

TURNING WHEEL

The Journal of Socially Engaged Buddhism



BPF no longer has an active prisoner support program. You may want to write the San Francisco Zen Center (300 Page St., San Francisco, CA 94102), the Liberation Prison Project (P.O. Box 33036, Raleigh, NC 27636), or Insight on the *Inside* ~~Insight~~ (4300 Melrose Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90029). Prison Dharma Network has additional resources: <http://prisonmindfulness.org>

Revolution of the Spirit
Special Focus: Burma

A Publication of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship • Spring 2008, \$5.00 • Visit www.bpf.org

From the Editor

Say the word *politics* in a Buddhist setting, and you may get a reaction like you've brought roast chicken to a vegetarian potluck. Many people think politics has no place in the Dharma. It was for just that reason that BPF was founded 30 years ago.

But what does the word really mean? According to one definition, "The totality of interrelationships in a particular area of life involving power, authority, or influence, and capable of manipulation." Buddhism is about nothing if not the totality of interrelationships. And as humans, it is impossible to avoid the issue of power. The question is, how do we use that power and toward what ends? If, as the definition notes, politics is capable of manipulation, it also has the potential for liberation, as Donald Rothberg writes about in his contribution to this issue.

Can we who practice the Dharma afford the luxury of keeping ourselves separate from politics? A good question, and one that the authors in this issue of *Turning Wheel* grapple with.

The theme of this issue, "Revolution of the Spirit," comes from a phrase used by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to describe Burma's nonviolent struggle for freedom. Although the mainstream media has mostly stopped covering Burma, the voices in this issue remind us that the struggle for democracy started long before the September 2007 marches, and will continue long into the future. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Let us realize that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." It takes a faith and tenacity to stay in this work for the long run. And we are being invited to co-create this journey to freedom.

The horrors in Burma continue, with conditions so bad that organizations like the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders have had to pull out of the country. And yet, there are also signs of hope that are not reported in the media. Some of those stories are told in this issue.

What makes a "revolution of the spirit" different? During the 20 century, a new political technology evolved, one that created the conditions for power to be transferred in ways much less violent than previous eras. Gandhi's Satyagraha and King's Beloved Community are two manifestations. And now, the monks, nuns, and citizens of Burma continue this tradition. The common thread is a deep intention to see one's "enemy" as oneself, and to believe in the possibility of collective awakening. In short, it's about having faith in the Buddhature of all people, even the most brutal generals of the junta.

Meanwhile, back here at *Turning Wheel*, we are seeing many changes. In November, Patricia Justine Tumang joined the BPF staff as the new managing editor. She is a skilled editor and an accomplished writer, and we are thrilled to have her working with us. Patricia has already contributed in many ways with her creative and organizational skills.

And finally, I will be stepping down as editor of *TW* with this issue. This is a rather unexpected development, but one that feels called for to support BPF to successfully evolve with new leadership, and for my own nourishment. Thich Nhat Hanh often uses the phrase "no coming, no going" to remind us of the impermanence of life. Just like politics, impermanence can be experienced as either oppressive or liberating. My intention is to weigh in on the latter, and to remember that relationships never really end, sometimes they just need to change forms. I look forward to connecting with all of you in the *mahasangha* in new ways, and continuing to offer dharma-based energy to nourish the world.

—In peace, Maia Duerr

TURNING WHEEL

Editor

Maia Duerr

Managing Editor

Patricia Justine Tumang

Art Consultant

Jan Eldridge

Consulting Readers & Editors

Beandrea Davis, Jenesha de Rivera, Lenore
Fine, Lyn Fine, Annette Herskovits,
Zenzu Earthlyn Manuel, Katje Richstatter,
René Theberge, Everett Wilson

Copy Editor

Rachel Markowitz

Production & Design

Lawrence Watson

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship was founded in 1978 to bring a Buddhist perspective to the peace movement and to bring the peace movement to the Buddhist community.

*See insert card for subscription information.
Single copies \$7.00 postpaid from:*

BPF National Office

PO Box 3470, Berkeley, CA 94703

Tel.: 510/655-6169 Fax: 510/655-1369

www.bpf.org

For advertising information, contact
Patricia Justine Tumang,
510/655-6169 x302, <TWads@bpf.org>

Staff

Executive Director: Zenzu Earthlyn Manuel

Administrative Director: Oren Sofer

Program Director: Hozan Alan Senauke

Membership Coordinator: Charis Khoury

Membership Program Coordinator:

Caroline Acuña

Membership Communications Coordinator:

Rosalie Fanshel

Youth Program Coordinator: Tempel Smith

Transformative Justice Coordinator:

Catherine Cascade

Human Rights Program Coordinator:

Margaret Howe

Board of Directors

Pete Shimazaki Doktor (HI), Anchalee
Kurutach (CA), Jesse Maceo Vega-Frey (NC),
Phyllis Oscar (CA), Susan Suntree (CA),
Azara Turaki (MD), Marian Urquilla (DC),
Chris Wilson (CA)

Coming deadline for *Turning Wheel* Fall/Winter 2008 issue: June 30, 2008

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

© 2008 Buddhist Peace Fellowship
ISSN 1065-058X

Contents

Departments

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| From the Director/4 | History/10 |
| Letters/5 | Ecology/11 |
| Calendar of Events/6 | Peacework/14 |
| Staff News/7 | Gratitudes/44 |
| Indra's Net/8 | BPF Chapters and Affiliates/47 |

The Roots of Engaged Dharma

Buddhist Resistance Against Oppression? by David Loy/12

Revolution of the Spirit

Burma

Burma Background and History,

by Hozan Alan Senauke/18

U Gambira: Burma's Revolution of Conscience,

by Alan Clements/20

Witness: A Tourist Recounts the People's Movement in Burma,

by Aliya Thakin/23

Practicing Lovingkindness: A Conversation with Sayadaw

U Kovida, by Maia Duerr and Hozan Alan Senauke/25

Journey to a Land Cloaked in Fear, by Hozan Alan Senauke/28

Giving Back to Burma, by Michele McDonald/32

And beyond...

The Promise of a Spiritual Democracy, by Donald Rothberg/35

Radical Liberation: Dr. Ambedkar and Democracy in India, by Mangesh Dahiwale/39

Book Reviews

Everett Wilson on *Perfect Hostage: A Life of Aung San Suu Kyi*/42

Zenju Earthlyn Manuel on *Tranquil Is This Realm of Mine:*

Dharma Talks and Writings of the Most Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii/42

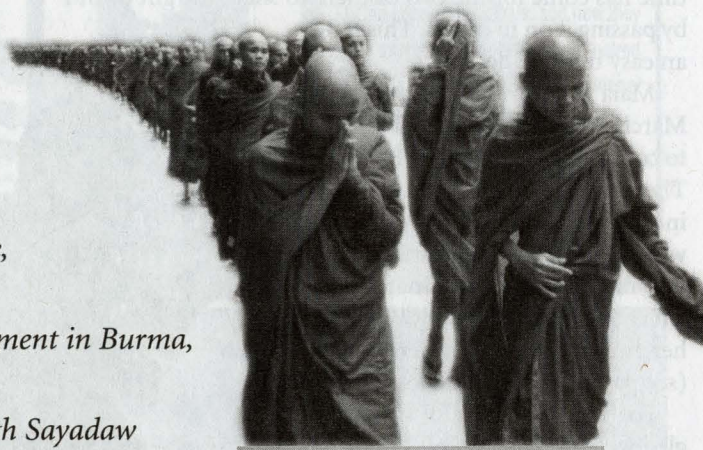
Patrick Carolan on *One City: A Declaration of Interdependence*/43

Art

Hedi B. Desuyo/cover, 17, 36

Jan Eldridge/32

MauMau/20, 23



From the Director

What Would We Do Without Change?

by Zenju Earthlyn Manuel

During times of change in my life, I call on my ancestors to be with me as I walk the earth, and I honor the folks on whose shoulders I stand. In doing the work of BPF, the work of transformation and impermanence, I have especially called on them to support me.

Then there are those in the lineage of BPF who came before me, those on whose shoulders I stand who laid the foundation for this work and who have kept the organization alive. I have never met some of these people, but there are two folks who have worked hard for BPF that I have come to know: Maia Duerr and Alan Senauke. Now the time has come for the two of them to share the gift of BPF by passing it on to others. This is not an easy thing to do.

Maia will leave BPF at the end of March. Alan transitioned from staff to consultant at the end of February. There will be a time to honor them in the way that they see fit. I also want to acknowledge Charis Khoury, our membership coordinator, who left at the end of February. We honor her five years of work here at BPF (see page 7 for a tribute to Charis).

For many years, BPF has struggled with the vastness of its mission and the limitation of staffing. Many staffing changes have occurred in the last five years. Upon my arrival, I asked, what would be best for BPF?

The answer was to simplify, simplify, simplify, and then build from there. Although we are sad about losing BPF family members, loss of personnel is inevitable in creating a viable organization for dharma-based social change. Is it possible to create such an organization in the midst of transitions? I say yes, because the vision goes beyond the walls of BPF and back as far as Buddha.

With going, there is always coming. In November, we welcomed Patricia Justine Tumang as the new managing editor of *Turning Wheel*. Patricia is a writer with extensive publishing experience. She is coeditor of the anthology *Homelands: Women's Journeys Across Race, Place, and Time* (Seal Press, 2006). This spring, two new staff members join the BPF family: Rosalie Fanshel as membership communications coordinator, and Caroline Acuña as membership program coordinator. Rosalie has a great deal of experience in newsletter writing, event planning, and graphic design, and was raised in a multiethnic and multidominational background. Caroline worked with

Peace Action West for 10 years, and has experience with events, database management, and fundraising. She is also a spiritual activist.

Our vision is that Rosalie and Caroline will help to increase BPF membership. I will also ask for their assistance in building membership within the chapters. I will continue to work with Viveka Chen, our organizational consultant, and Alan will advise me on position papers and the international socially engaged Buddhist arena.

We are developing some new and exciting programs, including three campaigns:

- *The Right to Practice*: A response to the inability of monks and nuns to practice Buddhism in some Asian countries, such as Burma, and linking it to the right to practice in the U.S. and throughout the world.

- *One Peace*: A response to war, militarization, occupation in Iraq, etc.

- *Too Young to Do Time*: A response to the thousands of youth under 17 who are incarcerated with life-in-prison sentences for nonviolent crimes and youths scheduled to be executed.

These campaigns will have three areas of action:

- Coalition building and alliance: rallies, marches, demonstrations
- Education and training: issue briefings, symposiums, speaker series

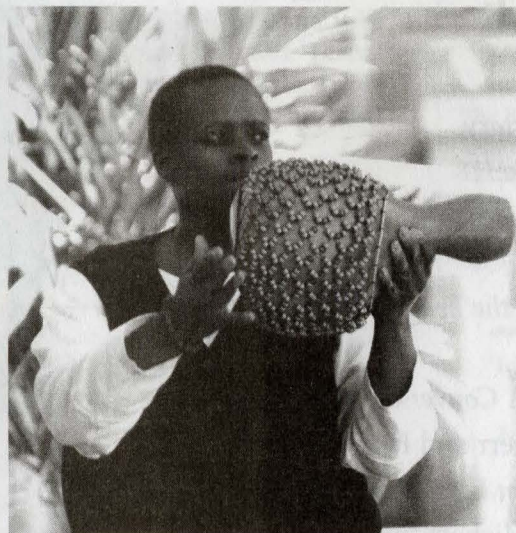
- Organizational networking/taking action nationally and internationally

Implementing these new program focus areas requires restructuring and revitalizing our staffing capacity. We are doing the hard work of letting go and taking in what is presented to us.

Finally, BPF will celebrate its thirtieth anniversary this October with a special event featuring Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi and another renowned dharma visionary (to be announced). The theme: how can Buddhists respond to and act in today's world? Please visit www.bpf.org for more details as they are announced.

My door is open. Please ask any questions or share any of your concerns by e-mailing me at earthlyn@bpf.org. May you be well with impermanence. ❖

In warm peace, Zenju Earthlyn Manuel



Letters

We welcome your responses to what we print. E-mail letters to <turningwheel@bpf.org>. Letters may be edited.

I am one of the prisoners in the United States who is lucky enough to receive *Turning Wheel*. I have long been an activist trying to help others. But activism in such an oppressive environment, where authorities often react in anger and violence, sometimes brings harsh consequences. I have a few scars to prove it. Of course, it's not as severe as what the brave monks and nuns faced recently in Burma, but for a setting in the United States, it could be surprising.

On October 6, I was being escorted back to my cell from my hour of recreation. I was handcuffed behind my back—as is policy—by an officer. Another officer walked up and aggressively grabbed my arm and tried to push me around. A minute or two later, other officers ran up and grabbed me too. I was escorted not to my cell but to a Level 3 cell. All of my personal property was taken. This includes all books, including a Bible, all magazines, all educational materials, even writing supplies.

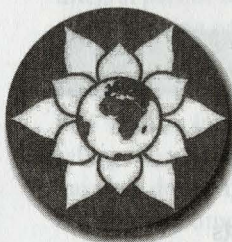
As I sat in my empty, filthy, stinky, uncomfortable Level 3 cell, growing more despondent as my anger faded, I began to realize that I needed something. The mail was passed out. An officer slid under my door the latest *Turning Wheel*, the one on nourishment. I began reading the first article from Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, and jumping from the page was the line, "There's no need to cling to external pleasurable things for a joyful life." All of my things are taken and in my hands drops *Turning Wheel* and wisdom on that very issue. Then I read "Phrases for Nourishing Equanimity" by Joan Halifax Roshi. My starving spirit in crisis was nourished by *Turning Wheel*. So I sit in my empty cell, myself no longer empty. Thank you for the *Turning Wheels* and all your efforts to improve the world.

—Sonny Wilson, Texas

One of the most important issues in our world today is Israel–Palestine. Since so many of our most respected Buddhist teachers are Jewish, I think it is vital that they address this tragedy in articles, interviews, and panel discussions for the readers of *Turning Wheel*. Thank you.

—Faith J. Fippinger, Florida

Green Sangha Spiritually-Engaged Environmental Activism



Join Green Sangha as we bring spiritual practice and environmental work together to heal the planet

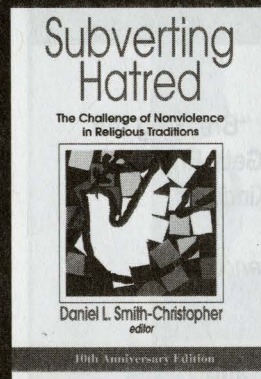
Fifth Principle of Green Sangha,
Being With What Is
Meet injustice without becoming lost in it. Over-identification with injustice leads to despair or rage. Meeting life in an intimate yet spacious way allows for a more creative and potent response.

Join one of the Bay Area Sanghas
in Marin, Sebastopol, San Francisco, and Berkeley
Or start a Green Sangha in your community

www.greensangha.org • 510-532-6574 • info@greensangha.org

Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions

Tenth Anniversary Edition
Edited by
Daniel Smith-Christopher



FOR ORDER INFO
AND EXAM COPIES:
www.brc21.org

"...a plethora of religious perspectives in a series of creative, scholarly, and provocative essays."

(Professor Paul Waldau, Tufts University)

Is violence really an inevitable product of religious belief?

In this updated and expanded edition of *Subverting Hatred*—perfect for a wide range of college-level courses—scholarly representatives of nine world religions offer insights into the teachings of nonviolence within their tradition, how practice has often fallen short of the ideals, and how they can overcome the contagion of hatred through a return to traditional teachings on nonviolence.

Developed by the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century
Published by Orbis Books (September 2007)
ISBN 978-1-57075-747-1 paperback \$20

Mountain Record

The Zen Practitioner's Journal



Earth Mind
Fall 2007

MENTION TURNING WHEEL
AND RECEIVE 10% DISCOUNT
ON A ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION

Calendar of Socially Engaged Buddhist Events



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

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

April

April 26–May 5

The Living Buddhism Conference: “Breaking the Mould: Buddhism Comes West & Gets Engaged”

Narborough, Leicestershire, United Kingdom

Contact: gina@amidatrust.com

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

April 26

Conference for Buddhists of Color and Ex-Untouchable Converts in India

San Francisco, CA

Contact: info@sfbuddhistcenter.org

www.sfbuddhistcenter.org

April 29–May 2

Gathering of Activists and Organizers of Color

Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

Menla Mountain Center, Phoenicia, NY

www.contemplativemind.org

May

May 4–17

Retreat and Conference on Engaged Buddhism

organized by the Brothers and Sisters of Plum Village

Hanoi, Vietnam

Contact: tnhvntrip@earthlink.net

May 17–18

Spirituality and Social Enterprise Conference

with Roshi Bernie Glassman and others

House of One People, Montague, MA

Contact: laura@zenpeacemakers.org

413-367-2080 ext. 4

www.zenpeacemakers.org

June

June 1–5

10th International Conference on Buddhist Women (Sakyadhita): “Buddhism in Transition: Tradition, Changes, and Challenges”

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

www.sakyadhita.org

June 6–8

Practicing Peace in Times of War

with Pema Chödrön and Richard Reoch

New York City, NY

Contact: practicingpeace@yahoo.com

August

Aug. 6–10

Engaged Buddhism Retreat: History and Foundational Practices of the Five Buddha Families

with Sensei Fleet Maull and Roshi Joan Halifax

Upaya Zen Center, Santa Fe, NM

www.upaya.org/programs

Aug. 15–18

Inner City Ministry: The Path through Homelessness and Poverty

Upaya Zen Center, Santa Fe, NM

www.upaya.org/programs

Aug 29–Sept 4

Sesshin: Dogen’s Koans for Social Action

with Roshi Joan Halifax and Sensei Kazuaki Tanahashi

Upaya Zen Center, Santa Fe, NM

www.upaya.org/programs

October

October date TBD

Buddhist Peace Fellowship

30th Anniversary Event

with Bhikkhu Bodhi and other guests

San Francisco Bay Area, location TBD

www.bpf.org

BPF Staff News



Charis Khoury, BPF's membership coordinator

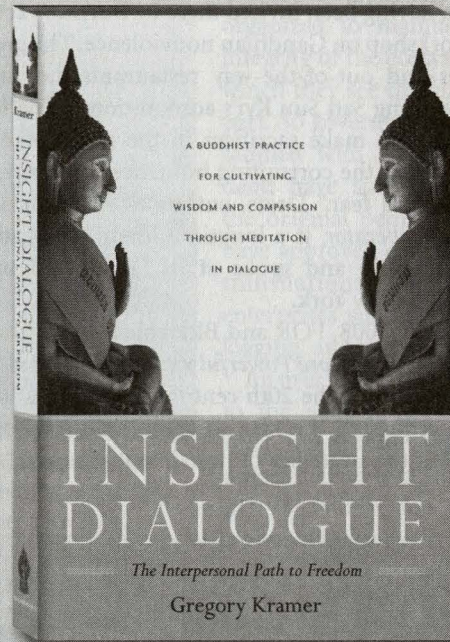
Charis Khoury was the first person I saw when I walked in the front door of BPF on my first day of work in 2004. Since then, Charis has remained a constant and steady friend and co-worker to all of us who have been through those doors. Helping the operations director with the arduous task of keeping up with BPF's over 4,000 members nationwide, Charis has made sure that members' phone calls are returned. She is the person behind the welcome packet all new BPF members receive. She thanks you when you send a donation and makes sure you receive that back issue of *Turning Wheel* you requested. It's not an easy task keeping up with a membership this large, but through the years Charis has done this so flawlessly and with grace and integrity.

Through BPF's changes, challenges, and triumphs over the past five years, Charis has been a consistent, reliable, and integral part of the BPF sangha. Charis came to BPF in 2003 after spending some time abroad in New Zealand and Spain and after completing a visual art degree at Brown University. Now the time has come for her to move on. Charis leaves BPF with an interest in pursuing a degree in integral counseling. We wish her the best of luck in all her endeavors and have no doubt that wherever she goes she will offer great insight and compassion. Charis, we truly honor all the years you have shared with us at BPF. You will be greatly missed.

—Jenesha de Rivera

“This book will be of tremendous benefit to all those seeking freedom in their daily lives.”

—JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN



INSIGHT DIALOGUE

The Interpersonal Path to Freedom

Gregory Kramer

Insight Dialogue is a practice that combines traditional meditation with interpersonal dialogue, allowing us to take the awareness gained in meditation into our human interactions. It's a particularly effective way of bringing mindfulness into daily life—and of breaking down the false boundary between formal practice and everything else we do.

