



TURNING WHEEL

Journal of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship

Summer 1993 \$4.00



Rufus Hockenhull, *Self-Portrait*

***MONEY** — and the lack thereof —*

DOES A DOLLAR HAVE BUDDHA NATURE?

Robert Aitken, Fleet Maull, Suzuki-roshi, and others

Interview with Mayumi Oda

Gary Snyder on Crawling

Cambodian Peace Walk

BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP
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FROM THE EDITOR

When I was growing up, money was never mentioned. Consequently, it's hard for me to talk about it without blushing and stammering. So I asked that Zen sage, Tofu Roshi, who doesn't know the meaning of embarrassment, to write a guest editorial on this most taboo of all subjects. — Susan Moon

When old Bush Wak was still master at the monastery on Poor Man Mountain, a young monk asked him, "Does a dollar have buddha nature?"

Bush Wak replied, "If you fold George Washington's collar up to his eyebrows, he turns into a mushroom."

The young monk bowed with deep respect.

According to ancient Buddhist teaching, there are twelve laws of money:

1. Money is worthless unless it's in motion. Throw it in the air or off of piers, for boys and girls to dive for.
2. Money is like chocolate. Either you don't have enough and you want more, or you have too much and it makes you sick.
3. Money is not really a thing at all. Like sex, it exists only as activity.
4. Money is dirty until it's laundered. Wash it by hand in cold water and spread out on a towel to dry.
5. The richer you are, the more money you can borrow from the poor.
6. People who say "The best things in life are free" have plenty of money.
7. There are two kinds of people who never touch money: the very rich, and those who have taken vows of poverty.
8. Inside every rich person there is a poor person struggling to be free.
9. Where there is no money, there is no poverty.
10. Put your money where your mouth is, but don't put money in your mouth.
11. Give 25 cents to whoever asks for it.
12. If you *must* keep money, do it in an old sock that's lost its mate.

I close with a verse I composed on the occasion of paying my real estate taxes.

Money does not exist in nature.

But when it flies in the ten directions,

It's beautiful as a bird or a flying mushroom.

When not in motion, it gives people warts.

♦ — Tofu Roshi

Coming themes for *Turning Wheel*:

Fall '93: Engaged lives. Deadline: August 16. Please send manuscripts and other material for this issue to: Denise Caignon, 720 Columbia St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060. She will be guest editing the Fall issue.

Winter, '94: Right speech/free speech. Deadline: November 15.

Tentative themes for **Spring '94:** Environmental activism. Deadline: January 17.

Summer '94: Nonviolence. Deadline: April 18.

COVER PICTURE — The photographs on the cover and on page 21 were both taken by Rufus Hockenhull, a participant in an ongoing photography workshop called "Oakland, Close-Up in Black and White." Scott Braley, founder and director, teaches photography to people who are (or have recently been) homeless. The project is sponsored by the Center for Urban Family Life.

If you can donate photographic equipment to this unusual and creative project, please contact Scott Braley, at 510/843-0771.

Bay Area residents may want to visit an exhibit of photographs by Scott Braley and Rufus Hockenhull, "From the Street: Two Views of Life at 14th and Jefferson," on display at the Pro Arts Gallery, 461 Ninth St., in Oakland, California, from July 7 through August 21.



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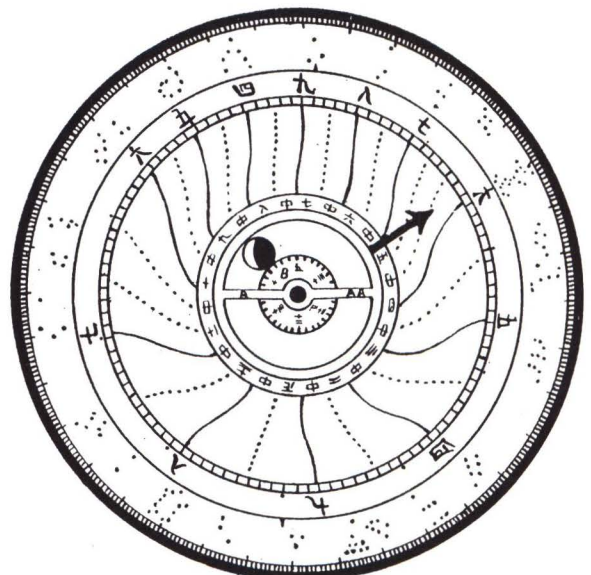
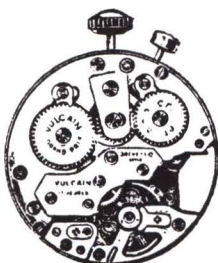
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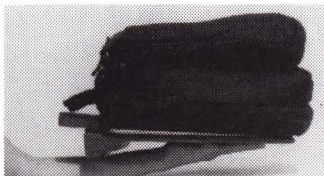
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LETTERS

On Racism

(Spring 1993 *Turning Wheel*)

Dear Turning Wheel:

The Spring 1993 issue of the Journal is again super! So much rich, helpful material.

The dialogue "Buddhism and Equality" [pp. 29-32] concerning Soka Gakkai International and its African American members is not only of intrinsic interest and value, but goes a long way to helping me overcome my prejudice against Soka Gakkai and Nichiren forms of Buddhism. Too long had I remembered critiques by Prof. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki and some magazine (*Time? Newsweek?*) that had portrayed Soka Gakkai in the mid-70's as too belligerent, even brainwashingly Japanese-nationalistic.

Seng T'san, third Zen patriarch warns me, "to be for or against is the mind's worst disease."

—Karl O. Hill, Larchmont, New York

Dear Turning Wheel:

It was refreshing that *Turning Wheel* in its Spring issue examined the role that traditional American cultural prejudices against certain racial and ethnic groups may play in Buddhism in our country.

However, in an issue devoted to discrimination I find it quite regrettable and inexplicable that Asian American Buddhists were located conveniently "on the back of the bus," as it were. At least this time they made it on board – if only as a muted presence in the closing pages.

When are we Euro-American Buddhists going to face up to the fact that while we will flock to listen to Asian lamas, Zen masters and monks, we are loath to have anything to do with the large communities of Asian American Buddhists here. Buddhist publications in the United States routinely ignore the very existence of the large Asian American communities in our midst. This is incredible. These people are the majority of Buddhists in the United States!

Buddhist periodicals in the United States are aimed at white professionals and are totally Amero-centric. They reflect a view of Buddhism in the United States which has a white "clubby" tone and intellectual trendiness to a degree that makes them Buddhist competitors to *Vanity Fair*.

There is a pathetic irony in all of this, in that many of us Euro-American Buddhists spend a great deal of time flouncing around in ancient Asian drag and parroting rituals in languages in which we have not even a toe-hold of fluency. While our neighbors, thousands of Asian American Buddhists, are virtually ignored by their Western alleged co-religionists as they struggle, for the most part in considerably more difficult circumstances, to practice the Buddhadharma in the nitty-gritty work-

day shambles that is the United States today.

How long will it be before we American Buddhists of Western origin examine the Jim Crow Buddhism we have erected against Asian Americans? The Jewel Net of Indra has a tragic rent in it in this country.

—Jack Carroll, New York, New York

Dear Turning Wheel:

Thank you for your thoughtful issue on racism.

One thought that comes to my mind after reading the issue is that in many minority communities there is already a strong faith that holds those communities together – be it Catholicism in the Latino community or other faiths for different groups. Perhaps if we live the dharma through engaged Buddhism within these communities, that is just right: living side by side, not trying to change someone to become Buddhist. It seems that people find the dharma when they're ready for it.

—Grace Sanchez, Scotts Valley, California

On Animal Rights

(Winter 1993; Spring 1993 letters)

Dear Turning Wheel:

David Schneider makes the argument in his letter (*Turning Wheel*, Spring 1993) that killing animals for food is on the same moral level as killing plants. Perhaps purchasing and buying a steak at the supermarket and selecting and buying a carrot seem similar. But I invite Mr. Schneider to go to a slaughterhouse and see where his meat comes from. Witness the newborn calf crying out in terror after being taken from his mother and locked in a small box to produce the white meat for veal. In fact, if Mr. Schneider were going to be completely honest about his views, he would slaughter the calf himself.

Next, I'd suggest that he go to a farm and observe the farmer pulling the carrot out of the ground, and have Mr. Schneider pull out one of those. Then and only then, when he himself has killed both the animal and the vegetable, can he assert that both acts are the same.

I have more respect for the meat eater who can say, "I know it's not right to eat animals, but I don't have the will power to stop," than for those who rationalize their diet with specious arguments about the rights of plants.

—Stacy Taylor, Berkeley, California

Dear Turning Wheel:

Buddhists struggle with the vow of not killing other sentient beings. For sensitive Buddhists this struggle extends not only to the death penalty but to questions regarding meat-eating, fishing, killing for sport or scientific research, and the like. This debate, if you will, about the ethics of animal rights – and the rights of plants – is very useful . . . up to a point. When the sentience of plants is invoked as a rationale for killing animals, then this kind of

*"Thus shall ye think of all this fleeting world:
A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream;
A flash of lightning in a summer cloud,
A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream."*

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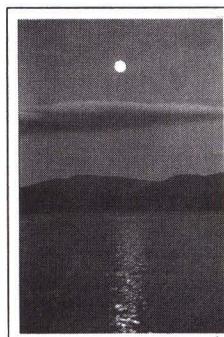
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debate must be called by its true name: sophistry. [See David Schneider's letter, Spring 1993 issue.]

What we need most of all is silence. Let us sit in meditation, let us sit with awareness, and invite the bears, whales, dolphins, chickens, cows, sheep, pigs, snails, toad hornworms, mosquitoes, and cockroaches we have killed or propose to kill into this circle of silence. Let's sit in silence without superimposing glorified images of Native Americans performing the buffalo dance before killing this great animal of the plains. This is the past.

Thoreau, having (I'm sure) sat in silence for a good while, said it eloquently in *Walden*: "Is it not a reproach that man is a carnivorous animal? True, he can and does live, in a great measure, by preying on other animals; but this is a miserable way - as anyone who will go to snaring rabbits, or slaughtering lambs, may learn - and he will be regarded as a benefactor of his race who shall teach man to confine himself to a more innocent and wholesome diet. Whatever my own practice may be, I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals."

Sentient beings do not die in silence, but their cries of pain have been silenced by our own self-centered thinking.

—Robert Epstein, Berkeley, California

Dear *Turning Wheel*:

Upon reading the letters in the Spring issue, I discovered I have some comments about animal rights. Let me preface my remarks by saying that I have been a Buddhist and a vegetarian for about five years.

What is the cost to the world, both socially and environmentally, of this (American) culture of ours that permits us to be vegetarians without any risk of malnutrition or hardship? The variety of foodstuffs available to us is staggering and problematic. Meditate upon where your vegetarian fare comes from: overseas perhaps? transported at high cost? grown sustainably or not? grown with criminally underpaid labor? I doubt it was grown in Seattle. If one happens to have serious ethical problems with our modern high-tech, "free market" society, as I do, how does one reconcile that with the fact that a vegetarian lifestyle would not be viable without it? This is a difficult problem. I don't pretend to know the answer.

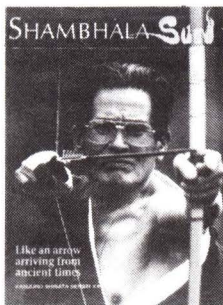
I agree with David Schneider about cultivating a sense of sacredness when procuring our daily bread. Whatever we eat, be it the flesh of animals or plants, we should do it with the utmost respect and understanding of the suffering that is a part of life.

