buddhist chanting gave her strength and reminded her she was not alone. Chanting enabled her to live, despite the awful signs that her husband was dead.

On March 9, 2002, more than 500 people assembled at the SGI-USA Los Angeles Friendship Center to pay tribute to Daniel Pearl. Daniel was not a practicing Buddhist, but considered "ethics and truth" his religion. Mariane wanted to "thank all of the SGI members, who have been endlessly chanting for Danny and me." SGI President Ikeda, described as "a fighter for peace" in her book, has obviously inspired her.

I found it easy to identify with Mariane, and her book reminded me of the importance of faith in such life-threatening crises. ❖

Lucien Nasiri lives in Oxford, England, with her husband and three young children. She is a Soka Gakkai practitioner.

Books in Brief

Reviewed by Shane Snowdon

Hot Off the Press

Renowned Buddhist scholar and Tibet advocate **Robert Thurman** has written a delightful new book likely to enjoy the same popular success as his 1998 international best-seller *Inner Revolution*. In fact, he calls the new title—*Infinite Life: Seven Virtues for Living Well* (Riverhead, \$24.95)—a follow-up to the earlier one. *Infinite Life*, he says, "goes further in the direction of empowering the individual to practice the inner transformations that underlie the social-historical changes tracked out in *Inner Revolution*. It's sort of 'how to make the Inner Revolution happen within yourself.'" Clearly intended for a wide readership, and graced with much good humor and common sense, the book will please Buddhist readers with its elegant descriptions of the traditional seven virtues of Buddhism and its thorough grounding in social engagement.

In another title aimed at a broad audience, Tibetan Buddhist psychologist **Lorne Ladner** explores the significance of traditional Buddhist notions of compassion for contemporary Western life (and social engagement). *The Lost Art of Compassion: Discovering the Practice of Happiness in the Meeting of Buddhism and Psychology* (HarperSanFrancisco, \$23.95) is a fierce, highly readable book that openly seeks to increase readers' compassion via down-to-earth teachings, stories, and exercises.

Re-Enchantment: Tibetan Buddhism Comes to the West (W.W. Norton, \$24.95) is a true Buddhist page-turner. With a liveliness and irreverence that would probably please most of his subjects, **Jeffery Paine** presents brief yet satisfying sketches of the best-known Western Tibetan Buddhists of the 20th century, from early Tibet visitor Alexandra David-Neel to current deathrow inmate Jarvis Masters. Readers will find a host of fascinating tidbits and pointed observations, as well as a final chapter on the Dalai Lama that, as scholar Huston Smith notes, "is worth the price of the book."

The Footsteps We Walk In

As Diana Lion reminds us in her review of Robert King's new book on Thomas Merton and Thich Nhat Hanh (p. 38), socially engaged Buddhists walk in impressive footsteps. This, in fact, is the explicit theme of the newly revised edition of *In the Footsteps of Gandhi: Conversations with Spiritual Social Activists* (Parallax, \$16). Although author **Catherine Ingram** conducted most of the conversations in the late 1980s, many of them are timeless in their ability to inspire. They also offer a poignant opportunity to compare what figures as diverse as the Dalai Lama, Joan Baez, Cesar Chavez, Ram Dass, Desmond Tutu, and Gary Snyder said about their lives and work 15 years ago with what actually unfolded for them over the next decade and a half.

Equally touching, but set in the present day, are the riveting first-person accounts collected in *Another Day in Paradise: International Humanitarian Workers Tell Their Stories* (Orbis, \$25). Editor Carol Bergman, a journalist whose parents escaped the Nazis, originally set out to write an article about the humanitarian workers she had encountered over the years, people whom she had found “compelling and complicated.” But when she met with nurse Iain Levine in a Manhattan restaurant to interview him about his work with Mother Teresa and in war-ravaged Sierra Leone, he showed her a journal so honest and gripping that her original intention “felt like an appropriation and evaporated.” She decided instead to present the workers in their own words—and Levine’s writing ultimately gave her book its not-entirely-ironic title. Her determination to seek out workers in the areas of the world most challenged by war and natural disaster made the book a far more difficult project than she imagined it would be. But it was eminently worth the struggle: readers will be deeply moved by the stories of these workers, whose lives, Bergman writes, “are dangerous and devoted in ways most of us cannot imagine.”

