



B U D D H I S T P E A C E F E L L O W S H I P

NEWSLETTER OF THE BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP, SUMMER 1990

BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP
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❖ *Buddhists & Native Americans:*

An Interview with Peter Matthiessen

❖ *A Ritual for Aborted & Miscarried Children*

❖ *Theater Work with Cambodian Refugees*

❖ *Story of an Arrest*

All Members' BPF Meeting September 21-23; Cambridge MA; See p. 44

CONTENTS

Readings	3	
Risking Truth: An Interview with Peter Matthiessen	15	Earth Day at Green Gulch Wendy Johnson, Stephanie Kaza
Being Arrested Maylie Scott	20	Prophets Without Names Kaz Tanahashi
Thai Buddhist Women Dr. Kabilsingh	24	Buddhism & The Bourgeois Blues Andy Cooper
Conflict in Ladakh An Interview with Chhoje-rinpoche	26	Healing the Broken Mirror Ellen Sidor
Ceremony for Aborted & Miscarried Children Melody Ermachild	28	Book Reviews
		Chapters & Members
		44

FROM THE EDITOR

The hidden theme of this issue is the risk and consequence of political action. Peter Matthiessen suffered years of FBI harrassment and censorship for his straightforward account of a shootout. Maylie Scott went to jail for protesting at a weapons station; Thich Tue Sy sits in a Vietnamese jail for his beliefs. These are just a few of the brave people who have endured the karma of what they believed to be right action, or right speech.

We often celebrate righteous causes in these pages, but as Buddhists we have to look also at the retribution for our enthusiasms — without fear, but also without naivete, for those retributions can be very severe indeed.

I had the good luck recently to see a film entitled *Through The Wire*, by Nina Rosenblum. This documentary shows the conditions of high-security prison life for three women who were put in jail for 'political crimes.' There is no word short of 'torture' to describe their treatment. I saw the film in a theatre, and by the end of the movie

there were few dry eyes left in the audience. My own were tears of shame — that our Justice Department, that our *country* could sink to such a level.

Through the Wire also ran as lead film of an extraordinary Public Television show called P.O.V. I am grateful for both the film and the series; other P.O.V. episodes I've seen were highly provocative.



This issue will be my last as Editor. The nearly two years I have been associated with the publication have been extremely rich for me; I have learned an enormous amount, and have made many wonderful friends. I resign only because I need to concentrate on another writing project which cannot be accomplished 'part-time.'

My best consolation is that the next Editor, Susan Moon (author of *Tofu-roshi*) will take very good care of the Newsletter. It has been a joy to work with her on this issue. I can say that she'll have a great staff, and a lively, responsive readership.

Thank you.



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For the Busy Buddhist

Free and fair elections were held in Burma for the first time in 28 years this past May. The National League for Democracy (the opposition party), under Aung San Suu Kyi, won. The Ne Win government and the army are refusing to hand over power and honor the election results, until certain "conditions" are met. One of these conditions is the writing of a new constitution, which could take years. In the meantime, they are relocating people by the thousands out of the cities and into rural areas to break up the population, and the torture and killing of dissidents continues. They have been holding Aung San under house arrest for more than a year.

An effective way to pressure the Burmese government to honor the elections and restore human rights is through economics. Some American companies doing business in Burma are: Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, Amoco, Unocal, and Exxon. We suggest that you urge them to withdraw their business from Burma until a just social, political, and economic order has been restored. Please send copies of your letters, (and any responses) to the National BPF Office. We will consider urging a boycott of these companies if there is no satisfactory response.

Teak is another important and lucrative export; and the Burmese use the profits to buy arms. The Burmese teak forests (the last in the world) are being harvested by Thai lumber companies at an alarming rate. All teak coming out of Thailand should also be boycotted, as most of it is from Burma. If you would like to organize a boycott in your area, please contact the national BPF office.

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Letters

Dear Friends,

I was disappointed in the Libyan Listening Project's failure to question Ibrahim Aboudhazm, Vice President of the Libyan people's General Assembly, about his belief that "Reagan was following International Zionism when he bombed Libya." [Gene Knudsen-Hoffman, "Listening to the Libyans," Winter 1990 issue.]

"International Zionism"!? This is not an innocent phrase. Too often it has been a pretext for persecution and pogrom. What is Mr. Aboudhazm saying? Does he really believe that the president of the United States takes his orders from "International Zionism"? Couldn't someone have asked him what he meant? And whom he includes in his conspiracy — all Jews? Some Jews? Which Jews? How does he tell?

Leaving this claim to hang there unchallenged does not leave me with an open mind concerning Libya, though that is presumably the intent of the project. I am left suspicious and wary. I would rather not be. The Listening Project's campaign to "put a human face on Libya" would benefit from asking more questions.

— Murray Reiss, Vancouver, B.C.

To the Editor:

The issue of traveling in Tibet during this tumultuous time raises many questions. The 1990 Peace Climb, perhaps sincere in its intentions, overlooked the damaging ramifications of their undertaking.

Is it appropriate to take a holiday in the midst of repression of the Tibetan people? Many members of the expedition arrived in Lhasa in March. During this period, anticipation of demonstrations provoked a huge military build-up by authorities. Chinese officials have encouraged foreign travelers to visit, while maintaining an iron fist policy over citizens in both Tibet and China. This sort of cultural exchange has been deemed a "tragic parody" by Tibetan exile Jamyang Norbu, who has written extensively on the subject.

Is the money spent by a climbing expedition subsidizing this tyrannical regime? Norbu contends the economic benefits Tibetan citizens receive from foreign travelers is negligible. With the resettlement of Chinese in Tibet, most jobs in the service sector are held by Chinese. It is doubtful that Tibetans directly benefited from the \$1,000,000 plus spent by the Peace Climb.

Is one willing to be used as a propaganda tool by Chinese officials? Visitors to Lhasa have been featured in articles in the People's Daily, and other publications. This provides officials with a tool to present to Chinese citizens that the world approves of the methods used to control internal strife. The Whittaker group was such a high profile crusade that they were extremely vulnerable as an instrument for propaganda.

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press included photographs of US, Soviet and Chinese flags waving in unison in the breeze. This symbolism of teamwork fails to take into account the abuse and repression inflicted by the Chinese in Tibet and China. Any depiction of the Chinese government as congenial only perpetuates the already short attention span many Americans maintain concerning foreign affairs.

In interviews with the press, Whittaker spoke of the significance of the Chinese government allowing the Tibetans to be a part of the expedition. He fails to recognize that the Chinese would welcome this positive exposure by an American during this period when world opinion is extremely important to their regime.

Whittaker therefore placed himself and the entire expedition in the position of being used as a propaganda tool for the Chinese government, and actually paid them for this privilege.

Travel throughout Tibet may provide a positive cultural exchange, and perhaps a vehicle for disseminating information. These positive results need to be weighed against the damage done when a propaganda tool is provided for Chinese officials, and when the Chinese government is characterized in such a complimentary profile. The Peace Climb unfortunately crossed this line, and therefore lost the benefits Whittaker desired in the first place.

— *Martha Bellisle, Ventura, California*

Dear Editor:

The extremely disparate coverage in the latest BPF Newsletter given to the deaths of two Zen roshis — Maurine Stuart and Katagiri — is an example of what women are up against in Zen and other Buddhist establishments. There is barely one column on Maurine and three on Katagiri, including a piece of his writing.

The omission of all biographical facts on Maurine's life in contrast to the two columns of biography and eulogy for Katagiri belittles Maurine's achievements and denies this information to those readers who did not know her.

As a concert pianist, mother, wife, and woman roshi in the early days of Zen in America, Maurine was a pioneer on several fronts. Had a man done all this, he would certainly be hailed as remarkable. As it is, BPF Newsletter has hardly hailed Maurine at all.

— *Ann Spanel, Somerville, MA*

We apologize for any appearance of belittling Maurine Stuart-roshi's life and accomplishments. We solicited material from several of her students, and we printed what we got. We are glad to be able to amend our presentation with this new information. —Ed.

Prison Dharma Network

I am writing to you on behalf of Prison Dharma Network, Incorporated. My name is Fleet W. Maull. I am a 40-year-old male American Buddhist prisoner serving a 25-year sentence in the federal system. I am currently incarcerated at the U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners (MCFP) in Springfield, Missouri where I have been coordinating the MCFP Dharma Study Group for the last 4 1/2 years.

With the help of several sangha friends on the outside, I have recently founded Prison Dharma network, Inc. with the intention of developing a nonsectarian Buddhist support network for prisoners involved in Dharma practice and study. [See below] We invite you to refer prisoners to PDN. We will make every effort to assist and support them in their Dharma practice.

There seems to me to be a very natural connection and unity of purpose between Prison Dharma Network and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Prisons are in great need of further attention from our society. They tend to be disregarded altogether in people's aspirations for a better world. The Dharma can be an ideal vehicle for bringing peace, fairness, and ecological wisdom to the world of prisons and to the men and women who have been abandoned and forgotten there.

*Sincerely yours in the Dharma,
Fleet W. Maull #19864-044
P.O. Box 4000
Springfield, MO 65808.*

Prison Dharma Network, a not-for-profit religious organization incorporated in the State of Connecticut, has been established to provide a nonsectarian Buddhist support network for prisoners involved in or interested in the Buddhist faith, the practice of meditation, or the study of the Buddhist teachings.

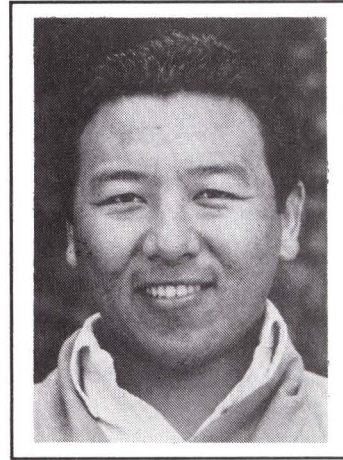
At Prison Dharma Network (PDN), our first priority will be to develop a data base of qualified meditation instructors from the various Buddhist traditions active in North America who are willing to provide instructions and guidance to interested prisoners on a correspondent basis. Application forms for those interested in becoming correspondent meditation instructors are available from the PDN office (see below).

Our second priority at PDN is to establish a network for collecting donated Dharma literature for free distribution to prisoners. Such literature may be sent to the PDN office. Tax receipts will be available upon request for book donations (minimum \$20.00 value based on wholesale used book prices).

Prison Dharma Network is organized as a not-for-profit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS tax code. We have filed for recognition of tax-exempt status from the IRS, and we are currently awaiting an IRS Letter of Confirmation.

The generosity of a number of early Prison Dharma

The Venerable Lama Chhoje Rinpoche



The Venerable Chhoje Rinpoche is a reincarnated Tibetan Buddhist Lama and an Oracle. He was recognized by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche and H.H. Karmapa as the incarnation of the previous Chhoje Rinpoche.

Chhoje Rinpoche is a lineage holder of both the Nyingma and Kagyu traditions. He is a yogi and a scholar who was trained under the personal guidance of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche and who received the complete transmission of the Nyingma lineage from His Holiness.

Chhoje Rinpoche is the founder of Padma Shedrup Ling, a Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Center dedicated to the tradition of Padmasambhava, the 8th century enlightened master who founded Vajrayana Buddhism in Tibet. He has visited and taught extensively in Europe, Asia, and the United States. His autumn 1990 teaching schedule includes:



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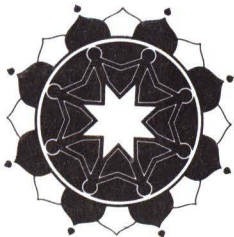
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Network supporters has covered our operating expenses during the startup phase. We now need further contributions to cover current and ongoing operating expenses in order to move forward in our effort to support prisoners seeking to follow the Buddhist path. Donations of any size will go a long way toward supporting such prisoners, as all funds received will be used to cover direct operating expenses, primarily printing and mailing costs. As funds are available, we may also purchase discounted lots of unsold books from Dharma publishers for free distribution to prisoners. PDN has no paid staff and will not have until such time as the scope of PDN's activities makes a part-time or full-time office person an absolute necessity. For tax deduction purposes, a receipt will be provided for all donations.

We hope to see Prison Dharma Network grow into a broad-based, grassroots organization, a nonsectarian sangha of prisoners and nonprisoners alike supporting each other in the Buddhist path. We are actively seeking local representatives to organize PDN activities in their communities. Please contact Vicki Shaw, to express interest or share information about any kind of Buddhist prison ministry activities or ideas.

Prison Dharma Network is governed by a Board of Trustees which currently includes the following persons:

Karen Lavin, President: Karma Dzung, Boulder, CO; Director of Recruitment, Naropa Institute.

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Vicki Shaw, Secretary: Kagyu Dechen Chöling Center, Hartford, CT.

Fleet Maull, Project Director: U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners (MCFP) Dharma Study Group, Springfield, MO.

Please address all correspondence and send all donations (payable to Prison Dharma Network, Inc.) to: Prison Dharma Network, c/o Vicki Shaw, P.O. Box 987, Bloomfield, CT 06002. ❖

Longing

*I'll return to my homeplace in ten years or so
For Mount Truong has few brilliant sunsets,
few burning paths or dusty lanes
And love fades away in my eyes.*

— Thich Tue Sy

Sitting At Night

*Prison time is wearisome,
one wastes the night away alone with a
single light.*

*My heart yearns for the temple far off
in the mountains.*

The road leading home is uncertain.

— Thich Tue Sy

**International Network of Engaged Buddhists
Organizational Aims for 1990.**

reprinted from *Seeds of Peace magazine*, vol. 6 no. 2, May 1990.

INEB's agenda for the coming year, as established at the 2nd Annual Conference held at Wat Suan Mokh from March 8-13 [see Spring '90 BPF Newsletter], consists of both the continuation of current projects and the creation of others. The final resolution, confirmed orally at a meeting of conference participants, was based on the six topics: the Environment, Human Rights, Women's Issues, Spirituality and Activism, Education, and Nonviolence/Violence. These areas were discussed by small study groups formed at the outset of the conference, who then presented specific proposals of action. As voted by the conferees, these proposals are:

ENVIRONMENT

To coordinate and exchange information on nuclear power and its environmental effects so that lessons learned in the fight against nuclear power in developed countries can be used in countries in which nuclear power is being considered as an energy alternative.

To draft a letter in opposition to the dam being planned in Surat Thani Province, Thailand, asking that the rainforest which will be destroyed by the construction of the dam be given National Park status.

To prepare a list of environmentally sound practices which individuals can do by themselves in their own countries to help conserve the environment. This can be based on the form of the book *50 Simple Things You Can Do To Save The Earth* which applies specifically to the United States.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The proposals of the Human Rights group were mainly concerned with issues stemming from the situations in Bangladesh, Burma, Sri Lanka, China and India. In regard to Bangladesh, INEB and INEB-Japan will attempt to send a factfinding team to India to visit the refugee camps of the exile population of the Chitragong Hill Tracts, in order both to publicize their predicament and to gather more detailed information on their situation. Additionally, the office will draft letters which request the Indian government not to forcibly repatriate these refugees and to continue pressure on countries giving aid to Bangladesh to tie that aid to the observance of basic human rights.

In regard to Burma, INEB will expand its information network to distribute information on the Burmese situation, both to show the plight of the ethnic minorities, students, and Buddhists in that country and to list companies and governments presently aiding the oppressive Rangoon military government.

In regard to Sri Lanka, INEB will draft a resolution to request greater attention to human rights and

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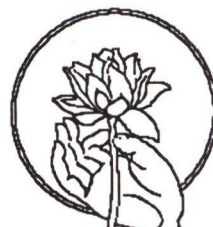


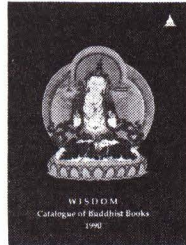
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send it to the government of Sri Lanka and the Mahanayakas there. Additionally, a similar resolution will be prepared to be sent to parties outside of Sri Lanka who have some influence in the present situation. INEB will also coordinate its activities to aid the international conferences on human rights in Sri Lanka which are planned for the coming year.

In regard to India, INEB will attend a meeting of Buddhists in India to be held before or after next year's international conference. This meeting will highlight the present situation of Buddhism in the country of its birth and attempt to aid its existence in that country. Additionally, INEB will try to support the construction of a hostel in India.

Finally, INEB will continue to gather and publicize information in regards to the human rights situation in Tibet, a part of this being the assistance of the Dalai Lama's planned visit to Thailand.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

INEB activities will focus on local action in Japan and Thailand and the publicizing of these efforts. INEB-Japan resolved to make a leaflet discussing Women's Issues, aimed at informing Japanese men. In Thailand, Friends of Women will prepare a similar leaflet for male workers in Thai Non-Government Organizations.

Also in Thailand, INEB will look for ways both to educate the monkhood in Women's Issues, possibly by arranging a workshop, and to enhance the Buddhist educational opportunities and monastic status of women.

SPIRITUALITY AND ACTIVISM

Two specific proposals were made in this area: to develop an international training program for engaged Buddhism and to search for ways in which the next INEB international meeting could more effectively exemplify Buddhist ideals. The first proposal is very similar to suggestions for action made by the Education and Nonviolence/Violence groups (see below) and its implementation will be incorporated with the implementation of their proposals. Regarding the creation of a more Buddhistic model for the next international meetings, local groups connected with INEB are encouraged to explore possible ways of doing this and to report their successes and failures to the INEB central office with the aim of providing a format for next year's meeting.

EDUCATION

INEB's activities in promoting engaged Buddhist education will involve both gathering and disseminating information, as well as creating a training program for engaged Buddhism.

INEB will collect and distribute information about efforts to establish programs which are in accord with Buddhist Dhammic principles, such as the programs of the Dhammavedi Institute for Mass Communication

established in Sri Lanka by Raja Dhammapala in 1986. Ideally the distribution of this sort of information will lead to the creation of effective Buddhist educational programs in other countries.

In addition, INEB will promote and coordinate the creation of critiques of local educational systems from as many countries as possible, emphasizing the failure of modern education to fulfill social and spiritual needs and presenting educational alternatives in accord with Dhammic principles. In Thailand, Santikaro Bhikkhu has already submitted a proposal for the formation of study groups.

Regarding the implementation of educational programs, INEB will support the efforts of Mon Tantrakul to develop workshops and seminars to promote socially active Buddhism. This program is in its infancy and is being developed at the Ashram for Life and Society located outside of Bangkok.

This program will be loosely coordinated with the attempt to establish a training program-workshop-school for engaged Buddhism which will educate teachers, monks, and NGO workers in Dhammic principles applied to the modern situation. A Curriculum needs to be developed focusing on effective Buddhist social action, and instructors and a site for such a program need to be determined. This effort will incorporate proposals made by the Spirituality and Activism group and the Nonviolence/Violence group.

Finally, INEB will gather and distribute information on books, periodicals, tapes, and videos which relate to Buddhist education and social activism.

NONVIOLENCE/ VIOLENCE

INEB will continue to promote nonviolence training, both separately and in conjunction with the efforts to make a training program in engaged Buddhism, and will continue to support nonviolent efforts toward human rights in Burma, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and other countries.

SUMMARY

With these specific activities in mind INEB will continue its work during the coming year. Any suggestions and ideas related to these efforts is greatly appreciated, and those who have a specific interest in any program are asked for their full participation. Since the effectiveness of INEB as an organization relies more on the exchange of information than anything else, a continual dialogue between members is extremely important. Please stay in close contact with the activities and efforts which have been decided for the next year. ❖

Rainforest Action Alert

Over the angry objections of rainforest dwellers, the Shell International Petroleum Company has announced that it intends to replace some 200 square kilometers of natural forest in Thailand with a eucalyptus tree farm for the production of wood chips for Japan and Taiwan.

According to Larry Lohmann, formerly of Thailand's Project for Ecological Recovery, Shell has used "coercion and violence" to convince local people to "sell" informal rights to use much of their land. Houses have been burned down, villagers arrested, and officials bribed so that Shell can get access to the land. Shell has even set up a boxing camp to encourage gambling: the more indebted the villagers become, the easier it will be to buy them off.

Meanwhile, Thailand's Royal Forestry Department has found that 76 percent of the proposed tree farm, which will be entirely within the Khun Song National Reserve, is now primary forest — some of the last still standing in Thailand.

Shell has insisted that it will follow the law by not cutting a "single tree" to make way for its plantation, but in other national reserve forests trees have regularly and illegally been cut down to plant eucalyptus with the open collaboration of government officials.

All over Thailand eucalyptus companies have been

A PILGRIMAGE IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUDDHA WITH MOBI HO AND SHANTUM SETH December 2, 1990 to December 19, 1990

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In England: Jo Lee; 1 The Old Rectory; Tarrington; Herefordshire; HR1 4EU. Tel: (0432)-79312

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encouraged to convert large tracts of national reserve land into eucalyptus tree farms. This has meant tragedy for the estimated 8 million people living in traditional ways — and often without formal title — within the reserves. The plantations eat up farms, communal grazing grounds, and community woodlands. Eucalyptus is useless for fodder; it damages local soil and water supplies, and provides little firewood and none of the natural forest products that rural dwellers on the edge of the market economy rely on. Every five or six years it is harvested like any other export crop, and the ground is left bare and hard.