Thank you for your excellent journal. Keep up the good work!

—John P. Azelvandre, Brooklyn, New York

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On Livelihood:**Dear Turning Wheel:**

Since your Summer issue deals with Right Livelihood, I want to share something I learned when studying Sanskrit.

The word "right" is the Sanskrit *samyak*, which had two translations in Soothill's dictionary. Besides "right," *samyak* means "complete," as in *anuttara samyak sambodhi*: "complete awakening."

I have always appreciated this double meaning. Not only is the Eightfold Path one of "correct livelihood" (as a left-hander, I prefer this to "right livelihood"), but also there is encouragement to perform "complete livelihood," which I take to mean giving ourselves completely to our activities. An excellent path!

—Sandy Stewart, Pittsboro, North Carolina

Dear Turning Wheel:

"And, after a few years of criminal appeals, I have learned all too well how easy it is for innocent persons to be convicted by bloodthirsty prosecutors. . . ."

—A.J. Kutchins, "How I Killed Robert Alton Harris," *Turning Wheel*, Summer 1992.

I wasn't used to *Turning Wheel* articles provoking the anger that these words did. I didn't like the judgment Albert Kutchins made about me — a county prosecutor turned state Assistant Attorney General. Besides, he was wrong. After years of overly sympathetic Supreme Court rulings that have ignored the rights of victims and hamstrung police, it is not easy to convict guilty persons, of whom there are plenty. I have yet to meet the prosecutor who has the time or the inclination to go after the innocent. I have met bloodthirsty people in courtrooms, but most of them sit at the other table. And is it right livelihood to work toward the release of dangerous defendants back into the community?

After my anger and my indignation subsided, and my judgments got out of the way, I was left with the understanding that Albert and I both struggle to reconcile the practice of a profession that is adversarial by design (and gives its practitioners enormous power over the lives of other beings) with a spiritual practice that teaches compassion. We both have seen law and Buddhism as two practices, and we both seem to be growing into the realization that they are one.

In January 1984, I was half way through my first year of law school, and already convinced that my spiritual and creative life needed tending in the midst of such cold, linear thinking. I had been meditating, in one form or another, off and on for years and decided to find a place for retreat and some instruction. The first response to my various inquiries was the arrival of the Tassajara guest season brochure announcing the first Zen retreat.

So, that May, I headed to Tassajara for a week that changed my life. I found a home and a practice, and

met people who have become family. I also felt the first stirring of the question that would, with some refinements, become my koan.

I finished law school and became a prosecutor in Multnomah County (Portland) Oregon. Soon after experiencing the exhilaration of winning my first jury trial, the question, my koan, became clear. It sat sesshin with me, went to Tassajara with me, and sat with me at counsel table most every time I entered a courtroom. Is it possible to be a compassionate prosecutor?

I had gone to law school to become an advocate for children and, juvenile law specialists being rare, I was soon transferred to the DA's juvenile court office. I represented the state in actions to take kids away from parents who abused or neglected them. No conflict with right livelihood for me there. I also prosecuted kids who broke the law. Not joy-riding or vandalism cases, which is how many people still see juvenile crime, but rape, sexual abuse, armed robbery and a host of other violent crimes. And with these kids, many of whom were victims of abuse themselves (and virtually all children who sexually abuse other children are victims of sexual abuse) the question of right livelihood did arise. Can I prosecute victims? Can I send these kids to jail? The answer was yes, they should be held accountable and they should be treated. My koan did not go away, it just became less pressing.

I kept sitting, kept going to Tassajara. I sat sesshin. I took the precepts. I tried to live them.

Finally, two and a half years ago, burned out and battered by the immense suffering of children, I left the District Attorney's office and went to work for the state Attorney General. I still work with and for abused children, I still take them away from abusive parents. I handle fewer cases now, though those I do get tend to be bigger and more complex.

I don't spend a lot of time looking for answers. Heeding Rilke, I try to live the question. I have learned that what I do is far less important than how I do it. It is important to me that I do what I do mindfully, carefully. That I try to approach even the most deviant people with compassion and wisdom, with love. That I remember that I am but one jewel in the net they have created for themselves in this and past lifetimes, as each of them is one jewel in the net I have created and am creating for myself. That I remember that there is only one net.

I remember when I first met Albert. We were introduced before a morning work meeting, and the acknowledgment that we were both lawyers was made quietly, almost secretly. Even at Tassajara, lawyering seemed to be a suspect profession — or was that only our shared perception, distorted by our own doubts? I expect that Albert and I again will meet at Tassajara, each more comfortable with our chosen profession, and each a whole lot easier on ourselves.

—Nancy Simmons, Wilsonville, Oregon

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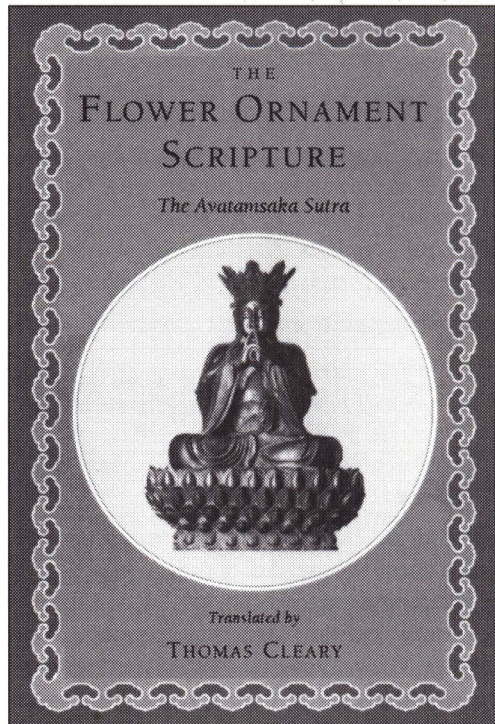
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READINGS

Free Trade and Interdependence

by Steven Gorelick

Nowadays, both Buddhists and "free trade" advocates can be heard talking about "interdependence." But do they mean the same thing?

In Buddhism, interdependence refers to the interconnected web of life and the co-arising of all phenomena. But "free trade" today denies our interdependence with nature. Interdependence in economic terms refers only to links between nations in the new global economy. The increased trade resulting from agreements like NAFTA and GATT, it is claimed, will make us even more economically interdependent – so much so that we will become a "Global Community." *

But in fact these expanded trade links are severing the interdependent bonds that tie real communities together – bonds to nature, to culture, to people. Thanks to the already exploding levels of international trade, New Zealand apples crowd out local apples in markets in the U.S. and England, Michael Jackson recordings eclipse indigenous music in Chile and China, and Danish potatoes are shipped to Italy to be washed – and then sent back to Denmark to be sold. In America today, the average pound of food has traveled over a thousand miles before it reaches the kitchen table. As trade increases, local production for local consumption is steadily replaced by corporate production far removed from local control. Free trade really means more dependence – on the multinational corporations that are the major players in the new global economy.

Owing no allegiance to people or place, these corporations are impelled by the profit imperative to produce where wages and environmental standards are lowest. In practice this means shifting production to the Third World, where workers will be the producers for consumers in the richer countries. NAFTA and GATT aim to make corporations even freer in their pursuit of profits, while the impact on local producers and local economies is ignored.

In the name of economic growth, free trade agreements threaten anything that stands in the way of trade – including democratic process. One example is the hard-won U.S. environmental law restricting imports of tuna caught with methods that kill dolphins. Since Mexican tuna caught with these methods is banned, Mexico has challenged the law as an "impediment to trade." Unelected GATT bureaucrats meeting in secret will have the power to strike this U.S. law.

The pollution and urban squalor surrounding the *maquiladoras* (U.S. factories in the "free trade zone" along the U.S.-Mexican border) reveal what the Third World can expect as a member of the new Global Community. Meanwhile, unemployment in the devel-

oped world will rise as factories relocate, with blue-collar workers hit hardest. Small farmers, unable to compete with huge agribusinesses, will disappear. And since corporations will relocate their factories and agribusinesses to countries with lax environmental standards, pollution can be expected to increase, and food to become more chemical-laden than ever. Goods once produced locally or regionally will be shipped ever greater distances, adding to fossil fuel depletion and air pollution. This is "interdependence" as championed under the banner of free trade.

NAFTA is expected to be sent to Congress for approval by the end of the year. GATT is still being negotiated (in secret, of course).

Write your congressperson to oppose these "free trade" agreements. Let them know that it is more important to protect the environment, local economies and the democratic process than to increase the power of corporations. For more information about NAFTA and GATT, write the International Society for Ecology and Culture, P.O. Box 9475, Berkeley, CA 94709.

* NAFTA is the North American Free Trade Agreement, which aims to join the U.S., Canada, and Mexico into a single trading block. GATT is the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, a worldwide agreement on the rules of international trade. It is currently being renegotiated, with the aim of extending its scope and further breaking down trade restrictions.

Help Protest Investment in Burma's SLORC Regime

The *Bangkok Post* reports that the U.S.-based oil firm Unocal has acquired nearly half the interests in natural gas prospecting in the Gulf of Martaban off Burma's coast. The deal, conducted with the French oil firm Total, was apparently struck some time ago but not publicly announced, partly because Unocal was concerned it would again become a target of criticism by those opposing foreign investment in Burma, which is known for extensive human rights abuses. (Unocal has already come under such criticism for its past – and continuing – investments in on-shore oil exploration in Burma.)

Please write immediately to protest Unocal's continued (and covert) economic support of Burma's murderous regime, SLORC (the "State Law and Order Restoration Council"). Unocal provides U.S. dollars which SLORC uses to buy weapons and continue its campaign of terror against Burma's people.

Write or call: Mr. Richard Stegemeir, Chairman of the Board, Unocal, P.O. Box 7600, 1201 West 5th St., Los Angeles, CA 90061, tel. 213/977-7600.

Also, Seven Seas Cruise Line is currently advertising a cruise to Southeast Asia that includes Burma. Previously SLORC has used such cruise-ship arrivals as propaganda to indicate foreign support. Please point out to Seven Seas (which has Norwegian registry for its

"Song of Flower" cruise ship) that such tourism to SLORC-controlled Burma is grossly inappropriate at this time. Write: Mr. Anders Stenersen, President, Seven Seas Cruise Line, 333 Market St., #2600, San Francisco, CA 94105, or call 800/285-1835.

Help Free Burmese Monk, Living Dharma Treasure

Bhaddanta Sumangala, a Burmese monk and abbot of Gandayon Monastery, is one of only five people in the world who have been recognized for memorizing the entire Pali Buddhist canon in verse. As such he bears the title Tipitaka-Dhara, "holder of the teachings"; now in his fifties, he is the youngest of the five monks (all Burmese) so honored. In 1990, U Sumangala participated in a monks' boycott protesting Burma's brutal SLORC regime by refusing to attend religious ceremonies arranged by SLORC. This was a gesture of "overturning the bowl," or refusing alms from those who have committed wrongdoing against the sangha.

In October of 1990 he disappeared, and unconfirmed rumors report that he was sent to Myitkina prison and solitary confinement.

Please write letters to the Burmese official named below, asking whether U Sumangala is still alive, how his health is, if he can receive letters or visitors; or you may simply demand his release. Write to: Lt. Gen. Phone Myint, Minister for Home and Religious Affairs,

Kaba Aye, Rangoon (Yangon), Burma (Myanmar).

(Should you receive any response from Burma, please let BPF know.)

Chittagong Hill Tracts Update

1992 saw a number of initially promising meetings between the Bangladesh government and representatives of the indigenous peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts region. However, by the end of the year it became clear that the government was obstructing the talks and showing unwillingness to work for a political settlement to the conflicts over the region's future. [For an orientation to the situation in the Hill Tracts, see "Readings" in the Spring 1992, Summer 1992, and Winter 1993 issues of Turning Wheel.]