\$18.95 • Paperback



Shambhala Publications

Receive a 20% discount online
at www.shambhala.com

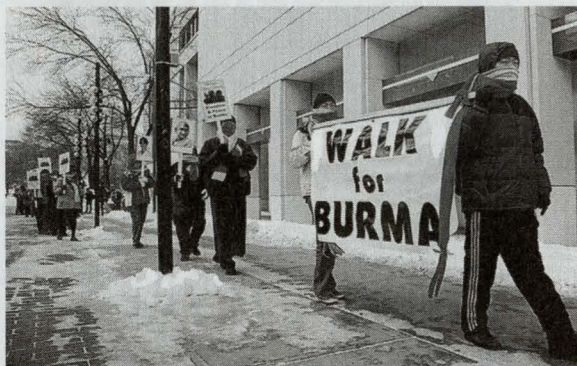
Indra's Net

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

FOR and BPF Support Burma's Revolution of the Spirit

Just before the September 2007 marches in Burma, Richard Deats of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) visited Rangoon, having been invited there by Burmese activists to offer a workshop on Gandhian nonviolence. The group met in homes and out-of-the-way restaurants, hoping to be faithful to Aung San Suu Kyi's admonition "to persevere in the struggle, to make sacrifices in the name of enduring truths, to resist the corrupting influences of desire, ill will, ignorance, and fear." Deats, author of *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Liberator*, is a longtime friend of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and spoke at BPF's 2006 Membership Gathering in New York.

In January 2008, FOR and BPF collaborated to send 40 copies of *A Force More Powerful* (about successful nonviolent movements of the 20th century) to activists in Burma who had requested the film so they could educate themselves about the strategies of nonviolent struggles.



BPF Madison marches for Burma (photo: Kathy Derene)

BPF Chapters Respond to Human Rights

In the weeks following the September marches in Burma, BPF members organized vigils in nearly 70 cities and towns, including New York City, San Francisco, Chicago, Honolulu, Washington, Tallahassee, Portland (OR), Atlanta, Madison, Tampa Bay, Bellingham (WA), and Milan (Italy). A special section on BPF's website informed visitors of action alerts and news updates from Burma.

Since October, BPF members have organized many events to help educate community members about the plight of the Burmese people. The Seattle chapter hosted an event featuring Larry Dohrs, co-chairman of the board of directors of the U.S. Campaign for Burma. The Pioneer Valley (Massachusetts) BPF group sponsored a talk by Michele McDonald, a vipassana teacher with strong ties to the Burmese monastic community. (See Michele's article on page 32.)

Also in the fall of 2007, BPF chapters responded to a call for action on torture. In October, members in Seattle and Oklahoma hosted a showing of *The Ghosts of Abu Ghraib*, a documentary on U.S.-sponsored torture, as part of a campaign organized by the National Religious Campaign against Torture (NRCAT) and endorsed by BPF. In November, the Madison (Wisconsin) chapter sponsored a presentation by Brent Mickum, an attorney for several detainees being held at the Guantanamo detention camp.

FOR MORE INFO: Visit BPF's Burma website, www.bpf.org/html/whats_now/2007/burma_main.html

Voices We Need to Hear: Seeking Peace for Palestine and Israel

Sabeel (Arabic for "the way") is a Jerusalem-based, ecumenical, grassroots movement initiated by Palestinian Christians. Inspired by liberation theology, it promotes nonviolence, human rights, and international law, based on the Gospel teachings on peace and justice (www.sabeel.org). Among Sabeel's advisers is Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize winner for his work against South African apartheid.

The U.S. chapter of Friends of Sabeel organized conferences in four U.S. cities last year to stimulate thoughtful action toward a just resolution of the Palestine-Israel conflict. BPF cosponsored the Berkeley conference in August 2007. Entitled "Breaking the Wall of Silence: Voices We Need to Hear," the conference presented realities that get obfuscated by the U.S. media.

Anna Baltzer, granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, delivered a powerful talk called "Life in Occupied Palestine." As a volunteer with International Women's Peace Service, Anna accompanies Palestinian civilians and documents human rights abuses. She described Jewish hilltop settlements unloading sewage onto Palestinian villages; checkpoints where Palestinians wait for hours or days; Israeli activists facing Israeli Army bulldozers with Palestinians; and the "Security" Wall, used to annex Palestinian land deep into the West Bank. Anna finds reason for hope in the forbearance of the Palestinian people and in the commitment of their Israeli allies.

In her workshop on divestment, Anna explained that Palestinians, when asked what they most wanted from the international community, called for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it complies with international law.

Jean Zaru, a Palestinian Quaker from Ramallah, described peace as "a state of respect, cooperation, and well-being." She spoke about the need to love your enemy—but also to refuse to cooperate with structures of oppression. Her strong faith and loving presence moved everyone.

A panel on "Nonviolent Resistance to the Occupation" featured Chris Brown, an African American who spent many months walking Palestinian children to school to protect them from settlers; Huwaida Arraf, of the

International Solidarity Movement, which trains activists to face the Israeli military unarmed; Mubarak Awad, who led Palestinian nonviolent resistance during the first intifada; and the parents of Rachel Corrie, an activist crushed by an Israeli bulldozer while trying to protect a Palestinian home from demolition.

Students for Justice in Palestine (U.C. Berkeley) presented the unsettling *Street Theater: Palestinians at the Checkpoint*.

Other speakers included Mitchell Plitnick (Jewish Voice for Peace), who showed how, through the years, Israel has sought territorial expansion, not peace, despite its claims; and Don Wagner from Chicago's North Park University, who spoke about "Challenging Christian Zionism and the Theology of Empire" (see www.christianzionism.org).

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict compels us to take into our hearts people who suffer and those responsible for that suffering. We are grateful to BPF for sponsoring the conference. Seeing what is so, however painful it might be, is a necessary step toward truly compassionate action.

—*Delia McGrath and Annette Herskovits are BPF members who live in the San Francisco Bay Area.*

FOR MORE INFO: "Friends of Sabeel North America" (see www.fosna.org) is organizing three conferences in the U.S. in 2008—in Pasadena, CA, Philadelphia, and San Diego—as well as witness trips to Palestine and Israel.

UN Declaration for Indigenous Peoples

On September 13, 2007, the member nations of the United Nations voted overwhelmingly in favor to adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This historic event changes the power relations between governments and the 300 million people living under their occupation in 70 nations around the world.

For 25 years, the coalition of indigenous activists faced entrenched opposition from powerful governments who used every possible tactic to undermine their efforts. These nations made it clear that they were unwilling to acknowledge the political and human rights of the original inhabitants whose historic claims to the land and self-determination have been mostly ignored since conquest. In the final vote in the General Assembly, the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand were the only nations that

refused to support the declaration. Nevertheless, the New Zealand Human Rights Council and the new Australian government have each vowed to respect the declaration.

Indigenous peoples usually live where raw materials such as petroleum, timber, water, and minerals lie like a beacon to foreign corporations looking for lucrative opportunities. Land-based societies are organized to maintain the integrity of the ecosystem of which they see themselves a part. So governments, many saddled with huge foreign debt, have simply ignored the original people as they have approved contracts for transnational extractive enterprises such as mining, logging, and agribusiness.

All over the planet, damage to the natural world from such operations has been devastating to local communities. Contamination from a Chevron-Texaco operation in Ecuador has caused severe birth defects. Toxic waste from mining throughout the Americas has made it hard to grow food and causes serious health problems. The Saami in Norway are facing the destruction of the forests that support their reindeer herds. Politically unable to defend themselves against foreign resource development, First Peoples have been forced to exist in a manner that does not allow them to complete their duties to caretake the land entrusted to them by the Creator.

But this is a new day. The declaration encourages states to abide by existing international law, including the excellent protections stipulated in the ILO 169, a statute of the U.N. International Labour Organization, which requires that for any resource development to proceed within the territory of native people, the interested party must first obtain "free, prior, and informed consent" of the communities to be impacted. This notion strikes fear in the heart of executives of transnationals since revealing the truth of the environmental, social, and spiritual impacts of resource extraction would mean the end to their plans.

Beyond rectifying the abuses of imposed resource exploitation, the declaration brings First Peoples out of the political oblivion where they had been relegated by occupying powers that have historically failed to abide by the treaties originally made between sovereign nations to keep the peace. The fact that the nations of the world have agreed to abide by these principles of respect is cause for celebration. ♦

—*BPF member Tamara Brennan lives in Chiapas, Mexico, and is the director of the Sexto Sol Center for Community Action, a nonprofit organization.*



Four members of convoy formed by 1,500 Israelis to bring necessities to Gazans after Israel imposed a total blockade. All were stopped at the 27-foot high wall, but supplies were allowed in after a few days.

(photo: Mona Halaby)

SPiRiT ROCK MEDITATION CENTER

Take refuge in the silence

Year-round schedule of Residential Retreats

Vipassana instruction

Diversity Program

Daylong Retreats

Family Program

Teen Program

Teachers include:

Jack Kornfield

Sylvia Boorstein

Ajahn Amaro

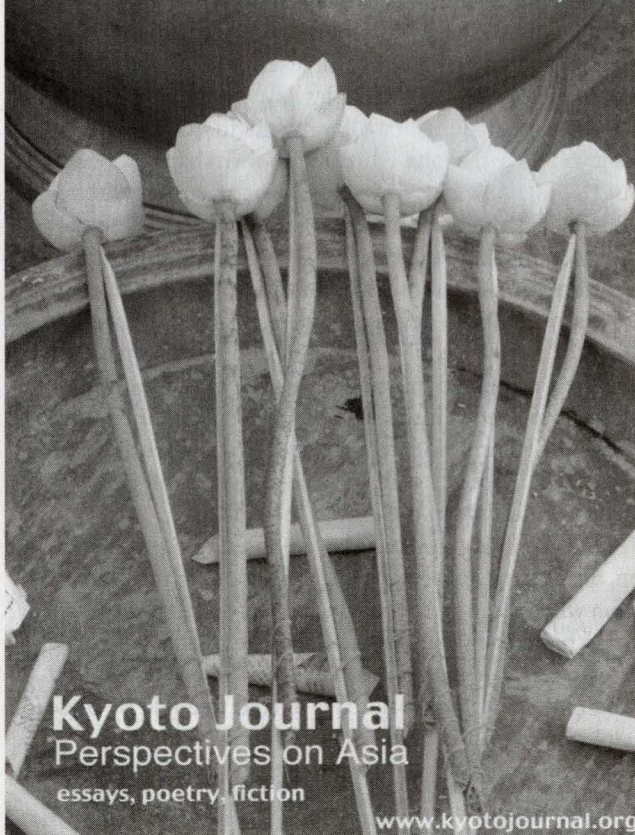
and others



PO Box 169 • Woodacre • CA 94973

www.spiritrock.org

"informative, creative and lyrical"



Kyoto Journal
Perspectives on Asia
essays, poetry, fiction

www.kyotojournal.org

History

Kenmyo Takagi: A Socialist Priest

by Diane Ames

During the Meiji era (1868–1912), the Japanese government adopted the slogan, "Eradicate the influence of Buddhism." Shinto was made the state religion, Buddhist temples were deprived of traditional funding, and anti-Buddhist propaganda inspired violence against Buddhist shrines. To counter the charge that its hereditary priesthood was inbred and ossified, the Shinshu Otani school (a branch of the Jodo Shinshu, a Japanese Pure Land school) offered free education to qualified boys from lay families who would agree to become priests. Kenmyo Takagi (1864–1914) was one of these boys.

Takagi was ordained in 1897. Because he was not a hereditary priest and so had not inherited a temple, he was sent to a temple that served poor *burakumin*, the Japanese equivalent of untouchables—no other priest wanted to serve there. Shocked by these people's plight, Takagi became an outspoken advocate of burakumin liberation. When burakumin children reported constant abuse in school, he started a school for them in the temple and raised money to buy them school supplies.

Takagi was also outraged by Meiji-era prostitution, which amounted to a form of slavery. Most prostitutes at the time were sold to brothels by their fathers, often at puberty, and were virtually the chattel property of the brothel owner. Takagi organized opposition to the opening of a new house of prostitution in the area and worked to bring attention to the issue.

Takagi's political activities annoyed the authorities and frightened his clerical superiors. Seeing how the conscription of male breadwinners and wartime shortages reduced his congregation to starvation, Takagi became a pacifist in response to the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05). Also, deciding that the Jodo Shinshu's teaching of the spiritual equality of all human beings must imply more material and political equality as well, Takagi declared himself a socialist. He organized a socialist group made up largely of local burakumin and Christian leftists.

In May 1910, suspicions arose when a small group of anarchists were found to be plotting an attack against the Meiji emperor. An antileftist witch hunt ensued. Takagi was arrested, apparently because his political writings attracted too much police attention. Twenty-six people—including at least 20 who were purportedly innocent—were convicted of high treason. Fourteen were eventually executed. The rest, including Takagi, were ultimately sentenced to life in prison. The Shinshu Otani school, by now terrified, stripped Takagi of his status as a priest. In prison he was, within days of beginning his sentence, driven to suicide by torture.

In 1996, the Shinshu Otani school admitted that its treatment of Kenmyo Takagi had been unjust and restored him to priesthood posthumously. Today his achievements as a pioneer of burakumin liberation are recognized, and his best-known treatise, *My Socialism*, is still widely read. ❖

The Smallest Monastery

by Stephanie Kaza

After a weekend in San Diego for a professional conference, I was on my way home, settled in for the long plane ride to Vermont. I had picked up the usual assortment of new books from the conference's gymnasium-sized book exhibit. One book in particular had caught my attention: *Angelic Mistakes: The Art of Thomas Merton*. I had taken a class on Merton's spiritual thought in seminary but I didn't recall any comments about his art. Yet here was a beautiful portfolio of 34 drawings with commentaries, placing Merton's art in the context of his very powerful and well-known writing.

I opened the book and quickly found myself immersed in Merton's life. The drawings were very much a private world for Merton, a measure of his solitude and personal explorations. He gave his "experiments," as he called them, to friends and visitors who he felt might appreciate what he was trying to do. A few were published in small literary magazines, and very late in his life, he did put together a small public exhibit. Art historian Roger Lipsey, curator of the book, describes Merton's art as falling into three periods—his college years, his early monastic period, and the decade of the '60s. This last period, by far the most productive time, reflects Merton's strong interest in Zen, which appears in the abstract style and openness of his images.

As I turned the pages of Merton's story, I felt as if I were entering his silent world of reflection and inner exploration. The book included the important history of Merton's letters to D. T. Suzuki and his deeply rewarding visit with Suzuki in 1964. In a photo of Merton's small hermitage at Gethsemani was a wall calendar with images and calligraphy by 18th-century Zen priest and artist Sengai, one of several such gifts from Suzuki over the years. Suzuki also gave him a small scroll of his own writing with the characters *wa, kei, sei, jaku*—the four values of harmony, reverence, purity, and tranquility associated with the practice of tea. These likely served as objects of contemplation, much like scrolls placed in the *tokonoma* of the tea space. Merton's cabin would have been much the same size as a small Japanese teahouse.

As I opened to the work itself, my concentration deepened. I gave myself fully to the invitations from Merton's mind, his use of brush and ink to enter places untouched by words. I thought to myself, *I am in a place of practice*. Here in the narrow space of my airline monastery, I am sitting with Merton and following his breath on paper. The smallest sardine space of the plane had become a hermitage of Big Mind.

Merton described his abstractions as "simple signs and ciphers of energy," "summonses to awareness, but not to 'awareness of.'" He felt they represented expressions of "unique and unconscious harmonies appropriate to their


own moment though not confined to it." Merton viewed his work as fleeting, inconsequential, without category. He wrote, "It is better if they remain unidentified vestiges, signatures of someone who is not around." The 34 images were each accompanied by a selection of Merton's writing, another entry to contemplation. Perhaps I was tasting a form of *lexio divina*, a close reading of a text to see what arises. Page after page, I found notes on "motionless movement," "the inner dynamism of life," "the sense of the Holy." Two years before his death, Merton wrote, "Who will you find that has enough faith and self-respect to attend to this mystery and to begin by accepting himself as *unknown*?"

Following his brushwork experiments, Merton tried some simple printmaking. His supplies were minimal. He had no press, no copper plates, no wood blocks, stencils, rollers—none of the usual materials. Friends sent paper and ink, but often Merton worked with whatever was at hand—envelopes with their topography of stamps and glycerine windows, grass stems, pieces of wood. He used scraps of paper for the original ink pattern and then transferred the image to finer papers using only his hand as a press. These were homemade monoprints based in a Zen sense of spontaneity, each one fresh and unplanned.

Merton's mind was his own smallest monastery, but it was vast too, something I was tasting in the concentrated attention of my airline cell. Absorbed by the gift of Merton's work, I stayed with the book through the very last page, completing it just as the plane touched down. There was nothing to say; I had entered the monastic mind. Merton's words expressed what I was thinking: "There is a silent self within us whose presence is disturbing precisely because it is so silent: it *can't* be spoken. It has to remain silent. To articulate it, to verbalize it, is to tamper with it, and in some ways to destroy it." ❖


Awake or asleep in a grass hut,
what I pray for is to bring others across
before myself.

—Zen Master Dogen



Future Forests Retreat Cottage, LLC
Kailua - Kona, Hawaii
1 Bedroom, 1 Bath, Sleeps 2, kitchenette
www.forestrnursery.com/cottage.html
808-325-2377 email:jillw@turquoise.net

\$95 night
25% deposit to book



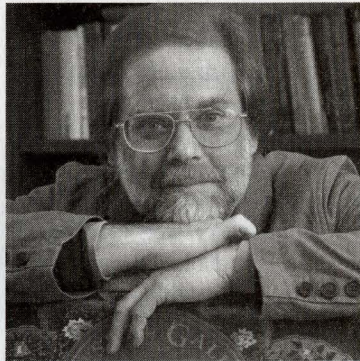
Serene retreat cottage in a native Hawaiian forest, just 4 miles from downtown Kona. Furnished room has a queen bed, full bath, screened kitchenette.

There is a meditation hall on the property for use at any time.

Cool Hawaiian cloud forest is a refreshing retreat from the heat of the beach and town. Wake up with the song birds in a gorgeous tropical setting. 5 miles from airport and beaches.

Buddhist Resistance Against Oppression?

by David Loy



“The vanguard role of monks in the Burmese protests underscores a curious turn for a creed often associated with quiet contemplation. Unlike Islam and Christianity, Buddhism offers no clear scriptural mandate for revolt against unjust rulers.”

—The *Wall Street Journal*,
7 November 2007

Is the vanguard role of Buddhist monks in Burma really such a curious turn for Buddhism? Or is that claim another version of the old stereotype about an “unworldly religion”?

From a royal family himself, Shakyamuni Buddha was comfortable among kings and princes, and often advised them. But he was not a biblical prophet, fulminating against unjust rulers and warning them about God’s wrath. Instead, the Pali Canon offers stories about the Buddha’s role as peacemaker. In this capacity, he did not hesitate to put himself in harm’s way in order to broker a nonviolent settlement.

In one incident, the peoples of Kapilavatthu and Koliya were about to battle over the Rohini River, which meandered between their lands. Because of a drought, there was not enough water in the river to irrigate the fields on both sides. Instead of working out a way to share what was available, the two clans argued, and eventually their kings took up arms to settle the issue.

As the two armies approached the river, the Buddha appeared and spoke to both sides: “Is this water more valuable than all the blood about to be sacrificed because of it?”

His words brought both sides to their senses, but he was not always so successful. According to another sutta, Prince Vidudabha hated the Shakyas (the Buddha’s clan) due to an old insult. Upon ascending the throne, he vowed to destroy them. The Buddha appeared before him and his army, sitting under a tree with few branches. Vidudabha commented that the tree did not provide enough shade to ward off the burning heat. The Buddha replied, “Taking a rest in the shade of one’s many relations is what is cool and refreshing.”

Vidudabha evidently got the Buddha’s point—that war leads to the death of many relatives and friends—and returned home without attacking the Shakyas. Yet

his desire for revenge led to a second and third campaign, both attempts dropped when the Buddha reappeared. On the fourth attempt, the Buddha realized that the Shakyas could not avoid the consequences of their karma. Vidudabha massacred almost all of them, and the Buddha’s clan was destroyed.

Whether or not these incidents actually occurred, they reflect Buddhist emphasis on the peaceful resolution of conflict. But they don’t address the problem of resistance to one’s own oppressive government. However, another sutta considers what can happen when rulers do not fulfill their economic responsibilities.