Because labor needs on such plantations are few, and because small farmers seldom plant eucalyptus themselves, the economic benefits generally go elsewhere.

Shell has continually refused to release detailed forest maps of its concession area, and has claimed that its concession contains no natural forest. The company admits that one of the reasons it chose the site is that it would be relatively cheap to evict and compensate the 4,000 or more villagers who already live there.

The company admits also that it intends to employ no more than 1,000 local people. According to Larry Lohmann, under a more equitable division of the land 10 times that number of people could be accommodated, with superior livelihood security and ecological benefits if each family planted two hectares of fruit and rubber trees. The Appropriate Technology Association has calculated the economic return from such a plan at twice Shell's projected profits from eucalyptus. Evicted and forced to move on, however, the villagers will be foisted upon an industrial economy unprepared to accept them. ❖

What You Can Do

People working on behalf of the rainforest and village dwellers in Thailand have asked that we pressure the London-headquartered Shell International Petroleum Company, which is developing the Thai project. Shell has been trying to cultivate a "green" image, and is embarrassed at being caught red-handed in such a blatant example of environmental and human rights abuse. Please write Shell addressed to:

*Mr. L.C. Van Wachem, Managing Director
Shell Int'l Petroleum Co.
Shell Centre
London SE1 7NA England*

Postage for a one-page letter will be 45 or 90 cents; you should either weigh your letter or affix the higher postage.

Prison Poems by Thich Tue Sy

translated by Trevor Carolan & Frederick Young

Trevor Carolan is a member of PEN in British Columbia, Canada, and active in that chapter's efforts to help release Thich Tue Sy; BPF has also been campaigning for his release. These poems are to appear in the Summer 1990 (premier) issue of *(m)Öthér Tōngúés*, address: 4708-45th Ave., Ladner, B.C. V4K 1J8, Canada. It is edited by Mona Fertig, who is coordinating PEN's efforts on behalf of Thich Tue Sy. We commend the efforts of PEN on behalf of the imprisoned monks in Vietnam.

Stone Walls

*My stone walls are adorned with valueless decor.
No sunset would penetrate this cage.
A lonely man stares at a flickering lamp;
All history's words cannot describe these
heart-felt emotions.*

Narrow Cell

*Here in my narrow cell I am free.
Strolling leisurely,
I talk, laugh with myself,
cast a longing eye toward the
eternal sun.*

Self Satire

*A monk lies unwell among the mountains,
Woken from nightmares, shaken from noisy dreams
Alone and unsure beside the green pine before his
abode
Of what history will report of his fate.*

Self-Questioning

*Why are you imprisoned?
You point to the sparrow beside you in the cell.
Shackled, chained, heart yearning for the glamour of
city life, the skin turns pale.*

Thoughts of the Sage

*The sage avoids the world in his rocks and caves;
I run away from life in the bottom of my cell.
No escape for even smoke or ether here,
Though water flows unceasingly amid the rocky
cliffs.*

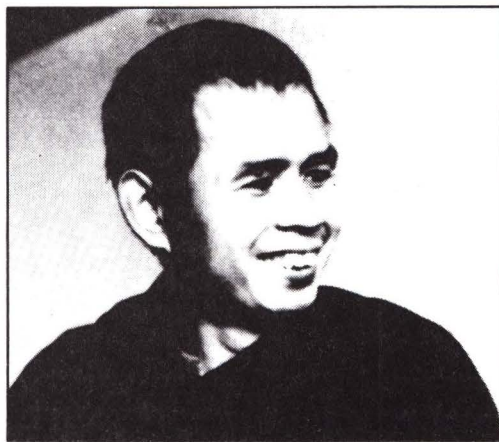
Hermit's Thoughts

*No surprise in learning modest hermits hide
amid the highest peaks;
Nothing strange finding great hermits in boisterous
markets.
But stuck away from the world, in a bottomless pit
With nothing and no one to mind — now that's
thought provoking.*

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COMMON BOUNDARY CONFERENCE

Compassionate Living: Integrating Healthy Narcissism and Social Responsibility

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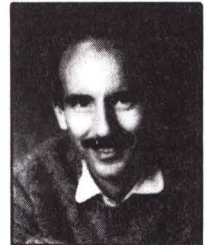
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F.O.R. Column:**Mid-East Witness in Palestine and Israel**

Broad-based citizen movements have had a dramatic impact on American foreign policy towards Central America and the Soviet Union. "Citizen diplomacy" helped destroy caricatures of "the enemy," counteract myths and distortions perpetuated by mainstream media and government spokespersons and, in some cases, actually break media blackouts. Over time, such movements have demonstrated their power to encourage and inform public debate, and to actually shape US foreign policy.

There is no place where citizen diplomacy is more sorely needed than in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The US is heavily involved; myths and distortions are deeply rooted; and the risk of widening violence, even nuclear war, is great.

While the need for information and for active citizen involvement in Mid-East policy issues has never been greater, public awareness of developments within the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 is being frustrated. Military authorities have closed large areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the media, Palestinian news agencies are shut down, international reporters are harassed, and reporting in the mainstream media has virtually evaporated.

Since the beginning of the Palestinian intifada in December 1987, Palestinian Christians and others have cried out for an ongoing American peace presence in the occupied territories. In October 1988, two dozen people met in Philadelphia to formulate a response to this appeal. An exploratory delegation was sent to the region in early 1989, and by May the group agreed to initiate "Mid-East Witness."

Modeled after Witness for Peace in Nicaragua, Mid-East Witness places long-term volunteers (six months or longer) and short-term delegations (14-21 days) in areas threatened by violence. Such placements not only establish an active, nonviolent presence of US citizens in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel; they also expose Americans to the realities of the military occupation there, and to Israeli repression of the Palestinian intifada.

As with Witness for Peace in Nicaragua, the firsthand impressions and moral authority of long-term volunteers and short-term delegates create a powerful "trickle-up" effect, helping to shape the terms of public debate and the direction of public policy toward one that respects human rights and affirms the right to self-determination of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. Witnesses also offer active support and advocacy for groups in Israel committed to human rights and a just peace.

The presence of the delegations is coupled with follow-up work in the United States, to develop a core group of activists and a widening network. Specifically,

Mid-East Witness supports the rights to self-determination and statehood for both Palestinians and Israelis; supports Israel's right to secure borders and peace with her neighbors; and affirms that the Palestinians' right to self-determination and statehood includes being represented in negotiations by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In some instances, the presence of US citizens in the occupied territories may deter violence, and may serve to mitigate the harsh measures taken by Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians under occupation.

In some locales, their presence will contribute to the host communities by sharing particular skills (such as medical training or language instruction), and cooperating on specific projects (such as rebuilding demolished houses).

The FOR has played a major role in launching Mid-East Witness. FOR serves as fiscal sponsor for the program and is represented on the national steering committee and on several national working committees of Mid-East Witness. FOR Middle East Task Force member Deena Hurwitz is staffing the Mid-East Witness office in Jerusalem and works closely with the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) affiliate known as Palestinians and Israelis for Nonviolence. A joint FOR/IFOR delegation visited the region in April.

Mid-East Witness is currently seeking funding, building the membership of its various working committees, hiring staff, recruiting long-term volunteers and scheduling ongoing short-term delegations. Friends and supporters of the FOR are encouraged to participate in Mid-East Witness by joining a delegation, or becoming a long-term volunteer, or through financial support. For more information, contact: Mid-East Witness, 515 Broadway, Santa Cruz, CA 95060; (408) 423-1626.

—by R. Scott Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy chairs the FOR's Middle East Task Force and the national steering committee of Mid-East Witness. He was in Israel and occupied Palestine last December.

New and Noteworthy

The Newsletter would like to draw your attention to the opening of Schumacher College, Britain's first residential center for studies informed by ecological and spiritual values. Schumacher College will open in January, 1991, in the grounds of Dartington Hall, near Totnes in Devon. The College is named after E. F. Schumacher, author of *Small is Beautiful*.

"Schumacher College is founded upon twin convictions: that the rational and scientific view of the world that has so dominated Western civilization is incomplete and that new vision is needed to sustain the earth."

In 1991, a succession of five-week courses will be

taught by: James Lovelock, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Hazel Henderson, Rupert Sheldrake, Jonathan Porritt, Victor Papanek, Theodore Roszak, Reb Anderson, and Manfred Max Neef. Course themes will include deep ecology, science and religion, social and rural development, the arts, and sustainable economics.

The estate of Dartington Hall dates back to the 14th century, and its landscaped gardens and medieval buildings are world-famous. Since 1924, it has been the site of a series of innovations in education and community-building, including a rural crafts center, Dartington College of Arts, and the International Summer School of Music.

For further information, contact: Sandra Perraton, Schumacher College, The Old Postern, Dartington, Devon, TQ9 6EA. Telephone 0803 865934

A personal plug: I lived for one year in a village near Dartington Hall. I studied bookbinding there, attended many concerts and films, drank stout in the pub, walked in the misty gardens, and saw a fox in the early morning, down by the Dart River. If there were such a thing as special, it would be a special place.

— Susan Moon

Buddhism and Cambodia's Future

What role can Buddhism play in Cambodia's future? This question was explored at a conference held at the University of California, Berkeley, June 2-3, titled "Cambodia in the 1990's: The Role of Buddhism in Khmer Society." It was co-sponsored by Khmer Conscience (an international Cambodian refugee group based in San Jose, CA) and the Center for Southeast Asia Studies of U.C. Berkeley.

Traditionally, Buddhism has been central to the lives of Cambodians — more so than in most other Asian countries. When the Khmer Rouge took power in 1975, however, they sought to eradicate Buddhism entirely, destroying temples and executing monks. Almost all of the 70,000 monks were disrobed and at least 14,000 were killed. Since 1979, the regime installed by the Vietnamese has allowed Buddhism to revive. Over the last year particularly, it lifted the restriction that only men over 55 could be ordained as monks. Leading government officials attended Buddhist ceremonies and Buddhist prayers have been broadcast over Phnom Penh radio.

Overall, however, Buddhism remains under tight control in Cambodia. Only one sect is allowed, and its supreme patriarch, Ven. Tep Vong, is also a member of the Cambodian Communist Party and of the National Assembly. All ordinations must be approved by government authorities. There are now about 8,000 monks and 2,800 functioning pagodas in the country.

Buddhism apparently enjoys more freedom in the refugee camps along the Thai-Khmer border, but one might assume that the monks there suffer some political restrictions at least. This would apparently hold true in the U.S. also: last April in San Francisco, a group of Khmer monks attempting to publicly memorialize the two million people who died under the Khmer Rouge were prevented from doing so by angry anti-communist Khmer demonstrators (themselves survivors of the Khmer Rouge holocaust) who accused the monks of being "pro-Vietnamese."

Ven. Tep Vong was present at the Berkeley conference, as was another monk from Phnom Penh, Ven. Oum Sum. Two monks were also brought in from the Khmer refugee camps: Ven. Som All Pannabaco from Site B; and Ven. So Pheab Phourng from Site 2 (both sites are Khmer camps along the Thai-Cambodian border). Other speakers and participants included professors, government officials and representatives of non-government organizations. The presence of the monks was clearly the most significant aspect of the conference.

In his presentation, Ven. Sum noted that before April 1975 there were many Buddhist sects in Cambodia and much divisiveness between them. Now, he said, there was only one sect, and the divisiveness had been eliminated. That's one way of putting it, but considering what has happened in neighboring Vietnam — where the most prominent monks have been arrested for differing with the one government-authorized sect (as we have noted in past issues of the BPF newsletter) — one may ask if Cambodia is not experiencing a similar fate. There is always the danger that excessive state control will corrupt the integrity of Buddhism or other religions, intimidating its monks from showing true leadership and from expressing honestly their spiritual values, even when they conflict with those of the state.

At the conference, it was hard to get a sense of whether the monks were there to represent Khmer Buddhism or their respective political factions. I feel the two monks from the border camps were more honest and less partisan, but perhaps this reflects my own bias. In any case, it may well be true that the greatest significance of the conference was simply in bringing these monks from disparate factions together. It is true, as several speakers emphasized, that Buddhism offers a common language to almost all Cambodians — and in this sense the monks can serve as intermediaries for reconciliation.

Whether Buddhism can find its own voice for reconciliation and social justice in Cambodia will depend on the courage of its leading monks and on their willingness to "speak truth to power." The alternative to this approach is outlined in another expression, "Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition." The role of Buddhism in Cambodia's future is yet to be seen. ♦

— by Stephen Denney

Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize Money

As His Holiness announced on Dec. 10 in Oslo, he has donated most of the Nobel Peace Prize money to people who are suffering from hunger and leprosy and to institutions and programs working for the advancement of world peace.

The \$484,000 that His Holiness received as part of the Nobel Peace Prize has been contributed as follows:

1. \$10,000 to Romania as emergency aid for those who suffered during the change to a democratic government.
2. \$10,000 to UNICEF for hunger relief programs.
3. \$15,000 to Lutheran World Federation for hunger relief programs.
4. \$20,000 to Maharogi Sewa Samiti of Baba Amte in Maharashtra, India, for self-help programs for leprosy patients and the handicapped.
5. \$10,000 to Samaj newspaper in Orissa, India, for leprosy programs.
6. \$5,000 to Palampur Leprosy Home and Hospital, Himachal Pradesh, India.
7. \$15,000 to the University of Peace in Costa Rica.
8. \$3,000 to Mother Teresa's Missionary of Charity, Calcutta, India.
9. \$3,000 to the Lok Kalyan Samiti of New Delhi for the provision of medical aid to the poor.
10. \$3,000 to the Peace Education Foundation of St. John's High School in Bombay, India.
11. \$190,000 for various developmental programs and projects for Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal.
12. \$200,000 to the Tibetan Foundation for Universal Responsibility which will eventually contribute funds to programs, projects, institutions, and organizations engaged in promoting peace.

—reprinted from News Tibet, 24:1.

Gratitude

The BPF Board gratefully acknowledges all who contributed so generously to the spring fundraising campaign (through July). We would like to thank:

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For gifts above and beyond the call of fundraising, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship wishes to thank:

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A Cup of Clear Water

*The lonely hermit does not yearn for tea,
A pure heart, clear water is sufficient to entertain
Emptiness and beauty.
Though there are few people in these windy and
dusty outskirts,
I can share my dreams with the purple clouds at
dusk.*

RISKING TRUTH

AN INTERVIEW WITH PETER MATTHIESSEN

The following is excerpted from an interview which took place in April, 1990, in San Francisco, as part of the City Arts and Lectures Series, to benefit The Women's Foundation. Sedge Thomson of KQED-San Francisco interviewed Buddhist author and activist, Peter Matthiessen, in a discussion that ranged from the Leonard Peltier case and the suppression of Matthiessen's book about it to the correspondences between Tibetan Buddhist and American Indian cultures.

Sedge Thomson: I was reading in the paper just last month that the FBI suit against your book, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, has been dropped. I wonder if you could give us a bit of background as to what led to this censorship, and what the current status of the suit is.

Peter Matthiessen: First, I should explain briefly who Leonard Peltier is, because too few people in this country know. He's a young American Indian activist who's currently doing two life terms in federal prison for allegedly killing two FBI agents in a shootout on Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, on June 26th, 1975, in which a young Indian was also killed. The young Indian didn't count, apparently, since he's never mentioned. Peltier has become a kind of modern hero for the Indian people, because he was railroaded into prison, and he didn't commit the murders. And I wrote a book about this case, called *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*. It's a crucial case, not only for social reasons, but for historical and economic ones, since it involves environmental problems, and mineral development in the North Central states; it may be the most complex case since Sacco and Vanzetti. We're still working to get Leonard out — to get him either a new trial or a pardon, because he didn't do it. I said in the book that I didn't think he did it; now I know it.

This past weekend, I spent five hours listening to the man who actually killed the agents. He's an Indian who was involved; he feels he killed in self-defense and that the circumstances gave him no choice. He doesn't feel he should go to prison, so he doesn't want his

identity known, and I don't know it. I was in a little house, and he came out in a hood like a ski helmet, with dark glasses, and even black gloves - just his nose showing, and long Indian hair coming down. And he talked to me for five hours about what it's been like to live with this knowledge — not guilt, as he sees it, because he felt he was caught in circumstances he couldn't control. It was a very dramatic meeting with a very eloquent man.

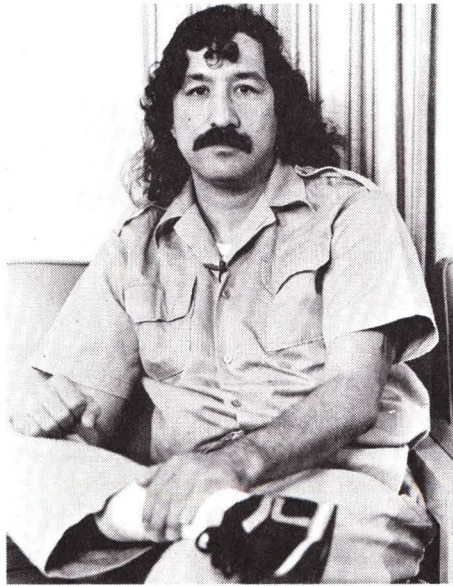
I'd always assumed that some young Indian guy who'd lost his head had actually killed the agents, but this guy said, "You know, I've never done anything wrong, I've never betrayed a friend, I've never been in jail, I've never stolen." He said, "I think of myself as a good man.

I was caught in this situation, and I don't feel guilty; I think anybody would have done what I did, but my friend Leonard Peltier is in prison for the rest of his life for something he didn't do." In 13 years in prison now, Peltier has never, he says, put the slightest pressure on him to come forward and confess.

ST: Why did he seek you out?

PM: He didn't seek me out; in fact he didn't really want to talk to me. But the man who brought us together was one of the Indians originally indicted for the murders; he and another man were acquitted by a jury in Cedar Rapids. The jury foreman announced that they would have acquitted the two Indian guys even if they felt they

had participated in the killing of the agents, because the pressure and the terror on Pine Ridge Reservation was so great — this was in 1975 — that reactive behavior couldn't be judged in the normal way. Leonard Peltier was originally indicted with these men, but he escaped to Canada. That must have seemed fine at the time, but it's actually why he's spending 13 years in jail. By a great irony, if he hadn't escaped, but had been tried in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with the other two guys, he'd be a free man today. As it is, he's doing two life terms. And Leonard is a man who had no acts of violence on his record, who's been known for helping his people for years and years, ever since he was a kid. Mr. Gorbachev has given him a signed copy of his



Leonard Peltier in jail

book; he's won a big peace prize in Spain; Senator Inoue, whom I went to see two weeks ago, has gotten very interested in the case; Desmond Tutu, and Bishop Morton of St. John the Divine are among his supporters — all these people want justice for Leonard Peltier, yet we can hardly get him on the news. His case has simply been suppressed, and so has *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, the book I wrote about it.

With the publishers — Viking-Penguin, the same folks who brought you Salman Rushdie! — I was sued for libel in two separate lawsuits; by FBI agent David Price, and by the ex-governor of South Dakota, William Janklow. These suits together came to 49 million dollars. Between the FBI and Janklow, these people have lost 7 decisions in the courts so far. There's no legal basis for their claim; there never was. Viking's lawyer has said from the beginning there was no libel in the book. I stated in the book that Janklow was convicted in the Rosebud reservation tribal court of having raped his 15-year-old Indian babysitter. This is on the record; it's not something that Peter Matthiessen thought up. But I was sued for saying so, and so was Newsweek magazine. Janklow lost the Newsweek case, but he's still suing us, which suggests another agenda. Because lose or win, the effect of these suits is not only to suppress my book, but to punish me and the publishers, to keep Leonard Peltier in prison, and to endanger the First Amendment rights of all of us. The FBI suit was for 25 million dollars. An FBI agent makes something like \$26,000 a year — usually there's an FBI agent wherever I speak, so perhaps he can correct me. He's very welcome, too! He'll hear the truth here! Yet Price had the best, most expensive lawyers in the North Central states, with huge offices on Park Avenue, in Paris, in London — I've been in their offices for depositions. So who is paying for these suits? Guess. I'm paying for them, and you are too, because this agent's not paying. But somebody is, and I think it's the American taxpayers.

I didn't expect that the Justice Department would be pleased by the book: I spoke clearly. On the other hand, I didn't think they would go to such extremes. So far, we have spent over 2 million dollars on our defense; presumably they are spending the same, even though it's coming from your pockets. This is a tremendous effort to go to, considering there's no possibility they're going to win, because there's no grounds for libel. It seems to be a clear-cut case of harassment.