There are several factors which may play a role in the government's apparent insincerity. First is the army's influence in the parliament. The army benefits by its presence in the Hill Tracts, which are wholly under its control (35,000 soldiers amidst a total population of 600,000 indigenous people), not only financially but because the Hill Tracts constitute a sort of laboratory for counter insurgency. The government also has an economic interest in the area's mineral and forest resources; and perhaps most problematically of all, any restoration of land to the indigenous people would entail the eviction of Bengalis who settled after 1947 and who now occupy a large part of the most fertile



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land. (Such settlers now number over 400,000.) Since Bangladesh's grave overpopulation crisis is one of the main reasons settlers were introduced in the Hill Tracts to begin with, this fundamental step toward restoring the rights of tribal peoples may be the most difficult of all to bring about.

For more information, contact Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, IWGIA, Fiolstraede 10, DK-1171 Copenhagen K, Denmark, tel. 45/33-124-724, fax 45/33-147-749.

Sulak Sivaraksa On Trial

Despite many attempts to have the charges against him dropped, Sulak Sivaraksa, founder of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, has been brought to trial by the Criminal Court in Bangkok, Thailand. After Sulak formally submitted a plea of innocence to the charges of *lese majesty* (defamation of the monarchy) and defaming General Suchinda Kraprayoon, the court began hearing the State's evidence.

For the remainder of 1993, Sulak will be a research fellow at Ryokoku University in Japan, but he will be returning to Thailand for three more trial dates in August, when it is expected that General Suchinda will testify against him as the prosecution's chief witness. Suchinda was the most prominent member of the military junta responsible for the bloody suppression of the nonviolent pro-democracy demonstrations in May 1992.

The charges against Sulak stem from a speech he gave in August of 1991, when Suchinda was Commander-in-Chief of the Thai army. In his statement to the court, Sulak asserted that General Suchinda and his "military clique" were in fact themselves guilty of *lese majesty* during the period of their rule, posing as they did a danger to the country, its institutions and its international reputation. The charges against him, Sulak said, were nothing more than an attempt to destroy him since he had become a threat to General Suchinda's power by speaking the truth.

Clinton Makes Preservation of Tibetan Culture MFN Condition

On May 28, President Clinton announced the conditions he was placing on the future renewal of China's Most Favored Nation trading status (MFN), and they included "significant progress" in "protecting Tibet's distinctive religious and cultural heritage." This historic pronouncement is the first time in decades that the Executive Branch of the U.S. government has formally made Tibet a priority in its relations with China. Clinton's Executive Order applies to the period beginning July 3, 1994.

This elevation of concern for Tibet by the Administration comes only weeks after the Dalai Lama met with President Clinton and Vice President Gore, as well as with many members of the House and Senate.

(The Congress has long given wide bipartisan support to the Tibetan cause.) The Dalai Lama, on his visit to Washington, stressed to U.S. policy makers that his foremost goal was the survival of the Tibetan people and Tibetan culture – to which the greatest threat was China's systematic policy of population transfer. (Because of the large-scale influx of ethnic Han Chinese, Tibetans have already become a minority in eastern Tibet. Similar population transfer programs since 1949 have reduced the native peoples of Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, and East Turkestan to small minorities in their traditional lands.) Clinton's Executive Order was hailed as a bold step forward by Senator Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) and by the International Campaign for Tibet in Washington, D.C.

Peace Pagoda to be built at Auschwitz

BPF member Paula Green, Director of the Karuna Center [see "BPF Affiliates," inside back cover] speaks this summer at Auschwitz in the groundbreaking ceremony for a Peace Pagoda to be built there. The pagoda will be erected as a memorial by the Nipponzan Myohoji, the Buddhist group who have constructed similar temples in Leverett, Massachusetts and elsewhere.

The Nipponzan Myohoji will initiate several major international peace walks to mark 1995 as the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. One walk will begin at Auschwitz in late 1994 and arrive in Hiroshima in August of 1995. ♦

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All chapters are particularly encouraged to send a representative. For registration and information call or write the BPF office: P.O. Box 4650 Berkeley, CA 94704 • (510) 525-8596

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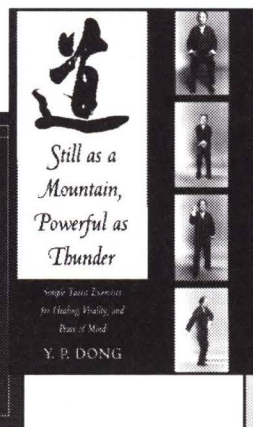
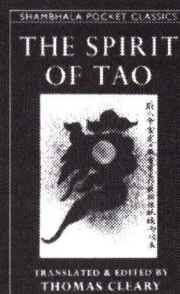
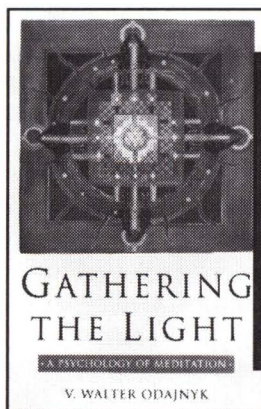
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Education Column –

BAG OF ROSES

by Patrick McMahon

*A flower is held up
And the secret has been revealed.
Kasho breaks into a smile;
The whole assemblage is at a loss.*

– from *The Mumonkan*, Case 6,
“Shakyamuni Holds Up A Flower”

“Look at what I have for you, Mr. McMahon.”

I don’t have to look. It’s only Uriel – he always has something he wants me to look at. Sometimes I have time for him, more often not. This morning I am finishing lesson plans as the school day is about to begin. But something in Uriel’s voice tugs me away from my plans, and I look up into his ten-year-old face, all freckles and anticipation. His gray-green eyes are wide open, as always, watchful for love or attack. Satisfied that he has me, he unzips his jacket halfway, peeks inside, and pulls out . . . a single rose. Of course! This is May, when students bring their teachers roses rather than apples.

The smile on Uriel’s face as he holds out his crimson joy on its inch-long stem is its own blossom. I seek for a vase in myself worthy to hold it. Failing that, I rummage around under the sink and find a fake cut crystal jar. He fills it with water, we find a spot for it on my cluttered desk, and he runs out to play until class begins. With my pencil poised over the open lesson plan book, I muse over the gift and the giver.

Earlier this spring Uriel stole \$25 from my jacket during lunch hour. I’d been devastated: Uriel is my most devoted fan. After the storm of truth-telling we’d come to a settlement. He would pay me back with the earnings of his weekly recycling. With ten weeks of school remaining until summer vacation, at a modest \$3 a week, he would be clear. We wrote out a contract, shook hands, and that was that.

But since then I’ve received only a single dollar bill. Whenever I ask him about our bargain, his eyes widen with worry. I threaten to call in his parents; he flinches in panic. Our contract, I realize, was wishful thinking. If Uriel earns anything, it’s going to go for junk food to sustain his malnourished frame. Kiss that money good-bye, I tell myself. Anyway, isn’t it clear that Uriel has already paid his debt in pain? I’d love to forget about the whole thing – the question is, will Uriel? It seems I must have from him *something* of value. Clean up my room each afternoon? His collection of bottle caps? The bell rings. As I rise uncertainly from my desk to meet

my students for another day, the flash of red on my desk cuts through the knot of my moral dilemma, and I recall old schoolmaster Mumon’s exclamation: “A flower is held up, and the secret has been revealed!”

Later that morning I take Uriel aside. “Remember our deal about the money you took?” Those worried eyes break my heart. I pull out the contract, and the envelope containing the dollar. “Well, I want to change it a little.” I point to the rose: “Can you bring me more of these?” He nods, suddenly happy. Yes, his mother has roses, his neighbors have roses, all the town is blooming. “I’ll count a dollar off what you owe for every rose you bring me, from now until the end of school.” I pull out my calendar and we count the days. Nineteen. “If you bring a rose each day, how many dollars will you still owe me in the end? (Teachers are always on the prowl for real-life math problems.)

He ponders. “Six dollars? No, five.” He points at the envelope with its single bill. But then he lights up with an inspiration that blows away all numbers: “I can bring you a big *bag* of roses.” He opens his hands to show me how big.

“A bag of roses, Uriel, and it’s a deal.” I watch as he bounces back to his seat. Just one dilemma remains: to find a large enough vase. ♦


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Ecology Column –

MORE ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

by Stephanie Kaza

For a year now I have been reviewing grants for the Ben and Jerry's Foundation as their environmental consultant. In the last round of submissions in May, I was very moved by two from Native American activist groups engaged in powerful social change projects. Native Action, based in Lame Deer, Montana, is one of a handful of non-profit community organizations located on an American Indian Reservation (Northern Cheyenne). Since 1984 they have been working to bridge racial barriers, challenge energy development, protect the land and sacred sites, and seek alternative economic development. Native Lands Institute operates out of Albuquerque, New Mexico, where it works to regain title and control of ancestral homelands in the Southwest, develop multicultural leadership, and protect ceremonial use of indigenous sacramental plants.

Native Action's original purpose was to organize against the impact of encroaching coal strip mines which surround their sacred homeland. In addressing the issues of economic dependence on resource extraction, they found themselves fighting for local self-reliance and community empowerment. They successfully challenged the local bank to provide equitable credit treatment for Indians and are now working to establish micro-businesses on the reservation as an alternative to the boom/bust cycles of coal mining.

To develop community strength, they are working with Indian teens to establish a public high school on the reservation as an alternative to Eurocentric schooling. Two years ago they reestablished an Elders Council of Tribal Sisterhood among the three Allied Nations — Cheyenne, Sioux, and Arapaho. The Council drafted and adopted a Tribal Sexual Assault code to stop "the killing of a child's spirit," as the Cheyenne call sexual abuse. To gain political power, Native Action is cooperating with Montana's seven Indian tribes to challenge Indian voter disenfranchisement due to gerrymandering of reservations into as many as four legislative districts.

Of great environmental significance is the drafting of specific Tribal environmental laws. A Great Plains Indian Water Code is now in circulation for comment; plans are underway for a Tribal Environmental Policy Act, a Solid and Toxic Waste Code, and a Sacred Sites Preservation Act.

Parallel to the efforts of Native Action, the Native Lands Institute is working on a comprehensive Native Environmental Statement of Principles. In February 1993 the Institute held a successful workshop with 50 Native leaders, activists, consultants, and attorneys to

address issues of pollution, local control, economic development, and holistic environmental education. Draft principles may eventually carry important legal weight in local environmental protection efforts.

The results of this work could be very powerful in the struggle against environmental racism on tribal lands. Native reservations have been exploited for natural resources much as Third World nations by a wasteful and inefficient First World economy. The heritage of environmental degradation on these lands is shameful and inexcusable. For Native Americans the practice of religious freedom is closely tied to environmental protection. The struggle to sustain this critical connection needs the active and compassionate support of practitioners from all religious traditions. The work provides a great opportunity for the long overdue righting of old wrongs. On Native lands, healing the earth is essential to cultural and spiritual survival. ♦

Ghazal V

by Judith Azrael

*There is something I want to tell you
The day and the night are no different*

*If I knew the answers to my questions
it would make no difference*

*Each new moment comes along
and sits beside me and clasps my hand*

*All day I hear the insects saying their prayers
Even in my sleep I hear them*

*Your words are drops of clear water
I have been thirsty all my life*

*All this time I have been changing
I am growing simpler*

A *ghazal* is an Urdu form dating from the 13th century, consisting of at least five couplets.