How do we begin to imagine involving ourselves in work for peace and justice? A lovely little book by Catherine deCuir presents an inviting process that appeals to both adults and children. In *Peace Prompts: A Guided Journal for Communities, Congregations, and Activists in a Time of War* (Stone Bridge Press, \$9.95), journaling teacher deCuir offers “prompts,” or questions, that gently stir personal reflection on world peace, peace at home, and inner peace. The book’s format allows readers to jot down their thoughts about questions ranging from “What was I taught as a child about war and peace?” to “If I saw my child or friend being bullied by others, what would I do or say?”

From Thich Nhat Hanh

As this beloved Vietnamese monk who embodies social-ly engaged Buddhism nears 80, his writings are, thankfully, proliferating. Thich Nhat Hanh has recently released four titles, three from his longstanding publisher, Berkeley-based Parallax Press.

Joyfully Together: The Art of Building a Harmonious Community (\$10) presents suggestions for “living happily with other people” in any context, from families to nations; it draws both on centuries-old Buddhist teachings and on experiences in his own monastic community, France’s Plum Village. *Finding Our True Home: Living in the Pure Land Here and Now* (\$12) offers a new translation of the Amitabha Sutra, a central teaching of the Pure Land School of Buddhism, followed by Nhat Hanh’s first commentary on how Pure Land practice can transform everyday suffering. The revered Buddhist text sometimes called the “King of the Sutras” is the subject of *Opening the Heart of the Cosmos: Insights on the Lotus Sutra* (\$26). In this book Nhat Hanh links the ancient sutra to such contemporary

topics as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, terrorism, and environmental degradation.

His fourth recent release is *Creating True Peace: Ending Violence in Yourself, Your Family, Your Community, and the World* (Free Press, \$23). Designed for a wide audience, the book is a highly accessible introduction to Nhat Hanh’s work. It presents many of his most illuminating and helpful anecdotes, teachings, and exercises, and is ideal both for those new to him and those seeking a one-volume compendium of his suggestions for practicing peace in everyday life.

Readers wanting to introduce children to Nhat Hanh’s life and work will be happy to know about a book for ages seven and up, edited by Maura Shaw and filled with photos and illustrations by Stephen Marchesi. *Thich Nhat Hanh: Buddhism in Action* (Skylight Paths, \$12.95) covers many of the topics that interest kids (and adults) most, including how to pronounce Nhat Hanh’s name, how he ended up living in France, why he’s called “Thây”—and what’s up with all that smiling!

The BPF Staff Bookshelf

It would be impossible to list all of the titles that have captured the attention of BPF staff members lately, but here’s a sampling.

- ♦ *The Wisdom of Solitude: A Zen Retreat in the Woods* (HarperSanFrancisco, \$21.95): Jane Dobisz, former guiding teacher of the Cambridge Zen Center in Massachusetts, describes her 100 days alone in a primitive New England cabin in winter.
- ♦ *In Buddha’s Kitchen: Cooking, Being Cooked, and Other Adventures in a Meditation Center* (Shambhala, \$18.95): Kimberley Snow “tells all” about her stint as head cook in a Tibetan Buddhist retreat center.
- ♦ *Return to Stillness: Twenty Years with a Tai Chi Master* (Marlowe & Company, \$14.95): Canadian writer Trevor Carolan ponders the gifts and meaning of tai chi.
- ♦ *Sleeping in Caves: A Sixties Himalayan Memoir* (Monkfish, \$16): Author and visual/performance artist Marilyn Stablein tells the engaging tale of how the “brief getaway” to Tibet and Nepal that she embarked on after dropping out of Berkeley in 1965 became a seven-year stay, featuring encounters with the police and soon-to-be-famous seekers like Ram Dass.
- ♦ *Street Corner Adept & Other Raves* (Good Gumbo Books, \$14): The 1975–2000 poems of BPF founding member Michael Fallarino.
- ♦ *Buddhism Is Not What You Think: Finding Freedom Beyond Beliefs* (HarperSanFrancisco, \$22.95): New from Zen teacher Steve Hagen, author of the bestseller *Buddhism Plain and Simple*.
- ♦ *At Home in the Muddy Water: A Guide to Finding Peace within Everyday Chaos* (Shambhala, \$21.95): New from San Diego-based Zen teacher Ezra Bayda. ❖

Shane Snowdon is book review editor of *Turning Wheel*.