In the Lion’s Roar Sutta, the Buddha tells the tale of a monarch who followed his sage’s advice: “Let no crime prevail in your kingdom, and to those who are in need, give property.” Later, however, he began to rule according to his own ideas and did not give property to the needy. As a result, poverty became widespread. One man stole something and was arrested; when the king asked him why, the man said he had nothing to live on. So the king gave him some property, saying that it would be enough to carry on a business and support his family.

The same thing happened to another man. When people heard about this they too decided to steal so they would be treated similarly. The king realized that if he continued to give property to such men, theft would increase. So he got tough on the next thief: “I had better make an end of him, finish him off once and for all, and cut his head off.” And he did.

At this point, one expects a moral about the importance of deterring crime. But the story turns in exactly the opposite direction. Hearing about this, people thought, “Now let us get sharp swords made for us, and then we can take from anybody what is not given, we will make an end of them, finish them off once and for all and cut off their heads.” They launched murderous assaults on towns and cities, killing their victims by cutting off their heads. Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, poverty became rife; from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased; from the increase of theft, the use of weapons increased; from the increased use of weapons, the taking of life increased (trans. Maurice Walshe).

In modern terms, the problem begins when the state neglects its responsibility to maintain a minimum of what we today call distributive justice. From a Buddhist perspective, social breakdown cannot be separated from broader questions about the benevolence of the social

order. The Buddhist solution to poverty-induced crime is not to punish severely but to avoid the problem in the first place, by enabling people to provide for their basic needs.

This story seems quite relevant to the present situation in Burma, with its wealthy military junta oppressing a poverty-stricken people. Even so, the sutta does not offer a solution to oppressive government. It merely describes the social breakdown that happens when rulers do not rule as they should.

The Buddha lived in a time of rapid social transition. More powerful and centralized monarchies were crushing smaller “republics” such as the Shakya clan. This period of warring kingdoms continued until the Mauryan Empire (322–185 B.C.E.) extended its rule over almost all of India. Its third emperor, Ashoka, was repulsed by the bloodshed of his war against the Kalingas and became the model of a righteous king, promoting peace and harmony for more than 40 years. Ashoka was also the model for a new kind of relationship between Buddhism and the state. Instead of traditional claims about descent from a divine source, he sought to legitimize his rule by wise and compassionate policies, which won the support of the Buddhist sangha. In effect, this replaced the divine right of kings with the law of karma: what’s important is not who you are (the caste you are born into) but what you do—a big step in the direction of egalitarianism and even democracy.

Ironically, however, karma has more often been used to rationalize caste and class, economic oppression, and other forms of discrimination. Taken literally, karma can justify the authority of political elites, who therefore must deserve their wealth and power, and the subordination of those who have neither. It provides the perfect theodicy: if there is an infallible cause-and-effect relationship between one’s actions and one’s fate, there is no need to work toward social justice because it’s already built into the moral fabric of the universe. No wonder that karma is such an important and controversial issue for socially engaged Buddhists today.

Does all this mean that Buddhism “offers no clear scriptural mandate for revolt against unjust rulers”? It’s the wrong question. Historically, many Buddhist sanghas have been quite cozy with authoritarian ruling classes. To survive, successful religious institutions have always needed to reach an accommodation with the political order, and until recently democracy was not an alternative. Today, democracy is an alternative, and literal interpretations of karma have become more questionable. There is no “clear scriptural mandate” not to resist unjust rulers. The problem is simply that traditional Buddhist texts offer no clear direction in how to do it.

Nevertheless, Buddhist emphasis on impermanence and nonsubstantiality implies that history need not be destiny. Impermanence and insubstantiality mean that no problem is intractable since it is part of larger processes that are constantly evolving. Shakyamuni Buddha’s own flexibility and Buddhism’s lack of dependence upon any fixed ideology imply a pragmatic approach to such challenges. Nonattachment encourages a receptivity open to imaginative solutions that leap outside the ruts our minds usually circle in—including our tendencies to respond to violence with more violence.

The essential issue is not merely wresting power from those who misuse it but also challenging their delusions in ways that might prompt them to reevaluate what they think they know. The righteous anger that often incites resistance movements is understandable. Yet it’s still a form of hatred, and hatred is never a skillful response. In a letter to Martin Luther King Jr., Thich Nhat Hanh spoke of the monks who protested the Vietnam War:

The monks who burned themselves did not aim at the death of the oppressors, but only at a change in their policy. Their enemies are not man. They are intolerance, fanaticism, dictatorship, cupidity, hatred, and discrimination which lie within the heart of man.

The world is not a battleground where people who are good should destroy those who are evil but the place where we do stupid things to ourselves and to each other because we are ignorant of our true nature. Buddhism traces our *dukkha* (suffering) back to delusion, not to evil. Burma’s rulers have been so preoccupied with gaining and wielding power that they don’t realize what their lust for power has done to themselves. Sympathy for their plight must not deflect us from working to achieve justice for the Burmese people, yet bodhisattvas vow to help *everyone* awaken.

It would be disingenuous, however, to conclude on such an upbeat note. For half a century, nonviolent resistance by Tibetans has had little success against Chinese domination and colonization. The greed of China, Southeast Asia, and the West for Burma’s vast natural resources means that, although concerns have sometimes been expressed, these countries don’t care much what happens as long as a stable business environment prevails. We must put increasing public pressure on our own governments until they respond more forcefully. This support is essential for the success of monks and other people inside Burma. ♦

David Loy teaches at Xavier University and is a founding member of the Cincinnati BPF group. His latest book is *Money, Sex, War, Karma: Notes from a Buddhist Revolution* (Wisdom Publications).

Today, democracy is an alternative, and literal interpretations of karma have become more questionable.

The Way Becomes Clear: A Court-Martial in Iraq

by Chris Wilson

While volunteering with the GI Rights Hotline last March, I received a call from the wife of a young sergeant on his second tour of Iraq who was facing a court-martial for firing his rifle in his living quarters at a combat base. The only other person present, another U.S. soldier, was unhurt. The bullet, fired at close range, missed by five feet, indicating that the shot was meant to scare the other soldier rather than kill him. Nevertheless, the base commander ordered that the original charge of reckless endangerment be changed to assault with intent to cause death or great bodily harm, a charge tantamount to attempted murder. The army lawyer appointed to represent the young sergeant was recommending a plea bargain entailing a prison term. The wife wanted my opinion.

I had no idea that this phone call would ultimately result in a journey to Iraq at the end of summer 2007. It was a trip I dreaded, but that is where my Buddhist vows took me.

Unlike most hotline volunteers, I am an attorney. I asked the wife how she explained her husband's conduct. She replied that he had been in a bombing that killed another soldier in his first tour of Iraq. She suspected he had PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). Prior to that tour he had served 11 years with a perfect record. After his return, he suffered from nightmares, patrolled their bedroom in his sleep, began to abuse alcohol, and became withdrawn from her and their young son.

I offered to write a letter alerting the base commander of the possible involvement of PTSD, and asking that the charges be reduced. I volunteered to assist his assigned army defense counsel, but said that I would not be able to go to Iraq for the court-martial, if it came to that.

I wrote a letter to the sergeant and his military counsel requesting a reduction of the charges in view of suspected PTSD. They responded by withdrawing the original plea offer and increasing the jail time for any negotiated plea. The army was playing hardball in this case.

Worried that my actions had made my client's situation worse, I began to help prepare for a court-martial in which PTSD would be raised in an insanity defense. When the army co-counsel expressed concerns about her ability to get the expert testimony needed to make this defense, I assumed the role of lead counsel and prepared to go to Iraq, despite the fact that the court-martial would be held at Camp Anaconda, a base nicknamed "Mortaritaville" for its frequent shelling by insurgents.

Things only got worse. I located two experts in PTSD, but they were unwilling to travel to Iraq. They would examine the sergeant and testify at his unit's permanent base in Germany if the court-martial could be moved there. I made such a motion, since otherwise his wife and experts could

only testify at a court-martial in Iraq via an audio or video hookup. The motion was denied.

At the same time, the army prosecutor filed a motion asking the court-martial judge to prohibit us from raising PTSD as a defense, or from even using the term *PTSD* during the trial. I also received a letter asking me to sign away any claim by me or my heirs for my death or injuries during my stay in Iraq. I filed objections to these actions as well.

We were given only an hour of video conferencing for my experts to interview the sergeant. They prepared reports saying they had high confidence he was suffering from PTSD, but they could not say that he was clearly and convincingly not guilty by reason of insanity. In addition, the prosecution failed to produce the alleged victim in the incident for our interview. I had no choice but to leave for Iraq in this unfavorable position.

After two days in a tent in Kuwait waiting for a military flight into Iraq, I arrived to find that the prosecution had finally dropped the deadly assault charge. Someone experienced in the ways of military justice remarked, "They dismissed the charge once they knew you were really coming."

The sergeant still faced a number of charges, including reckless endangerment. He was willing to plead guilty to these charges if he could avoid a dishonorable discharge. A new prosecutor offered a cap of six months' jail time but would make no promise as to the discharge. (A dishonorable discharge makes the veteran ineligible for the medical treatment or pension and potentially results in a life sentence of unemployment.)

Fortunately, military law requires the judge to impose his or her own sentence, without regard to the negotiated plea. We were hoping that the judge's sentence would require no jail time and retain the sergeant in the service. Two surprising developments gave us the outcome we hoped for. First, the sergeant admitted to being so depressed at the time of the incident that he fired his weapon in order to provoke the other soldier to kill him. His statement, made in open court, was very moving. Second, the victim unexpectedly testified that he thought the defendant hadn't meant to harm him and should be given another chance. On that basis, the judge gave the sergeant a sentence with no jail time, demoted him, but allowed him to remain in the service so that he could receive treatment for his PTSD.

Throughout this case, I was guided by the admonition of the Chinese Zen master Linji: "Just have faith in the one functioning at this moment, and the Way becomes clear." After years of Buddhist practice, this admonition has passed from being mere encouraging words to becoming a basis of trust upon which I rely. These events taught me once again that this trust must include a willingness to be scared while waiting for the Way to unfold. ❖

Chris Wilson is a BPF Board member. A former attorney and software executive, he has been studying koan Zen in the Sanbo Kyodan lineage for over 40 years.

The Five Precepts

(Manzanita Village version; Spanish translation by Bruni Davila)

One

Aware of the violence in the world
and of the power of nonviolent resistance
I stand in the presence of the ancestors, the earth,
and future generations
and vow to cultivate
the compassion that seeks to protect each living being.

Two

Aware of the poverty and greed in the world
and of the intrinsic abundance of the earth,
I stand in the presence of the ancestors, the earth,
and future generations
and vow to cultivate the simplicity,
gratitude, and generosity that have no limits.

Three

Aware of the abuse and lovelessness in the world
and of the healing that is made possible when we
open to love
I stand in the presence of the ancestors, the earth,
and future generations
and vow to cultivate respect
for the beauty and erotic power of our bodies.

Four

Aware of the falsehood and deception in the world
and of the power of living and speaking the truth
I stand in the presence of the ancestors, the earth,
and future generations
and vow to cultivate the ability to listen;
and clarity and integrity in all I communicate
by my words and actions.

Five

Aware of the contamination and desecration of the world
and of my responsibility for life as it manifests
through me
I stand in the presence of the ancestors, the earth,
and future generations
and vow to cultivate discernment and care
in what I take into my body and mind.

Uno

Consciente de la violencia en el mundo,
y del poder que hay en la resistencia pacífica
me paro ante la presencia de los ancestros, la Tierra,
y futuras generaciones,
y me comprometo a cultivar la compasión
que busca proteger a cada ser viviente.

Dos

Consciente de la pobreza y la avaricia en el mundo,
y de la abundancia intrínseca de la tierra,
me paro ante la presencia de los ancestros, la Tierra,
y futuras generaciones,
y me comprometo a cultivar la simplicidad,
gratitud y generosidad que no tiene límites.

Tres

Consciente del abuso y el desamor en el mundo,
y de la curación que se hace posible cuando nos
abrimos al amor
me paro ante la presencia de los ancestros, la Tierra,
y generaciones futuras
y me comprometo a cultivar el respeto
por la belleza y el poder erótico de nuestros cuerpos.

Cuatro

Consciente de la falsedad y decepción en el mundo,
y del poder que hay cuando se vive y se habla la verdad,
me paro ante la presencia de los ancestros, la Tierra,
y futuras generaciones,
y me comprometo a cultivar claridad
e integridad en todo lo comunico con mis palabras
y mis acciones.

Cinco

Consciente de la contaminación del mundo,
y de mi responsabilidad por la vida, así como se
manifiesta a través de mi
me paro ante la presencia de los ancestros, la Tierra,
y futuras generaciones,
y me comprometo a cultivar discernimiento
y cuidado en lo que introduzco en mi cuerpo y en
mi mente.

*For more information about Manzanita Village and the work of Caitriona Reed and Michele Benzamin-Miki
please visit www.manzanitavillage.org.*

A HISTORIC ENGAGED BUDDHIST EVENT



Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar (April 14, 1891 - December 6, 1956) an Indian scholar, a political leader of former untouchables and a Buddhist revivalist.

Saturday, April 26, 2008 10am-5pm

Conference for Buddhists of Color and ex-Untouchable Converts in India Bringing together prominent Buddhist, Dalit leaders of India with prominent Buddhists of Color from America and the U.K.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Lama Rangdrol, American Vajrayana Mahasiddha

Angel Kyodo Williams, Author, Zen Priest & Founder of The Urban Peace Project

Anchalee Kurutach, Recent Board Chair of The Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

PLUS HONORARY GUEST SPEAKERS FROM INDIA

Mangesh Dahiwali, Leading intellectual, Buddhist follower of Dr. Ambedkar and working for the revival of Buddhism in India

Karunadipa, Director of The Arya Tara Mahila Trust, dedicated to the uplift of Dalit women

- **Limited spaces available for people of color allies. Pre-register soon at www.sfbuddhistcenter.org (sliding scale \$15-\$50)** ●

CULTURAL CELEBRATION 7-10pm All welcome (\$5-\$10)

Dharma Songs, by **Karunadipa**, Indian Dharmaworker

Bollywood Dance Party! (with lessons)

Images From India, by **Padmadhara**, Asian British Documentary film maker.

Book launch for **BROKEN VOICES, ex-Untouchable Women Speakout**, by **Vimalasara**, African British Buddhist Author

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, San Francisco Buddhist Center 37 Bartlett St. San Francisco, CA

inward | outward

The practice of one heart listening to another.

Master of Divinity

Deepening the connection between inner wisdom and compassionate action fosters an interreligious approach to engaging our world.

www.naropa.edu/mdiv

Naropa
UNIVERSITY

Boulder, Colorado · 800-772-6951



Burma Background and History

It is not easy for a people conditioned by fear
under the iron rule of the principle that might is right
to free themselves
from the enervating miasma of fear.
Yet even under the most crushing state machinery,
courage rises up again and again,
for fear is not the natural state of civilized man.

— from *Freedom from Fear* by Aung San Suu Kyi



Burma Background and History

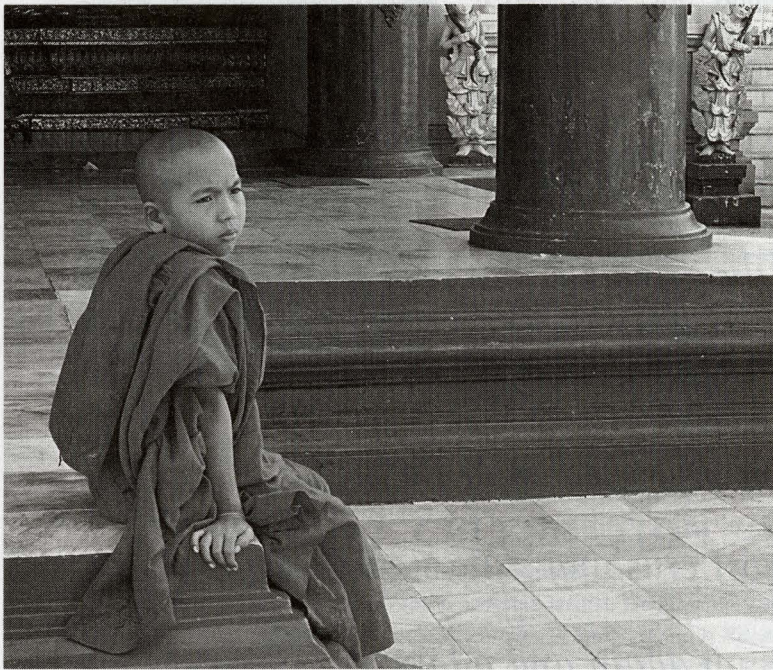


photo by Hozan Alan Senauke

Burma has endured 45 years of extreme hardship under a military regime straight out of Orwell's 1984. The generals' State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has expropriated Burma's wealth, and the nation has followed an inexorable path of deconstruction. Burma has gone from being self-sufficient to being one of the poorest countries in the world, despite an abundance of natural resources and a hard-working population of 50 million people. When it seemed things could get no worse, on August 15, 2007, the government cancelled fuel subsidies. Overnight, gasoline and oil prices doubled at the pump and the cost of natural gas, used extensively for fueling cars and for cooking, rose by 500 percent. Public protest began.

In a nation that is 90 percent Theravadin Buddhist, monks—revered as “sons of the Buddha”—represent the most stable institution of Burmese life. These monks are not cloistered but live in close relationship to the wider population. So it was not surprising that monks in the city of

Burma Timeline

1287

Mongols, under Kublai Khan, conquer Bagan.

1901

Standard Oil Company, the first American oil company in Burma, begins operation.

1945

Britain liberates Burma from Japanese occupation with help from the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), led by Aung San (father of Aung San Suu Kyi).

1948

Burma becomes independent with U Nu as prime minister.

1962

U Nu ousted in military coup led by Gen Ne Win, who abolishes the federal system and inaugurates “the Burmese Way to Socialism:” nationalizing the economy, forming a single-party state, and banning independent newspapers.

1057

King Anawrahta founds the first unified Burmese state at Bagan and adopts Theravada Buddhism.

1852

Britain annexes lower Burma following the second Anglo-Burmese war.

1942

Japan invades and occupies Burma.

1947

Aung San is assassinated by political opponents. U Nu, foreign minister in Ba Maw's government, which ruled Burma during the Japanese occupation, asked to head the AFPFL and the government.

1960

U Nu's party wins elections, but his promotion of Buddhism as the state religion and his tolerance of separatism angers the military.

1981

Ne Win relinquishes the presidency but continues as chairman of the ruling party.

Burma has gone from being self-sufficient to being one of the poorest countries in the world.

Pakokku raised a nonviolent protest, several hundred of them marching and chanting the Metta Sutta of Lovingkindness. On September 5, Burmese troops attacked the demonstrators and beat three monks. The All-Burma Monks Alliance demanded an apology from the SPDC. There was no apology, and the alliance urged Burma's monks to take a radical step—*patam nikkujjana kamma*, or “overturning the alms bowl”—refusing food and donations from the military regime and their families.

A “Saffron Revolution” spread across Burma, calling for decent living conditions and national reconciliation. In late September, Burmese monks demonstrated peacefully in more than 25 cities. When monks pushed through the barriers blocking off Aung San Suu Kyi's home in Rangoon, Suu, still under house arrest, came out on her balcony to receive their blessings. As they continued to march, the monks were joined by students and working people inspired by their example and eager to take part in the rising spirit.

The junta retaliated with arrests, beatings, and killings. This repression continues. Dozens of monasteries have been closed and locked. Thousands of monks have fled or were exiled from the larger cities. Political activists and innocent citizens have been taken off the streets and from their homes. There is no accurate reckoning of those killed, disappeared, or arrested, but the count is far beyond the generals' lies. Everyone agrees that nothing is “back to normal.” ❖

Hozan Alan Senauke is vice-abbot of Berkeley Zen Center in California, where he lives with his wife, Laurie, and their children, Silvie and Alexander. He serves as advisor with BPF and is director of the new Clear View Project, sponsoring Buddhist-based resources for relief and social change.

1987

Currency devaluation wipes out many people's savings and triggers anti-government riots.

1989

SLORC declares martial law, arrests thousands of people, re-names the country Myanmar. NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi is put under house arrest.

1991

Aung San Suu Kyi awarded Nobel Peace Prize for her commitment to peaceful change.