Judith Azrael's poetry has been published widely, and her most recent book is Apple Tree Poems, from Confluence Press. She lives in Mendocino, California.

ABOUT MONEY

by Robert Aitken

We associate money with Mara, the destroyer, who becomes fatter and fatter with each financial deal at the expense of the many beings. We can also associate money with Kuan-yin, the incarnation of mercy, whose thousand hands hold a thousand tools for rescuing those same beings. Money can be one of her tools.

Kuan-yin functions as the Net of Indra; Mara, the destroyer, functions as the Net of Indra too. Each point of the Net perfectly reflects each other point. Each point is a hologram. Mara says, "All of you are me." Kuan-yin says, "I am all of you." It's the very same thing, except in attitude. Attitude poisons or nurtures the interbeing.

The 9th century Chinese master Ta-sui announced that you and I perish along with the universe in the Kalpa Fire, the fire at the end of the eon that destroys everything totally. Joyous news! Joyous news! *Duhkha*, anguish, disappears in the laughter of Ta-sui. How to find Ta-sui's joy is the question. The path is eight-fold, the Buddha said: Right Views, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Recollection and Right *Samadhi*.

Mara hates Ta-sui for he confirms the demon's worst fears and seems to exult in them. How can he joke about the ultimate end! Mara hates the Eightfold Path because it undermines the ram-parts of his firehouse. The firehouse itself becomes a hostel and the champion fire fighters become nurses. Who will put out the Kalpa Fire?

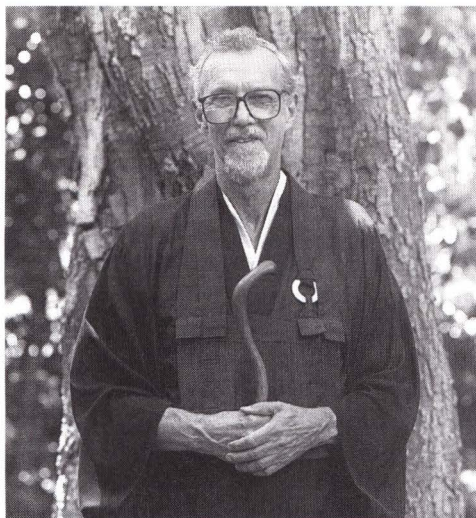
Meanwhile Kuan-yin repose on her comfortable rock by the waterfall, shaded by a willow tree. People say they don't like bowing to Kuan-yin because she is just an icon or an idol. Of course it's nonsense to bow to an idol. Kuan-yin doesn't think of herself as an idol. Her idol is her ideal, her ideal is her Right Views, her Right Views are her blood and guts.

Kuan-yin's practice is elemental too. It is embodied everywhere — as the Earth, for example, exchanging energy with Uranus and Jupiter and Mercury and others together with the Sun as they plunge on course through the plenum. It is embodied as the plenum itself containing the vastly more incredible dynamics of the nebulae. The *Dana*, charity, of Kuan-yin is not

only a vast chaos of order; you will find it in tiny systems of mutual support as well — the termite, for example, nurturing parasites who digest our foundations in exchange for a dark wet place to live.

Primal society also embodies the *Dana* of Kuan-yin, circulating the gift that nurtures its families and clans. At a single festival, a necklace of precious shells becomes two dozen precious pendants. At a single market holiday, a knife becomes salt and salt becomes a colt. The honor of a new chief is spread by blankets far and wide. Of course, Mara blows his smoke through these exchanges. Did the primal peoples know Mara from Kuan-yin? They never heard of it either, of course, but they knew greed when they saw it and so do we.

Mara isn't an icon either and he is bowing to himself all day long. He hates the notion of circulating the gift.



Robert Aitken Roshi

Instead he circulates the folks. He maneuvers them, lines them up before his machinery, then offers them their own products for their money. He circulates the animals and their products, the grasses and their products, the trees and their products. Broken glass set in cement on the tops of high stone walls protects his treasure from those whose diligence produce it. Gates and armed guards and police dogs protect his children and judges protect his bookkeepers. With his ardent practice the poor get so poor that he must give a little back to keep the arrangement functioning. He is ennobled and great institutions of benevo-

lence bear his name. Bits of nature are conserved. Peruvian musicians are recorded. Yet the karma of wealth can be inspired by Kuan-yin. The wealthy are stewards named Kuan-yin.

All the while Kuan-yin herself sustains the poor. They are her teacher. She doesn't circulate the folks or their products; she leaves them be; she leaves the birds and the fish and the animals be, the stones and trees and clouds be — and does not move them around. The walls with their broken glass and guarded gates hold her in her place, outside. If she keeps the folks entertained, she might even get a grant. You can have a grant, you can do your thing, or you can go to jail. It's up to you, Kuan-yin.

It isn't easy for Mara to manipulate people and things. He practices so diligently that he foregoes golf and the theater sometimes. Kuan-yin foregoes golf and the theater

too as she sits in royal ease, delighting in the birds as they dip in and out of the spray. But Mara never finds ease of any kind, not even in the middle of the night. His prostate gives him hell and he sweats with fear.

This Mara mind is the uneasy, primordial mind, arising from the muck, as reptilian as a dinosaur. It is much older than Kuan-yin. How old is Kuan-yin? Don't say ageless. You are just letting Mara do his dirty work unchallenged. Don't say she is the moment. That is Mara's view as well, pouring out the drinks at his villa on Majorca.

Mara can be your fall-back mind. After all, it's a dog-eat-dog world and I've got mine, Jack. Kuan-yin, on the other hand, is always fresh and new. She can come into our time and go out of it freely, a trick Mara never learned. We cannot fall back on Kuan-yin; we have to remember her. With a single Mara thought we are in his reins, giddyap horsie! With a single Kuan-yin thought, we are laughing at the puppies. *Namo Avalokiteshvara Mahasattva! Namu Kanzeon Makasatsu!* Veneration to the Great Being Who Perceives Sounds of the World! As the *Ten Verse Kannon Sutra of Timeless Life* declares, "Thought after thought arises in mind. Thought after thought is not separate from mind."

Mara and Kuan-yin create and cultivate many nets within the Net of Indra. Like the stars, the points in these lesser nets survive by exchanging energy, called money by Mara, called money by Kuan-yin sometimes. There are industries and collectives, golf clubs and base communities. In the lesser nets, Mara dominates, Kuan-yin subverts. Mara co-opts the subversion. Kuan-yin chooses to counter with her money sometimes, if it will keep the waterfall abundant and the birds happy. Sometimes Kuan-yin runs an industry. Sometimes Mara runs a collective. Sometimes there are base communities within golf clubs. Sometimes there are golf clubs within base communities.

It is possible to play endlessly with archetypes and metaphors. Mara as the reptile mind can be called the id. Kuan-yin as the Buddha mind can be called the super-ego. When the id is boss, the forests burn in Armageddon's self-fulfilling prophecy. When the super-ego is boss, the fires of love are extinguished. But Mara and Kuan-yin are not Mara and Kuan-yin, therefore we give them such names. Wipe away the terminology! Wipe away the archetypes! Let Mara and Kuan-yin disappear!

The anguish of nations and families arises from an anxiety to prove oneself — or oneself together with kin and compatriots. The vow to save everybody and everything brings fun to the dinner table and to international festivals. But proving yourself is the Way of the Buddha,

bringing forth your latent pantheon of *Manjushri, bodhisattva* of wisdom, *Samantabhadra, bodhisattva* of great action, and the others, as the self. (The archetypes keep popping up anyway!) The shadow side of the vow to save everybody and everything is the imperative to bring Mother Hubbards to heathen Hawaiians.

Checks, bills, bonds — the tokens of power — transport solutions of sugar and salt to rescue infants from dysentery. They prime the pump of life and order eggplant parmesan at Aunty Pasto's Restaurant. They build the dam of energy. Moose and beavers and primal people die. Checks, bills, and bonds dance to the music of attitude. Attitude poisons or nurtures the interbeing.

We're in it together. You can't hide out and drink from streams and eat from trees. Or if you do you are languishing at the top of Chinese master Ch'ang-sha's hundred-foot pole, and he'll kick you off. The culture we treasure does not exist apart. The municipal symphony, museums, galleries, theaters, bookshops, even our practice centers are intimately integrated into the acquisitive system. We have to work with this fact somehow.

It is not clear to me, as it may not be clear to you, how to go about this. As you go along, your qualms can get worse. You can find yourself in a truly dark night, with many misgivings about the Way and doubts about how to deal with the terrible ethical problems that confront every person in middle or upper levels of management — and every worker, every teacher, every social worker.

I suggest that the way to deal with a lack of clarity is to accept it. It's all right not to be clear. The practice is to clarify. Moreover, you're working always with your ego. You never get rid of your ego. Your ego is just your self-image. Burnish your ego down to its basic configurations. Then it will shine forth. You can forget yourself as your vows take over your practice, like the birds in the spray of the waterfall. ♦

Robert Aitken is the head teacher of the Diamond Sangha in Honolulu, and one of the founders of BPF.

*With resources scarcer and scarcer
I vow with all beings
to consider the law of proportion:
my have is another's have-not.*

*Robert Aitken, The Dragon Who Never Sleeps
[a book of gathas], Parallax Press, 1992*

*Mara is bowing to himself all day
long. Broken glass on the tops of high
stone walls protects his treasure from
those whose diligence produce it.*

THE PURITY OF MONEY

from a lecture by Shunryu Suzuki-roshi,
May 24, 1970

To exchange is to purify. When you exchange things, it means to purify things. You feel that if you pay for something with some money, that you don't owe anything to anyone. But there is something missing in that idea. Even though you pay for the labor, there is something which you cannot pay for. That is the true value of what is given to you by Buddha. Only when we pay with respect for the things which are given to us, or for the result of someone's labor, can we purify our life within our activity of exchanging things. Without this idea, even though you pay for the things you get you still owe something.

That is why we must always have great respect for things: for money and for labor. This is Dogen Zenji's idea of everyday life. So, the money is not yours. It belongs to our society.

Because you think the money is yours, you sometimes think that money is dirty. Some people may attach to money too much. That kind of idea is a dirty idea. Not a pure idea. When you say that money is dirty, your understanding is dirty.

So to accumulate money can be allowable for someone like me in order to be ready to enter the hospital or to prepare for death. For a funeral parlor it costs a lot of money. I have \$1,000 or \$2,000, a lot of money (laughs). So we may need \$5,000 or \$10,000, but to rely on the power of money is wrong. Buddha did not like that way at all. In his time the money system was not so strong, so he said, don't accumulate things; you should live on the food which is offered to you just before you eat, and you should not beg for more food than will suffice for the next meal. I think Buddha was a good scholar of economy. That is the most important point of economy, I think.

The reason why we have money is for exchange. We should not stop the flow of the money. So, in this sense we say that everything changes. That is the Buddha's first principle.

Money is not a symbol, but money expresses the value of things which change. If things are valuable because we can eat them or live on them, then the flow of money should not stop. If money stops flowing, that causes a business depression. If money is going slowly all over our society, then our society is healthy.

So money purifies our world. It is not something dirty. It is very pure. It is a very important thing for us when we take care of it and respect it. Because you don't pay enough respect to money, the money becomes dirty. It doesn't matter how much money you have. Even if the money you have is very little, you

should pay respect to it and you should make the best use of it. How you make the best use of it is to make it help our society.

The other day the officers discussed how we should run the Zen Center. We don't like to say that you should pay some money if you want to come and study with us. We don't like it, but for us that is part of practice. How we treat money is a very important practice for us. Most people forget how we survive here. You think you can survive alone in the remote mountains. But the reason you can go to the remote mountain is because of money. You cannot work when you get to the Sierra or the Rocky Mountains. It is very foolish to ignore how we survive here.