The FBI case, I'm happy to report, was thrown out by the Supreme Court last October, but after six years of litigation, despite repeated findings by the courts that these lawsuits had no merit, Janklow is still hot after me; he's probably going to run for governor

again, and he wants to show the voters that he won't take any nonsense from any Eastern Indian-lovers like me. So the Janklow case is still under appeal before the South Dakota Supreme Court.

ST: Back when the suits were first brought, the publishers withdrew the books and destroyed some, didn't they?

PM: I guess they panicked. They ceased distribution, and they even destroyed 1700 copies of the book, which I could have sent out to Indian people who couldn't afford it.

We don't think of books being suppressed in this country, but this book's been suppressed for six years — you can't get it. If you do find it, hang on to it: it's worth about 300 bucks now, on the rare book market. But after Janklow is defeated, it will come out again, probably next year (1991), and I hope it will help spread the word about Leonard Peltier, because this is a case that we all should know about. Not just for Leonard, but for the sake of the integrity of justice in this country.

ST: Do you wake up in the morning with knots in your stomach thinking about this?

PM: The first couple of years it got me down. I regard myself as a good citizen. I have such a high opinion of this country that when our government behaves

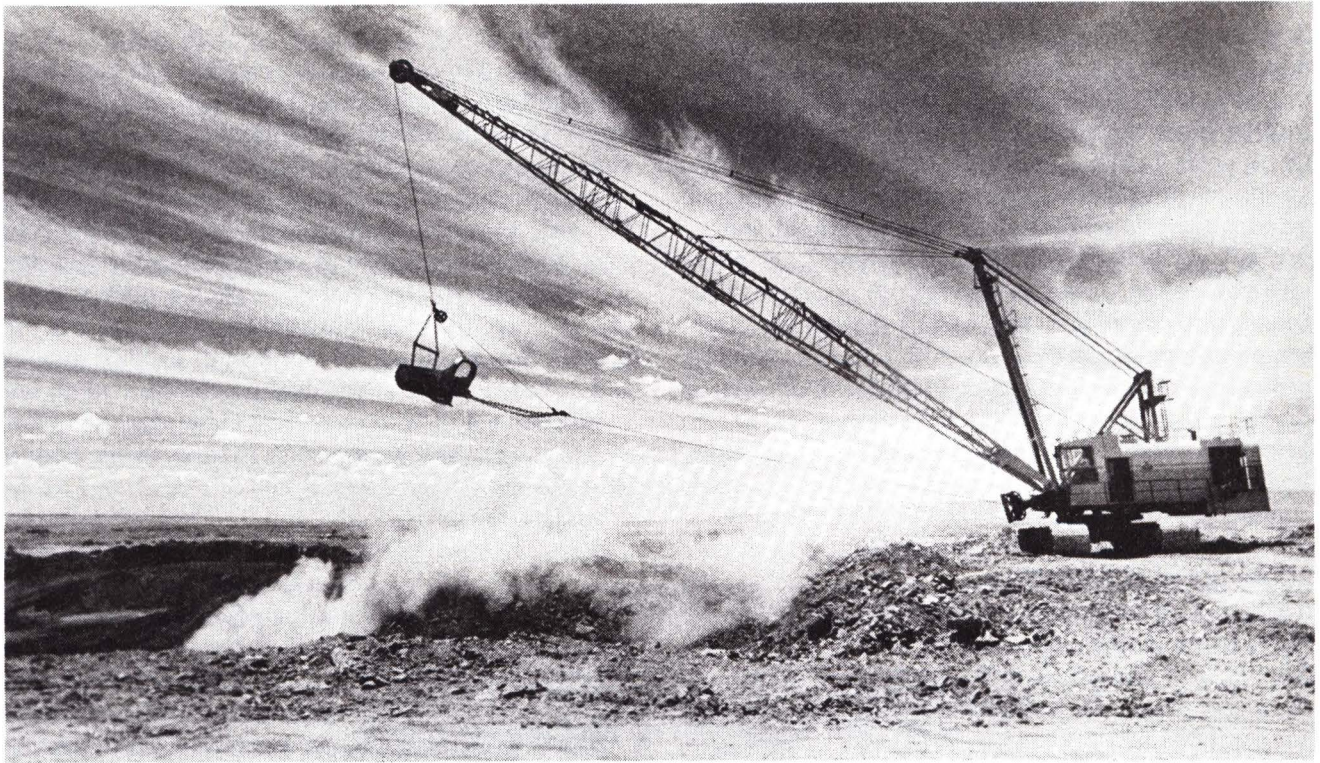
We don't think of books being suppressed in this country, but this book's been suppressed for six years — you can't get it.

in a way that's not only disgraceful but transgresses the standards of the Constitution and the Founding Fathers, whether it's in relation to our Indian people, or the environment, or Vietnam, or

whatever it may be, I feel it behooves us to speak out.

It's unpleasant to have the feeling that your own government is after you: it's not just an individual FBI agent. I interviewed this agent, and he told me he didn't make a move without his superiors' approval, so he didn't sue me without his superiors' approval either. And this means the F.B.I., the U.S. attorney's office, which is also very severely criticized in the book, and the entire Justice Department — in effect, the Federal Government. And they're working very closely with Governor Janklow — that's not a really great feeling, either. But I don't regret it. I'd say the same things again. The Peltier case is a national disgrace, and I hope you will all inform yourselves about it.

Leonard is still a young guy, full of life, and he doesn't want to be spending his life in federal prison. He's had a very rough time of it, but he's an amazing guy. As I said, he's never asked the man who actually killed the agents to come forward, he's put no pressure on him — the man said that himself. In eight years, I've never heard Peltier whine. When all the rest of us get discouraged, it's Leonard's example that re-inspires us. Sure, he gets upset and desperate, but he's shown amazing courage and dignity. And he laughs, he's



Michel Dubois

Strip mining for uranium on Black Mesa

funny. I promise you, if he came up and took a seat here, you'd take one look at this guy and you'd like him immediately. He's a very likeable man.

ST: How else are you trying to get his story out, besides the book?

PM: Well, I work it into every conversation, every time I have a captive audience. "60 Minutes" has been fooling with this story for four or five years, but it's too much of a hot potato for them, I suppose. Willie Nelson and Kris Kristofferson and Joni Mitchell gave a benefit concert in L.A. a few years ago for Peltier's defense fund, and the FBI actually came out on their own stationery and boycotted the concert and scared people off, saying there were going to be riots and so on; they used an arm of government, paid for by taxes, to keep the attendance of the concert down.

Meanwhile, we can all do something! Meanwhile, we work to interest Congressmen and religious leaders; we are working on a feature film, to be done by Oliver Stone; we work with Canada's Parliamentarians, who feel that Peltier was extradited to the U.S. on fabricated evidence. We really *can* do something — this is what's great about this country. I've been in plenty of countries where the cops have full sway: if you say anything, they knock you down, and glad to do it, too. And I can remember in the 60's, marching for Martin Luther King, or against Vietnam, and the cops were holding back crowds of people who wanted to beat us up — the cops also wanted to beat us up, but still, they held the crowds back. In most countries, the cops

would be leading the assault: we see it on TV every night. So this is a marvelous country to be brave in: it takes a lot less courage to be brave here than in a place such as South Africa.

ST: Was there a turning point in your writing career when you discovered that writing was a political act?

PM: I never thought of it that way. But I was very touched by something that Albert Camus said when he won the Nobel Prize. He said that in these times — as opposed, say, to the 19th century — it's part of the writer's duty to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. I feel that completely. It isn't enough to go on talk shows and sign petitions and such; I think that all writers should lend some part of their eloquence to the public good.

ST: You've written about disputes going on between the Navajo and the Hopi over land claims, when the Federal government was going to try to move them around. When you travel through the West, are you viewed as an outsider, with some sort of suspicion, or are you welcomed? Can you move from the Hopi to the Navajo with trust? How are you viewed, as a journalist?

PM: It depends who you're with, and who sends you, and how patient you are. Indian people are rightly suspicious of white people because we're always in such a hurry, and we have an agenda. If you go there simply as a journalist, then there's something you want to do, something you want to get from them, and then you'll split and go back and live your own comfortable life.

So they think nothing of keeping you waiting 3 or 4 days before they let you into their confidence, and then only if they feel you are sincere. As a society, we have a problem: we can't handle being disliked, or feeling unwelcome. I have it, most of us have it. And you can go into an Indian household accompanied by an Indian friend who's well liked in that household and no one will say hello to you. And sometimes they won't give you coffee, although they give it to your Indian friend, and they leave you out of the conversation, sometimes for hours. After a while, you can get really paranoid. Probably it would be good for all of us to go through that experience, to know what it's like to belong to a disliked minority. But after a while, somebody cracks a joke, and if they see you are genuinely amused, if a little smile comes out — they notice everything — and if you laugh, then maybe the next joke will be aimed in your direction, will include you, and maybe a coffee will appear mysteriously at your place, and after a while, you're friends. Indians don't feel they have to be your friends simply because you come into their house. In our own culture, we are immediately friends with everybody we meet — "Hi! How are ya, Pete! Pete? I'm Jim!" — we're on this frantically friendly basis that has nothing to do with sincere friendship. Traditional Indians don't feel that way — they don't feel they have to have friendship imposed on them. They want to have the vibration right between two people, so that the friendship, if it occurs, is a real one. It's wonderful. And they're really very humorous people. We think of them as being stone-faced, and many are, dealing with whites. Who can blame them? But they're enormously humorous people. I've had more laughs in Indian country than anywhere.

There's a sort of incipient racism in attributing certain qualities, even "noble" ones, to an ethnic group. We think Indians are more spiritual than we are. But Indians are people, and there are some wonderful Indians and there are some terrible Indians. Boy, have I met some bad Indians. Cesar Chavez said to me one time — he was talking about one of his lieutenants — he said, "This guy is a good guy, he's one of my best men, but people are people. You give this noble farmworker that ranch over there, and in two weeks he'd be just as big a bastard as the guy who's got it now." Alas, that's the way things are.

Among traditional Indians, at least, there is a wonderful underlying spirit and attitude toward the earth, toward life itself, but we mustn't romanticize it, or confuse it with our own ideas about, say, the environment. Our attitudes and theirs are often at odds. One time I was in an Inuit village up in Alaska in the spring,

A Mohawk guy I was traveling with in the West said, "How do your Zen teachers feel about you hanging out with Indians all the time?"

and a Fish and Wildlife agent came in and said, "You people have been shooting the emperor geese that pass through here on migration. Those geese are the property of the U.S. Federal Government." This was a very strange idea to people who'd been there for 10,000 years. But nonetheless, it was true, according to the law. And these Inuit men, in the most touching way, said "Well, that's true; and we recognize the law, and we appreciate the law and we'd like to obey the law, but if our children are starving, we must kill the geese." And I will say for the Fish & Wildlife guy, he was extremely good about it. It was his duty to go out there and read them the riot act, and at the same time, he knew he wasn't going to do a damn thing about it — it was just an exercise, just talk.

ST: You're a Buddhist, and in *The Snow Leopard*, you describe some of the mystical qualities that Buddhist legends share with legends of the American Indian.

PM: Yes — there's a lot of correspondence. I remember one time a Mohawk guy I was traveling with in the West said, "How do your Zen teachers feel about you hanging out with Indians all the time?" And I said, "They don't mind at all, because the teachings

don't conflict." And when the Tibetan teachers come here, they go to the Hopi, because they share so many traditions; they feel a very strong connection there, and the Hopi agree. When I was on the Tibetan plateau, I was struck over and over by similarities between the Tibetan culture and American Indian cultures.

The Gobi Desert was once a great hunting region, but as it became a desert — and this process is still going on — some inhabitants followed the game animals across the Bering Straits into North America, and others migrated south, toward what is now Tibet.

We have this idea that when the Indians left Siberia and streamed across the Bering Strait, they went all the way down to South America, and never looked back. This theory makes no sense whatsoever. We know that most of our large mammals came from Asia, and those animal species drifted across, going back and forth across the huge hunting ground that existed when that strait was still dry land, and these ancient tribes must have gone back and forth with the animals. Gradually the animals started moving south, so many people followed them, but others probably drifted back, or stayed in Siberia. There are Chukchi people in Siberia today who have exactly the same sort of prairie chicken dances as the Plains Indians.

One Hopi tradition says that for years and years and years their people sent messengers back into the land of origin. In late winter a young runner would start out at Hopi — which is now, of course, in Arizona

— and would follow the frost line north, and then he'd go up through the ice-free corridor on the east side of the Rockies. He'd cross Alaska and the Straits, perhaps in the walrus-hide coracles used by the old people, and then go somewhere in Eurasia, though they didn't know just where. It was about a two-year trip. He'd go back there and get new knowledge, and return again, that was the idea. And these runners covered enormous distances, and still did so into very recent times.

I knew a man named John Lansa who lived in Old Oraibi. He only died about two years ago, at the age of 99. John had tribal gardens in Moencopi, which is about 40 miles west of Oraibi, along hard desert rimrock. About three times a week, he would run to Moencopi, work the clan gardens, and come home — that's an 80-mile round trip in one day, running. And John did not consider himself an unusual or particularly good runner. The Hopi had runners who were better; our early government agencies used them. Anyway, these messengers travelled great distances. And all these pictographs we find on rocks — they aren't just people doodling on cave walls; they are also spiritual instructions, practical instructions, instructions about terrain and direction, where the water is, where the game is. And even if this tradition is ill-founded, there was passage back and forth between the continents, which must explain the many correspondences.

ST: In *The Snow Leopard*, you come to regard one of your Sherpas as your teacher. I wonder if you could talk about how you came to recognize him having that role for you.

PM: Well, I recognized it a bit late. We say in Zen practice that when you are ready, the teacher will appear. I obviously wasn't ready, because I didn't recognize this teacher until after I came home. This man Tukten gave me teaching after teaching — and you know, teachers aren't necessarily self-conscious teachers. "I'm gonna teach this four-eyed Westerner to shape up . . ." — nothing like that. No, his whole being was so simplified, so burned away. Simplicity for me is a very very important word.

I always liked him; he was an amusing, enterprising fellow, though the other Sherpas were very wary of him. They disliked him, and they disdained him, because he had taken a porter's job, which they would never do. At the same time, they were scared to death of him, because he had real power, you could feel it.

On the outward journey, we got to this community

where people practically went down on their knees to him. Quite obviously, they all thought that this man was something special. Here was a guy with a kind of tractor hat worn backwards on his head, and big rags I gave him because his own clothes were worn out, because he was too improvident to keep anything; he was supposedly a bad drinker, by reputation a thief, foul-mouthed, and yet nothing bothered him, he was always in the moment, merry and generous. I've never had anybody take care of me so well. Not take care of me in the usual sense; he was taking care of the world around, which at that time happened to include me. This is the way the Sherpas think; it's a real Buddhist approach to life, to just take care of what's in front of you. He was impeccable, extraordinary; nothing could tire him or wear him out: an amazing man. If I put him in Zen robes and took him to a monastery in Japan, I think everyone would go straight into deep bowing.

Audience Question: You've referred several times to the tragedy of what's being lost in the environment, and of all the things that future generations will not be able to experience. I have the feeling that as each generation appears, the people of that generation have no idea what existed, what was possible, what is possible. I'm wondering if you have any thoughts as to how

people can be reeducated, to learn more about the history of the earth, so that they can know what the potential is, and not just assume that the shopping centers and the fast-food places have always been there.

PM: I think people are learning now. The polls show clearly that the American public and the European public were ready for environmental change 5 or 6 years ago. All the polls show that. The politicians paid it no attention, because they are so closely allied with the corporations and often attain office because of the corporations. But now environmental concern is a worldwide thing; the politicians cannot ignore it, and even Bush has to pay lip service to it. It's happening, and it's going to keep on happening whether our leaders like it or not.

These days I want to talk not just to people who agree with me; I want to talk to corporate people, because whether the corporations like it or not, they're going to have to change their ways. And a corporation that's advanced enough and intelligent enough is going to say, "Hey, this environmental reform is going to happen anyway, so let's lead the way and get some credit for it." A few business leaders, like Yvon



Chief Fool's Crow, of the Sioux Nation

Chouinard who runs Patagonia, are putting a percentage of their company's income into the environment: supporting environmental concerns. This is wonderful, and I think this is the way it's going to go.

Take McDonald's hamburgers, for example. They're a major cause of the destruction of the rainforest. People are cutting down all those huge trees in order to grow the grain to feed a few scraggy cattle to make McDonald burgers, though the timber is far more precious than the beef. But the local people are poverty-stricken, you can't blame them. Now the widow of old Mr. Kroc, who owned McDonald's, is turning this thing right around. She wants to make a

contribution. She's casting about for ways of directing McDonald's huge income into help for the environment. And that to me is the best kind of news. I think more and more corporations will become enlightened, because it's good business. The question is, will they do it in time? Without stronger leadership than we have now, it will be difficult. We need somebody like Gorbachev, who's willing to take chances, to bring this about in a hurry. I somehow feel we will persevere in this environmental crisis, but unless the nations start talking very seriously and very soon about excess human populations and diminished water, it is going to be very very close. ♦

BEING ARRESTED

by Maylie Scott

January 10, 1990

The eight o'clock morning traffic along Port Chicago Highway just outside of Concord is brisk. A trumpet from the Naval Weapons Base across the street from the Nuremberg Action Site blows a crisp Reveille, which is followed by a loud, blurred recording of the Star Spangled Banner. The air is chilly and the wind bears a faint chemical bitterness. A heron flies overhead, towards what used to be marshlands and is now increasingly industrial sites. Many smokestacks are already streaming their white or grey plumes towards the sky. Mount Diablo presides to the southeast. Blackbirds, enjoying the daily offering of seeds put out for them, make a bright, musical background for the sounds of traffic.

The site is lodged in a thin, triangular wedge, between the Navy road to Port Chicago on one side and Port Chicago Highway on the other. A blue tarp covers the living area, which consists of two cots, an armchair and a table with leaflets and files. A few white plastic chairs are scattered about, waiting for the day's business. Beyond them are six full-length black cardboard coffins, commemorating the deaths of the Jesuits killed in El Salvador. (Seventeen people, including six local Jesuits, were arrested at the site on Dec. 6th.) Beyond the coffins, Tibetan prayer flags hanging from a post make a roadside altar. An outhouse — a small green rectangle with a yellow crescent moon painted on the center of the door — marks the end of the site. The area is intermittently bordered by large logs and good-sized rocks, in hopes they might have a protective effect should a vehicle swerve in from the road. White wooden crosses inscribed with names of victims of U.S.-supplied wars lean wherever it is convenient. The vulnerability of the site, where people have

been living by day and sleeping by night since Brian Willson was maimed in September, 1987, testifies to vulnerability everywhere.

For two years the NA Site has been my educator. I have come once a week, most weeks, for a few hours, to "hang out," or to walk up and down with a cross as cars drive by, some yelling insults, some encouragements, or to participate in the Thursday morning "Non-Violent Workshops" led by inveterate peace-worker David Hartsough, or to meditate with the BPF group on the third Sunday of the month, or to get arrested myself.

Lately, the group of five or so constant site residents has been thinning out and I have been coming out to spend a night a week, rather than to come by day. So far at night, there have always been at least two people on site. Last night was enlivened by a couple of teenagers who ran past and threw rocks at G. He ran after them, but couldn't catch them. Sometime after that, I was awakened by a light weight on my legs. I sat up and a rat and I looked at each other. We were equally startled; she left as I said, "Go". Living here, even on a very part-time basis, pushes at one's middle-class insulation.

This morning there are three "full-timers"; Greg, Steve and Diane. Greg, combing his tangled hair with his fingers, sits on a plastic chair, listening intently to the KPFA morning news. Steve, who is skinny, is clapping his hands and sides, to recover from the cold. We have just had bread (food is sometimes donated, but there always seems to be a supply of bread) and hot drinks, from water heated on the propane stove in the "kitchen" on the back of a truck, parked across the street. Diane, in her usual costume of maroon headscarf, purple sweatshirt, orange, tie-dyed long skirt and Tibetan boots, is writing the routine morning note to the Base, advising them of our intention to block any

weapons train. She straightens and focuses a pair of binoculars on the Base. She reports a build-up of sheriffs' cars that suggest a train may be about to come.