2001

Ruling council releases some 200 pro-democracy activists. Government says releases reflect progress in talks with Aung San Suu Kyi, who remains under house arrest.

2007

Wave of public dissent sparked by fuel price hikes. Dozens of activists are arrested. Buddhist monks hold a series of peaceful protests. Aung San Suu Kyi is allowed to leave her house to greet monks. After some delay, UN Security Council deplors military crackdown on peaceful protestors. Monks are absent, after thousands are reportedly rounded up.

1988

Thousands of people are killed in anti-government riots. The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) is formed.

1990

National League for Democracy (NLD) wins landslide victory in general election, but the result is ignored by the military.

1992-93

International political and economic pressures force SLORC to offer a pretense of motion towards democracy. With much fanfare, they announce meetings to form a new constitutional convention. A delegation of former Nobel Peace Prize laureates, including the Dalai Lama, and Desmond Tutu, request to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi in Rangoon. They get no further than the border.

2004

Constitutional convention begins, despite boycott by NLD.

U Gambira: Burma's Revolution of Conscience

by Alan Clements

This interview, which will appear in the forthcoming book Voice of Hope, was the result of a three-way communication between author Alan Clements, Dr. Ashin Nayaka (a Buddhist monk and visiting scholar at Columbia University in New York), and U Gambira, a leader of the All-Burma Monks Alliance that spearheaded the nationwide protests in Burma in September 2007.

U Gambira, 29 years old, became a fugitive following the September 26–27 crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Burma. On November 4, shortly after this interview took place, he was arrested by military police in upper Burma and was charged with treason. The regime's security forces also arrested a number of U Gambira's family members.



Alan Clements: Word has it that as many as 1,000 monks in Rangoon alone have been taken to Insein Prison. Fifty monasteries were raided. The security forces are cutting phone lines, seizing computers and mobile phones, and ransacking the grounds during their raids. I am also told that there is a nationwide manhunt for you and that you are a fugitive on the run, avoiding arrest by going from home to home, sometimes every few hours. Given the dire urgency of the situation, since my first question may be our last one if you are arrested, what do you want to tell the world?

Ashin Nayaka and U Gambira: People the world over have witnessed for themselves the disastrous and wicked system of the dictatorship imposed upon us. They have seen through media the brutality. The military regime has killed peaceful demonstrators. They have killed monks. They have emptied monasteries. They have forcibly disrobed monks. Beaten them, assaulted them—very badly. Even tortured them. Jailed them. Many others are missing. Others are running

and hiding. I am hiding. They want to butcher me. My situation is not good. I have slept outside for two nights now. I am not very well.

The dictatorship has committed crimes against humanity. This is a great tragedy for our people and for the Buddhadharma in our long history of monastic Buddhism. This wicked regime committed these atrocities in full view of the world. They are shameless, seeking only to systematically oppress us for decades to come.

What I wish to say is this: the spiritual authority of Burma resides in the Dhamma. The Dhamma in Burma is both protected and practiced primarily in the minds and hearts of the monks and nuns in my country. Of course, the laypeople too practice dhamma. But the symbol of hope in our society is the Sangha [the order of monastics].

At present the Sangha is the enemy of the regime. If this continues unaddressed, further bloody confrontation is unavoidable. Our spiritual obligation is to freedom, not to silence or submission. So we, the Sangha of Burma, will not stop until the goal is reached. To reach our goal we invite everyone in the world who cares about freedom to enter our struggle with us. Find a way to help us that suits you and then please take that action.

AC: There are 400,000 rank-and-file soldiers under the dictator in Burma. Most of these young men are devout Buddhists. Many of them have at some point in their childhoods ordained as novice monks and lived in monasteries studying the basic teachings of the Buddha. Yet they are being commanded by their superiors in the military to murder monks, to attack the Sangha, to shoot at the most sacred institution in their own country. This is like asking someone to put a bullet through their own conscience, a type of moral suicide. Why do these Buddhist soldiers follow orders to kill Buddhist monks?

AN and UG: We too are shocked. We never thought that our own soldiers would open fire on us. We trusted that the soldiers had some degree of *saddha* (faith) in the Sangha. And that *saddha* would prevent them from following any orders to harm us, or arrest us, or kill us, should they be ordered to do these wicked acts toward the Sangha.

We have learned that if the soldiers do not follow orders they will be arrested or killed. We have no doubt that the soldiers know that by assaulting the monks, they are assaulting the Triple Gem, the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. And to assault the Triple Gem is, according to Buddhist scriptures, the greatest crime one could make in one's life. It is likened to killing one's parents or killing one's own children. It is unthinkable.

According to our Buddhist beliefs, we believe in *kamma* and *vipaka* [the law of cause and effect]. We also believe in *lokiya* [different dimensions in the universe]. We believe that life is not confined to just this earth. And even here on earth there are many forms of life: animals, insects, birds, dogs. With *kamma* and *vipaka*, heinous actions on the part of the soldiers will lead them to the *apaya lokas* [lower worlds], where suffering is very intense.

But there were other soldiers who acted differently. We saw tears in some of their eyes.

We could also see they were tormented inside. If they were to lay down their guns there would be no place for them to go, no safe passage for them to flee the country or find safe haven inside the country.

We are certain that the majority of soldiers under the dictator are very sympathetic to our dhamma message of love, kindness, and compassion. After all, although they wear uniforms they are Buddhists at heart. And as Buddhists they know right from wrong. They too want freedom from tyranny. They too want democracy. It's the dictator Than Shwe and his senior generals who must be stopped. Once they are stopped we are confident the soldiers will come to our side.

AC: General Than Shwe and his leading generals claim to be devout Buddhists. They proudly visit monasteries, pay their respects to the Abbots, offer large donations and in turn, recite basic Buddhist prayers for offering these gifts. How do these generals justify in their own mind not only the murdering of monks but the murdering of them in the name of "harmlessness and basic human goodness"—the two most salient features of the Buddha's teachings?

AN and UG: It's very simple: they are talking Buddhist talk but not walking Buddha's walk. We see this level of hypocrisy and perversity almost everywhere in the world. It is the norm, not the exception. We see it among all walks of life, from ordinary citizens to political leaders, human beings who by and large do

not know themselves. They cannot distinguish what they think. They do not know what they feel. They cannot differentiate states of consciousness, mistaking one state for another state.

In English, I think you call this mental blindness, or ignorance or stupidity. In Abhidhamma, or Buddhist psychology, we call it by the Pali word: *moha*. It's a type of mental perversity that mistakes reality. Killing monks is not only wrong, it is insane.

They kill because they are scared. Violence is an act of weakness. Violence is not a sign of strength. There is some place in them that must know this.

It was our belief that the monk-led protesting would stir their conscience. Maybe it did. Maybe they are not yet aware of it. Maybe in a quiet moment, when Than Shwe or any of the others are alone with themselves, they may feel a deep uneasiness in their hearts. In Buddhism we call this uneasiness of the heart *hiri* [moral shame] and *ottappa* [moral remorse]. These two states of mind are what you would call conscience.

If they feel this uneasiness, that would be the greatest good for them and the future of our country. That would be the only true road to reconciliation. And it is reconciliation that we want. We want peace.

For that to happen, Than Shwe and others in his ranks must enter their hearts and feel the terrible transgressions they have committed. This is one of the gravest acts of self-delusion we have seen in modern Burma. They believe it is to their own benefit to force countless sufferings on the people. But they can change this at any time. That is, if they change themselves.

Our message to them is this: raise your consciousness, increase your ethical integrity, and align your-

*There were other soldiers who acted differently.
We saw tears in some of their eyes.*

selves in reality to the principles of Buddhism. That means, conquer your own fear, put down your weapons, and do what is right for the people. They can do this at anytime.

Buddhism is a compassionate teaching. It is firmly rooted in forgiveness and redemption. There are numerous examples of great transformations of consciousness in the traditional Buddhist texts.

Monks are being arrested at this very moment. I too may be arrested today. Still, the uprisings are not going away. They may kill or arrest or torture us, but the uprisings will continue. Like bamboo that is rooted deeply in the soil, no matter how much you try to cut the bamboo back, it sprouts up here and then over there and then everywhere at once. We the people of Burma are determined to keep rising up everywhere until the land is free to grow our democracy

conomic mismanagement. An end to a one-party military junta. An end to media censorship. An end to countless abuses against ethnic and religious minorities. The right to choice. Self-determination.

The glint in people's eyes conveyed their appreciation for our outside support. Demonstrators passed by me giving the occasional thumbs-up. At one point, I stopped to buy a bottle of water. The shopkeeper would not allow me to pay, humbly saying, "Thank you, my sister! You understand." Tears filled my eyes then as they did so often on the days of the buildup and the complete, violent dismantling of this people's movement.

Energy continued to surge from the streets and from every window and balcony. I sensed that people felt liberated. It seemed to me that the bodies and eyes of many of the demonstrators were shooting sparks. Their glances and voices conveyed hope and inspiration.

Watching these young men line up shield-to-shield, I felt deep sorrow.

As we walked, chanting Buddhist blessings and calls for change, an old woman ran to the side of the street right in front of me. She knelt down, put her hands together and, looking toward the monks and nuns, she said, "Thank you. Thank you. Many, many thanks." A younger woman, perhaps her granddaughter, grabbed ahold of her blouse, pulling her back toward the house. Aware of the possible repercussion of outwardly supporting the demonstrators, her family expressed worry about her well-being, but judging by the old woman's age, she had been under the thumb of the military for the past 40 years. She could not hold herself back. She had been waiting decades for something to happen.

Mingled with the earnest calls for change was the question, "Why haven't THEY stopped us yet?" The anticipation of the likely violent response by the military clung to the last syllable of every cry.

On September 25, truckloads of outfitted soldiers and riot police jammed through crowds as they headed for the two central Buddhist stupas in Rangoon—Shwedagon and Sule pagodas. As they did so, demonstrators shouted messages of hope and good will in their direction. Standing outside of Sule pagoda, I watched soldiers climb from their vehicles and carry trunks of supplies—handfuls of batons and their bedrolls—right into the pagoda compound. As they took their formations, the young men's eyes reflected terror. I surmised that coming from rural areas and perhaps never having visited a city before, they had no prior experience to fully comprehend what was occurring.

Watching these young men line up shield-to-shield, I felt deep sorrow. Of all the people out there that day, they were the most inculcated into the military junta's delusions and tight hold on power. They had not yet been able to experience the liberation of speaking out.

The soldiers did what had seemed impossible a few days prior: they quelled the open outcry by beating and killing religious leaders and innocent people. As soon as soldiers sent out the first shots, the crowd, many down in a squatting prayer pose at the time, scattered away from the guns and fled down the narrow lanes. Once the shooting stopped, people reassembled and resumed their chanting. I watched one betel nut seller pick up his small stand, run from the gunfire and then put his goods back on the market. Living hand-to-mouth, people take incredible risks.

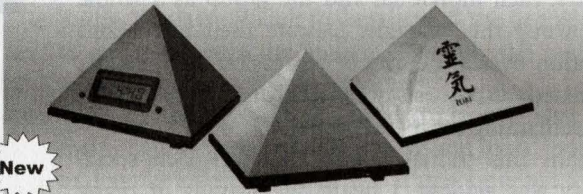
The reason that I do my work became clear in that moment. During my tenure as an aid worker, I have given much time and emotional energy to Burmese refugees in countries neighboring Burma. Their personal stories can be difficult to hear, and my faith in the future end to their suffering often dissipates. But the march affirmed to me that people in Burma have the will to bring about their own desired future of freedom from oppression. I felt something that I hadn't experienced since early in my career—that the combined efforts of many individuals could lead to a peaceful and just society. ❖

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: The Foundation for the People of Burma provides humanitarian relief to support monks and families on the Thai-Burmese border. Learn more at www.foundationburma.org.

When you run after your thoughts, you are like a dog chasing a stick: every time a stick is thrown, you run after it. Instead, be like a lion who, rather than chasing after the stick, turns to face the thrower. One only throws a stick at a lion once.

—Milarepa

CREATIME Meditation Timers



New

The **COMBI TIMER** serene gong chime not only signals the end of your meditation period, but can also chime at regular intervals to help you actually "train" yourself: you can move from one meditation object to the next and you are reminded of the present moment.

CREATIME products are all beautifully handmade wooden pyramids.
5.3" long at the base, they run on 4 AA batteries - not supplied.

Further information + order: www.gongtimers.com

Practicing Lovingkindness

A Conversation with Sayadaw U Kovida

by Maia Duerr and Hozan Alan Senauke

Sayadaw U Kovida is a highly respected senior monk who was born in Burma 81 years ago. Although he now lives in exile in New York, he was once the patron of Ma Soe Yein monastery, one of the oldest Buddhist schools in Burma.

In 2001, Sayadaw visited the U.S. and stayed at the Sasana Joti Center, a New York monastery. Since September 2007, he has not been able to return to Burma. Sayadaw is now the patron of Sasana Moli—the International Burmese Monks Organization—founded in October 2007. Sasana Moli (which translates to “crown jewel of the monastic community”) is an alliance of more than 50 monks from the U.S., the U.K., Singapore, Canada, and Malaysia.

On December 15, 2007, BPF staff Alan Senauke and Maia Duerr spoke with Sayadaw at the Mettananda Vihara in Fremont, California. The day before, Sayadaw had been awarded an honorary degree from the University of San Francisco. We met on the second floor of the vihara, with several members of the Burmese community joining us. Sayadaw welcomed us with a bow and a warm smile, and sat in a chair near the altar of the Buddha which was beautifully decorated with food offerings. Maung Yit served as our translator.

Maia: Please tell us about how you got involved in the movement for democracy in Burma in the 1990s, and what happened to you as a consequence.

Sayadaw: In 1988, there was a general uprising in Burma. I was not involved in that. In 1990, the army started shooting at people and shooting at monks. Some young monks came to me and showed me their bloody wounds. This is how I got involved. According

to the *vinaya* [Buddhist rules for the monastic community], the only way you should get involved in political matters is if the government starts hurting people. That was the first time that we overturned the alms bowls. We did this as a boycott because there were a lot of students who got shot and hurt.

The government tried to imprison me as the instigator of that boycott, and I was sentenced to three years with hard labor, even though they could find no evidence against me. I spent 22 months meditating in a Mandalay prison. In the beginning, I was allowed to wear robes, but then I was asked to take my robes off. But according to the *vinaya*, this doesn't matter because a monk can never be disrobed as long as he keeps the precepts.

The jail was not like the jails here where you have bedding and mattresses. It had a concrete floor, no beds, and iron bars that gusty winds came through. All the restrooms were filthy. In the beginning, I was put in solitary confinement.

Every day we had rice to eat, but it wasn't really rice. You could see the corn husks in it. And they gave us a curry. It's lovely when you have curry with cauliflower and cabbage, but for this curry, they spiced and boiled all the stalks so that it was tasteless and not nutritious. We have a Burmese saying: *Wet khaung khar*. This means that a pig shakes his head and refuses to eat when he sees what's coming—that's how bad the food was. Pigs are known to eat anything, but even pigs would stay away from this food! [Sayadaw laughs while telling us this.]

The worst thing I experienced was having to take off my robes and to adorn layman's robes. That is the worst thing that can ever happen to a monk. Because I was a high-ranking abbot of a monastery, this was the kind of treatment that I received. If I were a young

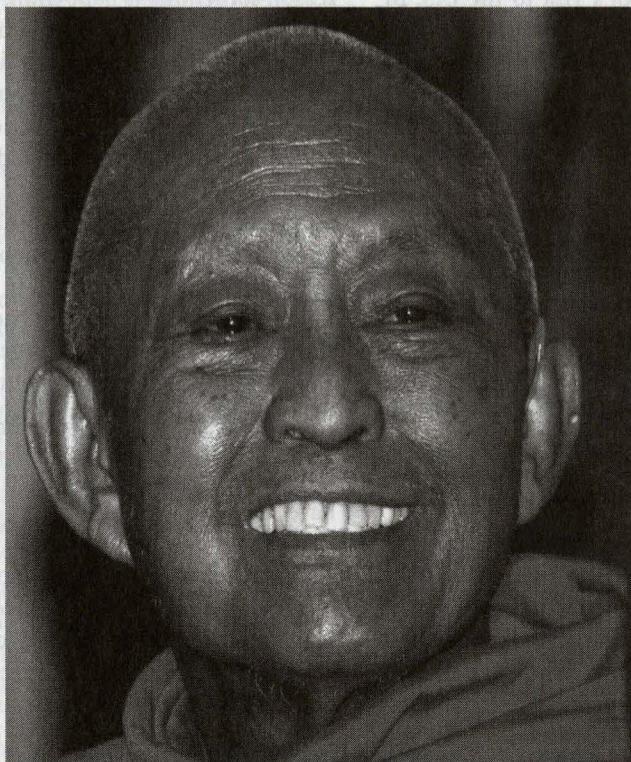


photo by Hozan Alan Senauke

novice or a junior monk, I would have been sent to a prison labor camp to be chained and shackled. The chances of returning from that kind of camp are very low because of malaria.

In those years, the monks were sent to prison camps and starved and died, and the world did not know about it. But this past September, the monks were murdered in front of the media and television. That is much worse than what happened in the '90s.

Alan: What happened after you were released?

S: After the 22 months in prison, I went back to the Ma Soe Yein monastery and took up robes again. I returned to teaching.

In 2001, I came on a visitor's visa to the U.S. In 2002, the Buddhist Friendship Association invited me to do sasana work in the U.S. In 2003, a monastery was founded in New York and so that is where I settled. Every year, I went back to Burma. But since September 2007, I cannot go there. If I go back, I will land in jail.

M: In September 2007, we heard stories about the monks who refused to receive alms from the soldiers. What was the significance of this action?

S: The monks are following the advice given by Buddha. If someone tries to suppress Buddhism, one should not fight back with arms but rather refuse to accept alms. That is in the vinaya, so the monks are simply following the rules. It's not an uprising but rather it is following the rules.

You have to have someone who commits a crime to start this boycott. There are some preconditions to overturning the boycott. Whoever has persecuted or hurt the monks has to admit that they have done heinous deeds and ask for forgiveness. Whoever committed the crimes has to say, "We are sorry." Then, according to ritual, they soak their heads and their clothes. Then they pray together as a whole family and come in front of the monks and say, "Please forgive us for having done bad deeds in the past."

A: Did the 1990 boycott ever end?

S: In 1991, it was overturned by a group of sayadaws who were not originally in the boycott. They were asked by the government to overturn the boycott. But technically, that boycott never ended. The government ended it forcibly.

M: You have a long history of standing up for the monks of Burma. What inspires you to keep doing that, even at the cost of your own well-being and safety?

S: A monk is essentially a dharma son of Buddha. If the government or anybody is oppressing the *sasana*

[fellowship of monks], then I am just doing what Buddha wants me to do. The boycott says that if somebody doesn't treat the monks fairly, then you shouldn't take alms from them. So I am just being a loyal son of Buddha, just following what Buddha taught, nothing special.

M: Do you feel angry at the junta for all the harm they have caused the sasana and the Burmese people? How do you handle anger with your dharma practice?

S: At times I feel angry, just like other human beings. But being a son of Buddha, I follow what Buddha taught, and that means metta [lovingkindness]. The reason something is happening is because of our bad karma in past lives. We should try to restrain our *dosa* [anger] by practicing metta instead. This doesn't mean we are not angry, but every time there is anger, we try to relinquish it by practicing metta.

At first, I didn't understand why I had to go to prison, because I thought that I had done good deeds all my life like teaching and building pagodas. Then I realized that because all human beings are born into samsara [rounds of rebirth], in some distant past we might have done something bad and this is just now showing up. So instead of forgetting that and getting angry, we can understand that this is what happened in our karma, and we go on with our lives. That was what helped me during those 22 months in prison. Otherwise I would have been angry and wouldn't have survived for long.

I taught for more than 50 years. When I learn about my former students who are being murdered and sent to prison camps, I feel much anguish and pain, because they are related to me.

If even people outside Burma, like the BPF members, feel a lot in their hearts, including anger, when they see what is happening in Burma, then you can imagine how the monks in Burma feel who have to directly face this. There is no way there will not be anger. The only thing is how to restrain anger and follow the teachings of Buddha.

M: I was inspired by your commencement talk at the University of San Francisco about the value of education. What role do you think education can play to support a peaceful transition to democracy in Burma?

S: I have always been a firm believer in education. The Buddha said:

If one studies diligently under a mentor, one gains *bahusuta* [general knowledge]. Bahusuta gives rise to wisdom and learning. Wisdom and learning enable one to reason, to differentiate the good and the bad, the right and the wrong. An educated mind,

The monks want to remind us time and again that the boycott is still on.

then, is able to do good things not only for one but for others as well.