Before we study Buddhism we should know what we are doing and how we survive here. So, we think of this as a part of practice. But we do not reject people just because they have no money. We are ready to help each other, but each one of us should purify our zendo with money (laughs) first of all. That is why I say you should pay: "give me some money" (laughs). If you give me some money someone will take good care of it. We should not accumulate money for Buddha, because Buddha didn't like to accumulate anything. ♦

The use of money is all the advantage there is in having money. – Benjamin Franklin

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WORLD HUNGER AND HOME-MADE MUFFINS

by Aron Fischer

I love to eat. I have always been surrounded with enough food so that I could eat until I could eat no more, and then eat again as soon as some space opened up in my stomach. When I get hungry, I must get food before I can get on with my life. So it's natural that I felt compelled to do something about the fact that some people *can't* eat whenever they feel like it.

Addressing the problem of hunger is like undertaking to clean a thoroughly messy room; you don't know where to start. I settled on the library. Every book I read emphasized that hunger is a complex political and economic issue. As developed countries exhaust our own natural resources, we turn to the underdeveloped countries, seducing them with images of the luxury of Western life into adopting large-scale, technologically advanced agricultural techniques which make food available only to those who can buy it, thus leaving vast numbers of people highly vulnerable to famine. These "root causes" have tapped down very deep; they are so entangled in the world's political, economic, and spiritual status quo that they cannot be alleviated without long-term political restructuring. This is the analysis of the problem of hunger I received from books. Though I knew it was accurate, something in this approach to hunger didn't sit right with me; it created a deep sense of powerlessness. I'm a high school student, and I don't have time after baseball practice to curb economic imperialism. If hunger could only be dealt with on the large scale, I decided I had neither the patience nor the perspective to do it.

In the midst of this feeling of powerlessness, I got hungry. I felt the physical sensations that hunger brings to the body: weakness, drowsiness, listlessness. This sparked a realization about hunger. Having always related to food as a pleasure, and as I said almost always eating before I was actually hungry, I had never thought how specific and physical a problem hunger is. I realized that if I could feel affected by hunger after a few hours, hunger certainly is not limited to famine victims in foreign countries; in California millions get hungry each day. If one happens to have to beg or mine garbage cans for one's meals, then a little bad luck can cause a hungry, miserable afternoon. So I decided to attack hunger as directly as I could: to prepare food and distribute it to homeless people on the streets of San Francisco.

You can guess that someone who walks down the street intending to "attack hunger" is in for a reality check. The first day I tried it, I left school after Spanish

class, having emptied my backpack of books and notes and filled it with some peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and I pedaled my bicycle down toward the Tenderloin district of San Francisco. Environmentally conscious, I didn't want to wrap them individually, so I stacked them in two large cookie tins. I didn't understand why so few people accepted them until I put myself in their place: Why would you accept a crumbly, unwrapped sandwich from a somewhat grubby stranger when there are soup kitchens and food in unopened packages in dumpsters behind supermarkets? Homeless people have their preferences just like anyone else.

So for the last several months, instead of doing homework on Monday nights I have baked, and every Tuesday and sometimes Friday, during a free period, I have pedaled to a homeless hangout with a backpack full of goodies. By being careful not to condescend or impose my own expectations on the experience, I've become acquainted with homeless culture.

When a friend of mine who joined me on Haight Street one second period felt extremely uncomfortable about giving muffins to people who didn't ask for them, I stopped approaching people who looked homeless. This safeguard against offending anyone made distribution a more subtle art; I would dismount my bicycle in a strategic location, pull out my food, and begin to eat it, making eye contact with any hungry onlooker. I would often have conversations over a muffin about the impossible cost of rent and food, about bike thieves, and clothes give-aways. Some people were articulate, others were incoherent. No more generalizations can be made about homeless people than about blondes or brunettes.

As I grew to know the people, I began to conceive of my "project" as attending a party and bringing refreshments. Therefore, I needed to produce food that was up to my best standards, and to communicate hospitality rather than charity in my approach. This point of view also helps me to avoid getting too self-righteous about what I'm doing. It is out of proportion to believe that by handing out muffins and biscuits I am "attacking hunger"; but when I see it as simply offering someone a snack, I can put it in perspective and still get satisfaction that maybe someone is less hungry because of a bran muffin I gave him. After all, the difference between hungry and not hungry can be just that. ♦

Aron Fischer lives with his parents and his brother at Green Gulch Farm Zen Center in Marin County, California, and will be a high school junior in the fall.

BUDDHISM AND CAPITALISM

by D. Gordon Tyndall

Buddhist writers who have commented on capitalism (or, at least, those whom I have read) have been uniformly critical of its results. For example, Sulak Sivaraksa (a member of BPF's International Advisory Board) in his Sinclair Thompson Memorial Lectures on "Religion and Development" states: "When an economic system, based on a capitalist market economy, requires increasing greed both in the producer and the consumer, can any religion encourage it?" (p. 18)

I want to comment on the nature of capitalism, to ask whether, in fact, a capitalist market economy does require greed both in the producer and the consumer, and, if not, whether it is right or useful to blame capitalism for the problems that we see in our society today when the fault may lie elsewhere.

A "capitalist market" economy is one in which most of the productive assets – manufacturing plants and equipment, transportation equipment, mines, office and apartment buildings, houses, warehouses, telephone systems, etc. – are owned by private individuals or by corporations which are in turn owned by private individuals, and in which the prices of goods and services are determined by the interaction of supply and demand in the market-place. With a few exceptions (e.g., the Post Office and the Pentagon and the regulation of prices and investment imposed on public utilities in most states), this is the system that we have in the U.S. and call "capitalism."

In order to determine whether this capitalist system *requires* greed, I would like to ask you to stretch your imagination to the limit by assuming that, overnight, a great change occurs in humankind, so that, as of tomorrow, all the inhabitants of the Capitalist world would begin to follow the Buddha's Eightfold Path: forsaking greed, practicing loving-kindness toward all beings, etc., etc. Certainly this would entail some drastic changes in what got produced in each country, in how it got produced and how it got distributed to the consumers, and in the pattern of investment. But all this would happen automatically! And this economist can see no reason why the capitalist market system should collapse as a result of the elimination of greed, provided that all persons in the system practiced loving-kindness.

Let us consider some of the changes which would occur following this overnight conversion to the teachings of the Buddha:

1. Advertising budgets would be drastically reduced because no business manager would want to be deceptive or to encourage needless consumption, so that

advertising would be limited to the purely informative function of advising consumers about new or more efficient products or about changes in price. The result would almost certainly be a sharp decline in the demand for many goods and services (especially the services of advertising agencies), and possibly an increase in the demand for certain other goods and services. This would cause a temporary decline in the prices of the goods and services in the industries where the demand had declined, and losses for the businesses in those industries; whereas in the industries where there had been an increase in demand, it would cause an increase in the prices and, temporarily, excess profits. These losses and excess profits would serve as indicators or stimuli to the owners of the businesses to decrease or increase output according to demand, and also to shift resources out of the industries where demand had decreased and shift them into those industries where demand had increased. As these shifts occurred, prices would return closer to their former levels, the losses and excess profits would disappear and the desired shift of resources would have been accomplished, not as a consequence of a greedy grasping after maximum profits, but by the business managers observing and responding intelligently to the signals which the market gives them. Actually it is likely that there would be a decline in demand for *most* goods and services because the vast majority of consumers (at least in the U.S. and most other "Western" countries) would now want to live much more simply, which would in turn reduce the need for new investment. In this event, there would be a general reduction in production and in the working hours of most employees.

2. Those persons who earned high incomes in the system, either because they had inherited wealth, or had accumulated it from their earlier earnings, or had special rare skills which resulted in high earned income under the market economy, would voluntarily contribute most of their income to private and/or public agencies. These agencies would use the funds to supplement the income of those who were unemployed or who earned a sub-standard income, to ensure that adequate health care was available to all, to promote the arts, to protect the environment, to expand educational opportunities, including retraining those whose jobs had been eliminated by changes in demand; thus everyone could practice Right Livelihood.

3. All producers and consumers would voluntarily follow the most enlightened conservation practices and would eliminate practices which degraded the environment. Producers would not conspire, implicitly or explicitly, to restrict output in order to raise prices and

profits, since this would clearly serve to harm the consumers and this they would not wish to do. Rather they would seek to produce products which better met the basic needs of the consumers and do it by means which required the least use of scarce resources.

I will not continue in this vein because the economics would get increasingly technical and because I suspect that you've seen my point. *It is not the capitalist market economy that causes the problems: it is greed! Uncontrolled greed!*

The capitalist market system does not, so far as I can see, require greed of either the consumer or producer, and would operate very effectively if there were no greed: the goods and services that people need would get produced efficiently in the right quantities without the phenomenal amount of waste which seems to have occurred in the bureaucratically controlled "command" economies of Eastern Europe and the former USSR; the environment would be protected, and we would all have much more time for meditation and the enjoyment of life on our wonderful planet.

But now let us return to the real world where,

The capitalist market system does not, so far as I can see, require greed of either the consumer or producer.

unfortunately, greed still runs rampant. Is it not true in this unhappy world that the operation of the capitalist market economy by greedy people produces some of the terrible evils which are so troublesome to Buddhists (and to thoughtful people of goodwill regardless of their religious traditions)? The answer must be: YES! But then we must ask: is there an alternative system which would produce better results given the greed of humankind? We have seen the results of the fascist system of Mussolini and the communist system of Lenin-Stalin; neither seems very attractive. And it is difficult to see how we could get back to some simple communal agrarian society which some contemporary Buddhist writers have proposed, given the population of today's world.

One alternative which has been proposed is a system in which all (or at least a major part of) the productive property would be owned by federal, state or local governments, and in which the management of the state enterprises which controlled these assets would be required to follow the rules of competitive market pricing. (This idea was developed by the Polish economist, Oskar Lange, earlier this century.) Unfortunately such a system has never been implemented and there are serious questions about its practicality, but it would be interesting to see the results if some country were to try it.

Finally, there is the approach taken by many Western European countries such as Sweden. Sometimes it is called the Middle Way, sometimes, Social Democracy. In this system, most of the productive assets are owned privately and there is a price-driven market economy; to this degree it is "capitalistic." But it differs from "pure capitalism" in that: (1) the government levies a relatively high level of progressive taxes on the income and/or wealth of its citizens and corporations in order to finance income supplements, health care, education, cultural opportunities, etc. for those who are unable to earn a reasonable level of income; (2) the government provides appropriate training opportunities to the unemployed; (3) the government rigorously enforces environmental and safety regulations on the business enterprises and it vigorously prosecutes illegal anti-competitive activity and closely regulates the prices charged by the so-called public utilities; (4) the government owns most of the railways, airlines, telephone systems, electric power plants, and, in some instances, steel, automobile and truck production, oil production and exploration, etc.; all this in addition to postal services, roads and highways, airports, seaports, educational, medical, and cultural institutions (libraries, museums, the performing arts), forests, rivers and lakes.

Certainly this is not the "middle way" of which the Buddha spoke 2500 years ago, but could it not be argued that, in this modern Middle Way, the democratically elected governments of our day would be performing the functions that the Buddha advocated for the benevolent monarch of his day?

I recognize that this modern Middle Way does not provide any solution to the basic environmental/ecological problems that stem from human greed in our system, particularly where that greed is stimulated by the insidious efforts of the advertising media. But I suspect that the most effective solution to those environmental/ecological problems, at least in the short run, may lie in direct response by government to those individuals and corporations who are the immediate cause of the problem (e.g., by imposing fuel-efficiency requirements for motor vehicles) rather than by attempting to radically alter our entire socio-economic system and its underlying gestalt.