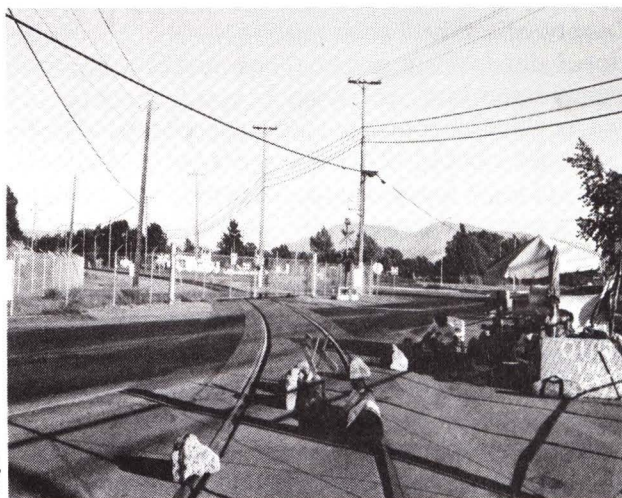
We begin to re-arrange the site, so that none of the property will be confiscated. The limits of where protective rocks, posters and other property may be in the event of a train passage have been worked out with the Navy by trial and error over a period of months. It is one aspect of a network of agreements constituting a code of behaviors that both protestors and authorities are fairly protective of. We carry the increasingly flabby coffins across the street, move some of the rocks and generally consolidate other effects. As I help, I remember that it has been several months since my last arrest, and that my day is relatively free; a good day to block. The other three won't mind skipping a jail day. I volunteer and sit cross-legged on the tracks at about the place that Brian Willson was hit — this seems respectful — and watch the group of Navy brass, men and women, that begin to saunter out from the base. Behind them, twenty-odd sailors, also of both sexes, as well as different colors, jog out, in step, towards us. They are dressed in camouflaged fatigues, and carry riot sticks at their belts. We must be outnumbered by almost ten to one. It is quite complimentary to be taken seriously. Unexpectedly, Diane sits down next to me, saying, "I realize I'd like to spend the day with you." I am very touched. Diane is a mainstay of the encampment; her energy, dedication and ability to articulate her intention have drawn my admiration for a long time.

The arrest process is the basic ritual of the site. It varies according to the group of protestors present, to their emotional level as well as to their dramatic ability. Today, we have been joined by three more "regular" visitors, but no one is planning to stage any particular action. Diane and I sit, circled by our friends. A Sheriff, not bothering to use his bullhorn, tells us that anyone who does not go to the other side of the Highway within 60 seconds will be arrested. Our friends, in not too much of a hurry, do cross the street, all except for Greg, who remains on a pre-arranged spot, with the site video camera. The presence of the camera has stopped any rough handling of arrestees. Diane and I are asked if we will "cooperate." Diane says, matter-of-factly, that she will not move so long as U.S. weapons are illegally killing innocents abroad. We are asked to stand, and we both do. (Some "go limp" at this point and are layed in rubber nets and placed in the back of a truck.) The sheriffs are gentle and help us stand. Diane is cuffed. A Sheriff warns me that the car is hot and I will be warm in my down jacket. He helps me take it off before handcuffing me. We are escorted to the car, and are reminded to lower our heads as we awkwardly climb in. The heater is going. It is warm.

Diane immediately resumes a conversation we'd begun earlier. An arrest is hardly a noticeable event for

her. She is beginning to feel that the time is coming for her to leave the site; she has lived there for most of the last two years, except for a four-month jail stint and a three month trip to China and Tibet. She is not sure whether this changing sense of direction is due more to the stress of the tracks or to a new calling. The shape of the new adventure is not yet clear, but something new is arising. The trip to China, as well as an encounter in a convent in Tibet, renewed her interest in Buddhism. She has been sitting more. She has emerged from a prolonged despair. In the last week, the urgent injunction she had felt to somehow change the disastrous course of events in the world has fallen off; all she needs to do is find the best way that she can live. She feels lighter and hopeful.

Traffic has halted and the weapons train is moving towards us as we sit in the police car. The tall yellow engine, with the heads of the two drivers, way up in



Maylie Scott

the cabin, like eyes, hauls a procession of white boxcars, each marked with a cautionary sign. We are silent. The first cars are labeled "inert." Nerve gas? Then comes a long line of cars, "Explosive A," "Explosive B." Each label has a little picture of an explosion, just in case the words are insufficient warning. It is difficult to keep attention wholly on the train; I am surprised by the irrelevant and trivial thoughts that arise. I keep returning to the exact fit of the metal wheels on the metal track. A long train. When it passes, cars that have been stopped in both directions are allowed to proceed. Meanwhile another train, coming towards the base from the direction of the port, has arrived and is waiting to cross. Diane continues in her positive vein.

Allowing piled-up traffic to flow between trains is a "victory"; previously when there were two trains, there was just double-time blockage and, when drivers were finally allowed to pass, they were often furious with us for having kept them waiting. Diane goes on to describe how the Site "won" another struggle with the County; pain holds have been barred, due to the suit won by the

three men whose arms were broken during arrest. Local law enforcement officials are generally friendly and protective. This year the site has been allowed to keep a tarp up over the cots. Sheriffs respond quickly and supportively to threats and harassments. Indeed, today, Dave, our arresting officer, and Diane are on familiar and friendly terms. Dave simply copies all of her identifying information from her arrest sheet of last week to this week's. He gives her some tips as to how she may be allowed to keep her scarf while in jail. Later, as she is describing to me how she thinks this country has "lost its ideals," he interrupts and asks her when she thinks this happened. He listens responsively to her careful historical analysis and then is quiet. Diane has a large classroom.

We arrive at the Martinez County Jail and pull up at the closed door of the garage. Dave makes a bantering identification into his microphone, a heavy door rises and we drive in. A man in an orange prison suit, whose ankles are chained, is hobbling over to a van parked ahead of us. A heavy woman is jumping up and down, yelling something at a sheriff. She is handcuffed. She runs over to the far side of a parked car. A loudspeaker voice says "Toilet call." We get out and stand by while our property is catalogued and put into plastic bags. Another round of identification questioning. "Born 3/29/35. Five foot nine. 130 pounds." Is my hair brown or grey? I say both. "Employed?" "Yes. Priest at the Berkeley Zen Center." I have lived in California for 27 years, in the same house for 25. I'm not sure how many times I've been arrested — perhaps six. Never convicted. Not on probation or parole. I say no to a long list of medical ailments. The little chips of one's identity are fed into a powerful, invisible machine. We are charged with the usual misdemeanor, "637c," blocking a public thoroughfare. We are ushered through two locked doors into the holding unit. Our bodies are patted by a female deputy. We sit and take off our socks and turn them inside out for inspection. We stand, back against wall, for our 'mug-shots.'" The camera whines as the shutter closes.

Despite Dave's coaching Diane is not allowed to keep her scarf. The women's section of the holding unit is quite empty. Four women are half-watching the TV that is fixed high up on the wall. Three of us are black and three of us are white. Two are good friends, Annie and Jo. Jo explains, "We been together three months." She taps Annie on her pregnant stomach. "She is my mama in here." They have been doing time out at The Farm, and have just been brought in for their court appearance. Jo asks about us. She looks at me and observes that I'm about her mother's age. "If my mother got in

here, I'd beat her butt." We laugh and I say I would expect my daughter to take good care of me too.

On the other side of the room, a pasty-faced, overweight woman in a tie-dyed T-shirt dozes. Another person, wearing black, spandex pants and leg-warmers, a cap, and an undershirt beneath a jacket gets up from the floor where she has been lying. It takes a moment to recognize her as a woman; hard to imagine she is over 18. She has been sleeping underneath one of the two large tables. People are not supposed to lie on the floor. A young, good-looking woman joins us. She is nearly in tears and wants to talk. She has been sentenced to four months for an offence committed last year while she was still in her alcoholic phase. Since then she has been through a program and is sober. "Maybe you sober

now", Annie says, "but don't you forget, once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic. You know, girl, we been through the program too." The tearful one admits the correction. She still thinks it's "not fair" that her program time didn't count against her jail time. She is impatient to "start" her life. Annie and Jo shrug.

Diane and I get back to our conversation. We are interrupted briefly for fingerprinting and then, at last, are undisturbed. A year ago I spent three months in a practice period at Tassajara while Diane spent four months in jail (in Richmond) on an accumulation of charges. We speculate on the similarities of jail and monastic experience. Diane would just as soon spend time in jail as out. She finds it centers and focuses her; does away with the pressure of "extra" possibilities.

She described an effective substance abuse program, DUCE, that is offered to inmates at Richmond. She put the program's lesson plans onto the jail's Macintosh, thereby gaining access to the Mac herself. (In her previous life, she worked as a computer programmer.) She wrote and desktop-published a book, which she sold when she got out. The sales helped finance the summer trip to China and Tibet. Jail gave her support; she found her moodiness was stabilized. She observed, with some humor, a rise in her anxiety level in the week before she was to be released. This is a common phenomena, known to detainees as "short-end shit." I had wanted to go to Tassajara for many years, and I wasn't disappointed. It was not, however, the complete "fit" that I had thought it might be. While appreciating the clarifying effect of the austere schedule, the long silences, and natural beauty of life on the floor of a coastal mountain canyon, I was uncomfortable with what I perceived to be a protective insularity that eclipsed, but did not address the problems of the outside world.

How, we wonder, do we find the "right fit"? I say

A year ago I spent three months in a Practice Period at Tassajara while Diane spent four months in jail on an accumulation of charges. We speculate on the similarities of jail and monastic experience.

I experience the NA site as a powerful monastic presence: a monastery with no walls, a place, in the midst of the noise of the highway and the smells of the nearby factories, where the long hours of silence, the inevitable rising of discomforts are the strict and true tests of commitment. Diane agrees. Nothing really “happens” on the site; it is primarily a place of *being*. The potency of its being manifests in its tolerance — all kinds of lifestyles, ages, religious/atheistic, political views, etc. Even violence is included, although not permitted. People come and go and return and the site, in its formless way, endures. Healing occurs; people who have lived scattered lives, on margins, find purpose and appreciation. All of us come to reconcile our anger and grief and confusion. Clarity and common purpose arise amid the evolved rituals of witnessing, gathering in circles and simply being present together. I recall that some time ago Diane had remarked that “just being” on the site, responding to its various demands to the best of her ability, was as challenging as any job she had ever had. (And she is not without a resume of demanding, skilled and lucrative work experience.) Diane observes that the site’s monastic conditions of no property, no devotion to comfort, and sustained vulnerability very successfully weed out people who should not be included. Nonetheless, Diane longs for a community based on a shared, religious life.

How might such a community begin? We start to imagine a group committed to voluntary homelessness. A group that would avoid the “missionary” aspect of returning to a safe place after the job is done. A group that knows that the only way to heal ourselves is by living an inclusive life, a group that would share a Buddhist practice of meditation and ritual. There would be no property, nothing to protect. In this way it would be as “pure” as the site. The vision grew in vivid intensity — shaved heads, robes, shopping carts? Celibacy? A minimum of seven? We are interrupted by a sheriff summoning the men to lunch: “Please, gentlemen, come out and line up.” I recall that I have been hungry for some time.

The men, perhaps 20, line up. They are mostly casually dressed, with a couple of strikingly middle-class exceptions. Diane points to a T-shirt worn by a hefty sort with a beard and longish hair. The front in large letters says “DAMN.” The back says “Drunks against Madd mothers.” Lunch is served to the women. We are each handed two sandwiches, one with a thin slice of cheese, another with a thin slice of bologna, a small package of mayonnaise and another of mustard and a half pint of low-fat milk. Everyone is hungry and Diane and I easily find takers for our meat sandwiches. The TV has been on continuously, mostly to the soaps, although no one seems to watch it enough to follow the plots. Nor do we need to; the plots are ours — addiction, craving, disappointment — the actors are

rich and beautiful, costuming the familiar suffering.

A commotion rises from the Men’s room. We hear yells, furniture falling. Deputies, mostly female, rush in. A bell sounds. A man is led out, protesting and holding his jaw. A few moments later, the aggressor is ushered out, two deputies on each side. He is put into a holding room, and begins pounding on the door and yelling. A call goes out to Mental Health. A nurse arrives and examines the man with the sore jaw. The man in the cell continues to pound and yell. He asks for water. One of the female deputies yells back to him, “What do you think you’re going to get with that kind of behavior?” From time to time she looks in at him and there is an exchange of obscenities. Apart from this woman deputy, the others are all at least polite.

I am short on sleep and become drowsy and unfocused. Napping is not easy because the TV is loud and the chair uncomfortable. I would like to continue our conversation, but can think of nothing to say. I am aware of all the impediments, internal and external, that distance me from the reality of our visionary talk. And yet, some energy, some clarity persists. A close encounter. All the other women are called to the sheriffs’ desk and sent on their ways. We turn off the TV. I fall into a sleepy zazen and time passes quickly. By the time another woman comes in and requests the TV be turned on, it is nearly 5:00. We watch the news, are served a supper identical to our lunch and are called to be released. Our property is returned, from a window just outside of the holding unit. Looking out onto the parking lot, I see the sun setting.

We telephone the site beeper, and, in a few minutes, Greg returns the call. He will come to get us. We walk up and down in the fresh air of the parking lot. The interior foggy paralysis lifts. The 20-minute drive back is fresh, as the world is after sesshin. The enormous Chevron plant, illuminated by hundreds of different-colored lights swirling in patches of white smoke, is like the body of a mysterious dragon-kingdom. Greg says the air has been especially bad. The nearly full moon, not yet risen, lights the clouds over the peaceful, dark hills. “Home again,” Diane says as we pull up at the site. It is cold. We hug. I get into my car, looking forward to a hot bath and supper, as she moves back into the site. Our separateness is painful. I start the car. ❖

Goodbye to Prison

I live empty in this world:

Within borderless realms I study Zen.

Nothing, no one

*Nothing to do but watch the flowers strewn
amid the heavens.*

— *Thick Tue Sy*

THAI BUDDHIST WOMEN:

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. CHATSUMARN KABILSINGH

By Stephanie Kaza

BPF: Can you tell us something about your work in Thailand with women and Buddhism?

Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh: On women's issues, it is important that we work hand in hand together on international issues — we need strength from western women. When I visited Los Angeles in November 1989, I was depressed listening to all the problems that Thai women have. I really feel we have to strengthen our relationship with our Western Buddhist friends and sisters. Five years ago we published a newsletter about Thai Buddhist women and it helped a lot. From the newsletter we started an organization for Buddhist nuns in Los Angeles called Sakyadhita. It couldn't be established in Thailand because the government will have nothing to do with ordained nuns. They don't recognize this position of nun; they are threatened, I think.

We have never had Buddhist nuns before; the fully ordained nuns never got to Thailand. Because they never had it, they don't want to have it now. Just period, full stop, and that's it. We try to make this full stop a comma so then we could continue the conversation. But they are very strong on it. Three nuns received novice ordination in Los Angeles. Now they are talking about going home, and they are being forced to change their robes. They cannot go home with brown robes; they have to put on white robes. But the white robes do not even mean they are nuns. It means you are forcing an ordained person to take on something else.

BPF: Who controls that decision, the government or the temples?

CK: The government, through the cabinet of monks and the Ministry of Buddhism. When I go back, I plan to talk with the Minister of Buddhism and ask him if he is aware of this or if it is someone down the line who has created all these troubles. I know an ordained American nun in Thailand who has the brown robe; but when she needed a visa extension, they would not give it to her unless she changed her robes.

BPF: Is Thailand the only country in Asia with

this discrimination?

CK: I am trying to find out if other countries share the same problem. Last year in Los Angeles we had five Sri Lankan nuns receive ordination. I don't know what has happened to them; they just disappeared; we have had no news from them at all.

BPF: What kind of help do you need from Western women?

CK: The Los Angeles organization has just started, so we do not have much strength to do anything much yet. When we are more certain of the attitude of Sakyadhita, we will know more and we can write to you. I see two issues: Theravadin monks do not accept Mahayana monks on the same level. And they do not accept women on the same level.

BPF: In your position as a woman academic, do you carry some power so your voice can be heard?

CK: I do not have any power in my position. But being a professor in the university, I am already a government official and I do have a certain rank. And I teach at the monks' university so I try to influence the younger generation of the monks to understand the issue better. You have to work in different ways. Because the institution is so solid, so established, we have to work in an indirect

manner. That's why I have to wait until I can see the Sangirhaja and ask him how he feels about it; only then can I go public on these issues. I cannot speak in public without talking with him or he will say, why didn't you come and talk with me directly?

BPF: Do any small groups of women meet together to discuss practice or work together as Buddhist women in Thailand?

CK: Our community is a Buddhist community, but not only of women. We meet on Sunday because most of us work. There is no such thing as counseling or anything. If you have personal problems, you go and speak to the abbot — who is my mother. She will give you direction to do this or that. But within the community itself there is not much link between the members. Everyone is linked to the abbot but not so much among themselves. So once you lose this abbot or central person, the community falls apart.

There is one thing the Thai people always say: "never mind" — it doesn't matter. This reflects a kind of mentality of constantly letting go, not taking things so seriously or as important to your own ego. We say "never mind" because we don't take it personally.

BPF: In the recent Women and Buddhism Conferences in the San Francisco Bay Area, we decided to reverse this model by not emphasizing any single person as a central teacher. We wanted to actively support the feminist premise that each woman's voice and experience is equally valid. The whole conference was structured so that each group was small enough so women could learn from each other. Could you get women together in small groups in Thailand to talk like this?

CK: In my community it ends up like this: you sit down in a group and you start talking and then everyone is looking at me, expecting me to say something — partly because of my education, partly because of the leading role that I have taken. So there is not much sharing of the same level.

BPF: How is your mother regarded in the temple?

CK: Her own temple is not registered. It is a private thing. Because of her position as a *bhikkhuni*, a fully ordained nun, the official Ministry of Buddhism Department does not accept her. They don't make us stop meeting, but they won't register the temple. We just function as normal; she wears brown robes but is not legally recognized by the government. She is not punished because she is not doing anything wrong. Though she received her ordination correctly in Taiwan, they say she is therefore Mahayana — so she is not one of us.

BPF: How big is your temple?

CK: We have a monthly magazine that we have sent out for 32 years and we have about 1000 subscribers. But of the people who come regularly every week, there are about 40.

BPF: Is your mother the only woman abbot in the country?

CK: Yes. She's 82. When she dies, we think our temple will run as a committee. And if we do need nuns to be there even just as a symbol, we will invite fully ordained nuns to come. That's why I said that we need international help. American nuns here have trouble finding a temple, but we have a temple ready for them.

But then again this individualism of American women! — at this stage it is very difficult for American women to live together.

BPF: Women in this country have two minds about leadership roles. They may be encouraged to lead and take initiative in their practice and yet in American culture women have been so much more conditioned not to take leadership roles. How do we recognize women who are actually good leaders and teachers? We are not very good at that. Most people are still conditioned to think that the teacher has to be a man, so we have our struggles here as well.

CK: Do you know of Aya Kema? She is German but she has an American passport. She goes around teaching — five months in Germany, five months in

Australia, two months in Sri Lanka. She said that she finds it very interesting to find that women would prefer men teachers than women. They look up to the man teacher and feel more secure. In the Western Buddhist Order in England the teacher has the men and women practicing separately, and he says they find it better, but I don't know — is it normal?

BPF: The question is often raised: how much should we concentrate our practice in meditation and how much we should go out and practice in the world? In this country it sometimes seems that meditation and personal work are regarded as more important than social action.

CK: Oh, I don't believe that at all! I think this is a very wrong interpretation of the teachings. How can you be very peaceful inside, observing the precepts while ignoring the rest of the world? Where is compassion? How can you be really peaceful when the outside world is suffering?

BPF: Do the monks in Thailand set an example for others in your country?

CK: If the monks can't lead us, we have to go back to the texts and lead ourselves. I think American Buddhists will have to find their own path, reflecting their own culture. You don't need to take on Thai culture or Japanese culture. At first you might have to learn the chants from another culture because your teachers is Thai or Japanese. This is a transition period, but I believe that very soon you will come up with your own American Buddhism that fits you. The core of Buddhism is the same, no matter what the culture. You should not mistake the culture for the core teaching.

BPF: In terms of daily practice, what are some of the things in Thai life that could be applied here?

CK: There is one thing the Thai people always say: "never mind" — it doesn't matter. This reflects a kind of mentality of constantly letting go, not taking things so seriously or as important to your own ego. We say "never mind" because we don't take it personally.

BPF: Showing compassion or sensitivity is not socially acceptable in many areas of Western culture. This makes it difficult to develop an open expression of compassion. The prohibition on emotion limits our ability to express our experience of relationship, not only as women, but as members of an ecological web.

CK: If you go back to the Buddhist texts, you find the real spirit of Buddhism doesn't make distinctions between men and women. Suppression of women came in later times with the development of the Buddhist community. ♦

This is the second part of a two-part article.

Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, chief Thai scholar for the Buddhist Perception of Nature Project, teaches Religion and Philosophy at Thammasat University, Bangkok. She is a widely respected author and translator.

CONFLICT IN LADAKH

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHHOJE-RINPOCHE

by Tensho David Schneider

Chhoje-rinpoche is a Nyingma Lama from Ladakh, currently living and teaching in Fairfax, California.