Unless you practice, you won't see the truth. As Buddhists, we know the importance of education. Burma once had a very good education system. It's been deliberately destroyed because the less people are educated, the easier they are to control.

The government of Burma seems not to be educated because they started shooting and killing monks. That shows a lack of education and lack of wisdom. Education is needed not just for the transition to democracy but also for wise judgment in everyday life.

A: How do you see the transition to democracy happening inside Burma?

S: Right now, the monks outside Burma are directly or indirectly helping the needy monks inside Burma, but they are working at a grassroots level and not going through the government.

The monks inside Burma are trying to do what they can, according to the rules of Buddha. The sole purpose of Sasana Moli is to prevent danger to the sasana. We will attain democracy, freedom, and peace if we follow the Buddha way.

We want the world to know that it's *not* us against the government. The only reason that a senior monk who has taught for 50 years is doing what I am doing is because the government has crossed the lines of human rights. Some monks have been shot just because they were not taking alms from the junta or they were reciting the Metta Sutta. Those kinds of things should be a common right in any human society. All around the world, people want to know why these monks are being murdered when they are just doing things that any decent citizen of any country in the world should be able to do.

The junta says that the monks got support from outside Burma. That's not true. They're trying to find scapegoats. We want to make sure people understand this in a true light.

A: Please tell us about Sasana Moli.

S: I have taught for more than 50 years and was never involved in politics or any organization. But after September, I felt that if I just kept teaching, that would not change the situation in Burma. So for three days, I thought of a good name and finally came up with "Sasana Moli," which means crown jewel for the sasana. This way, we can provide help to those not only inside Burma but along the border. At the age of 81, I couldn't stand it any more and decided that it's time to get involved and to have a strong organization so that the world will know what's happening and people can help.

M: What is your vision for Burma in the future?


S: I am convinced that Burma will get democracy very soon and that this boycott will end successfully. The monks inside Burma want to remind us time and again that the boycott is still on. It does not matter that they are having food forced on them. What's more important is to realize that in their minds the struggle is still on. If they have the courage and vision to continue the fight with support of the world, then Burma will see the light in the near future.

A: What is the most important thing that we can do to support the cause of the people of Burma?

S: The short answer is to help in any way that you can. In essence, two kinds of help are needed. First, the people need moral and spiritual help. The monks inside are fighting for a cause and they need the courage to survive. And second, they need some kind of physical help, whether it be monetary or anything else.


It's important to keep the pressure on. Even though I am 81 years old, I travel all over the country and give talks and interviews about this. If all the people in the world offered their help both spiritually and physically, in a few months I feel that Burma would be free from the worst danger. ❖

Vow to Sit Zazen Online Every Day for Next 9 Years



... please join me and sit-a-long

Our **Daily (Rain or Shine) Webcast Zazen** is meant for those who cannot easily commute to a sitting, often due to health concerns, living in remote areas, taking care of kids & work, or anyone who might benefit. Now, by 'tuning in' to our 30 minute 'Daily Zazen' broadcast, all can join in a Soto Zen 'just sitting' and Sangha.

 treeleafzazen.blogspot.com
Junjo Cohen, Teacher

Infinite Smile Sangha



We cordially invite you to share in the teachings of Michael McAlister whose spiritual work is currently reaching audiences around the world. Regardless of your wisdom tradition, you will easily see why his nondogmatic, accessible and often amusing style works to inspire the hearts and minds of his students.

Weekly Meditation and Talk w/Q&A
Mondays 7:30 PM - 9 PM

2940 Camino Diablo, Suite 200
Walnut Creek 925-283-8292

Just show up, every session offers a beginning. New seekers as well as experienced practitioners are welcome.
Weekly meditation - Podcasts - Retreats - DVDs

Michael McAlister
teacher

INFINITE SMILE.ORG

Journey to a Land Cloaked in Fear

by Hozan Alan Senauke

In early December 2007, a time of clear sunlight and mild days in Southeast Asia, a small Buddhist Peace Fellowship delegation traveled to Rangoon and to Mae Sot on the Thai–Burma border. Our group consisted of Phra Paisan Visalo, a Thai monk and founder of Thailand’s engaged Buddhika network; Nupphanat Anuphongphat, also from Buddhika; Jill Jameson from the Melbourne BPF chapter in Australia; and myself. We had several purposes in mind:

- To bear witness to the suffering of Burma’s peoples, to hear their stories and see their lives, and to carry their message back with us to the West;
- To convey the international Buddhist community’s solidarity with their plight; and
- To offer humanitarian support where possible and to explore channels for future support and education.

Listening Beyond Fear

We flew into Yangon International Airport on the morning of December 4, on a plane only a third full of businessmen and a handful of tourists. Yangon airport is new, spotless, fully staffed with immigration offi-

cial, and devoid of shops and restaurants. Just a few flights come and go daily, and I saw only one other airplane on the tarmac.

En route to the hotel, I had my first view of Rangoon. Streets were filled with people going to work, but car traffic was light—the cars themselves aged, decrepit, and spewing exhaust. Buses and trucks were crammed with commuters who hung out the windows and doors. There were few monks or nuns in the street—only very young novices and old men, carrying their bowls.

Our driver questioned us closely, going beyond ordinary curiosity. Why have you come to Burma and how long will you stay, who do you know here? We were careful in response, aware that we were likely to be watched wherever we went and that scrutiny had begun the minute we stepped off the plane.

Jill later told us an interesting story. Her driver went through the same questions. Then he remarked that three men had come on an earlier flight—an American, a Thai monk, and another Thai—and asked if she knew them. He had connected Jill with us. What other connections had already been made?

Over the next days in Rangoon we met with Burmese activists, senior monks, teachers, students, orphans, diplomats, and ordinary people in monasteries, markets, homes, tea shops, and restaurants. We woke up before dawn to circumambulate the Shwedagon Pagoda as the sun set fire to the stupa’s golden flanks. Wherever we went, people were eager to meet with us and welcomed news that the world kept Burma in sight.

But beneath the kind smiles, fear was pervasive. On busy streetcorners, large red billboards proclaimed the generals’ authoritarian message, the “People’s Desire”:

1. Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views
2. Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation
3. Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State
4. Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy

We felt watched in our hotel and in other public spaces. While police presence was less obvious than it had been in the fall, monasteries and official buildings were guarded by military vehicles and uniformed

photo by
Hozan Alan Senauke



*Laughter in the dark
is a necessary survival tool in Burma.*

guards. In their own homes, people often spoke in a kind of code. In tea shops, voices were lowered and people kept an eye out to notice who was listening. Sources assured us that military intelligence officers were dressed as monks at many of the monasteries and pagodas. One afternoon, while we were distributing packages of noodles to children at a monastic orphanage, plainclothes police followed us and questioned the head monk about our purposes.

We felt afraid not so much for ourselves but for the safety of friends who took risks just by talking with Westerners. One Burmese activist, Daniel, explained, "We have a saying: If you have died once, you know how much the coffin costs." People know the price of resistance. Seeing blood in the streets and the disappearance of friends and sangha creates an internal silencing. Fear is not simply imposed by the military. Internalized fear takes a toll, manifesting as anger, mistrust, and depression. Aung San Suu Kyi writes in *Freedom from Fear*, "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it."

So we listened a lot. This is basic Buddhism, breaking down the barriers that separate self and other, taking in the pain of our new friends. People in Burma have a compelling need to tell their stories in full, what they have experienced going back long before September, with all its violent and brutal detail. But there was lightness too. Laughter in the dark is a necessary survival tool in Burma.

The First Noble Truth

The Buddha taught that suffering marks our human lives. Even our few days in Rangoon offered us a chance to investigate the daily measure of suffering and resistance. According to the International Monetary Fund, the government spends only 0.4 percent of revenues on education and 0.5 percent on healthcare, compared with approximately 40 percent on the military (in a country that has no external enemies). A threadbare public school system is unable to accommodate all of Burma's children, so Buddhist monastic schools and orphanages attempt to fill the gap. In the Rangoon Division alone there are 162 monastic schools, which serve up to 80,000 children. There are also many schools run by Christian denominations.

One friend told us there are "hundreds of thousands of orphans." A father dies in the civil war. A mother in the field steps on a landmine. So there are "scrap children," their families too poor to feed them or afford the fees of a government school. After five years of elementary school, a child may have no option but to join the army. Children are forced con-

scripts to the army. Recent media reports tell of Burmese child soldiers as young as 10.

At one school we saw 500 students—half of them in residence—finding their food day by day. Rice was the poorest grade, stretched into a thin porridge to go around. Children sat at cramped benches, learned by rote memorization. The large dormitories smelled of neglect. During our visit, a health worker gently lifted children's shirts, uncovering ringworm and ulcers, which she salved with a sulphur ointment. Despite the best efforts of monks and teachers, malnutrition, overcrowding, and lack of books add up to neglect.

The average income in Burma is less than \$250 a year. Lay teachers at this monastic school earned \$12 to \$15 a month. The fuel increases in August meant some people could not afford the bus fare to go to work and others could not eat.

Monastic schools have been hard hit since September. At one school we visited, where there had been 200 monks, only 15 remained to staff a school of more than 700 children. Missing monks have not been heard from.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, 35 monasteries were raided in Rangoon alone; monks fled or were shipped back to their home villages. Some monks were forcibly disrobed. Leaders of the All-Burma Monks Alliance have been imprisoned and tortured. The junta claims that only 2 percent of the monks marched, but a more realistic estimate is closer to 30 percent. Videos from September show a sea of red robes in the cities—well over 100,000 monks and nuns.

Many who marched are still in detention. The U.N.'s Special Rapporteur Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro reported that during the crackdown, the government-controlled Ye Way crematorium ran late into the night. Mr. Pinheiro wrote:

...credible sources report a large number of bodies burned during the night, between 4:00 **A.M.** and 8:00 **A.M.**, on 27–30 September.... At least one report indicates that some of the deceased being cremated had shaved heads and some had signs of serious injuries.

Another reliable source with whom we spoke confirmed that many more Burmese were killed and disappeared than even the number cited by the U.N. According to this person's figures, at least 30 monks were killed in Rangoon and more than 70 people were killed in detention after the demonstrations ended. Presently, 1,000 dissidents are still being detained, including women and nuns.

On the Border

We flew back to Bangkok on the morning of December 8, then drove seven hours by van to the city of Mae Sot, on the Thai-Burma border, across the Moei River from the Burmese town of Myawaddy. Mae Sot, known as "Little Burma," lies on the western edge of Thailand's mountainous Tak Province. More than 80,000 Burmese, largely from the Karen state, live as illegal aliens around Mae Sot, many employed as garment workers in more than 200 prison-walled factories. The average pay (for those lucky enough to work) is less than \$2 per day, half the minimum wage in Thailand.

Mae Sot's proximity to Burma makes it home to NGOs and grassroots activist organizations committed to social change inside Burma. During our three days there, we met with representatives of the National League for Democracy-Liberated Area (NLD-LA), the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), the Burmese Women's Union, the Karen Women's Organization, the Organizing Committee for Saffron Strength, the Asia-Pacific People's Partnership on Burma, and the All-Burma Student Democratic Front. Each group does its best to sustain itself and its constituency. But cooperation is a historical and ongoing challenge. Mistrust along political and ethnic lines could be heard in a quick comment or seen in a sideways glance. Some factional differences date from the British colonial practice of divide-and-rule; some carry over from past rulers, kingdoms, and territories that predate modern Burma. As Burma's opposition moves slowly toward a shared vision, unity is a rare treasure.

The AAPP maintains communication with the families of political prisoners inside Burma and a network of ex-prisoners around the world—those tortured for their political activities from 1988 to the present. Photos of political prisoners line the office walls. AAPP Joint-Secretary Bo Kyi spent more than seven years in prison before escaping to Thailand. In a back room of the AAPP house, he has created a kind of museum—a model of the notorious Insein Prison, a typical prison cell, diagrams of stress and torture methods, and maps locating 39 military-controlled prisons in Burma. Disturbingly graphic photographs depict the wounded and murdered bodies of those who opposed the regime. Speaking with Bo Kyi and with Win, a survivor of crippling torture and 15 years of prison, I was inspired by the activists' extraordinary courage and determined commitment to dignity, and for the cause of democracy.

Although Mae Sot has a large population of Karen and other ethnic peoples, with another 75,000 refugees in three refugee camps nearby, surprisingly few urban Burmese have arrived since September. Reliable

sources suggest that only several hundred have made the difficult journey, and of those, merely a handful of monks. The number is hard to pin down.

We met with 11 monks from Rangoon, Mandalay, and Bago at two Mae Sot safe houses. Several of the monks were leaders in their communities. Others were monks whose conscience led them into the streets. What they saw and experienced in September at the hands of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and its civilian agents have left deep shadows in their minds. Escaping the cities, they all had to disrobe and use false papers to make their way across Burma. Crossing into Thailand and presumed safety, a sayadaw (senior monk) in this group was arrested by Thai police. Friends had to pay a bribe of \$800 to save him from repatriation.

If life is treacherous inside Burma, the fate of escaped monks in Thailand is hardly secure. Since Thailand has not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, there is no process to determine an immigrant's risk of persecution in Burma, risk that entitles the person to international protection. Thailand prevents the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from registering new arrivals, so they are vulnerable to arrest and deportation, as well as bribery and exploitation. Dr. Cynthia Maung's famous Mae Tao Clinic, the main medical resource for Burmese refugees, has been raided countless times. Thai Special Branch officers conduct random searches of refugee relief organizations, confiscating personnel and client files.

The monks we spoke with feel this insecurity keenly. They live in safe houses along with laypeople, a highly unusual situation for monastics. They can't go on alms rounds for food. The Thai sangha does not welcome them in their temple life. Without UNHCR refugee status, financial support, and the sustaining regimen of sangha practice, these monks have traded Burma's dangers for the twilight zone of displacement on the Thai border. They deserve much better than this.

On our last night in Mae Sot, after Phra Paisan and Top had returned to Bangkok, Jill and I had a good Burmese dinner at a local restaurant and conversation at a bar across town. Than Gyi joined us for a beer. A longtime activist from the 88 Generation, Than Gyi said, "I want my daughter to live in a free Burma, a country different from how it is now and how it has been for the last 40 years." We listened to each other and argued in a measured way. I liked this man and I was pained to see how 20 years of strife and loss have led him to believe in the necessity of armed struggle. It is not an unusual position, and advocates see targeted violence as a practical way of forcing the junta into dialogue. It saddens and wor-

**Beneath the
kind smiles,
fear was pervasive.**

ries me to hear this kind of thinking in a land where the overwhelming balance of arms and brutality belongs to the regime. But these are decisions his people must make. We agreed to find a way to continue our conversation, to explore our different views. And we have done so.

Creating Conditions for Liberation

How can we in the international community support the Burmese people? In some circles, the sanctions themselves are controversial, but I support them. Even though U.S., E.U., and Australian sanctions are compromised by Burma's trade with China, India, and Thailand, they send a signal that we stand behind Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy as Burma's legitimate elected representatives and that we fully support Aung San Suu Kyi's call for the release of all prisoners and dialogue with the junta. I also look forward to a U.N. arms embargo cutting off the flow of weapons that the SPDC so freely uses on its own people. An arms embargo, which has yet to be formally discussed by the U.N. Security Council, would be a visible act of international morality.

The people we met in Burma are bright, open, and ready for change. Ultimately, they will create the conditions of their own liberation. Among monks, activists, political prisoners, and ordinary citizens there is a wealth of political understanding and devotion to spiritual practice. The commitment to nonviolent change is exemplified by the monks' uprising. At the same time, the wounds of dictatorship scar the souls of all Burma's peoples. Political harmony depends on healing at every level. If these wounds are not acknowledged and engaged, they will replicate like a virus from one generation to the next, and their legacy will be the suffering of endemic divisiveness and armed violence.

Finally, where are the monks? We know they are not in their monasteries and schools; not studying and practicing dhamma; not serving their communities. Whether they have fled or been sent to the countryside, imprisoned, disrobed, or escaped to other countries, the Burmese sangha is gravely injured. No one knows what will happen in six months or a year, but the need for support is immediate. These "sons of Buddha" may be treated as criminals by the junta, but the people still revere the Buddha's robe. If Burma is to survive, the monasteries must be open and monks must have the freedom to practice dhamma in safety, within the wide circle of community. ❖

Please see page 19 for Alan's biography.

Burma:

How You Can Make a Difference

Keep the light of awareness on the Burmese people's peaceful struggle for democracy in your sanghas and in your communities. Let the people of Burma know that they are not forgotten.

Visit www.bpf.org for current information about the following:

- **April 9: Day of Action!**
On this day, the Olympic torch passes through San Francisco on its way to Beijing. China is a main supporter of the Burmese junta. BPF is organizing a peace walk across the Golden Gate Bridge and a rally for human rights in Burma. Join us, or organize a walk in your community.
- In your sangha, dedicate a monthly meditation or hold a full-moon chanting ceremony for peace in Burma and send lovingkindness to the monks, nuns, and laypeople of Burma.
- Write to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to ask for an international arms embargo. Bring a stack of letters to your sangha or sitting group.
- Attend or organize vigils and educational events on Burma.
- Stay informed! Subscribe to BPF's e-newsletter for updates about Burma and Action Alerts. Sign up at www.bpf.org.
- Buy a bumper sticker or a poster/altar card from the BPF office to make available at your sangha.

Giving Back to Burma

by Michele McDonald

I started formal satipatthana vipassana (mindfulness) practice in 1975. The Asian teachers who influenced me in my early years of practice were Dipa Ma (who was from India and had practiced in Burma) and the Burmese meditation masters Mahasi Sayadaw and Tungpulu Sayadaw. From 1984 to 1991, I immersed myself in studies with Sayadaw U Pandita. I currently practice with several sayadaws in upper Burma.

Back then, I had a fairly weak immune system, and I didn't make my first visit to Burma until 1997. But pretty much from the moment I first sat down to do practice, I felt very connected to the Burmese Buddhist meditation tradition.

Steve Smith, who was my partner at the time, had practiced in Burma for many years and studied extensively with Sayadaw U Pandita. In 1995, U Pandita invited Steve to practice in another sayadaw's monastery in a part of upper Burma known as the spiritual heart of the country. Sayadaw asked Steve if he would help him teach a retreat for foreign students at his ancient monastery. This was an honor—Steve may have been the first Western layperson invited into Burma to help teach in this way.

During that time, Steve became friends with Aung San Suu Kyi. Just before the 1997 retreat, Steve was blacklisted from Burma because of this friendship. Quite suddenly, I found myself finally traveling to Asia to teach the foreign student retreat with this sayadaw. It was very radical for a Western woman to teach in a Burmese monastic community, but he welcomed me. Since then, I have returned almost every year to help guide this retreat.

From the beginning of our involvement with the monastery and the people living in the surrounding village, it was clear that we needed to respond to the devastating conditions there. Steve and I have offered support through the MettaDana Project (www.vipassanahawaii.org/mettadana) for humanitarian aid projects, including building schools, and starting hospital programs and the first acupuncture training program in Burma. Our commitment to our friends in the community there is deep, and we're in for the long term.

A Window of Opportunity

This past winter, we had to cancel the annual retreat due to conditions inside Burma. Instead, I traveled to Thailand. I was sad to not see my friends inside Burma and see how the projects were going. But I was able to get a broader picture of what's been going on inside and outside of Burma, and gain a better understanding of what's needed to be of some help.

I spoke with Generation 88 student activists who escaped from Burma and have been working for democracy for the past 20 years. I learned that the ethnic minorities in Burma, like the Shan and the Karen, have been under siege for 60 years. Their struggle has been just to survive and to help their people survive. They haven't had the luxury of working out a strategy to change the government, or to even network with other minorities.

When the student activists escaped in 1988, they did have a strategy to change the government. These activists have worked a long time to try to unify all the ethnic groups in order to build a stronger network. One man has been working for many years to unite the youth of the different ethnic minorities in the refugee camps or living near the border.

On this visit, I felt the momentum and excitement that's set in since the Saffron Revolution. There is a glimmer of hope that hasn't been there before. Everyone feels it. There's a sense that it's possible to build a powerful alliance of many different people: monks, Generation 88 student activists, ethnic minorities, young people, journalists. The political will of the Burmese people is for national reconciliation, an end to military rule, and a peaceful transition to democracy. The people who have been doing this work since 1988 see a window of opportunity to change the government, and are calling more than ever for help from the international community.