BPF Chapter & Activist News

Welcome to our new chapter in **Dunedin, New Zealand!** And mark your calendars: **BPF New England** is hosting a regional conference July 10–11 in Amherst, MA. (See back cover for contact info.)

In memory of Martin Luther King, the **Boston, MA Chapter** invited to its January meeting guest speakers from the Transforming Prejudice Group, a multiracial group of Buddhist practitioners dedicated to exploring and confronting racism. In February, Melody Ermachild Chavis, a BPF activist and author, spoke about her book *Meena: Heroine of Afghanistan*. Members of the Boston BPF continue their weekly Sits for Peace in Copley Square. And Christine Aquilino, also from the chapter, continues to pump out those death penalty action letters.

The **Pioneer Valley, MA Chapter** featured guest speaker Dr. Janaki Tschannerl at its November chapter meeting, discussing issues of globalization—to help raise our awareness of how imperialism generates suffering. Planning was begun for participation in the 2004 AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) calendar project: “366 Things You Can Do to End Racism.” In December, the BPF-PV cosponsored a weeklong film festival as part of the “Undoing Empire” series organized by AFSC; films examined strategies of resistance to systemic oppression. The chapter also cosponsored the second annual Western Massachusetts Interfaith Coalition for Peace & Justice “Solstice Concert for Peace.” Once again this concert drew over 1,000 people and brought in generous donations for the Interfaith Coalition. Joseph Goldstein was a featured speaker. In January, BPF-PV held its first-ever retreat to practice together and deepen our relationships as sangha members. The chapter also cosponsored a talk by Fleet Maull, founder of the Prison Dharma Network, entitled “Transformative Justice and Spiritual Activism.” In February the monthly chapter gathering focused on “A Dharmic Conversation about the 2004 Election.”

The **Portland, OR Chapter** is a local cosponsor of the March 20 global action, We Still Say No to War, and is making plans for a meditation vigil during the day’s events. Portland BPF is also taking the lead in planning Portland’s first Change Your Mind Day on June 5, in cooperation with *Tricycle*. This will be an afternoon of meditation instruction, inspirational talks, contemplative practices, poetry, and music from a variety of traditions that will take place in dozens of cities across the United States.

The **Sacramento, CA Chapter** raised funds and purchased additional zafus and zabutons for the Folsom Prison sangha, and gave many Buddhist books and tapes, donated by sanghas in the community, to the Folsom Prison chapel library. In December, chapter volunteers met with the prison sangha coordinators to plan a one-day retreat for inmates. The chapter will be working on the landscaping for a home being built in Sacramento by Habitat for Humanity, in the spring or early summer. The chapter also distributed information and raised funds for

the producers of the film *Tibet: Cry of the Snow Lion*. Other activities include coordinating with local peace groups on upcoming events and providing information to area sanghas on nonviolent communication and racism.

The **East Bay, CA Chapter** held a half-day planning retreat on Martin Luther King’s birthday, where they focused on upcoming projects. A regional meeting of Northern California BPF chapters, to talk, organize, and practice together, is tentatively planned for the weekend of March 20–21, including a meditation vigil before and during the San Francisco peace demonstration marking the anniversary of the start of the Iraq War. We are also seeking to strengthen relationships with other faith groups working for peace. And a group of members is exploring actions related to the upcoming election, including voter registration and a voter information project that documents the presidential candidates’ positions on key peace and social justice issues. Also in January, chapter members working on the Art for Peace project submitted a grant application to the city of Oakland, to help bring art classes focused on peace to 20 recreation centers throughout the city.

At the February monthly gathering of the **Seattle, WA Chapter**, the discussion centered on the question “Does political activism have a place in the sangha?” Members also participated in the Nonviolent Peaceforce monthly meeting, which addressed practical community responses to domestic violence. Also in February, BPF-Seattle chapter members participated in “Brave Voices for Peace in Palestine and Israel,” a two-day conference to present perspectives on issues of peace, justice, and human rights in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. BPF-Seattle has begun planning a conference that would bring together Buddhist teachers, practitioners, and social activists in the Seattle area to dialogue on how Seattle’s Buddhist community can help foster the conditions for world peace. Our goal is to encourage broad participation in the planning and staging of this conference. Through engaging the diversity of perspectives in our community, we hope to realize harmony in our actions.