Chhoje-rinpoche: Tibet has been conquered by the Chinese, and today Ladakh is a place which is traditionally and culturally Tibet. The Tibetan tradition and the Tibetan way of life, and the way Tibetan Buddhism was formed, the art, architecture, dress and so forth — everything is a preservation of Tibetan tradition and culture. That culture is one limb of the Buddhist teaching. Preservation of the richness of the teaching and culture requires safety for the Buddhist population in Ladakh, which has now been threatened by the Kashmiri government.

Politically Ladakh is part of India. Ladakh is put as part of the Kashmiri state, under the jurisdiction of that state. This is the only state government in India which is ruled by Muslim leaders, and the Buddhists there are deprived of some rights, and are subject to discrimination.

Buddhists are generally very peaceful people, and the people of Ladakh are very friendly and peace-loving, so the Muslim Kashmiris kind of took advantage of them. The Buddhists didn't say anything, so the Muslims thought they could do what they liked. They created job discrimination and education discrimination. Of course, when there is education and job discrimination, the society doesn't go. If there isn't proper education, and proper economic status, then one would always remain backwards.

The Kashmiri government wants Ladakh to remain backwards. They don't seem to have any respect for the people of Ladakh. Even when the central government of India gives funds for the project development of Ladakh, the Kashmiris hold that money, and don't give it to Ladakh completely. There are also a great many bureaucrats who are corrupt.

It's the same all over. But here it is a major concern, because they really have no aspiration for the development of Ladakh. There seems to be some kind of feeling that since the majority of the Ladakhi popu-

lation is Buddhist, they don't need to care for them.

TDS: What are the demographics of Ladakh?

C-r: In Ladakh, beside the Buddhists, we have Shiya Muslim and Suni Muslim. Suni Muslims are the ones who are descended from the Kashmiris. The Shiyas are like the Ladakhi race. In 1989, last year, in Kashmir there were the anti-Indian slogans and demonstrations — they want to be with Pakistan. Then a Kashmiri businessman in Ladakh, through influence from Kashmir, created a big religious division (in Ladakh.) It is almost as if they saw that the Buddhists were so quiet and tolerant that now they could do anything. They thought that perhaps it was time for the Muslims to dominate the Buddhists. They provoked the Buddhists and then finally there was a big fight. It was in the newspapers for a couple of months.

The government brought in a special police unit from Kashmir, called the Kashmir Armed Police, who are Muslims; they committed sacrilege. They went to many, many Buddhist houses in Leh, and they destroyed the shrines, and they beat the men and women and children. They created havoc. But not with the Muslims. Even during the curfew

time, they let the Muslims off. They let them do anything, but they were very much against the Buddhists.

The Shiya Muslims didn't have any particular role in that trouble - this was the Suni Muslims from Leh who stirred up the whole thing. The Shiya population stayed out of it. It's sad, because you don't find any peace at all that way. As Buddhists we all believe in basic goodness in all beings, and we respect that. We want to live in peace, and we respect their joy and happiness. Now suddenly with the whole thing all stirred up, it doesn't create anything better for anyone.

The Buddhists are seeking a certain special status, so that Ladakhis who wish to be part of the Indian government could be sent to New Delhi, instead of to Kashmir, which has proved very difficult. If the government stays in Kashmir, then the government should respect everybody equally, instead of discriminating. But this is difficult, because the Kashmir issue is very sensitive in Indian politics. The Indian government



could hardly do that.

Nevertheless, if the New Delhi government can tell the Kashmir government, and if the Kashmir government becomes aware that every human being has rights, and that those rights should be respected, then they would treat the Muslims and Buddhists equally. Not entering into Buddhist houses, not beating men, women and children, not taking the altars and destroying them. This was just last year in 1989, and they went on a rampage. There is a danger of losing the whole rich culture of Buddhism in Ladakh.

TDS: Is there an indigenous movement there with the Buddhists?

C-r: The Buddhists there united and made an appeal to the New Delhi government. But I think that the more people who have concern about that, the stronger the effect will be. They have been struggling for the last 20 or 30 years over there. It's not something new for them, but this time it's big. When they begin to come and rampage, that's intolerable. If the whole world could get concerned, then the pressure would be stronger.

Speaking for the Buddhists there, we want peace and harmony for everybody, whether Muslim, Buddhists, or whatever, since we see basic goodness in everyone. We don't say that only people labelled Buddhists have basic goodness and those not labeled that way don't have it. We don't see that way.

TDS: Are monasteries the center of the protest?

C-r: The call to the government is more from the lay population, but of course the monasteries — and there are many of them in Ladakh — are behind them, too. But it is organized by the youth, and the students. They haven't involved the politicians very much, because when the politicians come, then they look for favors. Something they can exchange. This time the youth said, "We are not going to exchange anything. This has happened for too long." They really want to make sure this time that the people of Ladakh get the respect they deserve, and their fair share.

There is 12% Suni population in Ladakh. The Buddhists are 80%. The 12% Suni population holds 39% of the jobs. The 80% Buddhists hold 49% of the jobs.

TDS: These jobs are all the same level?

C-r: The administrative and governmental jobs are mostly held by Muslims. This has been happening for a number of years, and people have been very tolerant. They have been hoping that common sense would prevail, but so far it hasn't.

TDS: Are these problems due to the Western influence which came to Ladakh in 1974?

C-r: This is a long-term problem; it started in

1960 at least, but it's coming to a peak now. In fact, since Western tourists came, it has helped the economy of Ladakhi people, Buddhist and Muslim both. These problems have nothing to do with the increased tourism from the West.

TDS: Have the people become envious of the West — blue jeans, televisions, and so on?

C-r: That is very superficial. When there is the mingling of two cultures, this always happens. Sometimes people will wear Tibetan dress, or for fun, wear blue jeans. This is superficial. It doesn't have anything to do with the major issues. The major issues are much more than 12% of the population holds 39% of the jobs, while 80% holds only 49%.

TDS: Is there a group working on it?

C-r: The main organization there is called the Ladakh Buddhist Association, P.O. Leh, Ladakh. These are the people who have made this statistical study.

As Buddhists, we really should be able to share this planet in an harmonious and peaceful way, and not take advantage of others. But when we see sacrilege and discrimination, that makes it hard to survive. It makes it hard for the whole culture to survive. The culture, the tradition, is in an endangered situation. A certain voice has to be raised.

The youth association there has said that they right now really want to put the energy into this effort, because these Buddhists get sunken into tolerance. Now that they have waked up, let's take advantage of it. If they get sunk again, they will never wake up!

TDS: Is the ecology of Ladakh in danger now?

C-r: We cannot remain as we were. In this world today, no country is isolated. Everyone must respect the environmental concerns. But if we become isolated, it's going to be very difficult for Ladakh economically. Ladakh cannot survive if it is isolated, because hardly anything grows there. There is only one food — barley — and what can you do with barley? You have to survive some way, you have to get oil and all the other things you need to survive.

The tourism only comes for three months each year, so it's not like anything is being overrun. Ladakh is predominantly a very desert-like area, without any trees, so it is very dry. The tourism is bringing a good thing. It's also raising interest in a lot of things about Ladakh, particularly the Buddhist teachings. With a lot of people coming there, they see all the monasteries. That's the main thing.

There are so many monasteries in Ladakh; there must be hundreds. Amazing monasteries, small and

The youth association there has said that they right now really want to put the energy into this effort, because these Buddhists get sunken into tolerance. Now that they have waked up, let's take advantage of it. If they get sunk again, they will never wake up !

big... and that's what they are coming to see. It's raising people's awareness of the Buddhist teaching. And for the Ladakhi people too, it draws their attention back to Buddhism. Everyone is paying so much attention to it, they say "Wow, what is there that we missed or didn't understand?" So their interest is really helping in that way.

TDS: What can the Buddhists do?

C-r: For Buddhists all over the world, the general Buddhist teaching is nonviolence. The Buddhist teaching is to bring peace and harmony among all beings,

and enlightenment. But at the same time, we should have integrated strength to support each other when there is a problem. If we don't challenge things like what happened, then we won't find our way. People will be beaten up and if no one speaks about it, it will happen all the time, just like Tibet. There has to be a certain kind of voice raised — whether it should be raised to the Kashmiri government, or to the Indian government in New Delhi — to be concerned for the Buddhist population in Ladakh. ♦

A CEREMONY FOR ABORTED & MISCARRIED CHILDREN

by Melody Ermachild

I've noticed rituals announce themselves ahead of time. They approach us, talking to our intuitions, saying something is coming, something that will change us.

Two weeks before the ritual for the souls of miscarried and aborted children took place, it was pre-saged in a comment overheard: my friend Leah stood near me after a reading as women were saying good-byes. Her soft voice floated through the group "...my twin girls who died..." I heard her say.

I thought of Leah often in the next week, a woman of sixty. One is struck by her gentle dignity, yet she is diminutive, with her dancer's walk and small girl's laugh. She often speaks of her grown son, and once she told me she wished she had a daughter, but I had never heard of her baby daughters lost long ago.

Leah's words came "out of the blue", and I thought of that phrase, when I sadly thought of Leah's babies. I imagined two swaddled infant girls floating on azure blue light.

Two weeks later, at the Conference of Women in Buddhist Practice, when I walked into the room where the ceremony would be held, there sat Leah in the circle of women, her white hair a cap for her neat cross-legged body. Beside her was Yvonne Rand, the Zen Priest who had called us to take part in a Jizo ritual.

Yvonne, a married priest and a mother, has a solid presence which enfolds all human activities into her everyday practice of Buddhism. She talks to us now about Jizo, the Japanese Buddhist deity who protects travelers - including wayfarers who are journeying into and out of this life. He is represented in sculpture as a simple monk. Jizo takes care of the souls of miscarried and aborted babies, and it is to honor Jizo and remember our lost children that we have assembled here, in

this light and airy California room, open to the warm Summer day. Women come in through the doors opening onto the patio and take seats in the circle until we are about thirty women of all ages. Yvonne tells us about the hundreds of shrines to Jizo in Japan. She talks about the lives of women in Japan, and in the Soviet Union, two countries where birth control is inaccessible but abortion is not. Women in these countries often have as many as twelve abortions. And all over the world, where infant mortality is high, women bear many more babies than they raise to maturity.

Outside on the patio, Yvonne has made an altar, with several Jizo statues. One is two feet tall, carved of rough grey stone; another bright blue monk is only inches high. Jizo has a round, baby's face, and in his hands he always holds a ball.

Inside on a table she has placed red fabric, scissors, needles and thread. She explains that in Japan women sew bright red bibs or aprons for Jizo and dress the Jizo figures with them. Each apron commemorates the death of one child, and the aprons often have pockets, where a piece of paper with the name of the baby who has died is placed.

Yvonne has visited Jizo shrines in Japan, where hundreds of faded red aprons flutter on the statues. Sometimes many statues are placed together in one garden, or on a mountainside, and Japanese families walk there, and sometimes picnic among the shrines.

Our sewing circle begins, and Yvonne encourages us to talk about the children for whom we are stitching. At first we sit in silence, every woman's hands moving rhythmically, working at the blood-red cloth in our laps.

We begin to speak. A middle aged woman talks of her sadness every time she passes the hospital where her abortion took place twenty years ago.

A grey-haired, heavy-set woman, anguished and urgent, tells of finding herself pregnant, as a young teenager, with her father's child, and of the illegal abortion she had. Never, she said, did anyone acknowledge that she was hurt by this experience. Her tears fall on her plump hands as they sew.

Many older women tell of the terror of illegal abortions, one woman of nearly dying. She continues, saying that she later had a child and was pregnant with another one when she was in a car wreck that killed both her toddler and her unborn baby. There is so much pain here, we are silent for long pauses between speakers.

We grieve about our abortions, but also we express gratitude for their legalization. We talk of knowing the decisions were right for us, for the babies.

One woman, weeping, says she had an abortion when she was very young. She was rather cavalier about it, she says, not knowing she would never be able to have children.

One of us, because abortion was illegal, gave away a baby for adoption. She met him, and his son, 24 years later and feels she is the luckiest of grandmothers.

And Leah speaks of her twin daughters. They were named, she says, and buried on the Mediterranean island where she was living then. Once again I see them, surrounded by blue, as if floating out over the sea.

Our disclosures are shared equally. No one explains, no one gives reasons for the decisions that were made. We simply tell each other what happened. The facts of our losses, simply told, are received into the circle without judgment.

I leave the circle for a moment to re-thread my needle. I listen to the women speaking softly, as at an old fashioned quilting bee of sewers telling tales, and I am struck by how the circumstances of the deaths we mourn do not divide us.

There are the deaths we did not will; miscarried children who may have been unwell, and infants who died of accident or disease. Then there are those aborted who died from our intention; some lives ended by desperation, others to make room for something else in life.

As we speak, our intentions and our fates crisscross, weaving the fabric of our complex women's lives. Outside this room, judges on high courts could make decisions while marchers hoist their picket signs. A bomb could explode in an abortion clinic. But we, as we sit, feel in our bodies what we know: She could be me, and I cannot judge her. I rejoin the circle, and feel at home.

As we speak, the room fills with the presence of the beings who came to us, entered our very bodies, and then left us again.

Also with us are the many children and grandchildren we have birthed, and are raising every day.

These are thirty women brought together by the Celebration of Women in Buddhist Practice. We are of European or Asian descent, almost all well educated, most engaged in socially useful work.



Jizo Bodhisattva

In this ceremony our outer personas dissolve in the grief we share as mothers. And this we share with all women in the world whose every pregnancy has not produced a healthy child raised to adulthood. Biology is not destiny, but I feel the wind of our women's destinies blowing through the room. What is essential emotionally lives in our women's bodies.

As the last women in the circle speak, these insights come into focus for me: First, I gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of what it is to be "pro-choice". Choice is not control. While we cannot allow the government or men or other people to make our decisions, when we ourselves choose we are not controlling our futures. No one can know what will

happen. We can choose to bear children, but they may die anyway. We can abort a child to postpone our motherhood, but never become pregnant again.

Choice is a dialogue with the being who may come to life through our bodies. We can do no more than bring all of our awareness to that sacred conversation.

A doctor who talks of her own abortion says that she counsels women who are considering whether to have one. She tells them to go home and meditate and to ask the permission of the baby to send it away again. She has noticed, in the years since she started doing this, a high rate of spontaneous abortion among the women who asked permission of their children.

Second, I see that all that has happened is right. Although we weep and grieve, the scope of our suffering makes me know that every child comes to the right mother, even if that mother is one who cannot give it birth, a mother who must send that child away, perhaps to take human birth again. Something is learned from every life, and every death. Choice gives us freedom, and choice asks us to accept what we have done.

There is no evil here. No one has done anything wrong. This just is, and can be accepted.

Now, each one holding one or several small red

aprons, we gather outside on the patio around the Jizo shrine. Yvonne bows to the ground several times, and rings her brass bowl, consecrating this place for us. When she bows before the altar, her Zen priest's robe lifts to show her broad, worn, bare feet.

Yvonne speaks briefly, asking safe passage for the souls of the children. One by one we come to the altar, place our red aprons around one of the Jizo figures, and sprinkle incense in the urn burning at his feet. Although we all watch from the circle, this is a private ritual for each of us. Almost all weep. Many of us press the aprons to our lips, saying goodbye and wishing safe haven to our children.

My apron has inside its pocket my own slips of paper, and one other in memory of the child of my friend who cannot be at the ceremony: Carol, who chose a late abortion of a daughter she named Snowflower, a Downs Syndrome baby. Carol, a long-time Buddhist, had walked in the ancient pueblos in New Mexico, asking permission to end Snowflower's life. Now the mother of two more healthy daughters, she still mourns Snowflower sometimes.

Bowing, and ringing her bells, Yvonne closes the ceremony. She has opened a space for purification, and now she closes it. We look at each other and hug goodbye.

Together, we women have reached back for our children, brought them back to us for an hour and sent them more safely on their ways again. Our painful memories will still be with us, but attached to them forever will be remembrance of today's ceremony. We will not think of these abortions and miscarriages the same way ever again. We have changed our histories. ❖

A Celebration of Women in Buddhist Practice

In early June, 200 women met at Dominican College in northern California for a two-and-a-half-day Celebration of Women in Buddhist Practice, the third such event held in the Bay Area since 1987. Women came from sanghas across California and beyond, representing Zen, Vipassana and Tibetan lineages, as well as practitioners not affiliated with an inherited tradition. This year's celebration was different from previous ones in that it incorporated: regular periods of group meditation, chanting and ceremonies; a room always available for individual silent sitting; meditation instruction from the three major traditions; and sleeping accommodations on site to enhance group cohesiveness.

Participants met in home groups of 10 women each day, convened for two "polylogues" — panel discussions with invited speakers which opened out to include everyone present — and attended a variety of small theme groups including brush painting, physical theater, clay, awareness of death, Buddhism and psychotherapy, goddess practices and the dharma, relationships as practice, engaged Buddhism, and cultivating the fundamental elements of practice. At the final ceremony (which included Tibetan chanting and a guided loving-kindness meditation), everyone sat in a great open circle and, on an open mike, aired feelings of every kind — joyous, painful, controversial — in an atmosphere of deep listening and healing.

For information on future conferences, write: Celebration of Women in Buddhist Practice (CWBP), 20 Sunnyside Ave., Ste A 205, Mill Valley CA 94941.

—Lenore Friedman

SITTING ON OUR GARBAGE

Excerpts from an Earth Day talk

by Wendy Johnson

It's raining: rain, waking up the earth. You know the real miracle is to walk on the earth, and today we are remembering the miracle of our lives and of each other, and we are celebrating this miracle. It's kind of a mixed celebration — a little somber and a little bright, like the day itself. This is our day to celebrate the incredible interconnection of all beings.

We're sitting here on the earth, we remember each other, and we include everything. "Earth, is this not what you want? To arrive, invisibly, in each of us?" (Rilke.)

Did you know that in the entirety of her life, a honeybee produces one teaspoonful of honey? When you enjoy a taste of honey, remember, this is the taste

of a lifetime. Walt Whitman says, "Do I contradict myself? I am vast, I contain multitudes!" This honey contains multitudes.

There is a wonderful story about Mara, the evil one, coming to the Buddha and saying, "I am sick of being the evil one. Can we trade places? I've had it." And Buddha said, "Frankly, I'm a little sick of being Buddha. However, I can't do my work if you don't do your work. And you can't do your work if I'm not here." Balancing. So I look at this story as two friends cooperating with each other in the Big Work. And I think it's extremely important for us in this day and age, lest we forget that we all need one another.

We need to find a way to work with our enemies. In this day and age we've got to understand that the rose and the garbage come out of the same root; they

need each other. This is very difficult for us to understand, but sometimes it is better to throw the difficult stuff onto the compost heap, rather than try to have things always look so neat and clean and pretty. Because neat and clean and pretty isn't what we've got right now. We've got a big mess.

You know, recently one of our great teachers, Katagiri Roshi, died at home, 62 years old, of cancer. One of his favorite stories is of Buddha and the dead tree. The neighboring kingdom of Magada where Shakyamuni Buddha grew up was a very powerful kingdom. The king of Magada asked for a royal princess to be sent from the kingdom of Kapilavastu (Buddha's kingdom) so the marriage could represent the union of the two kingdoms. So a woman was sent from Kapilavastu, but in fact, she was not royalty. She married the king and later the king found out he had been deceived; that the woman was a commoner; she was not royalty. And his ministers said, "You should go to war with the kingdom of the Shakyas because they really fooled you." So he decided to go to war.

And the people came to Shakyamuni Buddha and said, "Can't you do something to save our kingdom?" Although he was a great warrior, he chose a radical alternative. He went out in the blazing sun and sat underneath a dead tree. He sat very quietly and he waited. The king came along with his troops and saw the Buddha sitting under the dead tree, and stopped. He said, "It's a very hot day. Why are you sitting under a dead tree? Why not sit under the leafy shade of a green tree? What are you doing?" And the Buddha looked at him and said, "I feel cool, even under this dead tree, because it's close to my native homeland." The king was so moved by this expression of understanding that he turned his army back and he didn't go to war. And the Buddha kept sitting. Later the ministers advised the king of Magada, "You'd better fix this up. You'd better really get them for doing what they did." So the king went back. And the Buddha watched with his countrymen while their country was destroyed.

Katagiri Roshi saw this happen to his own country. He always talked about "total dynamic working of our lives and standing up in the middle of our life." There are two lessons in this for us. The first one is that real peace is not a matter of discussion. It is a matter of sitting under a dead tree and being willing to face whatever comes up, understanding where nuclear weapons come from. They come from our human life, cracking secrets that we're not supposed to be able to crack. When we do that, the world is in front of us and the evil seed of nuclear war is in human consciousness, springing to life.

The second lesson is a much harder lesson for us. What we're doing may not work. Otherwise, this is a pollyanna world, where everything comes out sunny and predicted, and pink. It may not be that way. It may



be black and withered like the tree. Nevertheless with withered understanding, wholeheartedly you are here, so that you yourself become the tree. You sit under the dead tree and become real peace yourself, no matter what. This is the vow we can make with each other and the work we need to do, lifetime after lifetime.