(I hope that these thoughts will generate an interesting dialogue in the Letters Column.) ♦

Gordon Tyndall is Secretary-Treasurer of BPF's National Board, and is active in BPF's Tibetan Refugee projects. He has taught economics in the U.S., Canada and Kenya, and is Professor Emeritus of Finance and Management Science.

Whatever the fate of socialism, the yearning for a better mode of life which found expression in its thought and its struggle will reappear.

— Irving Howe

WHY BUDDHISTS SHOULD READ MARX

by Andrew Cooper

In the Zen Buddhist community in which I once lived, we began our meal chant: "Seventy-two labors brought us this food. We should know how it comes to us." "How it comes to us" today is through a production system in which most of those seventy-two labors are performed by impoverished people who are exploited, marginalized, and oppressed. If we are to remember their labor in any meaningful sense, we should also remember the actual conditions of that labor. For our good fortune is bought at their expense.

These are not the best of times to recommend Marx. The failures of his legacy have been grotesque and cruel, and this is particularly true in Buddhist Asia. Nevertheless, it seems to me that for anyone seeking to understand things like poverty, racism, money, militarism, economics, or the daily grind at work, some grasp of Marx is essential. Michael Parenti calls Marx a "social pathologist," who analyzed the systemic misery of capitalist society, and this is how I think he is best approached. He tells us that this misery is neither natural nor inevitable; rather, it developed through historical processes involving class relations and economic forces. He is concerned with the means and consequences of the accumulation of wealth, but not only

that. He also sheds light upon the nature of wealth itself: how it is created, its patterns of distribution, the ways it shapes consciousness and culture.

If you think "greed, hatred, and ignorance" is an adequate analysis of social evil, Marx will challenge you to look more deeply. And if you find him wrongheaded and stuck in his viewpoint, so much the better. Like Freud, his errors are legion. But again like Freud, he shows a way to look at the world, beneath surface appearances, that undermines for good its taken-for-granted quality. And just as Freud is not just for Freudians, Marx need not be just for Marxists. The liberation theologians of Latin America have long recognized the need for a critical Christian appropriation of Marx. Engaged Buddhists need to begin the process ourselves.

Literary and social critic Walter Benjamin observed, "There is no cultural document that is not at the same time a record of barbarism." The fruits of capitalist society can be enjoyed by some because of the labor of others who cannot enjoy them. Perhaps more than any other single individual, Marx made explicit that record of barbarism, demystifying the vagueness of good fortune to show the actual exploitative conditions and oppressive relations that produce it. Misery inheres in the production system, and all the best intentions in the world cannot change that.

If you haven't read Marx (or haven't read him since 1968) try the early, more humanistic *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. See what you think. ♦

Andrew Cooper lives in Berkeley, California, and is a former BPF Board member.



Rufus Hockenhill, *Three Guys in Old Man's Park, Coming Through from the East*

MONEY & LIVELIHOOD BEHIND BARS

by Fleet Maull

One of my early bunkmates in federal prison was a cook in the prison kitchen, and when I moved in above him, he started working on me right away, trying to sign me up on one of his "dinner contracts." He had three or four prisoners paying him several hundred dollars a month each to provide them with a good restaurant-quality meal every evening: steak, chicken, deluxe hamburger and the like with salad and dessert, served alongside their bunk, with a tablecloth and dinnerware. He was making serious money by prison standards. I suppose I still had the air of money about me from the street, but I was actually completely broke and already committed to avoiding that kind of prison hustling as much as possible, so he gave up on me after a few days.

Before coming to prison, I didn't think much about the practice of Right Livelihood or the lay precepts. Like many Westerners, I was more interested in the practice of meditation and the Buddhist teachings on the nature of mind. Unfortunately, from early on it seemed my spiritual yearnings had run a parallel course with alcohol and drug abuse, and by the time I began to get serious about Buddhism, I was already an alcoholic and addict. My denial was so strong that I was blind to the jarring incongruities in the life I was leading as an active Buddhist practitioner and a part-time drug smuggler.

Even after taking refuge and bodhisattva vows in 1979 and 1981, I continued to engage in criminal activity for another two years, without ever really experiencing any sense of the wrongness of what I was doing. I did begin to sense the precariousness of my situation at a certain point and tried to extricate myself from that way of life, but I still wasn't able to see the harm I had been causing until that first cell door slammed shut on me in May 1985 and my life unraveled completely.

In the weekly recovery meetings I began to attend in prison, I listened to the stories of other addicts and realized the harm I had been doing to others by bringing cocaine into the country. When the epidemic hit a few years later, I saw what a devastating effect cocaine, in this new form, was capable of having on whole communities. It became very clear to me that I needed to

make the practice of Right Livelihood, with its underlying basis in the five lay precepts, a central focus of my training from that point on.

In federal prison the authorities try to equalize prisoners as much as possible and to keep a lid on all the smuggling and black-marketeering that goes on by limiting what people can spend. There is a prison commissary store where you can shop once a week for postage stamps, ink pens, notebooks, toiletry items, laundry soap, beverages and snack foods, and athletic shoes and sweat suits. You can also buy a small Walkman style radio with headphones, an inexpensive watch, or a small fan to provide some relief during the hot summer months. You pay for your purchases with a plastic, magnetic-strip account card, which also serves as a picture I.D.

While there is no limit on the amount of money you can have in your commissary account, you're only allowed to spend up to \$125 a month. You can also purchase up to \$15 a week in coins to use in the washing machines, dryers, and vending machines on the residential units, but you're not allowed to have any more than \$20 in coins in your possession at any time. If you're caught with more than that, you'll lose the money, and you may do some time in the *hole*, or segregation unit, as well. At the very least, you will lose your room seniority, which means starting out again on a top bunk in one of the large, noisy dormitories. Men who use a lot of coins find ways to hide them though, or they stash them with other prisoners who are below their limit.

The \$125 a month spending limit mainly serves to limit an individual's use of outside resources. Most prisoners have no money coming in from the outside, and wages range from \$11 to \$60 a month for full-time prison jobs, but most of the prisoners make less than \$25 a month, and many, especially the medical and psychiatric patients who account for two-thirds of the population at this institution, earn only \$5 a month for part-time work, or nothing at all. Some prisoners look to some kind of honest but *gray market* work like washing and ironing clothes, cleaning rooms, or cutting hair for other prisoners. Some also make greeting cards, draw portraits, or produce other arts and crafts work for sale to augment their income; but many more resort to food smuggling or some other



Fleet Maull with Thrangu Rinpoche, after taking the novice vows.

hustle to get money. Some men even manage to send money home to their families.

One can get by with no money in prison. The institution provides you with three meals a day, work clothing, and basic toiletry items. You can throw your prison issue clothing, which is stamped with your name and bin number, in the laundry cart, and it will reappear several days later in your clothing room bin. Dirty socks and towels, which don't get tagged, can be exchanged daily in the clothing room for clean ones.

Being broke in prison is kind of a drag though. You feel somehow disempowered, not being able to "buy something," which in our culture seems to be the ultimate mark of personhood. But you are not looked down upon for being broke in prison, as long as you don't become a *mooch*, always borrowing or asking for things from others. Some men do adjust to living with very little, even some who were doing quite well on the street. Most, however, try to get some money somehow.

I've lived very simply in the past, especially during my early traveling years, when all my earthly possessions fit quite easily into a backpack. That's actually one aspect of prison life that has been enjoyable for

At about 7 PM the gambling enthusiasts transform the TV rooms into casinos, where they play poker until lights out.

me, just learning to live simply again. From the beginning, I had some notion of taking at least a modified monastic approach to prison life, and when I took temporary novice vows for the duration of my sentence in 1989, that further reinforced the idea of keeping things simple. I'm not rigid about it, but I always try to question myself as to whether I really need something. My small locker space, almost entirely taken up with books and correspondence files, provides a built-in limitation.

I haven't really had to struggle about money myself; my family has sent me funds since my fourth month here, and so I can't speak for being destitute in prison for any length of time. I probably spend about 75 percent of what I earn and what my family sends on postage for my extensive correspondence, and on phone calls to my 16-year-old son in South America. The rest goes for toiletries and a few food items. Once a year or so, I'll buy some new athletic shoes. At Christmas I buy a lot of holiday food items in the commissary at Christmas and throw an extended party for friends and neighbors. It's become kind of a tradition.

For those who have the money, there is a flourishing black market in food smuggled out of the prison kitchen and in stolen clothing issue, especially new socks, underwear, and towels. Also, if you have the

money, you can eat better on your residential unit than you can in the dining hall. You can buy three-inch thick, deli-style sandwiches, real hamburgers, omelet sandwiches, and sometimes burritos for 75 cents to a dollar; or you can buy tomatoes, green peppers, onions, and cheese to cook up a batch of classic, prison-style nachos. They sell the chips in the commissary.

Last year they were even smuggling homemade pizzas out of the kitchen and selling them for \$5. They would precook the dough in the kitchen, and then finish cooking the pizza with toppings to order in the microwaves that were installed on the residential units a few years back, when they put in vending machines. Before that, all cooking on the units was done with stolen heat lamps. A friend used to run a grill in his room every night preparing hamburgers to order with a cookie tin and a heat lamp.

Prisoners are not permitted to give each other anything of value, so all the business that goes on violates policy and is subject to punishment. But it's just impossible to control, and prisoners routinely buy and sell anything of value, barter goods and services, loan each other money, and gamble on sports and card games. The medium of exchange is coins, books of postage stamps, cigarettes, or commissary items.

Larger debts, primarily from gambling or jailhouse lawyer fees, are settled outside the prison by having family or friends send funds back and forth and into prisoners' commissary accounts. Gambling is the major evening entertainment in prison, and for some it's a livelihood. At about 7 PM the gambling enthusiasts transform the TV rooms into casinos, where they play poker until lights out.

Despite all the hustling, the efforts made by prison authorities to keep prisoners on relatively equal footing, both socially and economically, are largely successful, and I think this is a very good thing. Even a prisoner with unlimited financial resources can't really live much better than any other prisoner in federal prison. You can only wear so many athletic shoes and jogging suits, and you can only eat so many black market sandwiches.

Shortly after arriving here in 1985, I found a job in the prison education department where I felt I would be able to earn an honest wage while using some of my talents and education to help other prisoners. I have worked full time ever since, teaching other prisoners to read and helping them to prepare for the GED exam, and it's something I both enjoy and feel really good about doing. As the senior tutor, I earn about \$60 a month for my efforts.

Knowing I'm extremely fortunate for the help my family gives me, I have never felt judgmental toward those who hustle to get by, and I have a lot of respect for the men who find ways to earn and send money home to their needy families. But it saddens me greatly that the system is set up in such a way that prisoners are

actually encouraged to become proficient at hustling and thievery while in prison, skills that will only lead to more crime and more prison time down the road.

I try, but it's difficult to avoid participating in the black market completely. Like it or not, this convict world is my community, and I often find myself trying to balance my commitment to the precepts with the mahayana vows I have taken to extend myself to others. Something as simple as a birthday party for a friend is bound to involve some black market food. Prison style nachos is the usual fare. I must confess to buying a few of those black-market pizzas last year, and they were pretty good, too. I split them with a hospice patient, probably so I wouldn't feel so guilty.

At work I sometimes assist some of my students with very simple legal work, like writing a letter to the parole board, but I steadfastly refuse payment. I decided very early on that I didn't want to profit from dealings with my fellow prisoners.