On January 19, the **Washington, DC Chapter** sponsored a presentation by Sut Jhally, executive director of the Media Education Foundation and a leading media reform scholar and activist. The event also included a screening of *Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11, Fear and the Selling of American Empire*. The film, narrated by Julian Bond, reveals how the administration has used the trauma of 9/11 and the war on terrorism to advance a longstanding neo-conservative plan. The chapter has also been active in planning for a celebration of Change Your Mind Day, at the Ellipse on the Washington Mall, on Saturday, June 5, 2004.

Be sure to check the BPF website (www.bpf.org) for information on our dozens of chapters throughout the U.S. and internationally, as well as links to chapter sites. ❖

—Compiled by Robert Lyons

Prison Project

As I write this column, California has been facing its first state execution in two years. Kevin Cooper may have been executed by the time you read this, in spite of strenuous efforts to save his life. I see these strong efforts as a result of all the organizing we, and so many other groups, have done to try to secure a moratorium on the death penalty in California. The facts of Cooper's case seem to point to his innocence. But, as always, we are not opposing the death penalty because of any specific circumstances. We oppose it from our commitment to align ourselves with the First Precept of nonharming. This is the first execution the new governor of California has had to oversee. We know he supports the death penalty. And we watched as he showed some of his bias in denying clemency, despite significant public pressure.

The good news is that 12 hours before the execution was scheduled to happen, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals stayed (halted) it. That whole day we waited to hear what the Supreme Court would do. They have the authority to overturn any lower court's decision. Finally, three hours before the execution was scheduled to happen, the Supreme Court upheld the stay. Thousands of people involved in hands-on organizing gathered at interfaith services, on vigil walks, and outside the gates of San Quentin to celebrate this rare, though possibly short-lived, victory. Meanwhile Cooper, who had been held all day in the death chamber beside the lethal injection room, was allowed to return to his cell. I had never before woken up jubilant the morning after an execution was scheduled, but this time was different. The case could still end in an execution, and certainly the larger issue of ending executions altogether is far from being resolved. But for now, we can all relish the sweetness of our shared work leading to a good result.

We are waiting to see how the case plays out in the courts.

Meanwhile, on the East Coast, members of BPF in Massachusetts are joining efforts to stop the execution of Gary Lee Sampson, who was sentenced to death in federal court in Boston. You might well wonder how this could

be, as Massachusetts has no death penalty, and in fact has not executed anyone since 1947. According to the Massachusetts Citizens Against the Death Penalty (MCADP) website: "Congress has added over 60 capital offenses to the federal statute books in the last 15 years....These laws allow the Justice Department to remove a case from the state court system where it would normally be tried, to federal court, in order to seek the death penalty." Apparently this is happening increasingly in the 12 states, and in Puerto Rico, where they no longer have the death penalty. So there's First Precept work to be done in every state.

Finally, I'm planning a couple of visits during the coming year to discuss prison dharma face-to-face with chapter members. I also look forward to the New England regional BPF conference on July 10 and 11, which is being organized by the Pioneer Valley Chapter. I'm hoping that many people involved in prison dharma will gather there to discuss our work and share ideas for the coming year. ❖

—Diana Lion

BASE News

This New Year's we held our first winter Teen Meditation Retreat. We were challenged by a massive winter rainstorm on both the first and last days of the retreat, along with cold weather, power outages, flooded roads, and the temporary loss of our rural septic system. Yet as a great testament to the staff and the teens in our group, the mood stayed light and warm as we mindfully celebrated the ending of one year and the beginning of another. Many of the teens and the staff commented that this was the best New Year's celebration they have ever had!

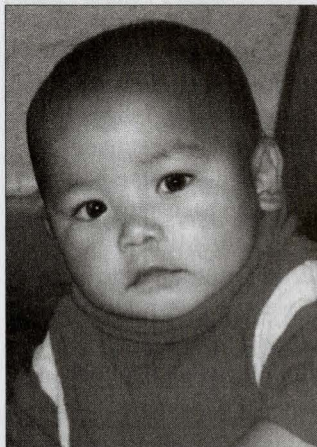
The dates of the next Teen Meditation Retreats are:

June 15–20 in Sebastopol, CA

July 3–7 in Santa Cruz, CA

Please visit www.bpf.org/teenretreat.html, call 415/643-8289, or e-mail <teenretreat@bpf.org> for more information. ❖

—Tempel Smith



AN APPEAL TO HELP SAVE TIBET

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

TIBET AID

www.TibetAid.org

877-Tibet-Aid

Please Note:

BPF is updating its web presence, thanks to some generous donors' contributions. Please check our website for updated events and program content. And please feel free to e-mail us at <web@bpf.org> with your notices of BPF-related events. Please send notices two weeks in advance, in pdf format, if possible, ready to post. We may edit notices for length and content, and will do our best to accommodate as many requests as we can.