I think there are wonderful examples of this in the world. You know we have these little styrofoam packing things. What can we do with these little peanuts? Styrofoam is created from polystyrene, a material that doesn't degrade; it doesn't come apart; it has a very long lifetime. Styrofoam peanuts, styrofoam cups, styrofoam packaging for hamburgers — none of it is biodegradable. So we can try to get rid of it, or we can try to use it in some way.

I've been wondering what to do with these little peanuts of styrofoam, keeping them in my mind all the time. I thought, why not make a meditation cushion out of them? So I did. And it's really comfortable! I'm sitting on it. It works. Actually this is kind of an apt metaphor of the world — to sit on what we don't like, and do a meditation on what we'd rather bury and get rid of.

Joanna Macy talks about creating shrines where our nuclear wastes are disposed — not to bury the waste but to put it on the earth, in cans that could be monitored, and to have religious persons gathered on the site to watch the degrading, and to dedicate lifetime after lifetime to sitting still under the dead tree of our nuclear wastes, and take care of our monstrosities as Buddha would, which we have to do. There isn't any other choice. There's not time for all these enemies. We have too much to do.

We're talking about inviting everything to help, to see if we can have that kind of feeling even for our nuclear waste. Why do we have a mind to confuse things? Why not open up the possibility of including the dark sides of our lives in the transformation that can go on with determination? The real miracle is to

walk on the earth, and we've got to be able to do it.

So this is our work, very definitely. Take a little bit of garbage, transform it into a 16-foot Buddha. Take a styrofoam peanut and generate the world. Hold it up — a blade of grass, a styrofoam peanut, a little piece of garbage — all on the way to becoming a rose. We have huge work to do together. This is not something to argue about. It's the work we have to do. It means including everything in what we do — primary Buddhist teaching, primary human teaching, primary teaching from all teachers. Sentient beings teaching the dharma — plants, animals, rocks, the earth itself. Climb on top of the roof and look at the sky. We have a lot of work to do. And real peace is not a matter of discussion. ❖

Earth Day Ceremony at Green Gulch Zen Center

We have for some time wanted to express our sadness and grief for the animals and plants who have died inadvertently or deliberately in conjunction with organic farming and gardening at Green Gulch Farm. On Earth Day, April 22, 1990, we offered a memorial service for these beings in combination with a Precepts Ceremony around a special coast live oak tree at the center of the temple. Over 100 people attended these ceremonies and expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to be quiet and compassionate on Earth Day.

The animal memorial service took place in the altar garden, following a procession from the zendo. We had brought more than 50 stuffed animals to the foot and roof of the altar to remind us of our animal friends and enemies. We presented food offerings and chanted the Dai Shin Dharani. People joined in this responsive reading I wrote for the occasion:

All:	We live in all things All things live in us
Leader:	We live by the sun We feel by the moon We move by the stars
All:	We live in all things All things live in us
Leader:	We eat from the earth We drink from the rain We breath of the air
All:	We live in all things All things live in us
Leader:	We call to each other We listen to each other Our hearts deepen with love and compassion
All:	We live in all things All things live in us
Leader:	We depend on the trees and animals We depend on the earth Our minds open with wisdom and insight
All:	We live in all things

Leader:	All things live in us We dedicate our practice to others We include all forms of life We celebrate the joy of living-dying
All:	We live in all things All things live in us
Leader:	We are full of life We are full of death We are grateful for all beings and companions.

At the end of the ceremony we made the following dedication, written by Wendy Johnson, head gardener at Green Gulch:

*Plants and Animals in the Garden,
We welcome you — we invite you in — we ask your forgiveness and your understanding. Listen as we invoke your names, as we also listen for you:*

Little sparrows, quail, robins and house finches who have died in our strawberry nets;

Young Cooper's Hawk who flew into our sweet pea trellis and broke your neck;

Numerous orange-bellied newts who died by shears, in irrigation pipes, by our cars, and by our feet;

Slugs and snails whom we have pursued for years, feeding you to the ducks, crushing you, trapping you, picking you off and tossing you over our fences;

Gophers and moles, trapped and scorned by us, and also watched with love, admiration and awe for your one-mindedness;

Sowbugs, spitbugs, earwigs, flea beetles, woolly aphids, rose-suckers, cutworms, millipedes and other insects whom we have lured and stopped;

Snakes and moths who have been caught in our water system and killed by our mowers;

Families of mice who have died in irrigation pipes, by electricity in our pump box, and by predators while nesting in our greenhouses;

Manure worms and earthworms, severed by spades, and numerous microscopic life-forms in our compost system who have been burned by sunlight;

Feral cats and raccoons whom we've steadily chased from the garden;

Rats whom we poisoned and trapped and drowned. Deer, chased at dawn and at midnight, routed by dogs, by farmers, by fences and numerous barriers;

Plants: colored lettuces, young broccoli, ripe strawberries and sweet apples, all of you who have lured the animals to your sides, and all plants we have shunned: poison hemlock, pigweed, bindweed, stinging nettle, bull thistle;

We call up plants we have removed by dividing you and separating you, and deciding you no longer grow well here;

We invoke you and thank you and continue to learn from you. We dedicate this ceremony to you. We will continue to practice with you and for you.

The Tree Precepts were offered in front of an altar set up by the oak tree. This ceremony was inspired by stories of tree ordinations in Thailand (see last issue's interview with Chatsumarn Kabilisingh). Abbot Reb Anderson led this ceremony and the group repeated the precepts after him

Three Pure Precepts:

I vow to refrain from all action that ignores interdependence.

This is our restraint.

I vow to make every effort to act with mindfulness.

This is our activity.

I vow to live for the benefit of all beings.

This is our intention.

Ten Guiding Precepts:

Knowing how deeply our lives intertwine,

We vow to not kill.

Knowing how deeply our lives intertwine,

We vow to not take what is not given.

Knowing how deeply our lives intertwine,

We vow to not engage in abusive relationships.

Knowing how deeply our lives intertwine,

We vow to not speak falsely or deceptively.

Knowing how deeply our lives intertwine,

We vow to not harm self or others through poisonous thought or substance.

Knowing how deeply our lives intertwine,

We vow to not dwell on past errors.

Knowing how deeply our lives intertwine,

We vow to not speak of self separate from others.

Knowing how deeply our lives intertwine,

We vow to not possess any thing or form of life selfishly.

Knowing how deeply our lives intertwine,

We vow to not harbor ill will toward any plant, animal, or human being.

Knowing how deeply our lives intertwine,

We vow to not abuse the great truth of the

Three Treasures.❖

— by *Stephanie Kaza*

PROPHETS WITHOUT NAMES

ARTISTS ENVISIONING A FAIR GLOBAL ECONOMY

by **Kazuaki Tanahashi**

The first gathering of "Prophets without Names" in Ojai, June 1990, was a rather unique one, as driving down to Southern California for a conference is not, one imagines, what prophets traditionally do. The 30 participants were musicians, dancers, poets, and painters, as well as artists in a broader sense — for example, ritual and healing artists.

A group of artists making suggestions about the world's economy may sound like a joke. Why can't we let specialists continue to take care of the world economy? Why should artists worry about an issue seemingly foreign to our special knowledge and ability? The reason is simple: the world, as we all know, is moving in some terribly dangerous directions, and no one can be safely remote from this issue. The gap between poor and rich is increasing rapidly, with many millions of people facing starvation and lack of basic human care. The natural environment that supports all life is in danger.

When we think of human rights and international peace, one issue we cannot bypass is that of a fair global economy. We know that peace in a true sense is actualized only when all people have a fair share of material resources. We, who are fortunate enough to live in the privileged part of the world, want to stay that way. It's a real pain to think of having to reduce our consumption and comfort to allow less privileged peoples to

have an equal share of resources. So we try not to think of the issue seriously, occasionally contributing to service organizations, or hoping the problem will be solved by government foreign aid programs or World Bank projects. But I think the challenge that each of us needs to face — and probably the most avoided issue of our time — is that of envisioning and actualizing a global family where we can be truly fair to each other. And I believe all human beings have a sense of fairness.

In our present world it is political and business leaders who have the most control over and take the greatest interest in large-scale economic matters, often employing professional economists to inform and support their efforts. There is a problem when these people try to address the problem of global fairness. Politicians, no matter how broad their vision may be, always have to answer to their supporters and to the sources of power in their political organizations. Encouraging other peoples to prosper will be unpopular. Corporate leaders may be dedicated to good causes, but they are constrained by their stockholders' expectations; they have to go on increasing production and consumption, even when these are harmful to the planet.

Artists are often regarded as specializing in starving. We also tend to prize individualistic creative expression, usually done in separation from others. International relations, economics, and political science are not our strengths. Yet artists have something particular to con-

tribute to the movement toward a fair global economy. Less restricted by political and financial pressure than many others, artists are dreamers, specialists in creating images and visions. Don't artists have a responsibility, then, to create a vision for the future and to work with people in all fields to actualize it?

At the planning meetings, held in Berkeley in May, it became clear that we should not imitate old processes and structures that have been leading the world towards destruction. Rather, we should find a new process appropriate to the new vision we were looking for. We wanted the voices of the Earth, of women, and of those who are usually silent, to be heard. So we decided to avoid conventional forms like lectures, discussions, strategy meetings, and hierarchical structures.

We brought tents to the hills of Ojai, a sacred place for Native Americans, where our activities were centered around the Dharma Yurt and the Teaching Tree. Dining took place outdoors. At the opening ceremony one of the participants led a guided meditation, asking us to experience being a mother whose child is dying of starvation, and to be a child in a family torn by war. Then she urged us to imagine creating the world anew, a world based on fairness, where the obstacles between people and the resources they need are gone, and the global economy sings the song of the global heart. Another participant, using a Native American form of prayer, called for a dream quest that would lead to new vision.

During the weekend we listened to poems, sang and did movement together, and interwove individual creativity with the activities of the community, as if having a great time were the primary goal of the gathering.

One process that was extremely helpful was an ancient council meeting form, where listening and responding to the needs of the whole is the basic requirement. An old Tibetan coin was passed among us; the person who held it had the turn to speak. Putting aside argument and having trust in the moment, everyone else listened wholeheartedly.

Some of us talked about personal experiences such as giving money to street people or adopting a child, while others referred to global issues such as redirection of military resources or redistribution of wealth. One person presented a vision of the Earth as a living, suffering being, another a dream of a woman baring her breast in front of men who became silent in reverence for her body as the source of life, which they wished to protect. Some expressed the need to listen, to understand why we have so much, to be free from the never-ending cycle of wanting more, to allow changes, to let inner and outer healing merge, to understand a world where artists are not apart from the rest of the society. Others suggested that we need to understand real "wealth" as residing in the heart and spirit; nobody can really feel peaceful until the basic needs of all people are fulfilled, including the need for respect for everyone

from the whole community of people.

All of this made me realize that "fair economy" is more complex than just redistributing wealth. It has much to do with respecting other people's cultural heritage, while sharing and attending to material resources. Many felt that this sharing should not be limited to people but should be extended to other living things. One of us pointed out that humans, unlike any other creatures, take much more than what we need to live.

Seven participants stayed in Ojai for two more days, summarizing the voices of the entire group and making the first draft of "The Ojai Appeal, 1990." The draft states an urgent need for humanity to envision collectively a world where people can be truly fair to each other. It also includes a "prophecy" that this vision will bring forth a profound change in the world. The draft is currently being reviewed and commented on by all the participants and other concerned artists, and the final appeal will be addressed to the larger community.



Unmasking

Rob Lee

While working on the first draft, we discussed the need to redefine "economy," "artists," and "prophecy." Economy has to do with how we relate to each other, the world, and ourselves more than with mere figures. Imagination belongs not only to so-called artists but to everyone. Prophecy comes from the power to listen to and express the deepest wishes of humanity. It seems that we were talking about essentials of society, creativity, and spirituality. If one of these three is lacking, we will not be able to have a full vision for the future.

Writing of the appeal is still in progress and I am only one of the workers on this project, so my prediction for the prophecy is not so trustworthy. But some of us are hoping that it will be one of a number of such visions that will come forth, and that it will emphasize listening rather than speaking. What is important is not our voice or our vision but your voice and your vision. ♦

Kaz Tanahashi is a painter and calligrapher who lives in Berkeley, California. His new book Brush Mind suggests "global heart, instead of individual mind, as the basis for shared vision and action."

BUDDHISM & THE BOURGEOIS BLUES

by Andy Cooper

*This is the home of the brave
and the land of the free
I don't want to be mistreated
by no bourgeoisie.*

*"The Bourgeois Blues"
by Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter*

In 1971 my friend Karen and I scored a ride from New York to Florida and then flew from Miami to the south of Mexico. We spent several months backpacking through the Yucatan and the state of Chiapas, staying at cheap hotels, crashing with Mexican hippies, or sleeping on the beaches.

The two of us had hit the road, as had so many others, seeking new experiences, a deeper connection with the natural world, spiritual illumination, and plain old good times — all together and in no particular order. We eventually made it to Palenque, which with its magnificent countryside, its extraordinary Mayan ruins, and its psychedelic mushrooms, had become a place of pilgrimage for the international brigades of bohemians traveling in Mexico.

Throughout my high school years I had been active in the anti-war movement. But my concern with politics waned as my interest in spirituality grew. By the time I left for Mexico, political action seemed irrelevant to matters of real value. Politics — including progressive politics — seemed to be just so much more delusion. It was the life of the spirit that now captured my imagination, though my notions of the spiritual life were more than a touch naive: a typical '60's home brew of Hermann Hesse, Baba Ram Dass, Carlos Casteneda, a little this 'n' that, ripened in the yeasty climate of the times and the somewhat less than cautious use of LSD.

During our time in Palenque, Karen and I camped along the river, and one morning, after a night of rain, we headed out to the fields where we knew the mushrooms would now be sprouting up. After partaking of our fill, we started down a dirt road to join up with some friends for a swim, and then it would be off to the Temple of Inscriptions. Everything seemed aglow with beauty and promise: the morning sun, the mountains in the distance, the sparkle of the river, and the natural simplicity of the life of the people of Palenque. We took it all in wordlessly.

Down the road we saw approaching us an Indian, a campesino. He seemed as natural and as ancient a part of the whole scene as the sun and the trees. He carried firewood on his back in a device strapped to his forehead, and his clothes gleamed white in the crisp morning

brightness. The moment seemed magical, and as the distance between us closed I marvelled at the noble grace of his life, its simplicity and harmony with nature. Looking over at Karen, I knew she was feeling the same.

When finally we came within greeting distance we called out "¡Buenos dias!", our voices brimming with appreciation. But our joyous epiphany was short — lived, for the campesino met our greeting with a bitter and utterly withering glare. Meeting his gaze, I now noticed the sweat and dust on his face, the muscles on his neck bulging under the strain, the slightness of his frame bent beneath what I realized was an enormous load. This was no magic moment for him, and we were just two more gringos traipsing through his world as though it were our own playground.

We eventually hooked up with our friends, and made it to the ruins. But the trip never really got back on track for me; I couldn't shake off the effects of that brief exchange. Not that I didn't try. Like any imperialist—that is, one born to privilege in a nation whose wealth depends on the forcible exploitation of other nations — I was quite adept at discounting the experiences of those exploited others when they intruded unwanted into my world. Not that I saw myself as an imperialist. In fact, I saw myself as one committed to countering the values institutionalized in imperialism. But, ironically, it was through my own alternative, spiritual values that I was able to push that campesino back into the invisibility from which he had so briefly, and threateningly, emerged.

I brought to our encounter in Palenque a perspective shaped by a language of unity, a sincere, albeit immature, spiritual perspective. I sought to meet the campesino at a level beneath the differences of race, nationality, and class that divided us, a level where we are one. But I also brought — naively, I think, and without malice — the arrogance and insensitivity of one raised in privilege. For me to erase our cultural and historical differentness under the banner of unity was to erase the distinct reality of his world. As a member of the privileged class, I could afford the luxury of saying our differences were inconsequential. It was easy for me to focus on our "common humanity," since as an affluent white male from the northern hemisphere my humanity is fully sanctioned in the sphere of social power (except, that is, insofar as I am shaped by a history and experiences that are themselves deviant and "other" — being a Jew, for example — and which provide me, when I root myself within them, a perspective from which I can view society from the critical stance of an outsider). My experience is not banished from the broad cultural narratives that set the criteria for

what it means to be fully human. We may well all be one, but we don't all share equally in shaping the meaning of that oneness.

In time I was able to bury the memory of that incident beneath other experiences and memories. Throughout most of the 70's, as I immersed myself in Buddhism, I never thought about it. But by the end of that decade, as my attention began to turn again to political questions, the memory resurfaced. I have thought about it often and from different angles. And though I cannot say with certainty what was behind that glare, I can give it the respect of serious attention.

Most recently I have been reading this incident in terms of the tension between a political perspective and a spiritual one. In speaking of this tension, I am not discounting that there are areas of convergence and complementarity, nor am I arguing that this tension is inherent. I want here to set these ways of seeing apart and to draw out the tension between them because I believe that holding, engaging, and working with it can be a creative endeavor, one that can enrich the way we approach and integrate both politics and spirituality.

I am speaking of spirituality and politics in a particular way.

For purposes here, I am defining each as a radical endeavor which fundamentally questions deeply held assumptions about ourselves and our world, and which points towards a thorough-going transformation of both. But, of course, they do this in very different ways. Each perspective creates its own system of values, establishes a language, produces an economy of ideas, imbues certain behaviors and experiences with import, legitimizes certain questions and disqualifies others, and each establishes rules for discerning what is true and what is valid. Each proceeds from certain assumptions about how human experience is constituted, and here the two perspectives are very different.

Spirituality sees the individual in the context of the universal. In Buddhism, for instance, we may speak of the fundamental identity of oneself and all beings. Each being uniquely manifests Buddha-nature; Buddha-nature manifests as each unique being. The richness of Buddhist discourse tends not to focus on the social and cultural conditions through which each unique consciousness is shaped (though it does on occasion, and there is no reason it could not do so more in the future). When I met that campesino on the road, raw though my spiritual vision may have been, it provided me with a perspective transcending our particularity in history. But I might have tempered this transcendence with a different perspective, a political one.

A political perspective establishes itself in the intermediate ground between the individual and the univer-

sal. Politically, we reflect upon ourselves as we come into being through the distinctiveness of our history and culture, especially as members of groups and classes. From the spiritual side, political consciousness may appear to be just more reification, more separation, more ignorance. From the political viewpoint, a spiritual stance may appear to be (to resurrect, and take liberties with, an old and once overused term) bourgeois, by which I mean complacent — an attitude which, by ignoring its own embeddedness within a web of social relationships, unconsciously reflects the values of, and furthers the interests of, those possessing privilege and power.

As an example of how different the two perspectives are we can look at the problem of truth. In spiritual practice we speak of gaining a direct perception of true nature, of reality. This perception is unmediated by the conditions of social and personal history, and exists ontologically prior to them. From a political perspective

... when the political nature of our lives is ignored, history is suppressed, the voice of the "other" is denied, and the prevailing practices and structures of power are seen as naturally given...

we approach truths as they are constructed within the social world, and particularly we look at how the criteria for truth are established through the exercise of power. Who defines truth? How is truth institutionalized? Whose interests are furthered by the current design of truth? And

what truths have been dismissed because they spoke of experience counter to that dominant design?

The truth claims of spirituality provoke political suspicion because when social relations are structured with the assumption that a particular person or institution possesses direct access to a more real substratum of experience than others are privy to, such a person or institution speaks from a position of privilege not open to critical interpretation. Where, after all, does one draw the line between claims of authoritative experience and the authoritarian imposition of views? On the other hand, the logic of the political stance is spiritually unsatisfying for it lacks a rootedness in the depths of consciousness. It speaks with a misguided arrogance, criticizing what it cannot even grasp.

If it appears that I am setting up spirituality to be knocked down by politics, that is not my intention. If I have leaned to one side it is because I think that our efforts to develop an engaged Buddhist community (and for that matter, any kind of Buddhist community in Western culture) are thwarted by the devaluing of political analysis, and by the swallowing up by spiritual logic of deeply felt concerns with power and authority. By granting both perspectives a measure of autonomy, each can speak to us in its own way.

I don't think spirituality is reducible to an analysis of social conditions. But neither do I think it is immune to such analysis. We practice within a social world, our practice assumes social forms, and our lives

are intimately and immanently political already. By ignoring this, we may find that we are unconsciously reproducing habits of oppression in our personal, interpersonal, and collective lives. I think that many of our Buddhist sanghas have suffered from abuse of power for precisely this reason. It may be that these events are so painful — and perhaps ultimately liberating as well — because they demonstrate that there is no retreat from concern with power — that is, with politics.