Other prisoners often ask me for help with legal work, probably because they think I'm well educated or something; and there have been times when my son and his mother's living situation in South America has been really bad, that I have been tempted to get into the jailhouse lawyer business to help them. Each time though, after considerable agonizing and pride swallowing, I have instead reached out to my parents and friends in the sangha for help. This meant breaking a deeply ingrained pattern of refusing to ask for help and looking for a way to make a quick buck instead. So this has been a positive change for me, and I know it's been better for my son too. My family and friends have been incredibly generous. My family provides my son with ongoing support, and a group of sangha friends even raised the money for him to visit me here last summer and then go on to Nova Scotia to participate in a Shambhala youth program called Sun Camp.

Another important part of right livelihood practice for me involves the way I relate to the people I work with, both the prisoners and the staff. Prisoners and staff generally have a very adversarial relationship. The staff expects the prisoners to steal and lets a certain amount of it go, in many cases, as a kind of job perk in order to keep good workers, especially in the kitchen and on the hospital wards.

I've always tried to be honest with my work supervisors, as far as my own behavior is concerned, and I try to do a good job. I also try to be supportive to my co-workers and sensitive to the needs of my students. The education staff respects that and so do many of the prisoners. Even though many try to get by with as little work as possible, they do respect someone who does a good job, as long as you are careful to be a prisoner first and never act like a staff person. The fact that my job involves helping other prisoners also earns their respect.

Sometimes other prisoners ask me to steal office

supplies for them. My bosses generally give me whatever I need for my own use, so if it's not much and I have it, I usually just give them something from my own supplies. When they press me for bigger quantities that would have to be stolen, I just tell them I don't do that. I usually explain that it isn't worth risking my job for, but sometimes if the person seems open to it, I will share something about my monastic commitments.

Hardly anyone sees stealing from the institution as immoral. Prisoners see it more as liberating things from the enemy, or just trying to get even a little. Even some of the more religious Christian prisoners I know don't regard stealing from the institution as a problem. For me though, it's not so much a moral issue as it is a question of discipline, having to do with the qualities I would like to cultivate in myself, and thievery and smuggling are just not among those qualities.

I understand why many prisoners feel almost obligated to fight back in any way they can against the injustices of our prison system, and how they see stealing as part of that struggle, but unfortunately this

*A friend used to run a grill in his room
every night preparing hamburgers to order
with a cookie tin and a heat lamp.*

approach is mainly self-destructive. I've given a lot of thought to how prisons could be set up differently, to build self-esteem and encourage the development of ethical principles like Right Livelihood, rather than just cultivating bitterness and thievery. Maybe one day I will get the chance to implement some of those ideas somewhere. But sometimes I would just as soon see all the prisons torn down, since in their present form they are horrible places, hardly fit for human habitation. ♦

Fleet Maull is completing a Ph.D. in psychology. He founded both the National Prison Hospice Association and the Prison Dharma Network and is a practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism. His article "Prison Monasticism" appeared in the Winter 1992 Turning Wheel. He can be contacted at: #19864-044, P.O. Box 4000, Springfield, MO 65808.



Boletus Washingtonia

“I CAN’T GET A JOB”

Prostitution as Livelihood

by Diane Patenaude Ames

When Honen (1133-1212, considered the seventh patriarch of Shin Buddhism) arrived at Muro-no-tomari, a small boat drew near carrying a woman of ill fame who said to Honen, “What sin could I have committed in some former life, to bring me into the evil life I seem fated to lead? What can a woman who carries a load of sin like mine do to escape and be saved in the world to come?” Honen compassionately replied, “If you can find another means of livelihood, give up this one at once. But if you cannot, and if you are not yet ready to sacrifice your very life for the true way, begin just as you are and call on the sacred name; for it is for just such sinners as you that Amida made that wonderfully comprehensive Vow of his. If you put your sole trust in it without the least misgiving, your rebirth in the Pure Land is assured.” Thus kindly taught, the woman wept for joy.¹

“Spare change?” asks the woman I see sitting on a piece of cardboard in the Civic Center Plaza. “I used to be a hooker, but I don’t want to do that no more.” Her face, her manner, her rags all proclaim “de-institutionalized mental patient.” At her autobiographical statement, an odoriferous drunk flops down uninvited onto her piece of cardboard and paws at her legs. “No!” she slaps him. “I told you, no, I don’t do that no more. No.” The drunk gives up for the moment and takes another swig of wine. “Spare change?” the woman asks the next passer-by. “Anything?” The economic options of a psychotic whom the state has abandoned on the sidewalk are, face it, constricted.

Honen would have understood this everyday San Francisco scene. For as the above story about him shows, he grasped a perennially disappointing fact about human nature: that people will do whatever they have to do to eat. And all over the world, so-called civilized societies tend to produce more people than respectable economic slots to put people in. Leftover men generally survive by crime, and leftover women, by prostitution. Of course these gender stereotypes do not always hold; there are male prostitutes, for instance. But as one such lost boy told the counselors at New York’s Covenant House, they go into the trade for the same reasons that women do: “I can’t get a job. I have no skills. I have no place to live.”² And prostitution, he explained, seemed marginally less dangerous than mugging people.

Prostitutes everywhere complain of very high job

stress. The social stigma is hard to bear, but the fear that permeates their lives is worse. Fear of their exploitative underworld bosses. Fear of the police. Fear of AIDS. Fear of violent customers. “The girls are apprehensive the first time they sleep with you,” says a perennial customer in Thailand. “They’re afraid you might be a slasher or a choker.”³ And, says a San Francisco streetwalker, “The screaming [that residents of the Tenderloin hear at night] is the illegals [immigrants] trying to rob us.”⁴ So who chooses this profession?

Hardly anyone. Observers everywhere report the same thing: that prostitutes become prostitutes for lack of any other economic choice. For example: In strait-laced India, where prostitution is commonly regarded with horror, countless destitute women and boys nonetheless sell their bodies to stay alive. In Madras homeless streetwalkers service their customers out in the open, on canal banks, on public beaches, and in parks. They may be paid as little as one rupee – about three cents. Or they may wind up in local brothels where, according to Dr. S. Sundararaman, the head of the AIDS Foundation of India, AIDS is spreading rapidly, and the brothel owners couldn’t care less. “They do not feel the women are an investment,” he explains. “They are moved on every 45 days. They are expendable, because there is an endless supply.”⁵

In the United States both male and female prostitutes tend to start out as teenage runaways (often from abusive homes) or as “throwaways,” ordered out of the house for one reason or another. “Basically, my parents found out about my [homo]sexuality and kicked me out,” is one of the commonest stories. Once they are on the street, an estimated one-third to one-half of homeless youth are reduced to trading sex for food or shelter. Most say they hate doing it. They tell counselors things like, “I’ve been raped on the streets. I’ve been robbed. I’ve been held at gun point and knife point.”⁶ Yet many remain on the street because there are neither enough social services for them nor enough shelter space, because they rarely have any marketable skills even if they are old enough to work legally, because, in short, they have no other real options.

What’s the point of this depressing tale? Part of it is that right livelihood is not purely an individual responsibility; it is society’s responsibility. If people are to earn an honest living, they must be given the opportunity to do so. They must also receive the education, training, and other social services that are necessary to make them employable.

Simple as that may sound, restructuring the economy so that that will actually be done is not simple. Meanwhile, the current system imposes moral stresses. What American is not at least indirectly dependent on the Pentagon's money, for example? Witness the current spectacle of whole communities – politicians, bankers, schoolteachers, as well as streetwalkers – abandoning any anti-militarist opinions they ever held to picket for the continued operation of the military bases on which their livelihood depends.

At this point let me indulge in a fantasy. Suppose the shock of base closure moved the whole town – prostitutes, strip joint owners, members of Congress and all – to grasp the truth of suffering and wish to practice Buddhism. Could they really do it, despite the lives some of them lead?

According to Shin Buddhism, they could. And if base conversion failed, they should take Honen's advice and "begin just as they are." Of course, Shin never counsels complete abandonment of life's moral struggle. Doing evil just because you do not think it affects your spiritual state is like deliberately taking poison because an antidote is available. But when leaving the job at the bomb factory would mean losing the health insurance of a sick child, then what?

Then you must realize that the concept of right livelihood is meant to be a means to liberation, not a barrier to it. Whatever you are and whatever you've done, your sins are only tiny perturbations in the great jungle of passion, aggression, and ignorance that is the human condition. For Shin, we must see the self for the silly little tangle of attachments it is, and must understand how those attachments taint everything we do, including earning a living, before we can hope to look beyond the self. For the nearest thing to liberation we can achieve in this life is for the self to cease to seem to be the center of the universe (as it usually does even if we despise ourselves). That liberation is possible for anybody, whatever they do for a living. ♦

NOTES:

1. Harper Havelock Coates and Ryugaku Ishizuka (trans.), *Honen the Buddhist Saint*, Kyoto, 1949.
2. Bruce Ritter, *Sometimes God Has a Kid's Face*, New York, Covenant House, 1988, p.55.
3. Richard Rhodes, "Death in the Candy Store," *Rolling Stone*, 11/18/91, p. 70.
4. Scott Winokur, "Steetwalker's Lament," *San Francisco Examiner*, 3/23/93, p. A-15.
5. Hamish McDonald, "The Africa Syndrome," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2/20/92, pp. 28-29.
6. Liz Galst, "Throwaway Kids," *The Advocate*, 12/29/92, pp. 55-57.

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DO NOT ACCUMULATE WEALTH

The Fifth Precept, from the 14 Precepts of the Order of Interbeing, with Commentary

by Thich Nhat Hanh

Do not accumulate wealth while millions are hungry. Do not take as the aim of your life fame, profit, wealth or sensual pleasure. Live simply and share one's time, energy and material resources with those who are in need.

The aim of Buddhist life is to realize insight and to help people, and not to gain fame, power, and wealth. How could one have time to live the Buddhist ideal if one is constantly pursuing wealth and fame? If one does not live simply, one must constantly work to pay one's bills. There will be little or no time for practice. *The Eight Realizations of Great Beings Sutra* says, "Running after fame and wealth without recess, one gets caught more and more in the circle of errors. Bodhisattvas go in the opposite direction and follow the principle of sufficiency. They gladly accept simple living in order to progress on the way and consider Insight as their supreme goal in life." In the context of our modern society, simple living also means to remain as free as possible from the destructive social and economic machine, and to avoid modern diseases, life stress, depression, high blood pressure, heart disease, etc. We should be determined to oppose the type of modern life filled with pressure and anxiety that many people now live. There is only one way out, and that is to consume less. We must discuss this way out with persons who have similar concerns. Once we are able to live simply and happily, we will be better able to help others. We will have more time and energy to share with other people. Sharing is difficult for rich people. Bodhisattvas who practice the *paramita* of giving live a simple life. They are able to give both their time and their energy to others. ♦

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On the whole we should regard money as mother's milk: it nourishes us and it nourishes others. That should be our attitude to money. It's not just a blank coupon that we have in our wallet. Each dollar contains a lot of past; many people worked for that particular one dollar, one cent. They worked so hard, with their sweat and tears. So it's like mother's milk. But at the same time, mother's milk can be given away and we can produce more mother's milk. So I wouldn't hang on to it too tightly.

— Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche

CRAWLING

by Gary Snyder

I was traveling the crest of a little ridge, finding a way between stocky deep red mature manzanita trunks, picking out a route and heading briskly on. Crawling.

Not hiking or sauntering or strolling, but crawling, steady and determined, through the woods. We usually visualize an excursion into the wild as an exercise of walking upright. We imagine ourselves striding through open alpine terrain – or across the sublime space of a sagebrush basin – or through the somber understory of an ancient sugar pine grove.