Announcements & Classifieds

ANNOUNCEMENTS/ CLASSIFIEDS

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

SW Nicaragua. Nonprofit seeks eclectic practitioners/investors/participants for diverse projects/development. Gorgeous region. Much potential. <dianebeatty111@yahoo.com>.

Experiential Teacher of Religions.

I would like to include meditation in teaching world religions. I have an M.A. in Buddhism and Contemplative Religion from Naropa University, and teaching experience. Please call with possibilities for work and to share ideas. Todd Rambo: 415/550-1142.

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

Attention Prisoners: Precious Dharma teachings on beautiful altar-sized cards: Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path, The Four Immeasurables, and Eight Verses for Training the Mind. Mail request with 3 first-class stamps if possible. For Resource Directory, send 4 first-class stamps. Naljor Prison Dharma Service, P.O. Box 628, Mt. Shasta, CA 96067; 877/277-6075.

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

Texas Sangha Quarterly, newsletter for and about Buddhist prisoners in Texas, is looking for submissions. Prisoners within the Texas system can send articles, sutra quotes, etc. for publication to: TSQ, P.O. Box 38064, Dallas, TX 75238-0064.

Sacred Language Glossary of the Earth

by George Kayer and Canadian poet Gitta Bernauer. Wit and wisdom from over 400 authors. "A work of tremendous scope, a broadminded, wide-eyed guide for all seekers."—Gabriel Fields, SFZC. \$10 for e-book; \$25 postpaid. Make checks payable to Gitta Bernauer, 2230 E. Morrow Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85024.

Pema Chödrön Tape: *Practicing Buddhism in Times of War*

a talk given in San Francisco in 2003. \$11 (includes postage), available from BPF, 510/655-6169; <bpf@bpf.org>.

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

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

GROUPS

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

Sangha for Buddhists of Color meets monthly in the San Francisco Bay Area for meditation, dharma talks, and mutual support. For information, call 415/789-8359; <boc_caretakers@hotmail.com>.

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

The Untraining is designed to help you "untrain" the subtle programming of white liberal racism. Put your meditative awareness to work for all beings. Ongoing groups: 510/235-6134.

VOLUNTEER/DONATIONS/ SPONSORSHIP

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

Prison Dharma Network (PDN) needs your donations of dollars and used dharma books to continue making the dharma available to prisoners. If you are interested in forming local or regional chapters to facilitate contemplative prison ministry, contact: PDN, P.O. Box 4623, Boulder, CO 80306-4623, 303/544-5923; <pdn@indra.com>.

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

BPF WISH LIST

We need the following items:

- Reliable photocopier machine
- Buddhist statue (12"-16" high) for altar
- Flat-screen iMac
- Full-spectrum floor lamps

Contact us at <prisons@bpf.org> or call 510/655-6169, ext. 307, if you can help us.

BPF Chapters, Contacts, and Affiliates

See our website, www.bpf.org, for a current version of this list.

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Gratitudes

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Inverness, CA 94937
415/669-1954

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www.gaybuddhist.org

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www.karunacenter.org

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www.lesbianbuddhistsangha.org

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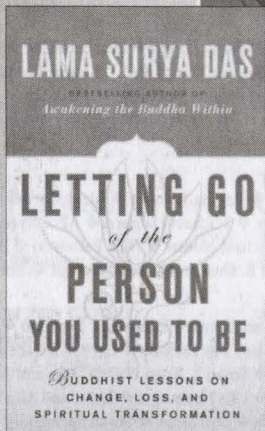
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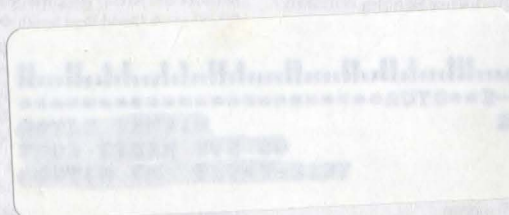
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