The Saffron Revolution started off an international outcry. Teenagers on their cell phones and brave Burmese journalists took most of the pictures, and the Internet helped the world see the brutality and struggle for survival that has been going on all these years. People may think things are OK now because we're not



seeing any pictures, but that's only because the junta has shut down all journalists and the Internet. That doesn't mean it's not still horrible. There are people working with activists inside Burma to continue getting information and photos out to the world.

Many of the people I met are also working on environmental issues. There is a connection between the decimation of teak forests, the logging, the natural gas from Burma flowing into Thailand, the burning of villages, and slave and child labor. What's been happening in Burma is destruction of life in all forms.

These activists are putting their spiritual life into action, and some of them are in a huge amount of danger. Most of the people I spoke with are willing to die for the truth. It's so inspiring to witness people embodying this, not because that's what they want to do with their lives, but because they're at the right place at the right time and they're stepping up. They are true bodhisattvas, willing to do whatever it takes to help their people.

Taking Responsibility

How do we change things in a nonviolent, intelligent, peaceful way? This is an important question when we look at Burma, but it also applies to how change happens on so many other levels—in individuals, in communities, and in governments.

What often gets passed off as equanimity in the spiritual world is really emotional cowardice or indifference masquerading as serenity. Discerning between equanimity and indifference can be difficult. It can seem like we are balanced, accepting things as they are, but actually we're disconnected. The heart is closed off from pain, but we pretend that everything's OK and we put our reaction in the shadows. This fake equanimity is what many people mistake for wisdom and mindfulness. Yet pretending to care when we lack the courage to connect is hurtful, at the least, and potentially very destructive.

Many of us were raised to avoid conflict. We need to become interested enough in conflict so that we can grow by learning how to move through it. It's easy to delude ourselves into thinking that we or others are connected, but what is often in place is a deep, unexamined desire for control over our experience. The gradual buildup of this indifference over time makes it increasingly difficult for healthy changes to take place. Yet there is a deeper spiritual need to be with the truth and to not be disconnected.

It can be really interesting to explore this edge. We can feel overwhelmed by the suffering in this world and continue to bang our head against the wall of indifference, or we can understand that a willingness to play with that edge is what keeps our practice, people, and planet alive. This edge gets particularly inter-

esting if we aspire to global responsibility. The U.N. has addressed this in terms of genocide in Rwanda, Kosovo, and Darfur and has said that if nations don't take responsibility, then the international community is responsible to take care of the situation.

It's important to hold compassion for everybody in Burma, from the child soldiers all the way to the top generals. I'm sure most of them are afraid. But clearly, atrocities are happening and we cannot turn away from responding. Buddhists need to wake up to this in terms of the situation in Burma, as well as in Iraq and in so many other places, including the U.S.

Giving Back to Burma

What I took away from talking with Burmese people in Thailand is a real urgency and encouragement for the rest of the world to get involved. The Burmese people are desperate for change. Many have put their lives on the line for the cause of freedom and democracy, and they deserve the full support of the international community.

One aspect of this is education, so that people can understand what has been going on inside Burma. A central information center and source could provide a way for all the different groups to be able to hear what each of them is doing. This will support people to come together and create more pressure on the government to change.

Urban areas in Burma are incredibly oppressed, but the rural areas have been under total siege. There's been a complete breakdown of the health and education systems. Children are not getting inoculated; some are forced to become soldiers. Women are being raped, whole villages are being burned. There is an incredible loss of land, and a loss of dignity. The Thailand/Burma Border Consortium (www.tbtc.org) has done impressive research on the plight of the internally displaced people of Burma; it would be inspiring to bring some of these people to the West and have them speak.

Sanctions are controversial but viable only if China, India, or Thailand participate. With or without sanctions, these countries need to feel international pressure so that they will call on the junta to change. If everyone in the world boycotted Chinese products, it would create great pressure. Our action has to be something that radical.

I also heard a plea to get more stories about Burma into the mainstream media. We also need to get more humanitarian aid into Burma. The nonprofits that are working so hard in Thailand and Burma need recognition and support.

It won't be just one thing that turns the tide in Burma—all of this is necessary. If enough people keep the pressure on, things will change. We all have a part to play. If we listen to our hearts, we know what's right to

When you consider how much people have benefited from mindfulness practice, it's important to understand that we have a responsibility to give back to the source.

SAMADHI CUSHIONS  **SAMADHI STORE**
 Samadhi means Meditation Since 1975



ZAFU
 GOMDEN™
 ZABUTON

Order Online www.samadhistore.com

Meditation Cushions Books & Media Sacred Style
 Gongs & Incense Yoga Mats Benches
 MORE

Sales support Karmê Chöling Shambhala Buddhist
 Meditation Center here in Northern Vermont. **1-800-331-7751**

SAMADHI CUSHIONS · DEPT TW · 30 CHURCH ST. · BARNET, VT 05821

do. For me, I plan to sit next month. This annual sitting keeps me just enough in balance so that I can continue to work for freedom inwardly and outwardly.

Mindfulness is now a significant part of mainstream Western culture, but the religious and cultural context from which these teachings emerged is often de-emphasized and many people aren't aware of the role that Burma has played in the transmission of these teachings. Many of the pioneers of the mindfulness teachings in the West studied vipassana practice with Burmese teachers. When you consider how much people have benefited from mindfulness practice and how much we have been given, it's important to understand that we have a responsibility to give back to the source. Our lineage is under attack. If we can connect with gratitude for the teachings, we will cultivate energy to work for change in Burma. ❖

Michele McDonald has taught insight meditation for 27 years. Beyond her commitment to the Vipassana Hawai'i Sangha, she has taught extensively throughout the U.S., and regularly teaches in Canada, Burma, and elsewhere around the world. Michele enjoys teaching retreats for beginners as well as experienced students, and developing meditation retreats for youth.

World Dharma Online Institute

Everyday Revolution – A Year-round Program Exploring the Art and Activism of a Life Based on Freedom

The World Dharma Online Institute (WDOI)
A Year Round Program Exploring the Art & Activism of a Life Based on Freedom. Offered by Alan Clements and Jeannine Davies

The program *Everyday Revolution*, is inspired by the principles of Burma's nonviolent Revolution of the Spirit and the example of Aung San Suu Kyi - the country's (imprisoned) Nobel peace laureate.

Monthly multi-media presentations include video and audio reflections by WDOI's founders, former Buddhist monk, author and activist, Alan Clements and colleague Jeannine Davies, Ph.D. candidate in the merging of Clinical

Psychology, Modern Psychics, and the Study of Interrelated-Consciousness. WDOI also offers presentations from a range of guest presenters. Online Forums are open 24/365 with over 150 community members from 13 countries. Everyone is invited to explore the program and community as a guest for 15 Days, cost free.

Visit the vision and watch an introductory video at: www.WorldDharmaOnlineInstitute.com
 Alan Clements is the author of *Instinct for Freedom* and *The Voice of Hope* and was Buddhist monk in Burma where he trained in insight meditation and Buddhist psychology. Visit his web site at: www.AlanClements.com

The Promise of a Spiritual Democracy

by Donald Rothberg

We live in times that are both deeply perilous and tremendously promising. One of the main areas of such danger and promise is in the very health and meaning of democracy. In recent years, we have witnessed a number of direct threats to democracy and signs of its weakness in the United States. The symptoms are many, including the decline of the power of Congress in relationship to the executive branch, the loss of civil liberties, the increasing corporate control of media, and a marked decline in the morality of our leaders (reflected, for example, in deceit and support for torture).

Yet we have also seen how powerful the idea of democracy continues to be. It has been invoked to counter many of the negative trends mentioned above, and in resistance to authoritarian and often brutal regimes, such as in the Philippines, Burma, Eastern Europe, China, South Africa, and many Latin American countries. And on February 15, 2003, millions of people worldwide turned out in the streets against the looming invasion of Iraq, mobilizing what the *New York Times* called the world's second superpower.

We've also seen a growing interest in the link between democracy and an emancipatory spirituality—in the work of “public intellectuals” like bell hooks, Michael Lerner, Jacob Needleman, Steven Rockefeller, Rosemary Ruether, and Cornel West, many activists, and organizations such as Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Sojourners, stone circles, and Tikkun.

Thich Nhat Hanh was well aware of many of the problems of contemporary democracies. In *Being Peace* (1987), he wrote about the visionary potential of the meeting of Buddhist practice and democracy:

There are important values in Western society such as the scientific way of looking at things, the spirit of free inquiry, and democracy. If there is an encounter between Buddhism and these values, humankind will have something very new, and very exciting.

In these difficult times, it is crucial to stay connected with transformative visions. I came of age during the latter part of the Vietnam War, and have lived through a series of presidents in relation to whom I've mostly felt disconnected and critical. But I've learned

that it's also important to focus on the beautiful and the positive in order to sustain our work of social transformation. As in the process of personal transformation, it is essential to balance attention to suffering, shadow areas, and difficulties on the one hand, with evoking states of openness, love, and wisdom on the other. We must be able to go into the darkness and stay connected to the visionary resources that bring renewal, faith, and energy. If we don't do this, we are prone to burnout, fatigue, and bitterness.

Visions of Democracy, Visions of Dharma

The original vision of the founders of the United States, however flawed, had a deep spiritual core. The founders intended to create a form of society that would maximize individual and collective happiness. Their vision of democratic government was centered on the equality of all people and on self-determination by the citizens rather than rule by kings and queens. They saw a vital connection between individual character, informed by nondogmatic religiosity, and the practice of being an active citizen.

In that sense, we can see the United States as carrying out an experiment in democracy on a scale and with a depth that hadn't been attempted previously. To remember this vision is to reclaim the idea of “America the beautiful.”

The speeches of Martin Luther King Jr. provide a wonderful resource for understanding the spirit of this vision. Even with all his criticisms, King also expressed a tremendous love of and hope for his country. In 1961 he said:

In the real sense America is essentially a dream, a dream as yet unfulfilled. It is a dream of a land where people of all races, all nationalities, and all creeds can live together as brothers and sisters. The substance of the dream is expressed in these sublime words, words lifted to cosmic proportions.

He then quoted the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any

Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

The emphasis on America as a place to develop what King called the “beloved community,” and to welcome strangers and those oppressed to join such a community, is symbolized by the Statue of Liberty (originally known as “Liberty Enlightening the World”). The statue echoes the archetypal Buddhist bodhisattva of compassion, Kwan Yin, “she who hears the cries of the world.” My own ancestors sailed by the statue in the first part of the 20th century, flee-

human potential only to some, and toward more inclusive practices. The Buddha established the monastic sangha to overturn the caste system of ancient India, and opened it to women as well as men. Similarly, Lincoln at Gettysburg spoke of the original vision that helped birth the country: “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” Such a focus on equality links democracy to the need for justice for all.

In both visions, intention is central. Rather than seeing governance as divinely ordained and carried out by royalty or large centralized states, as had been the norm for millennia, there was an emphasis on

establishing forms “of the people, by the people, for the people.” Just as in dharma practice, we can break with habit and encrusted tradition through the power of intention, accessing our best wisdom and compassion in the moment, and establishing a space of freedom in which we can counter our conditioning and make new choices.

Wisdom is another important value for both democracy and dharma. Democracy is not simply about majority rule; Plato saw demagoguery as the danger of democratic societies. Cornel West, in *Democracy Matters*, links the democratic vision to the Socratic ability

to question and examine life critically. We might reflect on the Kalama Sutta and the Buddha’s invocation to not simply follow tradition, authority, or dogma, but rather to examine all claims for oneself. Without wise, ethical, and well-informed citizens, democracy cannot flourish. John Dewey once wrote that “democracy is a way of personal life controlled... by faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment and action if proper conditions are furnished.”

“Proper conditions” suggests the need for education and training. The democratic emphasis on equality and self-determination does not alone guarantee wisdom. In *Democratic Vistas* (1871), Walt Whitman speaks of the urgent need for citizens (and we might add dharma practitioners) “properly trained in sanest, highest freedom.”



ing violence and oppression in Eastern Europe, and were welcomed with these words of Emma Lazarus (seemingly forgotten today):

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

These democratic visions parallel in many ways visions of dharma. At their best, both move toward universal compassion, enlightenment, and freedom, even as these are understood in somewhat different ways. There is a common emphasis on the equality of all human beings.

This emphasis requires a shift away from views and social structures that limit the realization of full

The Shadows of Democracy and Dharma

Yet the reality of democracy (as well as organized dharma) involves many shadows. The vision has often been distorted, obscured, or forgotten. In 1789, the ideal of equality was only extended to white men with property. Hence, part of following the vision of democracy has always been both to recognize democracy's shortcomings and to work to make the democratic dream real. In a similar way, the dharma path involves continual purification, in which we learn of the myriad ways that we are not mindful, wise, or compassionate. Whitman counsels: "We had best look our times searchingly in the face, like a physician diagnosing some deep disease."

A good starting point for an account of these shortcomings is King's analysis of the three primary social forces that distort the dream: poverty, racism, and militarism. The Buddha used a parallel language, identifying greed, hatred, and delusion as the root "defilements," and guiding us to be able to recognize and transform these forces in ourselves and in others.

For King, poverty stood directly in the way of the American dream: "If a man doesn't have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness." Glaring contrasts of poverty and wealth, he wrote, violate the commitment to justice. Whitman spoke of "the depravity of the business classes" and how the self-centered pursuit of wealth would poison the vision of democracy. In 1816, Thomas Jefferson wrote: "I hope we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of our monied corporations which dare already to challenge our government to a trial by strength, and bid defiance to the laws of our country."

Racism, especially directed at African Americans, is arguably the core wound of America. The disparity between the democratic vision and racism is manifested in slavery, legal discrimination, exclusionary policies toward the Chinese and other ethnic groups, and the near-genocide of Native Americans. The legacy of racism remains present, in the vastly higher (and increasing) rates of poverty among African Americans, as well as in its more subtle (to the mainstream) manifestations in institutional inequities, internalized oppression, and official neglect (witness the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina).

King spoke of militarism as a direct threat to the vision of the country: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." He echoed previous concerns about the contradictions between democracy and militarism. In 1791, Thomas Jefferson said: "If there be one principle more deeply rooted than any other in the mind of every American it is that we should have

In these difficult times, it is crucial to stay connected with transformative visions.

nothing to do with conquest."

The encounter of democracy and dharma is also potentially liberating for the dharma in Asia and in the West. In a remarkable essay in 2007, Bhikkhu Bodhi wrote of tendencies among Western Buddhists to be caught in middle-class blindness and self-centeredness, "oblivious to the vast, catastrophic suffering that daily overwhelms three-fourths of the world's population." He concluded, echoing King: "To help free beings from suffering today therefore requires that we counter the systemic embodiments of greed, hatred, and delusion." A vision of democracy can help us to investigate the complicity of Buddhist communities with oppression, and widen the meaning of the dharma path of transforming suffering.

Renewing and Deepening Our Visions

In these challenging times, we need the capacity to investigate the shadows of democracy, and to remain energized and led by the original vision of a spiritually grounded democracy.

Such a vision in the United States has typically been best expressed by our poets, musicians, artists, and visionary activists. Whitman, calling for "a sublime and serious Religious Democracy," wrote: "We have frequently printed the word Democracy, yet I cannot too often repeat that it is a word the real gist of which still sleeps, quite unawakened.... It is a great word, whose history, I suppose, remains unwritten, because that history has yet to be enacted."

Some years later, in 1938, Langston Hughes invoked the dream of America. He recognized its distortions, particularly related to poverty and racism, but called for its renewal:

Let America be America again.
Let it be the dream it used to be. . . .
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above. . . .

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe. . . .

O, yes,
I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath—
America will be!

Like our meditation practice, democracy has the potential to be self-renewing. In mindfulness practice,

we attend carefully to our own experience, finding a kind of deep organic impulse that leads through difficulties to greater awareness, truth, compassion, connection, and skillful means. Democracy, despite all the abuses, is at its best similarly self-correcting and can fix itself from within, as we have seen in our history.

How do we cultivate this vision of a spiritual democracy? Here, briefly, are three ways:

First, we need to address and redress the wounds and crimes of our country. This requires a deepened sense of moral responsibility. We need to develop more relational and collective forms to address the collective shadow, as we find in the work of Joanna Macy or South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We also need the individual abilities, cultivated in spiritual practices and in other ways, to be able to be with and transform our difficult experiences in the presence of this shadow—our anger, fear, despair, grief, and confusion. And we need to continue to develop skillful forms of action to respond to and transform the suffering of the world.

Second, we need to re-envision and transform our basic institutions—local, national, and global. How might a spiritual democratic vision manifest in our schools, our healthcare services, our economics, our


media, our agriculture, or our methods of governance? We must also give further energy to imagining a world that reflects a mature spiritual democracy. To do so, we need many contributions: practical experiments in the above areas; visionary scholarship and social analysis, as found, for example, in the work of the public intellectuals mentioned above, and such Buddhist writers as Rita Gross, Ken Jones, and David Loy; dialogues between service providers, activists, scholars, and spiritual practitioners; and inspired expression from artists of all kinds. We need to recover the many resources that might nourish the vision—spiritual and secular, ancient and contemporary, from a multitude of traditions.

Third, we need to develop the personal, interpersonal, and collective practices that make this vision real on a concrete, everyday level. How can traditional meditative practices be seen as part of a training in deep democracy, as practitioners learn to transform difficult emotions and unconscious material, and develop greater openness, awareness, and compassion? How do we understand more fully the relationship of healthy persons to a healthy culture? How can new relational practices bring the depths of dharma into interpersonal and communal interaction, in the midst of speech and communication? What would demonstrations inspired by dharma and democracy look like?

Gary Snyder's words from 1961 still ring true today, further inspiring us in this powerful vision of connecting democracy and dharma:

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. They are both contained in the traditional three aspects of the Dharma path: wisdom (*prajna*), meditation (*dhyana*), and morality (*sila*). Wisdom is intuitive knowledge of the mind of love and clarity that lies beneath one's ego-driven anxieties and aggressions. Meditation is going into the mind to see this for yourself—over and over again, until it becomes the mind you live in. Morality is bringing it back out in the way you live, through personal example and responsible action, ultimately toward the true community (*sangha*) of "all beings." ❖

Donald Rothberg, a member of the Spirit Rock Teachers Council and the faculty of Saybrook Graduate School in San Francisco, writes and teaches on meditation, daily life practice, and socially engaged Buddhism. He is the author of The Engaged Spiritual Life: A Buddhist Approach to Transforming Ourselves and the World. This essay is based on a talk given July 4, 2007, at Spirit Rock Meditation Center.



**SAN FRANCISCO
ZEN CENTER**
Founded in 1962 by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

Meditation Retreats	Farm Apprenticeships
Practice Periods	Work Practice Program
Guest Accommodations	Monastic Training
Guest Student Program	Conference Facilities

Beginner's Mind Temple in San Francisco 415-863-3136
Green Gulch Farm in Marin County 415-383-3134

WWW.SFZC.ORG

Radical Liberation

Dr. Ambedkar and Democracy in India

by Mangesh Dahiwale

"My social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Let no one, however, say that I have borrowed my philosophy from the French Revolution. I have not. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my master, the Buddha."

—Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, 1954

The Hindu caste system is the longest surviving system of human slavery. Like other institutionalized systems of oppression such as racism and sexism, the caste system gives rise to suffering as it divides people into watertight compartments, controls access to knowledge and resources, and denies human dignity. When people from the Untouchable caste demand their rights and dignity, they are suppressed by members of higher castes, often through violence. Although the practice of untouchability was abolished by the Constitution of India, it continues to exist in various forms in rural and urban India today. The people classed as Untouchables (also known as Dalits) constitute one-sixth of India's population.

This is the story of how one man, Dr. Ambedkar, devoted his life to the liberation of India's Dalit population, and how his dharma-inspired work continues today.

The Education of Dr. Ambedkar

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was a brilliant, if controversial, figure in India. He was born in 1891 in central India into an Untouchable caste. Throughout his life, he experienced extreme caste-based discrimination from India's educational, political, and social structures.

When he was a young student, Ambedkar's upper-caste teachers did not allow him to study Sanskrit. He and other Untouchable children received little attention and were not even allowed to sit inside the classroom. Despite such treatment, Ambedkar became the first person from the Untouchable caste in western India to enter college at the University of Bombay in 1907. This achievement was celebrated by one of Ambedkar's teachers, K. A. Keluskar, who presented

him with a biography of the Buddha. According to legend, Dr. Ambedkar's inner conversion to Buddhism took place after reading this book.