About a year ago a friend described to me a panel discussion he had attended on feminism and Buddhism. His characterization of the discussion was that it was “dualistic”. He is surely not the first Buddhist to dismiss the raising of political awareness in this way. In fact, this same claim, in one form or another, is one of the main devices employed to silence critical discussion within our communities. When women speak of the distinctiveness of their experience, identifying themselves as separate from men, and perhaps expressing anger as well, they may be accused of being divisive.

The peculiar thing about it is that from a spiritual perspective this may well be a reasonable (or at least defensible) thing to say. But when we read the political subtext, something quite different emerges. “Dualistic” is no longer an innocent descriptive term; it is a means of once again silencing voices of experience that can only be heard *in their distinctiveness*. It is a tool to undermine critical discussion. Because Buddhist culture has for the most part been dominated by men, it is the experience of men that shapes the story lines of practice and that defines what it means in a Buddhist framework to be a generic human being. When we say we are all one we may also be saying we are all men. Women speaking as women threaten to overturn this assumption; they threaten to liberate us — women and men — from it as well.

I am sure my friend would not intend his words to function in the manner I have described. But that is the point, really. By ignoring the immanent political dimensions of our lives we may act in ways quite at odds with our conscious intentions. Another example of this involves Mother Teresa. I am not questioning the value and sincerity of Mother Teresa’s work. But I can’t help questioning the adulation she receives, and the way she is so often portrayed as the model of religious activism. She and her co-workers provide love and care to thousands, maybe millions, of downcast and disenfranchised individuals, and this is extraordinary, perhaps miraculous. But she does not address the social structures that keep the poor that way. She doesn’t work to educate and organize the poor around their problems as a class of people. She doesn’t criticize the reactionary and misogynist politics of the Church, and, in fact, to some extent she embraces them. Mother Teresa is so beloved by the world not only for the beauty of her work and spirit, but also because she is

one of those “thousand points of light” who, we like to think, can make our world a more peaceful place without the conflict and trauma that is part of deep change (including nonviolent change) in the structuring of power relations. Her message may inspire us to act as individuals to help individuals, but it may disempower us to act together to change social conditions.

I think that for many spiritually-minded people an apolitical approach to social service is more appealing than a politicized one. I think that to some extent this reflects a well-founded suspicion of the morass of dogma, antagonism, and divisiveness that is so often characteristic of political thought and practice. But I question the process of depoliticizing our lives. Because when the political nature of our lives is ignored, history is suppressed, the voice of the “other” is denied, and the prevailing practices and structures of power are seen as naturally given, and thus no longer open to criticism and change. This is true whether we are looking at the power politics of nations or the power politics of sanghas. The notion of a spiritual politics need not refer only to the expression of spiritual values in the political world, but also to seeing through the mystification that would deny the political underpinnings of spiritual life.

Let me return to the story with which I began. I still believe that in some fundamental sense that man I met on the road and I are not separate. I still trust in the possibility that we can realize that non-separation together. But I am also coming to understand that it is cynical of me to relegate the political nature of our relationship — our respective locations in a historical and social world — to a position of inconsequence. To do so is violence. ♦

—Andy Cooper is a former BPF Board member.

Journey's End (The End of the Road)

*Oh, not to be swayed by worldly cares,
by the love of dark forests;*

*The path of shame
With no light in the tunnel.*

*I am willing to work
But the world cares not for weaklings.
I dream of heaven faraway,
The skies low and cloud-thickened.*

*Along the riverside I stand by the grass
Only a slender shoulder to continue life's
struggle,
With gray hairs blurring the seaview
And the clouds reluctant to disperse.*

*The clouds do not return North.
One gropes its way shamefully through sunset
paths to Mount Truong,
Yearning for the distant sky.*

—Thich Tue Sy

HEALING THE BROKEN MIRROR: A THEATER EXPERIMENT WITH YOUNG CAMBODIANS

by Ellen S. Sidor

In an unusual collaboration with two Rhode Island dramatists, about 20 Cambodian youths from Providence have been meeting since August, 1988, in an ongoing drama workshop that has encouraged them to explore and dramatize their feelings about their agonizing past and their difficult present life. These young people, now in their late teens and twenties, survived the Pol Pot regime (a rule of terror which resulted in more than two million dead) as well as years of painful internment in Thai camps. Now they struggle to adapt in a totally new urban culture.

The play *I Never Talk About This*, directed by Barry Marshall and W.E.R. LaFarge, features Cambodian youths with no previous acting experience. It is set on a simple stage with a large rectangle marked on the floor in green tape. There are few props: bamboo poles, black pajamas, wooden machine guns, bags of rice. The images evoked are powerful and stark: night, jungle, rain, fear, anxiety, exhaustion. This 50-minute drama has engendered strong reactions from Rhode Island audiences: it received a small but encouraging rush of grant money, and at the same time is perceived as threatening by some leaders in the Cambodian community.

In the predominately white audiences, most people receive with tears and somber faces the painful information about what these Cambodians went through. At a performance at a large public high school following an ethnic shooting incident, many students were moved and expressed their gratitude afterwards to the players for telling their story.

"Jeez, I didn't know how much you guys been through," Chantol Tho, 27, reports students saying to him. "They talk to me and say, 'I really didn't know what happened to you guys. Now I know. I feel so bad, and I don't want things like that to happen anymore.' That's what that theater tried to do, to show people what we've been through."

From the Cambodian community as well there have been varied reactions. A group of students from Fall River rushed up to the actors after the last performance and expressed affirmation and relief that their bottled-up memories and feelings were indeed shared by others. Some older people, even though they didn't understand much of the English, wept at the sight of the black uniforms and machine guns, as their painful memories returned.

Makna Men, in his mid-20's, recalled, "Before the last performance, we had some older Cambodian people

come. The music, the actions, the killing...it reminded them a lot. It is hard to reach them because they don't want to be reminded again. They're very hard-working; they didn't have time to talk to their children, or socialize. There's very little healing among the older people."

For Savry Plang, 26, the Assumption Church performance, the first time the play had been performed in their own neighborhood, was "hard, weird. I felt kind of awkward doing it in front of my own people: crying....feeling I was really back there."

Barry Marshall said, "After one performance, a Cambodian came up and said, 'It was so beautiful. I just wept...It even gave beauty to the suffering.'" But he also reported that some of the community leaders were angry that, at a time when tense and delicate international negotiations are going on about the political fate of Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge, among the principal players in the power struggle, should be presented in such a negative light.

So this drama on a small Rhode Island stage reflects the anguished and compelling drama in real life; as Barry put it, a drama in which he sees the Cambodian consciousness as "almost a broken mirror." Most of the pieces are present, but they are broken and separated. How can this theater piece bring about even a small part of the necessary healing? And what are the forces resisting that healing?

Coming to New England

On the bare stage, young Cambodians, barefoot and wearing winter coats, huddle together and share their jarring moment of arrival in the new world. Savry Plang: "I arrived at Green Airport [in Providence, RI] on the fifth of January. It was the first time I saw snow. It was so beautiful. I took off my flip-flops and touched the snow for the first time. It was so cold, but it feels so good to be here in the United States."

But soon, harsher realities appeared. "Hey, Chink. Hey, slanty-eyes. Hey, man, you're a loser." For these young people, fortunate enough to have survived this far, their new life came as a cruel shock.

Providence has one of the largest concentrations of Southeast Asian refugees in the country because of its light industry, primarily costume jewelry manufacturing. Even refugees who initially entered other cities in the U.S. have migrated here for jobs. But their integration into American culture has been very difficult.

In Providence, where over 12,000 Southeast Asians now live (of whom at least 7,000 are Cambodian) the community's resources — schools, social agen-

cies, fire, police, housing — have been pushed to the limits. A former board member of the International Institute, a consortium of social agencies dealing with immigrants, told me of the increasing number of mental health problems in the Southeast Asian community, complicated by lack of funds and an even bigger lack of bilingual mental health professionals.

In the past year, the number of racial harassment incidents aimed at Southeast Asians in Providence has been slowly increasing: assaults, firebombs, insulting graffiti sprayed on cars and houses. The tensions play themselves out in the residential community, at work and in the schools. For many of these recent immigrants, it must seem as if the war never ended.

In January, 1989, a shooting incident occurred at Central High School, the largest high school in the state. A young Southeast Asian fired into a crowd, apparently pushed beyond his capacity by pressures, including racial harassment. The school administration took immediate and vigorous steps to alleviate tensions, one of which was to have *I Never Talk About This* performed five times at the school.

Where the play came from

Although I was deeply moved by the first performance of this play when it was done at Moses Brown School in September, 1988, it wasn't until several months ago, when reading about the Central High School performances, that it struck me how unusual an effort this drama was. The idea that theater can help people deal with their real-life problems is not new, but two white Americans working in collaboration with 20 Cambodians certainly is, and I felt it deserved a wider audience.

Barry Marshall had been a director and writer for a number of years when he became a student of Buddhism in 1979, at the Chogye International Zen Center in New York under Zen Master Seung Sahn. In 1983 Barry and his wife moved to the Providence Zen Center in Cumberland, RI, into the family house where I was living. One day he told me about his consuming interest in the Cambodian war experience and that he had been trying to write a play about it ever since the late 70's when horrifying stories about the Pol Pot regime began appearing in the American press.

In 1979 he met Maha Ghosananda for the first time, a well-known Buddhist monk in Providence who is spiritual leader to thousands of Cambodian Buddhists.

"He was sort of a world teacher for me, then," Barry recalled. "I had started collecting little stories about him in my mind. One was when he came to New York. He used to stay at Chogye when he went there...and it was winter and they would give him a winter coat and he would go outside, and when he came back he wouldn't have it, because he had given it to someone who he thought needed it. And also at one point he didn't know what to do, how to help [Cam-

bodia] so he thought that he would go and sacrifice himself in front of the United Nations, kill himself. It's like he wasn't connected to his own survival, just to what he could do for other people...I'm amazed the way he can manifest that smile, after all he's seen and been through."

Barry said he was never able to write anything about Cambodia until he moved to Providence and found out that there were lots of Cambodians there. In 1983 he received a small grant from the International Institute to start interviewing Cambodians. "I needed to go there and talk to them and hear their voices. I don't think I understood their suffering, their grief at that point. It



Jeff Kenyon

was still more a curiosity about how that could happen, the cruelty...for a while I thought it was something in the nature of the culture and the people.

"There is really a kind of myth created about the peacefulness of these people, and they have a long history of enslavement and exploitation and brutality. I'm not even sure Buddhism has made them a better people. They're no different from a lot of people. I think there is a lot of resistance among them to accept that violence in themselves; it makes me feel like there's a lot of resistance in all of us, to own that kind of violence that's there in us. In a way, that's the work.

"When I first conceived of the play as happening with Cambodians from Providence, I saw a big tapestry with many parts to it that had many ages of people in it, so that lots of levels of reality could be brought out.

"All of the actors were between the ages of 5 and 15 probably, so they experienced enormous victimization. When you think of kids, they don't understand the process that puts them in that situation...that's why you feel their sadness, so that's where the play went."

Barry began his collaboration with W.E.R. LaFarge in 1986, when they met at a Zen retreat at Providence Zen Center. W.E.R., a native New Yorker who later made Rhode Island his permanent home, had been involved in experimental theater across the U.S. for many years and had written 15 plays. He started meditating in the late 1960's and attended classes with Tibetan Buddhists in New York, students of the late

Trungpa Rinpoche. He has been meditating in an eclectic way ever since.

"Barry and I really met on the issue of theater as having a usefulness as a part of community life, not just artwork. That led us to wanting to tell the stories of how different people in our community came to be here. Immigration has always interested me as a theme, probably because we're all immigrants.

"We decided to do some workshops; the problem was how to get the Cambodians to come. We had no idea if there was going to be any interest on the Cambodian end. It turned out that they were extremely enthusiastic. It must have been cooking inside their heads that they wanted to find some way to get the story out and talk about it. They were also experiencing frustration with the older people in the community who didn't want to talk about it.

"We did a lot of talking at the first workshop and they immediately started telling us their stories, which they really wanted to tell. We realized storytelling was going to be a very important part of it, and we luckily started tape recording them right from the start. Our format was that one person would spend a good deal of time telling their story. Then we started acting out some of these stories, with a great deal of talking and arguing. We really were a discussion group with a little bit of theater.

"We tried different things, theater exercises. We'd take a story they'd told the week before, and the following week select images and themes out of it and even little scenes, and just try to do them. One of the things I found very exciting was that they had the ability to return to the past and recreate it in a way that was dance-like and dramatic. Their movement was extremely expressive. Before we could direct the play, we had to be their audience completely.

"I asked 'Do you want to do this play in the Cambodian community?' and they said first of all they wanted American audiences, who could offer compassion and identification, applause, support and thanks for the work. Cambodian audiences can't offer that unless they've worked through their grief. We've talked about whether we should make space for interaction in the next play."

Reacting to the workshops

The young Cambodians had varied feelings about the sessions. "We worked very hard," said Makna Men, who graduated in June from Rhode Island College. "We came to be very close and helped each other about school. It came to be like a family." He said he had been a little reluctant at first, "because I had never been acting, but I decided I would try my best. I was shy, ashamed, nervous.

"The workshops affected me, made me more comfortable in sharing the story; in the theater group, we had similar experiences."

The workshops were a continually wrenching experience for Savry Plang, 26, now a hairdresser in Cranston, RI, and living alone in her own apartment. She joined the troupe in August last year. "I couldn't even open my mouth to tell about my situation without crying....and when I came home [afterwards], I sat and stared at the wall and felt bad. If my sister started to talk [about those days], I would walk out of the room. I didn't want to hear their stories of how it was.

"The thing that really touched me was that those Americans were really interested in us. Their patience is really incredible. It was a lot of work, and we didn't know anything about acting.

"When I was living in the camp, they took me away...when I came back home, 14 of my family members had died. My brother told me who died of what. The reason it's so hard for me is because I wasn't there when they died, especially my parents. It seemed much harder for me, not being there.

"I am thankful for this country, what it's done for me. My friends listen to me...most of them are Americans. Here I have a job, and have money to spend."

For Chanthol Tho, a senior in mechanical engineering at URI, "It felt like one small family. When we get together, we talk and laugh and share things." To him, the healing seemed to be for the younger people, not the older. Like Savry, he felt bad about the performance at Assumption Church.

"It's just like you open an old wound, and people don't want to see it. One time when we did the play at Assumption Church, we invited some old women there, and we didn't even start anything yet, just came in and took off our jackets, and they saw the black clothes, they started crying...It made me feel bad." He said he didn't think it was a good idea to play it for the older Cambodians, because they experienced such intense flashbacks from the past that their minds weren't really present in the theater. "Boom, they go back there," he said.

Where the wounds come from

Notes from the play handout: "Until 1970 Cambodia was governed by Prince Sihanouk. In that year he was deposed. A civil war, which had been brewing for many years, broke out, led on one side by Cambodian Communists known as the Khmer Rouge and on the other by the corrupt government backed by the United States. In April 1975 the Khmer Rouge won and entered the capital, Phnom Penh.

"The Khmer Rouge were in power until early 1979. They proved to be one of the most brutal governments in history. Cambodians themselves, they systematically murdered all Cambodians who were known, or suspected, to have worked in the previous government or even who had any education. They killed doctors, teachers, students, artists and monks. Of a popula-

tion of about 7 million, between one and two million died in four years. The entire population was enslaved and enlisted in forced labor camps where men were separated from women and children from their parents...

"The Khmer Rouge leaders provoked the Vietnamese by murdering ethnic Vietnamese who had lived for centuries in Cambodia, and by attacking the border. At Christmas, 1978, Vietnam invaded Cambodia and within a few weeks took the capital...The Khmer Rouge forced many Cambodians, including children, to fight against the Vietnamese. The Khmer Rouge withdrew into the jungle, where the fighting was fierce. Finally they were defeated and driven up into the hills. Thousands of Cambodians fled into Thailand, hoping to escape the violence at home and emigrate to western countries. Large refugee camps were set up. Most of those who left Cambodia have never been able to leave these camps...a lucky few went to Europe or the United States."

From *The Washington Post*, July 9: "After the Vietnamese invasion of 1979, the Khmer Rouge joined in a coalition with two non-Communist resistance groups (one of them loyal to Prince Sihanouk) in order to fight the Hanoi-installed government in Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge has built up the largest army in this U.N.-sponsored coalition, and is increasing its military and political gains ever closer to the capital. As a result of the most recent fighting, relief workers in Cambodia report that tens of thousands of refugees are fleeing west from mountain villages near the capital, as well as some 20,000 refugees fleeing to the capital.

"Since the Khmer Rouge military strategy is similar to that which allowed them to seize power in 1975, there are rising concerns that it may fight its way back to power. The U.S. is currently rethinking its non-military support of the non-Communist groups, out of concern that these materials may aid the Khmer Rouge."

On July 15, the Associated Press reported that a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators were circulating a letter calling for President Bush to "revamp U.S. policy towards Cambodia" and stating that "the Khmer Rouge represents an unacceptable threat to the people of Cambodia, and that American policy should be based, first and foremost, upon preventing the return of the Khmer Rouge."

Difficulty in the community

Maha Ghosananda, spiritual leader of the Khmer Buddhist Society of New England whose head temple is in South Providence), has exerted continuing peacemaking efforts. He has repeatedly expressed the wish that

the factions would come together to end years of exile in Thai refugee camps for the thousands of Cambodians still caught in the cross-fire of the guerrilla war, so that the war-torn country could begin to rebuild itself.

That same power struggle is mirrored here in America as factions loyal to the different groups in Southeast Asia wrestle for control. Even such a respected figure as Maha Ghosananda has not been immune to the political maneuverings within the Cambodian community. According to a June 20 *Providence Journal* story, seven Cambodian men are suing Maha Ghosananda and the temple's treasurer for allegedly mistreating temple funds, and for serving "improperly and illegally."

Similar suits are underway in at least seven other Cambodian temples in the U.S. and have to do with "secular political concerns," according to Gary Powers, lawyer for Maha Ghosananda and the Providence temple treasurer. "The temple, because of its prestige, because of the resources that it has, is a very potent weapon in assisting in the political efforts of those who are supporting the various factions in Kampuchea (Cambodia)."

Another sign of the power struggle has been Barry Marshall's difficulty in getting the most recent grant funds released from the Cambodian Society. The theater project has received three grants from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, grants from Citicorp Mortgage and

the RI Foundation, and contributions resulting from performances at high schools, Brown University and the RI School of Design. The project is funded for a new set of workshops and performances to begin in August.

These funds were deposited with the Cambodian Society, since it is the workshop sponsor in the Cambodian community; and the Society is holding grant money until its directors can agree with Barry, W.E.R. and the theater troupe on the content of the new play.

The dispute centers on the political implications of these dramas. The Society would like either no political overtones in the next play or a balanced presentation, in which the sufferings created by the Vietnamese invasion and government takeover are presented as clearly as the excesses of the Khmer Rouge. Removing the funds from the Society entirely is another option.

When asked what he was going to do about the hold-up, Barry said he would continue meeting with the Society's leaders to keep exploring the options. "One of the lines in the play is 'Cambodians don't trust other Cambodians,' and that's a function of the war they've gone through and the fact that they've done that to each other," he said.





The new play

Jeff Kenyon

Chanthol Tho is looking forward to continuing the workshop sessions. "I don't want that thing to die out," he said. "This is something that's good for kids to learn. Maybe I can't do anything for the community, but at least I could get into something like that. I feel people learn from what they see and what they hear."

He had very specific topics he wanted to deal with in the next play: the great difficulty of life in the refugee camps, and the high value he assigns to education, because it was so hard to come by and so expensive there. In the Thai camp where he was before coming to the U.S., to buy even one book cost 16 cans of tuna — when just half a can of tuna was all the whole family ate in a whole day. Because he couldn't afford the price, Chanthol used to make a peephole in the thatched walls of the hut where the teaching went on, so that he could listen and try to learn.

When he started high school in Providence, he was already 19, but some of the dates on some of the family papers were mixed up, so it appeared that Chanthol was young enough to attend high school. His zeal for hard work and learning became a legend in the neighborhood. He worked in a jewelry-plating factory after school to pay some of his expenses. "My teachers said, 'You're crazy; you're trying to kill yourself.' I worked at the factory eight hours, and went to school, and when I came back, 11 p.m., I didn't have much time to study, so sometimes I stayed up till 2 or 3 a.m. and got up at 8 a.m."

"The intensity that I have inside is everything that I heard about America: that they had great schools. So when I came, I said, 'Why waste it? Now you've got to the place you wanted to be, so you have to take advantage of it.'"

He is currently taking a semester off from his last year in college in order to help his father establish a new grocery store in the neighborhood. Chanthol also is serious about Buddhism. He was one of the few young Cambodian men in the area to shave his head and enter the temple for two weeks last December between college terms. "When I was young," he said,

"I wanted to become a monk, at least for one year. I still have that feeling."