Although he did not formally convert to Buddhism until 1956, he was moving in that direction from an early age. He extensively read Buddhism during his stay at Columbia University, and his important speeches bear the stamp of dharma. In a 1936 speech titled "Which Way Liberation?" he advocated the importance of legal and constitutional changes in the democratization of society. But he noted that lasting social change can occur only when minds are changed. In 1941, he wrote:

Politically India is like a sick man.... The doctor who can wash this filth will help in establishing Democracy in India. That doctor undoubtedly is the Buddha. Only the Buddha can help in creating a democratic society. Therefore it is important to remember the Buddha and take his medicine (the Dhamma) for cleansing the political and social lifeblood of the Hindus.

The Maharaja of Baroda awarded the young Ambedkar a scholarship to pursue his education at Columbia University in

New York City, where he began studies in 1913. His time in the United States gave Ambedkar a taste of freedom from caste and untouchability, and exposed him to the Black Renaissance in Harlem. Later in his life, Dr. Ambedkar asked W. E. B. DuBois to help lobby for rights of the Untouchables in the newly constituted United Nations.

Political Awakening

Upon his return to India in 1917, Ambedkar served as a military secretary in the Baroda state government, in preparation for becoming a finance minister. Though he was highly educated, no one welcomed him, and he



**Through
Buddhism,
Dr. Ambedkar saw
the possibility of a
peaceful social
revolution.**

was forced to leave his position and return to Bombay. He started a consultancy service for stock-brokers but this enterprise failed because higher-caste clients did not want to consult with an Untouchable.

In 1918, Ambedkar took a job at Sydenham College in Bombay, where he soon became a popular teacher. During this time, he started to build the foundation for his future movement. In 1920, he started a journal, *Mook Nayak* (The Leader of Silent), to increase awareness of the rights for Untouchables. That same year, Ambedkar went to England to complete unfinished studies despite severe economic hardship.

When he returned to India in 1923, equipped with two doctorates and a law degree, Dr. Ambedkar launched a civil rights movement for the Untouchables. In 1924, he founded Bahishkrut Hitkarani Sabha (Society for the Welfare of the Untouchables) and began to organize his people to end the caste system. In 1927, he initiated two mass movements: at Mahad for the right to drink water from public water tanks, and in Nasik at the Kalaram temple for the right to enter Hindu temples.

At the Round Table Conference in England in 1930, Dr. Ambedkar advocated for civil and political rights for the Untouchables and spoke passionately for the rights of people to elect their own representatives, irrespective of caste and class. Though Mahatma Gandhi agreed to separate electorates for Sikhs and Muslims, he opposed the rights of the Untouchables to elect their own representatives. In spite of Gandhi's resistance, the Untouchables were awarded a separate electorate by the British prime minister. Gandhi vowed to fast until death against this decision. Higher-caste Hindus pressured Dr. Ambedkar with threats of assassination and mass murder of the Untouchables, and he was forced to reach an accord in which the Untouchables had to relinquish a separate electorate and settle for reserved seats.

The relationship between Gandhi and the Untouchable people was complex. Although Gandhi, who was born into the Vaishya caste (traditionally merchants and bankers), spoke out against Untouchability, he was also a conservative Hindu who believed in the verity of the sacred scriptures and in the caste system as an ideal form of organizing society. These beliefs alienated him from the majority of Untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar, who had to live with the cruel consequences of Untouchability all his life, advocated a much more radical approach to the problem: the elimination of the caste system. In 1935, he gave a speech that ignited national debate and was later published as the book *The Annihilation of Caste*.

Sensing the rigid and patronizing attitude of the caste Hindus, Dr. Ambedkar saw that the only way

forward was to leave a religion that made one "untouchable," and find a more liberatory belief system. After studying the world's major religions as well as communism, he concluded that only Buddhism was in accordance with his most valued principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The Buddha's emphasis on ethics, lovingkindness, altruism, rationality, and individual responsibility appealed to him. Through Buddhism, Dr. Ambedkar saw the possibility of a peaceful social revolution.

Dr. Ambedkar entered electoral politics in 1936 and founded several political parties, including the Independent Labour Party. In one of his greatest accomplishments, Dr. Ambedkar single-handedly drafted the Constitution of India in 1947. He used his knowledge of Buddhism to inform the draft, which included sangha practices such as voting by ballot, rules of debate, and the use of agendas, committees, and proposals to conduct business. The constitution provides for freedom of religion and the abolition of untouchability, and outlaws all forms of discrimination.

A few weeks before his death in 1956, Dr. Ambedkar, along with 500,000 Dalits, took refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, embracing a spiritual tradition free of prejudice and discrimination. Many more have followed since then. The number of Buddhists in India today is estimated at well over 20 million.

Carrying Forward the Work of Liberation

In recent years, the rise in religion-based nationalism in India has resulted in conflicts between Hindu nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists that have taken many lives. Sadly, Dr. Ambedkar's fear of Hindu nationalism has come true.

Dr. Ambedkar's goal was to create a truly democratic society, which he defined as one in which an individual can express all of his or her capacities. The caste system continues to be very strong in India and is a major hurdle to democratization. For Dr. Ambedkar, Buddhism was not a religion but rather a system of thoughts and practice with the potential to transform minds and therefore the world, and an effective vehicle for dismantling the caste system from the inside out.

Since Dr. Ambedkar's death in 1956, his followers have taken his movement forward. Thousands of social organizations have been formed in the name of Dr. Ambedkar, vowing to fulfill his dream. The growing political consciousness among his followers has resulted in the formation of a major national political party headed by a firebrand woman named Mayawati, herself a Dalit.

One of the organizations that works with the fol-

lowers of Dr. Ambedkar is the Jambudvipa Trust, founded by Dharmachari Lokamitra in 1998 to cultivate the relationship between individual ethical and spiritual practice and social transformation. The Manuski Project is an initiative of Jambudvipa. The word *Manuski* has connotations of humanity, compassion, and respect. The purpose of the project is to help socially deprived members of Indian society become free of the material and psychological obstacles to their full participation in a caste-free society. The Manuski Project is run by people who know from their own experience the realities of caste and untouchability. The project offers classes in Buddhist meditation and study, as well as residential retreats.

There is a conspiracy of silence over caste issues, and the Indian government has kept the issue out of the public eye. In 2006, the Manuski Project alerted a worldwide network of Buddhists and human rights agencies to raise awareness on the "Khairlanji Atrocity," a violent massacre against a Dalit family in 2006. A dedicated website was created to keep track of the case and to inform the public, and the international media was briefed about the incident. This advocacy work snowballed into more than 800 public protests all over India and in other countries too. The government finally appointed an official from the Central Bureau of Investigation to the case, and designated a public prosecutor.

The Khairlanji Atrocity generated a lot of public consciousness internationally, and a significant number of resolutions against caste have subsequently passed. The prime minister of India made a statement acknowledging that a "hidden apartheid" exists in India. There is a direct correlation between low caste and poverty. According to the National Crime Records Bureau Report of 2005, 26,127 crimes were committed against Dalits, including 669 murders and 1,172 rapes against Dalit women. Many cases remain unregistered due to local pressures of the feudal caste people.

The challenge for human rights activists is to find methods to annihilate the caste system. Buddhism is one means, and the Manuski Project is reaching out to people across different castes through Buddhism in order to address issues of human dignity and self-respect. As the Indian diaspora migrates to other parts of the world, the caste system is becoming global. A national movement isn't enough to fight the caste system; a global response is needed to end it. ❖

Mangesh Dahiwalé was educated as an electronic engineer. He works with the Jambudvipa Trust, where he is involved in publicity and communication, and serves as a contact for national and international agencies. He works closely with Dharmachari Lokamitra.

The Village Zendo

Spring / Summer '08

Beginning Instruction
Mondays at 6

All Day Retreats
Monthly

Urban Sesshin
March 12-16

Visit 'Zen Japan' with Roshi Enkyo
May 12-25

Summer Ango at the Grail
July 23- August 24

588 Broadway, Suite 910, NY, NY 10012
www.villagezendo.org, registrar@villagezendo.org



Roshi Enkyo O'Hara

In the Chaparral Mountains of Southern California



Manzanita Village

Retreats . Workshops . Residential Programs

www.manzanitavillage.org

PO Box 67, Warner Springs, CA 92086 tel: 760.782.9223

Pilgrimage with Dharmacharya Shantam Seth every winter through India and Nepal

Lumbini, Kapilavastu, BodhGaya, Sarnath, Varanasi, Rajgir, Nalanda, Sravasti, Kushinagar
"Shantam's Buddhapath journeys lead the awakening pilgrim to visions of the ancient paradise of Shakyamuni and his enlightened community still living in the midst of Mother India in all her paradoxical glory."

Prof. Robert Thurman

For information & free brochure:
info@buddhapath.com

U.S. Contact: Linda Ballantine: (888) 279 1484

Please Visit:

www.buddhapath.com



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUDDHA



Book Reviews

Perfect Hostage: A Life of Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's Prisoner of Conscience By Justin Wintle

Skyhorse Publishing, 2008, 480 pages

Reviewed by Everett Wilson

Aung San Suu Kyi's life, as portrayed by Justin Wintle in the biography *Perfect Hostage*, is woven from a rich fabric of Burmese history. As an outspoken leader of Burma's National League for Democracy (NLD), she weaves the more modern threads of democracy and nonviolent resistance with the historical heritage of Burmese Buddhism in her vision to create a free Burma. Most of all, we see her courage as she unflinchingly stares down a ruthless military junta without resorting to violence herself. Ultimately, her life serves as an embodiment of socially engaged Buddhism, and Wintle's biography is an inspiring account of what nonviolent political action can accomplish—when rooted in enough courage.

Aung San Suu Kyi's life is interspersed with the history of Burma. For the first 50 pages or so, Wintle outlines the rise and fall of various Burman dynasties that have struggled to govern and unite a diverse people. Throughout Burma's history, its ethnic minorities—the Karens, Karennis, Mons, Chins, Kachins, Shans, Rakhines, and Rohingyas—have rebelled against Burman rulers, who in turn have used force to suppress and enslave them. For centuries, Burmese people have struggled under the force of occupation—first the Chinese and Mongolians of antiquity, and, as Burma entered the modern era, British colonialism and Japanese imperialism. At times, I found Wintle's account of this complex history to be laborious and too removed to engage me in what proves to be important background for his unfolding narrative.

As Wintle moves into the 20th century, however, I find myself grateful for the background history. Reading about Suu Kyi's father, Aung San, and his struggles as a student leader who opposed British colonialism and later, Japanese occupation, I see Suu Kyi's life in a broader context. If Suu Kyi claims her leadership of the NLD to be her father's legacy, the Burmese dictator General Ne Win also claims her father's legacy as a soldier who fought alongside Aung San in the Burmese struggle for independence.

These conflicting claims for Aung San's legacy collide most dramatically on July 19, 1989, when Suu Kyi attempts to lead an NLD march to her father's grave on Martyr's Day, the national holiday commemorating the assassination of Aung San. Seeing that the military government, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), has filled the streets with armed soldiers, the NLD cancels the march at the last minute, "issuing a statement that it 'had no intention of leading our people straight into a killing field.' Suu Kyi added a personal statement. SLORC'S preventative actions, she said, only showed that 'we have a fascist government in power'.

The next day, July 20, 1989, when Suu Kyi attempted to leave her home at No. 54 University Avenue to privately lay a wreath on her father's grave, she discovered she was now under house arrest—an arrest that continued for six years, until July 10, 1995. (Suu Kyi has been placed under house arrest three times, for a total of twelve of the past eighteen years. Her arrest continues to this day.)

Despite the narrative distance Wintle undertakes as a political historian, there are moments when his prose shines with lyrical beauty. Whether in his description of Suu Kyi's unarmed confrontation with a contingent of Katmadaw soldiers outside the town of Danubyu, or in his riveting account of the bloody massacre outside Depayin, when Suu Kyi is again fortunate to escape with her life, Wintle's narrative makes history come alive.

After reading *Perfect Hostage*, I find myself grateful for this opportunity to know Suu Kyi more intimately, especially considering how difficult it is to get any news about her out of Burma. As a socially engaged Buddhist, I resonate with Suu Kyi's philosophy, which, as Wintle tells us, rules out force as a means of achieving transition.

And yet, I can't help but be troubled by some of the tough questions Wintle poses at the close of his book. If the situation in Burma is currently engaged in a stalemate, whereby the military regime hopes to literally outlive Aung San Suu Kyi and thus deflate the power of the NLD, it remains to be seen whether Suu Kyi's story is a triumph or a tragedy. Her struggle—Burma's struggle—to peacefully bring democracy to a country that has never known it is deeply relevant to social activists here in the United States, since we too have historically experienced violent resistance to peaceful protest. More than just the story of Burma's struggle for independence, Suu Kyi's life reveals exactly how far peaceful resistance can succeed in the face of uncompromising military force.

Everett Wilson is a writer and Zen student. After five years of monastic practice at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, he now lives and practices at the Berkeley Zen Center in Berkeley, California.

Tranquil Is This Realm of Mine: Dharma Talks and Writings of the Most Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii

Translated by Yumiko Miyazaki

Nipponzan Myohoji Publications, 2007, 207 pages

Reviewed by Zenju Earthlyn Manuel

If you were to suddenly hear the sound of drumming and the chanting of *Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo*, you might be standing before the monks and nuns of Nipponzan Myohoji, a temple in Japan founded by the Most Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii. However, this is not an

order that sits in the monastery but rather one that goes into the streets drumming and chanting to bring world peace to all who are open to the Buddha's teachings.

In order to fulfill a prophecy of Nichiren Daishonin, founder of Nichiren Buddhism, the venerable felt his mission was to bring the true spirit and teaching of the Buddha back to India. He first traveled to India in 1931 and returned countless times in the next 52 years. During that time of travel, he met Mahatma Gandhi, who bestowed upon him the name Guruji. It is believed that Gandhi began walking, drumming, and chanting with him.

Guruji, as the venerable is lovingly called, first published 128 dharma teachings and writings in Japanese as *Tenku Yomonshu* in 1991. This book is a translation of those teachings on topics including nonviolence, faith, service to others, war, economics, and materialism. In one of his talks recorded in this book, Guruji says, "Nonviolence demands extraordinary courage. It takes uncompromising faith in human beings and unwavering confidence in spiritual values to believe that there is Buddhature even in evil men and a resolve to sacrifice oneself for them."

Guruji's teachings provide an example of socially engaged Buddhism in which the activism is spreading the Dharma. Some would say he advocates proselytizing. He would say that spreading the Dharma is the bodhisattva practice, by spreading the path of liberation.

As a practitioner of Nichiren Buddhism for 15 years, I enjoyed reading this book because it brought back to me the power of chanting and sharing one voice. It brought back the fulfillment in sharing the Dharma with others if they asked that of me. This was the way I engaged with the world. So the book was a revisit to how I took action as a Buddhist.

Now reading this beautifully presented (in photographs and calligraphy) book as a practitioner of Soto Zen, I am challenged with Guruji's teachings around the appropriateness of activism in spreading the Dharma. It is a social activism that is clear and appeals to me, yet many lineages of American-convert Buddhism would avoid such an approach to injustices, preferring peaceful protests or sharing financial resources. Guruji's teachings might not be appealing to those who prefer the latter. Also, many Buddhist practitioners will find Guruji's teachings highly religious, authoritative, and direct. At the same time his *gathas* (short verses) are poetry.

If you are interested in the Buddha's teachings as they relate to social engagement without joining the secular activist movement, then this book might serve your needs. Perhaps after reading it you might feel motivated to walk out your door, start drumming and chanting, and wake up the neighborhood.

Dr. Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, executive director of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, is a contributing author to Dharma, Color, and Culture: New Voices in Western Buddhism (Parallax Press), an anthology of essays by Buddhist teachers and practitioners of color.

One City: A Declaration of Interdependence

By Ethan Nichtern

Wisdom Publications, 2007, 175 pages, \$19.95

Reviewed by Patrick Carolan

Clueing readers in to the existence of what he calls "the Real Internet"—the myriad of relational, spiritual and economic links by which every being is interconnected—Ethan Nichtern, author of *One City*, prompts readers to think deeper. From the application of Buddhist philosophy to this theory of interdependence, Nichtern provides readers with a handbook for improving their own lives and the world they live in.

From Chinese-made toothbrushes and Indian-sown sweatshirts to American-designed (and subsequently Chinese-made) alarm clocks that are an inescapable aspect of our daily routines, Nichtern reveals the thousands of ways we depend on others across the globe. By virtue of this interdependence, he argues, the fate of the world is everyone's responsibility: we must all work toward solving the issues of global warming, genocide, and poverty, for—as he reminds us—turning a blind eye to them is as bold of a statement as speaking out is.

His solution? Buddhism. Through the outwardly seeming "self-centered" practice of meditation, Nichtern believes that Buddhism offers a way to "bring the practitioner to a place where she or he is more and more able to live with the world." He argues that the mind is our "wireless connection" to the Real Internet; therefore it is only natural to "train ourselves in the skilful operation of this basic interface." Increased mindfulness, awareness, and insight developed by meditation, Nichtern suggests, will help us to proactively interface with our external world.

The message contained in *One City* is one of hope. Nichtern asks readers to open their eyes to the problems around them, and while he may not have all the solutions, he offers one or two. While it can occasionally feel as if he's trying a bit too hard to be hip with his references to pop culture, his breezy style and reader-friendly approach to sharing knowledge will especially resonate with young people looking for a new way to better the planet. This proactive socialization of an up-and-coming generation trying to remain hopeful in a chaotic universe is the key strength of his book and why it makes a great read for anyone looking for practical suggestions on how to leave the world in a better state than when we found it. ❖

Patrick Carolan is 21 years old and writes from Vancouver, where he studies psychology, history, and Korean language at the University of British Columbia.