While he was there, he talked with Maha Ghosananda, who asked him why he didn't stay longer. "I told him it's something I needed to do, something not just for myself, but also for the Cambodian people; but if I'm a monk, I can't really do things I want to do," things that would involve working for pay and handling money, not permitted for monks.

For the future, he says he wants to go back to Cambodia and help rebuild. So instead of taking business courses, he chose mechanical engineering. "That's a big thing. I don't like the shape of my country now. I've never seen my country in peace. When I grew up, all I heard was just the guns. Cambodia is thousands of years old, and what have they done to it? I'd like to build something, make something."

Chanthol Tho also had strong feelings about the power struggle in Cambodia, as well as in his Providence community. "I want to tell them, 'Right now, you better talk straight, do something, resolve it. In a few more years you're gonna be dead and it's us [young people] that have to take it. In order to get a good planting, you have to get a good seed, and you have to care about that seed. You can't just care about your own power, and then die and let these people suffer. Each one would say they love their country, their people, but instead they did not...they fight, they still fight.'"

A ragged and dirty boy with no shirt is carried on stage, his face haunted by exhaustion and grief. The boy and the girl who carry him are dressed in casual American clothes. Holding him, they take washcloths and dip them into a basin of water and carefully wash him. They dress him in a clean western shirt. They comb his hair. A stool is brought in and they place him on it and give him his flute. Then he tells his dream, in which his long-dead sister, whom he had to abandon during the jungle fighting years ago, appears and forgives him. Afterwards, he plays his flute.

A professional video crew taped the final performance of "I Never Talk About This" at RISD auditorium in June. It would take about \$2,000 to complete the editing and to make tapes available for viewing. If you would like to contribute to this, or to the support of the theater group itself, send donations to: Popular Theater of Rhode Island, c/o Barry Marshall, 110 Lauriston Street, Providence, RI 02906 (not yet tax deductible). ♦

—Ellen Sidor is a part-time copy editor at the Providence (RI) Journal. For five years she was Editor-in-Chief of Primary Point, newspaper of the Kwan Um School of Zen. She edited *A Gathering of Spirit: Women Teaching in American Buddhism* (Primary Point Press, 1987). A Senior Dharma Teacher and student of Zen Master Seung Sahn, she founded *The Meditation Place* in Providence, R.I., a support center for meditators.

The Emerging New Age

by J.L. Simmonds.

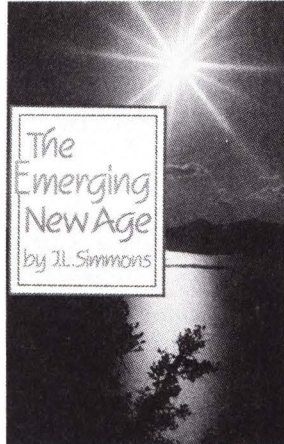
Santa Fe: Bear & Co., 1990.
227 pp. \$9.95.

reviewed by Ken Jones

The author of *The Emerging New Age*, a social psychologist by trade, acknowledges that "The New Age" is a generality that has so many separate strands they can hardly be counted." In one sense it is the emergence of a new mentality or paradigm which is organic rather than mechanistic. It seeks to restore the balance of *yin* qualities in our culture (feminine, cooperative, intuitive, synthesizing) in contrast to the currently ascendant *yang* (masculine, aggressive, rational, analytic). Pioneers like Fritjof Capra, in *The Turning Point*, have described the coming of this new culture in physics, psychology, medicine, economics and other fields. Similarly there is the faltering emergence of a Green style of politics, a spiritually informed politics in contrast to the traditional politics and arguably more significant than mere Green *policies*.

Simmonds' book, however, is an amiable, anecdotal, easy-to-read introduction to the New Age as "a world-wide spiritual awakening...a transition to a new era." The book is strongly oriented towards the psychic and the occult, especially in the earlier and largest part, with chapter heads like "Some Common Psychic Incidents," "Profound Paranormal Experiences," "Disembodied Spirits," "Messages from Beyond" and "Past-Life Relationships." This orientation is emphasized in the interesting list of 23 annotated and recommended readings at the end.

From the viewpoint of a socially engaged spirituality, what concerned me about the book — and got me thinking — was what I saw as its failure to relate clearly the spiritual search to the experience of psychic phenomena. To those of us who are socially engaged in Buddhist, Christian and similar traditional spiritual practice this relationship is important for two reasons. On the one hand it is important in clarifying our attitude to psychically oriented (and presumably typical) New Agers and making common cause with them. On the other hand, New Ageism can get in the way of our attempts to communicate the meaning of spirituality to fellow activists in the secular, humanist tradition. Not only termagants like Murray Bookchin, but cooler thinkers like Boris Frankel (in *The Post-Industrial Utopians*, 1987) readily equate "spirituality" with "spiritualism," whereas the former is explicable (and even practiced) without reference to psychic phenomena. Books like this muddy the waters for us.



In my view it is helpful to understand so-called psychic phenomena as manifestations of an energy more subtle than the coarse, dense, and low-vibrational energy which informs consciousness as ordinarily experienced. It would have helped if Simmonds had included something of the scientific approach exemplified in books like John Davidson's *Subtle Energy* (1987), concerned with electro-magnetic radiation, bioelectronics, the Earth's energy field, body auras, dowsing and the like — all ignored by Simmonds.

The ancient traditions of the world's religions do bear witness to a wide range of disembodied beings and other psychic phenomena. These have been incorporated into some spiritual practices, as in, say, Tibetan Buddhism, and the various Books of the Dead. However, in all spiritual traditions there are warnings about the lure of exotic psychic by-ways. At the least these divert energy from the task of self-transcendent liberation. At the worst they can lead to the appropriation of "left-handed" powers by a dangerous spiritual egotism. In short, *higher* consciousness (whether disembodied or not) should not be confused with different *kinds* of consciousness (disembodied or not). Unfortunately Simmonds' otherwise astute chapter on "Spiritual Pitfalls" (he is good on headstrong gurus) neglects to mention this deepest pit of all.

There is some truth in Murray Bookchin's charge that New Ageism tends "to sedate people in quasi-religious and mystical nostrums." An articulate and widely acceptable socially engaged spirituality is the most effective response. But as a typical New Ager Simmonds is not reassuring. He acknowledges that two-thirds of the world's population "are living more or less downtrodden lives," and that excitement about the forthcoming New Age "might seem like cold comfort to someone languishing in a Central American prison or a woman on her own trying to raise two children on a subsistence salary." His response is that "the bottom-line assertion of the New Age is that things don't have to be the way they are....Everyone who stirs or awakens spiritually alters the collective vibrational patterns of the planet, thereby lightening the intensity of the Earth trance with its coarser wavelengths. As this process continues, it eventually reaches the point where it becomes difficult for anyone to remain asleep." Without denying the truth in this, many of us believe that the process is going to need quite a bit of help...

Reading Simmonds' informative book helped to clarify my mind around some fundamental questions, though not in the direction he intended. You might well find a similar exploration worthwhile. Depending on where you are coming from, some of the chapters might entertainingly raise your eyebrows. But beneath the easy read there is a lot of astute good sense (on cults and karma, for example) in this likeable book. ❖

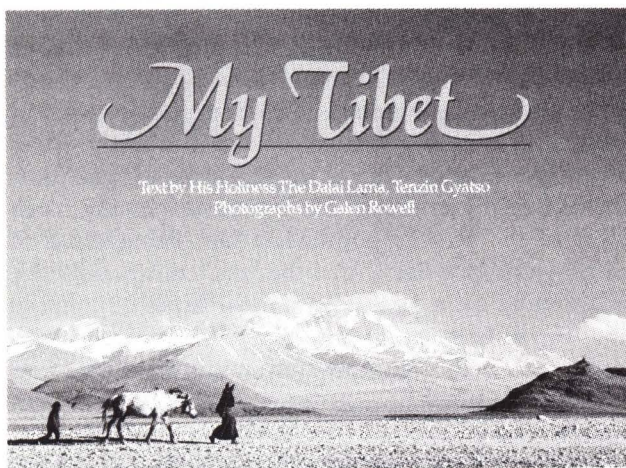
PREVIEW: *My Tibet*

His Holiness the Dalai Lama & Galen Rowell
 University of California Press, Sept. 1990; \$35.00.

Readers of our last issue will recall the cover photograph (and lead article) by Galen Rowell, documenting abuse of the Tibetan environment. Now H.H. the Dalai Lama and Galen Rowell have collaborated on a new book, *My Tibet*.

Six essays by the Dalai Lama and one by Galen Rowell form the basic text of the book. There are also 118 photographs by Mr. Rowell, who is widely considered to be the preeminent nature photographer in the U.S. During the past 15 years, Mr. Rowell made 35 trips to the Himalayas. He culled the best photographs from these trips, and showed them to the Dalai Lama with a slide projector. Mr. Rowell recorded the remarks the Dalai Lama made as he watched, and these remarks accompany many of the images.

Galen Rowell is anxious that the book should find appreciative readers (and not just those who stumble across it in a coffee-table section of a major chain bookstore). Please ask your local bookstore about it if you don't find it in stock. Half of the proceeds from sales will go to a fund of the Dalai Lama's designation. ❖



Chapters & Members

All Members' Meeting September 21-23, 1990

This year's meeting focuses on community building and networking. How can we support each other more as BPF members, how can we feel more connected to each other and how do we deepen our commitment to the purposes of BPF? Come join in exploring these and other issues as we together create the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. All are invited and chapters are encouraged to send a representative.

The meeting will be hosted by the Cambridge-Boston, MA chapter. They'll provide housing in homes

for all out-of-town attendees, help with information on transportation from the airport and other Boston information. The local contact is Jim Austin, at (508) 967-1036. The meeting and Saturday workshop will be held at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center at 331 Broadway in Cambridge. Here are some highlights:

Friday

7:30 pm — **Public Talk by Robert Thurman**, renowned Buddhist scholar and Tibet activist; Cambridge Friends Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge, MA (off Brattle Street.)

Saturday

9am -12 — **Council of All Beings Workshop** with Paula Green and Stephanie Kaza. A workshop to experience our place in nature as we speak for the endangered and extinct species among us. No charge to BPF members.

1:30 - 6:00pm — Meditation & Meeting

Evening — Free (group dinner optional)

Sunday 9am - 12noon — Meditation & Meeting

12 noon — Closing ceremony

Please inform Jim Austin of your plans to come as soon as possible. We hope to meet many of you there!

National Board Report

BIG THANKS —

During the nearly two years that David Schneider has been the editor, the BPF newsletter has grown in many ways, becoming a 48-page journal with a regular quarterly schedule. He has creatively and ingeniously pursued authors and stories to ensure rich, original material. The Board and Staff are grateful for his dedication and commitment. His dynamic, passionate presence will be missed. Thank you, David.

Berkeley, California, June 1-3, 1990

The BPF Board of Directors gathered for its twice-yearly meeting, hosted this time by Gordon Tyndall. National members from Hawaii, Rochester, and Nyack, New York joined the local executive committee for consideration of budget, program, and future directions.

Budget

We are pleased to report BPF has been in solid financial standing for the past year. We had passed a budget of \$60,000 for 1990, and now we find we are both spending and receiving 25% more than this, for a total income/expenditures so far in 1990 of \$42,500. This has given us confidence to take out a loan of \$4000 to purchase a much-needed computer for the office. Thank you for your membership renewals and donations — and please keep them coming!

Program

Our committees met and planned future programs for the coming year at BPF. 1) The Environment and

Buddhism group (Doug and Stephanie) agreed to work on two upcoming conferences on the Environment and Tibet, and Buddhism/Ecology in Thailand. We also plan to encourage American Buddhist centers to establish a position on their boards for an ecological officer, who would investigate the level of environmental awareness and responsiveness in the center. 2) The International Committee is looking into the timing and logistics of sending a BPF/FOR delegation to Burma in early 1991. We will be continuing to pressure the Chinese government on Tibet by circulating petitions. 3) The Outreach Committee will prepare a Travelers Packet for board and staff members who are traveling to other parts of the country so they can meet with local BPF members. The committee will keep chapter contact going with the quarterly conference calls and work on program planning for the BPF Annual Meeting in September in Boston. 4) The Engaged Buddhism Committee has drafted a proposal for a summer training institute and for weekend workshops to develop a framework for social action based in Buddhist philosophy and practice. National Coordinator Margaret Howe attended the FOR conference in July for non-violence training, and to gather ideas on the structure of the BPF Institute.

Affiliations

Our most involved discussions focused on the distinction between BPF internal programs and program affiliates. Kaz Tanahashi and associates have requested endorsement and support from BPF for their new organization in Global Buddhism, with a focus on translating books on engaged Buddhism into Japanese for distribution in Japan. As BPF grows, we expect to receive more requests for support, so we are studying the various levels of commitment and accountability appropriate for internal, affiliate, and endorsed or sponsored projects.

Board Election

We will need several new members to join the Board of Directors in January 1991, so we discussed election timing and procedure. We need more directors to serve on the Newsletter and International Committees. Anyone we (or any of you) suggest as a Board member will be requested to write a letter to the Board stating their interests and reasons for wanting to serve on the Board. Then the executive committee will consider the candidates and make formal nominations for the election. These will be presented at the September Annual Meeting. Additional suggestions can be accepted at that time from members, and the election will take place in October.

Evaluation

We were very pleased with the substantial progress BPF has made in the past year, in terms of finances, program, and organizational structure. The continuing efforts of all our teachers, mentors, and leaders in non-

violent, compassionate action encourage us to continue the work of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

—*In fellowship, Stephanie Kaza, President*

Boulder-Denver Chapter Report

Nature Meditation

A group of us who love to sit and walk outdoors are starting a "nature meditation" group. We will get together about once a month on a weekend. We'll sit and walk silently outdoors for 3 hours (you choose the length of time suitable for you). Then we'll share a lunch and talk. In the afternoon, some of us will meditate with sketch pad, pencil or brush. Some may choose to sing or continue sitting, talking, or doing any activity that is in harmony with the environment. We may practice meditation through the arts of camouflage, stalking and still watching, thereby becoming intuitively acquainted with various aspects of trees, plants, rocks, and animals.

We're planning a weekend retreat in the woods. We plan a day of walking meditation — on paths, off paths.... The group can be a forum for whatever we wish. Kind of a BPF Sierra Club — including the aspect of social action! If you would like to join, call Desiree at (303) 772-4119 or Pamela Gang at (303) 444-1310.

Garbage and Roses Theater Company

Yes, folks, a new theater company is forming, in the spirit of Thich Nhat Hanh's teaching. Our first production will be "Stone Boy," one of Thây's stories. We will perform as a choral ensemble — the style will be "story theater." Movement will be spare, like a danced haiku, echoing some types of Asian ritual theater. Performance will be both indoors and outdoors. Some evening performances will be by torchlight. All are offered in the spirit of a Tea Ceremony at a retreat.

The company welcomes people who: like to play music, write songs, compose and perform movement; enjoy creating props, costumes and effects with basic lighting; enjoy using their voices; enjoy doing publicity, including artwork and writing; enjoy helping during a performance and backstage; like to fundraise small sums to cover the budget.

The time commitment will be an intensive four to six weeks between performances. For the experimental work between productions, the group will determine how often it wishes to meet.

We will perform privately and publicly, for free or for pay or for benefit, depending on the company's wishes and the particular audience. If you are interested in participating but have no training in what you wish to do, you are equally welcomed. Training will take place in the course of rehearsals.

If you'd like to participate, call Pamela Gang at (303) 444-1310 or David Silver at (303) 449-7073. ♦

ANNOUNCEMENTS & CLASSIFIEDS

Thich Nhat Hanh: 1991 Retreats & Lectures

BPF is co-sponsoring Thich Nhat Hanh's tour of the U.S. and Canada. The following schedule is *tentative*. A brochure with final dates and registration information for all retreats will be sent to all BPF members in October.

Retreats in English:

March 14-17, Mindfulness
Houston, TX

March 26-30, Environmentalists
Ojai, CA

April 1-5, Families and Children
Santa Barbara, CA

April 30-May 4, Mindfulness
S.F. Bay Area, CA

May 5, Day of Mindfulness
S.F. Bay Area, CA

May 6-10, Helping Professionals
S.F. Bay Area, CA

May 13-17, Mindfulness
Chicago Area, IL

May 23-26, Mindfulness
Washington D.C. Area

June 5-10, Veterans
Omega Institute, NY

June 11-14, Mindfulness & Judaism
Omega Institute, NY

June 16, Day of Mindfulness
Boston Area, MA

Public Lectures in English:

March 13	Houston, TX
March 30	Ojai, CA
April 10	Los Angeles, CA
April 12	San Diego, CA
April 17	San Francisco, CA
May 12	Chicago, IL
May 21	Washington, D.C.
June 3	New York, NY

Public Lecture in French:

June 24 Montréal

Retreats and Public Lectures in Vietnamese will also be held at all of these locations. BPF National Office has specific information. Through the fall and winter of 1990 Thich Nhat Hanh will be giving retreats in Europe; if you are interested in these, contact BPF National Office for information. ♦

Announcements

ENDANGERED TIBET: An Ecology Conference. featuring Galen Rowell, Orville Schell, Nancy Nash, Tenzin Atisha and others. Saturday, October 27, 9-4 pm, with evening cultural program. Fort Mason Center's Cowell Theater, San Francisco, CA.

WOMEN'S RETREAT: October 5, 6, 7. Vedanta Center, Olema (Point Reyes) CA. The theme of the retreat will be "Coping with the Legacy of Shame." From Friday evening until Sunday afternoon we will observe the healing power of our Vipassana practice in the quiet setting of the Vedanta Retreat Center. The maximum number of participants is 15. For information call Margo Tyndall, (415) 654-8677, or Barbara Wilt, (415) 652-1184.

BUILDING A SANGHA FOR EDUCATORS: Being Peace, Making Peace — In Our Schools. Continuing the spirit of Thich Nhat Hanh, we invite people who are involved in the education of children, teenagers and adults to join us for a day of mindfulness. We do sitting and walking meditation and share experiences and ideas of ways to cultivate peace in our work and everyday lives. *When:* Saturday, Sept. 15, 1990, 1-7 p.m. *Where:* Home in Point Richmond, CA. *How:* For further information and directions call Patrick McMahon, (415) 236-3122. *Bring:* Food for potluck supper, pillow for meditating. We get together for a day of mindfulness once every two months. If you cannot make it to this gathering but would like to be on the

mailing list call or write: Jennifer Biehn, 5233 Fleming, Oakland, CA, 94619, (415) 261-8714.

SEX, POWER, & BUDDHA NATURE, A Town Hall Meeting for the larger Buddhist sangha. Berkeley, CA October, 1990. Call 525-8596 for information.

Classifieds

THE INFLATABLE ZAFU is actually an inflatable beachball inside a fine quality Zafu cover. Lightweight - convenient - guaranteed. Colors: Plum, Burgundy, Royal Blue, Navy, Black, and Green. Cost: \$18 postpaid. Free brochure on this and traditional meditation cushions. CAROLINA MORNING DESIGNS, Dept. BPFN, Rt 1 Box 31-B, Hot Springs, NC 28743. (704) 622-7329.

PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL needs volunteers to help protect human rights lawyers in Sri Lanka. As part of the PBI team, you would shadow these peaceworkers to help keep them safe and alive. Write: Peace Brigades International, 4722 Baltimore #2, Philadelphia, PA 19143.

FOR SALE IN BPF OFFICE: T-shirts with the BPF logo in turquoise or white, \$12. S, M, L, XL.

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

Earth Day Poster - A beautiful 24" x 33" two-color poster of the Buddha contemplating the interdependence of all things in a rainforest surrounded by a myriad of animals. \$7.

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

All prices include U.S. postage.

DONATIONS NEEDED - East Bay Committee for Central American Refugees needs donations of money, clothes, furniture, food. Please call (415) 533-1119.

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BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- ❖ To make clear public witness to Buddhist practice as a way of peace and protection of all beings;
- ❖ To raise peace, environmental, feminist, and social justice concerns among Western Buddhists;
- ❖ To bring a Buddhist perspective to contemporary peace, environmental, and social action movements;
- ❖ To encourage the practice of nonviolence based on the rich resources of traditional Buddhist teachings;
- ❖ To offer avenues for dialogue and exchange among the diverse American and world sanghas.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

BPF membership requires only a commitment to the general spirit of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Please see Statement of Purpose, above. BPF relies on members' support and suggests a minimum annual donation of \$25 for U.S. residents, \$30 overseas. Please make checks payable to "Buddhist Peace Fellowship." Contributions are tax deductible. Members receive a one year subscription to the *BPF Newsletter*. For contributions of \$50 or more, we will send you a copy of *The Path of Compassion*.

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BPF encourages members to join the BPF chapter in their area, and to join the Fellowship of Reconciliation in their home country.

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