We Give Gratitude

BPF gratefully acknowledges contributions above membership received between August 1 and November 30, 2007:

Fred Abels • Diana Abrashkin • Miriam Del Duca Adlum • Martin Ahrens • Kari Akers • Paul F. Albert Fund of Horizons Foundation • Lee Allen • Judith Alper • Jean Alvarez • William and Diane Ames • George Appenzeller • Mary Armour • Helga Ashkenaze • Margrit L. Atalig • Judy Babinski • Ray Ball and Gwen Coe • Michael Balogh • Melissa Banks • Claudia H. Banta • Fairley Barnes • Irving Barrett • Betty Bass • David Beaulieu • Rachel Belash • Dianne Y. Bell • Judith Bell • Joe Benenate • Samuel C. Benner • Barbara Bennett • Teresa Benson • Sarah Berel-Harrop • Jeff Berry • Sarah Beserra • Don Bethel • Rachel Billowitz • Helen Blackeby • Tim Boger • David and Roberta Borglum • Tay Bosley • Irene Bowie • Bob Bowman and Coral Mack • Richard Brady and Elisabeth Dearborn • Barron Brainerd • Neal Brandoff • John Briggs • Lauren and Ginger Brightwell • Cristian Brito • Cheryl Brown • George Brown • Rachel Buddeberg • Joanna Bull • David Bullard • Patricia Burbank and Michael Kilgroe • Marco Burenko • Anne Burich • Kathe Burick • Karen Burkhardt • Tim Burnett • Dorothy Burton • Cindy Burton • John Busch and Colleen Morton Busch • Heather Buttle • Kathleen Cahill • Christopher Calhoun • Margery Cantor • Mitchell Cantor • John Carey • Joel Carp • Julio Carrello • Edward B. Carskadon • David S. Cassells • Adriana Cavina • Mark T. Celedonia • Wendy Chapkis • Mary Ann Chapman • Pimporn Chavasant • Whittnee Chen • Eirene Chen • Tenzin Chogyi • Sarah Chynoweth • Donna Cieply • Mollie Clarke and Cynthia Calvert • Ginger Clarkson • Anne Clay • Sally Clay • Trena M. Cleland • Marilyn Clements • Elizabeth Coe • Gerald Cohen • Robin Cohen • Murray Cohen • Mary Coker • Michael Colligan • Karen T. Connelly • Phebe Connolly • Helen Cooluris and Richard Ditzler • Carmela Cooper • Tony and Gillian Cootie • Marilyn Copeland • Barbara Cornell • Dennis Courtney • Barbara Couture • Willis Cowing • Terry Cox • Margaret F. Crawford • Philip Crean • Betsy Crites • David Cross • James Crouse • Patrick Cunningham • Linda Ruth Cutts and Steven Weintraub • Jessica Damen • Todd Danen • Paul Davis • Linda Davis • Cheryl Davis • Martha and Lee De Barros • Stuart Dean • Linda K. Deaton • Ann C. DeBaldo • D. J. Delaney • Linda and Russell Delman • Christie Denhart • Laura Denman • Angela R. Dickey • Alan Dorr • Dolores Ducommun • Jessie Duff-McLaurin • Martin Duffy and Nancy James • Rebecca Durant • Nancy Edwards • Ruth N. Edwards • Bill Edwards • Harriet F. Elkington • Gyl Elliott • Brian Ely • Ruth Emers • Kirk Emerson • Elizabeth Emmer • Paula England • Jean Erlbaum • Gloria Evans • Douglas P. Evans • Mikos Fabersunne • Susanne Fairclough • Pauline Feltner • Mark Ferguson • Cate Fering • Carolyn Zecca Ferris • Elizabeth Flanagan • Linda Forrester • Jeffrey Franklin • Frank Fredericks • Jack Freese • Lenore Friedman • Nancy Friedman • Barbara Frierson • Marie Friquegnon • Tabitha Fronk • Ronald Frost • Gay Gale and Peter Dering • Andrew Galpern • Thomas J. Gangloff • Dr. Sandra Garcia • Doug Gary and John Wiskind • Ken and Susan Genevish • Rhoda Gilman • Rochelle Gingerich • David and Judith Glaser • Ronald Goltermann • Ann Gonzalez • Joseph Gorman • Chuck Gould • Susan Gracey • Ruby Grad • Nancy Grant • Barbara L. Gray and Domenic Santaricca • Kathy Grayson • Amelia Greacen • Rev. Tova Green • Howard Green • Warren Gschard • Susan Gwynne • Dr. Kate Ha • Margaret Haberbush • Constance Delois Hamilton • Bob Koshin Hanson and Karen Ingvaldstad • Faye A. Harasack • Karen Harley • William Harrison • Blanche and Louis Hartman • Roger Hawkins • Willis B. Hayes • Donald Heapes and Pam De Ryke • Barry Heath • Ann Fischer Hecht • Barbara Stevens Helfant • Emily Heller • Boyd Herforth • Eva Herzer • Anne Hietbrink • Erin Hill • Peitsa Hirvonen • Helen D. Hobart • Michael Hodder • Sandra Hodson • Ned Hoke • Joanne Holden • Deborah Holloway • Jean Holroyd-Sills • James Hopper • Jamie and Maki Hubbard • Betsy Huffman • Suzette Hughes • Springer Hunt • Corrine Hunt • Sandy Hunter • Christopher Ives • Rose Jambrone • Jill Jameson • Gary W. Janka • James and Chanpider Janko • Becky Jennings and Walt Mann • Lynne Jewett Smith • Sonia Jirka • Kristin Johannsen and Kevin Millham • Rachel and Tony Johansen • Breck Jones • Elwyn Jordan • Lynne Journey • Margaret Jusiel • Angela Justice • Dahlia and Jack Kamesar • Madeleine Kamman • Tamara Kan and Gil Fronsdal • Steve Karpa • Pam Kasa • Nancy Kates • Charles and Angeliki Keil • Joseph Kelaghan • Jill Kelly • Valerie Kelly • Lola Kemp • James and Renate Kempf • Michael Keown • Grace and Tom Kepler • Roger Keyes • Dr. Ken Khoury • Lucy Khoury • Mary A. Kiedis-Keough • David Kilroy • Sandy and Su Il Kim • Terry Kinzel • Charles Klein • Sheila Klein • Laurie A. Klesitz • Michael Knappman • Sheila Knupp • Susan L. Koen PhD • Dr. Helen R. Koepfer • Pamela Krasney • Jennie Kristel • Bill and

Beth Krumbein • Sidney J. Kurn • Jacqueline Kurtz • Anchalee Kurutach • Lynn La Count • Sheila LaFarge • Lori Lass • George Le Large • Bokara Legendre • Carol Lemei • Jim Lemkin • David and Mona Lemon • Bart Leonard • Laura Leso • Mark Leventer • Eva and Alan Leveton • Mordecai Levine • Kathy T. Liu • Kristin K. Loken • Dorothy Lower • David Loy • Lisa Luke-Lee and Rick Ramirez • Lucy Lunt • Leonie W. Luterman • Lynn Lyle • Nancy Maclaime • Anne Macquarie • Eda Marcus Malenky • Jennifer Mancini • Lana Manzanita • Genjo Marinello • Jennifer Mark • Kristina Markey • Paula Markham • Alan Marlatt • Michele Martin • Toni Mason • Dan Matarozzi and Dan Pelsinger • Keitaro Matsuda • Sachi Matsumoto • Michael May • Kam McCallum-Gesher and Gabriella Heinsheimer • Chris McCarthy • Susan McEvoy • Deborah McFarland • Delia McGrath • Maureen McGraw • Joseph E. McGrory • Patricia McKowen • Charles McMichael • William Jonen Meegan • Marvin Mercer • Misha Merrill • Jerry Meyer • Geri Meyer • Janine Miller • Peter A. T. Miller • David Mills • Claudia Milstead • Priscilla Minn • Donna Minock • Deba Mitra Bhikkhu • Susan Moon • Karola Moore • Bernice Moore • Maryellen Mori • Luis Morones • John Mudd • Donna Mumma and Chris Bartlett • Jean and Carl Myers • Brian Nagata • Susan Nash • Francoise Navarro • Robert Nevraumont • R. Scott Newcomb • Chua Viet Nam • Letitia Noel • Jane S. Norbeck • Sherri Nordwall • Thomas A. Norton • Emily O'Brien • Kevin O'Connor • Stephen O'Neil and Cathy Grubham • Gerhard Overmann • Marge Oishi • April Oliver • Paul C. Opperman • Mary Orr • Phyllis A. Oscar • Bounsouan Outhamonty • Theresa Owens • Pearl Oyle • Joseph F. Palen • Martha Pamperin • Suzannah Parker • Glen Parker • Lon Parsons • Shen Pauley • Lucinda Peach • Richard Pearce • Ira Pearlman • Louis Pech • Kathleen Pelley • Douglas Pengilly • Paul E. Pennell • Trime Persinger • Brigitte Pichot • Christopher Piel • Fred Pietrzak • Lindsay Pinkham • Jeffrey Plate • Melvin Pohl • Renee Potik and Kay Taus • Rev. Baika A. Pratt • Maura Quealy • Ralph Quillman • Gail Quillman • Nel and Dan Quinn • Sue Quinn • Connie Ralls • Martin Ramstedt • Judith Randall • Miriam Raphael • John Rask • Alice Ray • Mark Redmond • Eric A. Reed • Benedict Reid • Richard Reoch • Michael Reshetnik • Tom Restaino • Anna Louise Reynolds Fund of Triangle Community Foundation • Rhea • Juanita J. Rice • Louise Teddi Richman • Melissa Riparetti-Stepien • Tey Roberts and Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts • Larry Robinson • Elizabeth Robinson • Walter Robinson • Karin Hilsdale Rodes • Timothy Roller • Keith A. Roper • Adrienne Ross • John B. Ross • Cheryl Ross • Katy Roth • Kathy Rowe • Claire and John Rubin • Brady and Ira Rubin • Nancy Russell • Alison Ruzicka • Nora Ryerson • Dina and David Saalisi • Nancy D. Sackman • Sara Salisbury • Grace Sanchez • James Schafer • Peter and Grace Schireson • Ronald Schneider • Martina Schneider • Jennifer Schneider • Jan Blaustein Scholes • Claire L. Schosser • Todd Schroeder • Stephen Schryver • Tom Schuessler • Stephen Schwichow • Doris Segal Matsunaga • Seth Segall • Mary Selkirk and Lee Ballance • Alan and Laurie Senauke • Sheila Shafer • Diane M. Sharon • Judith A. Sharp • Robert B. Shea and Kate Weisskopf • Thomas Shostak • Mark Sibley • Jacqueline Siegel • Dan Siegel • Larry Simon • Mariana Sintay • David Ross Smith • Kathrin Smith • Ch'anna Lynda Smith • Corby Smith • Deborah Smith Bernstein • Regina A. Sneed • Jesus Solorio • Nan Soule • Margaret Spallone • Daniel Spelce • David B. Spurgeon • Mae Stadler • Steve C. Stadtfeld • Eric and Lynne Stietzel • Meredith Stout • Steve Stucky • Michael Sugarman • Nancy L. Suib • Robert Swanson • Walter Tamao • Beverly Tangri • Geraldine C. Taplin • Denise Taylor • William Taylor • Richard K. Taylor • Marlea Taylor • Patricia Tegler • Abby Terris and Misha Schurman • Mary L. Thompson • David Thomson • Grace Tiessen • Kathryn Tinsley • Al Tribe • Marianna Tubman • Keith and Karen Umezawa • Peter Van Etten • Betsy VanLeit • Nyvette Vicens • Allan Vogel • Eric Von Horstman • Thein Wah • Roberta Wall • Sheila Wall • Beth Walsh • Edda Weber • Joan Webster • Katherine Weed • Judi Weinstein • Judith M. Weitzner • Greg Wellons • Myoyo Sara Wexler • David Wilensky • Cheryl Wilfong • Christian Willauer • M. Katherine Williams • Richard Williams • Lyn Willwerth • Cynthia Denton Wineburgh • Madeleine Wing and W. Travis Selmier II • Diana Winston • Robert Wist • Peter M. Wood • Jessie Wood • Marcos Wunderlich • Ruth Yeatman • Stefan Zijlstra • Rev. Sara Zimmerman • Ken Zimmerman • Connie Zimmerman • Laura Zulch-Hays • Lilian Zwyns

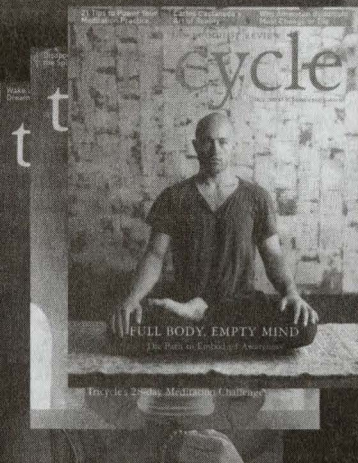
In memory: Larry LeBron in memory of Peter and Rachele LeBron.

Special thanks to all who volunteer their time to BPF: Gene Baker, Yvonne Charles, John DelCarlino, Joseph Ginsberg, David Mavity, Susan Calico, Les Nightingill, Leslie Thomas, Jean Fournier, Diana de Pineres, Uma Kahn, Jan Eldridge, Jenessa de Rivera, and Everett Wilson. ♦

THE BUDDHIST REVIEW
tricycle

your tool for practice

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
www.tricycle.com
800.873.9871



the independent voice of Buddhism

THE INSTITUTE OF THE SOTO ZEN BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION
OFFERS A RESIDENTIAL WORKSHOP OPEN TO
ALL BUDDHIST TRADITIONS

ETHICALLY TEACHING THE DHARMA

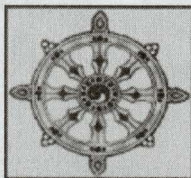
FOR TEACHERS AND SANGHA LEADERS

AT GREAT VOW ZEN MONASTERY
NORTH OF PORTLAND, OREGON

MONDAY JULY 7- SUNDAY JULY 13

LED BY REV. ALAN HOZAN SENAUE, JAN CHOZEN BAYS, ROSHI,
REV. KYOKI ROBERTS AND UNITARIAN DISTRICT EXECUTIVE JANINE SEITETSU LARSEN

BUDDHIST ETHICS & THE MIDDLE WAY
THE COMPLEX ROLES OF SANGHA LEADERS
CONFLICT DYNAMICS IN COMMUNITIES
ETHICAL BOUNDARIES
CRISIS: PREVENTION & HEALING
POWER: WHAT IS IT? USING IT SKILLFULLY
ETHICS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



SEXUALITY, MEDICAL ISSUES AND GREY AREAS
CULTURE AND TRADITION AFFECTING ETHICS
WORKING WITH VULNERABLE POPULATIONS
GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERIAL BOUNDARIES
PERSONAL NEEDS: SELF CARE AND RENEWAL
ETHICAL FUNDRAISING

\$280 SZBA MEMBERS/ASSOCIATES
\$380 NON-MEMBERS
(DANA FOR TEACHERS)

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER
VISIT [HTTP://WWW.ZENDUST.ORG/SANGHAETHICS.HTM](http://www.zendust.org/sanghaethics.htm)
503-728-0654



ZEN CENTER OF NEW YORK CITY

John Daido Looi, Abbot
Geoffrey Shugen Arnold
Resident Teacher

Lay-Training Center

Residential Program

*Zen Teacher and
Monastic Staff
in Residence*

*Daily Meditation
Schedule*

Saturday retreats

For more information (718) 875-8229
www.mro.org/fretotus
zcity@mro.org



Mountains and Rivers Order of Zen Buddhism

Buddhist Peace Fellowship

Teen & Young Adult Retreats

*Building Community Through
Deeper Awareness*



For information on our fall, winter, and spring retreats please
contact Tempel Smith at 510-655-6169 x305, or visit:
www.bpf.org/teens.html (ages 15-19)
www.bpf.org/ya.html (ages 18-30)

BPF Chapters and Affiliates

Visit our website, www.bpf.org, for updates, along with a list of "BPF Friends" (more informal groups).

U.S. Chapters

NORTHEAST REGION

BOSTON, MA

Joan Schwartz
info@bpfboston.org
www.bpfboston.org

NEW YORK CITY, NY

Chris Raines
212/545-4123
info@bpfny.org
www.bpfny.org

ROCHESTER, NY

Jay Thompson
585/576-6073
info@rochesterbpf.org
www.rochesterbpf.org

SOUTHERN REGION

WASHINGTON, DC

Rebecca Hines
301/529-6158
info@wbpf.org
www.wbpf.org

TAMPA BAY, FL

Tom Lacy
727/455-1056
bpf.tampabay@gmail.com

NASHVILLE, TN

Joey King
615/485-1616
jbkranger@aol.com

MIDWEST/CENTRAL REGION

CHICAGO, IL

Dean Kaufer
773/465-4279
deankaufer@mac.com
www.bpf.org/chicago

CINCINNATI, OH

Mary Clare Rietz and
Mike Marcotte
513/821-3031
mikemaryclare@cinci.rr.com
www.bpfcincinnati.org

CLEVELAND, OH

Lynne Brakeman
lbrakeman@cox.net
www.bpfcleveland.org

MADISON, WI

Kathy Derene
608/233-4118
kathy@derene.com
www.madisonbpf.org

MILWAUKEE, WI

Paul Brodwin
brodwin@uwm.edu

WESTERN REGION

(See separate listing for California chapters)

JUNEAU, AK

Sudie Hargis
907/321-8300
sudielak@yahoo.com

HONOLULU, HI

Pete Shimazaki Doktor
dok@riseup.net

PORTLAND, OR

Heidi Enji Hoogstra
503/236-5741
bpfportland@yahoo.com
www.bpfportland.com

BELLINGHAM, WA

Edi Norton
360/527-9101
edwinanorton@earthlink.net

OLYMPIA, WA

Robert Lovitt
360/357-5409
ssbpf@comcast.net

SEATTLE, WA

Elaine Waller-Rose
206/725-7074
elainewr@speakeasy.org

CALIFORNIA

HUMBOLDT

Mitch Trachtenberg
707/677-0762
mjtrac@gmail.com

LOS ANGELES

Richard Modiano
310/439-1507
richardmodiano@earthlink.net

NEVADA CITY

Perissa Busick
530/265-4274

SAN DIEGO

Ava Torre-Bueno
619/294-8779
avatb@cox.net

SAN FRANCISCO

Lee Lipp
415/864-4828
sfchapter@bpf.org

SANTA CRUZ

Phyllis Levin
831/475-8037
and
David Hofvendahl
davidhofvendahl@hotmail.com
www.bpfsc.org

TASSAJARA MOUNTAIN MONASTERY

Judith Randall
39171 Tassajara Rd.
Carmel Valley, CA 93924

International Chapters

CANADA: VANCOUVER

Andrew Larcombe
604/879-3650
larcombe@telus.net

AUSTRALIA: MELBOURNE

Jill Jameson
61-3-9844-2289
jamesonjg@bigpond.com

AUSTRALIA: SYDNEY

Mari Rhydwen
rhydwen@bigpond.net.au

ITALY: MILAN

Stefano Bettera
stefano.bettera@stefanobettera.eu
www.bpffitalia.org

SPAIN

Jean-Jacques Vellino
BPF Bodhyanga, Barcelona
jjv@dzogchen.bodhyanga.org
<http://dzogchen.bodhyanga.org>

Affiliates

AMIDA TRUST

01/162-867-476
www.amidatrust.com

U.K. NETWORK OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS

secretary@engagedbuddhists.co.uk

FOUNDATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF BURMA

415/978-3016
www.foundationburma.org

GAY BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP

415/974-9878
www.gaybuddhist.org

GREEN SANGHA

415/459-8610
info@greensangha.org
www.greensangha.org

INEB JAPAN

81-566-76-2486
Suzuki Ryowa, 81 Honyashiki
Minowa Anjo Aichi 00446,
Japan

KARUNA CENTER

413/367-9520
www.karunacenter.org

PEACEMAKER CIRCLE INTERNATIONAL

413/367-2048
info@peacemakercircle.org
www.peacemakercircle.org

PRISON DHARMA NETWORK

303/544-5923
pdn@indra.com
www.prisondharmanetwork.org

SAKYADHITA

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BUDDHIST WOMEN
www.sakyadhita.org

Buddhist Peace Fellowship

PO Box 3470
Berkeley, CA 94703 USA

Address Service Requested

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 413
BERKELEY, CA



LAMA SURYA DAS is the author of *The Big Questions* (Rodale, 2007) and *Buddha Is As Buddha Does*, (HarperSanFrancisco, 2007). He is also the author of *Natural Radiance (Sounds True)*, as well as a number of other books including *Letting Go of the Person You Used to Be* and the *Awakening* trilogy, which includes the classic *Awakening the Buddha Within* (Broadway).

Lama Surya is a Lineage holder of Tibetan Buddhism in the Rimé (non-sectarian) tradition. For over thirty years, including more than eight years in secluded retreat, he has studied with the great masters of Tibetan Buddhism. With his open and lively style, he is particularly effective in the transmission of Buddhism in viable Western forms by presenting Buddhist ethics and insight, as well as methods of practice, in a manner accessible to all.

DZOGCHEN

THE NATURAL GREAT PERFECTION

DZOGCHEN RETREATS WITH LAMA SURYA DAS

Dzogchen is the consummate practice of Tibetan Buddhism. Considered by many to be "the teaching of our time," Dzogchen is direct, immediate, essentialized, adaptable, and profound: a pure awareness practice applicable to any circumstance and readily integrated into modern life. Dzogchen, often translated as the Natural Great Perfection, directly introduces us to our inner Buddha, the inherent freedom, purity and perfection of being that is our true nature.

DZOGCHEN CENTER MEDITATION RETREATS are held across the country, throughout the year:

Joshua Tree, CA	Spring	March 29 – April 6, 2008
Garrison, NY	Summer	July 25 – August 3, 2008
Garrison, NY	Winter	January 3 – 11, 2009

MULTIPLE TEACHINGS DAILY • NOBLE SILENCE • BEAUTIFUL SURROUNDINGS
VEGETARIAN MEALS • PRIVATE, SEMI-PRIVATE, AND DORM ROOMS AVAILABLE



DZOGCHEN CENTER
BUDDHISM FOR THE WEST

For complete information and secure on-line registration for all of these scheduled events, go to www.dzogchen.org/retreats, e-mail retreat@dzogchen.org, or call 617-628-1702.

Creating a Legacy of Peace

For 30 years, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship has been a compassionate and nonviolent instrument of social change. BPF takes a progressive stance on militarism, disarmament, the prison-industrial complex, and environmental and human rights.

- Your support makes our ongoing work possible during these challenging times. Please consider:**
- Corporate or matching gifts
 - Endowments and/or foundation gifts
 - A gift in tribute to a loved one
 - Life insurance and retirement plan gifts
 - Including BPF in your will or trust
 - A gift of appreciated securities



Contact Oren Sofer at 510/655-6169, x300. All inquiries are confidential.