But it's not so easy to walk upright through the late twentieth century mid-elevation Sierra forests. There are always many sectors regenerating from fire or logging and the fire history of the Sierra would indicate that there have always been some areas of manzanita fields. So people tend to stay on the old logging roads or the trails, and this is their way of experiencing the forest. Manzanita and ceanothus fields, or the bushy groundcover and understory parts of the forest, are left in wild peace.

My crawl was in late December and although the sky was clear and sunny, the temperature was around

Dive in:

*down on your hands and knees on the
crunchy manzanita leaf-cover, and
crawl around between the trunks.*

freezing. Patches of remnant snow were on the ground. A few of us were out chasing corners and boundary lines on the Bear Tree parcel of the 'Inimim with retiring B.L.M. [Bureau of Land Management] forester Dave Raney, who had worked with that land many years before. No way to travel off the trail but to dive in: down on your hands and knees on the crunchy manzanita leaf-cover and crawl around between the trunks. Leather work gloves, a tight-fitting hat, long-sleeved denim work jacket, and old Filson tin pants make a proper crawler's outfit. Face right in the snow I came on my first of many bear tracks. Along the ridge a ways, and then down a steep slope through the brush, belly-sliding on snow and leaves like an otter. You get limber at it – and see the old stumps from early logging surrounded by thick manzanita, still-tough pitchy limbs from old wolf trees, hardy cones, overgrown

drag-roads, four-foot butt logs left behind, webs of old limbs and twigs, and the periodic prize of a bear scat.

One of our party called us back a bit: "A bear tree!" And sure enough, there was a cavity in a large old pine that opened up after a fire had scarred it. A definite black bear hangout, with scratches on the bark. To go where bears, deer, raccoons, foxes – all our other neighbors – go, you have to be willing to crawl.

So we have begun to overcome our hominid pride and learned to take pleasure in turning off the trail and going directly into the brush, to find the contours and creatures of the pathless part of the woods. Not really pathless, for there is the whole world of little animal trails that have their own logic. You go down, crawl swift along, spot an opening, stand and walk a few yards, and go down again. The trick is: have no attachment to standing, find your body at home on the ground, be a quadruped, or if necessary, a snake. You brush cool dew of a young fir with your face. The delicate aroma of leaf molds and mycelium rise from the tumbled humus under your hand, and a half-buried young boletus is disclosed. You can *smell* the fall mushrooms when crawling.

I began to fantasize on the larger possibilities of crawling. Workshops in Power Crawling? Crawling to Achieve Your Goals? Self-Esteem Crawls? Well, no. But at least – Crawl Away into the Wild. The world of little scats and tiny tracks. And self-esteem – no joke! "I feel finally liberated. I have overcome my aversion to crawling, and *I can go anywhere!*"

It's not always easy, and you can even get lost. Last winter we took a long uphill cross country transect on some of the land just above the Yuba Gorge that soon turned into a serious crawl. We got into denser and denser old manzanita that had us doing commando-style lizard crawls to get under their low limbs. It became an odd and unfamiliar ridge and I had no idea where we might be. For hundreds of yards, it seemed, we were scuttling along, and we came on a giant, totally fresh, worm-free *Boletus Edulis*, the *prize* of all the boletes. That went into the little day pack. And a bit further the manzanita opened and there we were! Suddenly it was just the opening below Suzanne Graham's old cabin built half on B.L.M. land at the edge of Ananda, and a dirt road that led toward home.

Get those gloves and a jacket and a hat and go out and explore California. ♦

Gary Snyder is a poet who lives in the Yuba watershed, Shasta bioregion, and serves on BPF's Advisory Board.

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ANGRY FACES

by Jarvis Masters

"Man, are you watching the news?" my new neighbor asked from the next cell one evening while I was relaxing on my bed, reading a book about meditation.

"No, not really," I answered, glancing up at my television that I had turned on for the dim flickering light I read by. "Why, what's up?"

"Ah, man! Check out Channel 7. They showing a Ku Klux Klan rally in Louisiana. Man, just look at all those Klansmen screaming and shouting all that white supremacy garbage. Isn't that sickening?"

"Yeah, Chuck, it is," I answered, before I even looked over at my TV screen. "They do look pretty awful. You say this is where? In Louisiana?"

"Yep! They must have it really bad there. Did you hear what they were saying? Man, these idiots talking about how all the Jews and Blacks is destroying this country. Didn't you hear them?"

"Nah, man. I missed it. I have my volume turned down. I just seen a bunch of angry faces and all those racist posters they had. But I'm not really watching TV right now. I just have it on so I can read. But now and then, you know, I'll take a quick glance – just to see what everyone else is talking about down the tier."

"Oh, OK," said Chuck. "Man, I apologize. I didn't mean to take you away from your reading. It's better than this nut box I'm watching."

"Hey, that's OK. If you see something big in the news – hey, let me know. I don't mind."

Ten minutes passed.

"Hey, Jarvis!" Chuck hollered. "Man, check out all those people. Must be a thousand people marching in San Francisco. Do you see them?"

"Yep! I'm checking it out," I said, taking a glance at the huge demonstration on my TV screen. "Wow! Chuck, what's up with them? Where did you say this was at?"

"Man, that's right in San Francisco. It's an environmentalist demonstration. They protesting the destruction of wildlife by special interest groups in Washington. So now they demanding an end to the cutting of trees in some places and the senseless slaughter of wild animals. They saying the planet is being destroyed."

"Is that right? Man, I'm not listening to it. But I can just tell by looking at the screen that they are pretty upset. You see that one woman who is shouting and raging into the microphone, while a lot of those demonstrators holding up posters and screaming is getting arrested? Hey, they all must be pretty pissed to be screaming like that and risking going to jail like that."

"Yeah, you're right!" said Chuck. "They do seem

pretty pissed off. But man, it makes me mad, too! Because what this government is doing is wronger than two left shoes. I just get madder than hell when I think about all of what is becoming of our planet. You know what I mean?"

"Well . . . to me, I just find it more saddening than anything else . . ."

"What do you mean?" asked Chuck.

"Well, for the first time, I'm starting to see something – that the kind of anger that is painted on the faces of all those environmentalists in San Francisco is the same as all those Klansmen in Louisiana. It's almost like everyone is suffering from the same thing. The only difference, I think, is that the Klansmen wear khaki and hoods, and the demonstrators are dressed for going to jail."

"Wow!" said Chuck. "I never seen it like that. You know, I myself get mad all the time when I see the Klan on TV or when I see how our planet is being destroyed, and things like that. But I never thought until this very second, Jarvis, that we all wear the same kind of hateful expression on our faces."

"Yeah, isn't it a trip?" I said. "Because here we are, trying to connect with the suffering of our planet, but we're living with the same kind of anger. I guess we need to learn how to see the real suffering and pain in people like the Klan, and even all those destroying our planet, too."

"Ah, man . . . man . . . man!" Chuck's voice rattled. "Man, I don't think I'll ever learn how to do something like that. Man, that there is a little too much chili on the hot dog for me."

"Yeah, I know what you mean, Chuck. That will be hard for me, too. But it's something to think about. Because if we can recognize all the suffering in this world, not just what we feel most connected to, then maybe our love for humanity will express itself more sincerely. But as of now, all we really want to do, Chuck, let's be honest, is get in line with the environmentalist cause, and afterwards, go kick a few Klansmen's asses." ♦

Jarvis Masters is a frequent contributor to Turning Wheel. He is an African American prisoner on Death Row at San Quentin, and can be contacted at: C-35169, Tamal, CA 94974.

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."

– Karl Marx

who can say
what we all know:

The little
Everyday ritual
of making
A lonely meal

And the courage
Such an ordinary act
Can take.



SAILING IN THE EARTHSHIP

An Interview with Mayumi Oda

by Susan Moon

Mayumi Oda is a well-known artist, beloved especially for her exuberant goddesses, who ride vegetable-bicycles and dig in the garden in the nude. In February 1993, and again in June, I talked with Mayumi in her house of big windows, billowing with light, in Muir Beach, California. After we talked, she did Korean Zen chanting with me, gave me bells to play while she chanted, then fed me on sorrel soup. With a joyful spirit she extended herself to me completely, and I came away bursting with joy that there is such a person as Mayumi. — Ed.

BPF: In the last couple of years, you've thrown yourself wholeheartedly into working to ban plutonium, one of the most toxic substances on earth, and you started an organization called "Plutonium Free Future." How did you get involved in this work?

Mayumi Oda: I went back to Japan in the winter of '91, feeling ready to work with the people in Japan, especially the women. I had left Japan in '66 and so this was 25 years later. The country's been quite a spiritual country, but something went wrong, and the people have become drunk with material things. I was worried about my country.

The country had gone gung ho over the nuclear project, and there were 41 nuclear reactors in a country smaller than California.

Almost all other countries have given up using plutonium in fast breeder reactors because it's so dangerous, but Japan is pursuing an energy-independent policy, recycling waste to extract plutonium from it. They're sending their spent fuel to France for reprocessing, and then having the plutonium shipped back halfway around the world to use in nuclear reactors.

In Japan, a friend of mine, a young woman, gave me a pamphlet about Japan's use of plutonium. She's a very strong environmentalist. I read it and I said "Oh my Goddess! What can I do?" I realized that it would be helpful if we could put pressure on Japan from outside, because the voices of people inside the country are not heard. There's a movement there against plutonium use, but international pressure was needed.

While I was in Japan, I went to an ancient shrine to the goddess Sarasavati. There's a huge ginkgo tree there that was planted by Kobo Daishi about 1200 years ago. Once it was two separate trees, a male and

female, and now they're tangled together into one big tree. I asked the tree what I could do about the plutonium. Then I came back home and sat in meditation.

BPF: The tree didn't tell you what to do?

MO: Not then. So I didn't think about it for a while. I was sitting in meditation on New Year's Day of 1992, and I was asking what it is I should do this year, and a voice came to me and said: *Stop the plutonium.*

I said, "Why me? I'm not a nuclear physicist, I'm not an activist, I don't know anything about plutonium." The voice just kept saying: *Help will be provided on the way. You don't have to do it alone. Just take it up and do it.*

So I asked my old friend Kaz Tanahashi, a devoted peace activist, for help, and Kaz said, "Let's do it." We went to a group called "Kai" in the Bay Area, mostly Japanese people, who work for peace.

BPF: Does Kai mean something?

MO: Kai means "the group" or "meeting" in Japanese. So I said to Kai, "This is what's happening in Japan. Can you do something about it?" Kai publishes a

newsletter called *Earthship*. A woman named Fusako Di Angeles is the editor. She asked me to do the cover of the newsletter for an issue about the plutonium shipment. So I made the Goddess Sarasavati sitting on a treasure ship with all kinds of endangered animals, elephants, giraffes, zebras and

owls. The ship is floating on the ocean of life.

BPF: I've seen it on a T-shirt.

MO: Yes, and then I made it into a silk screen print, and sold each print for \$300, and that was the beginning of our fundraising.

BPF: It's so inspiring to hear about how you just started from scratch, even though you had never done anything so politically direct before.

MO: Yes, and just as the Goddess Sarasavati said, help was provided. For example, Julian Glaser, an international environmental lawyer, showed up. He's a student of Aitken Roshi. He's bilingual, and just an absolutely great person. He offered to help us. The Japanese government was planning a shipment of 1.7 tons of reprocessed plutonium from Le Havre, France, to Japan in December 1992. Julian said we could file an international petition against the Japanese government because the shipment would be affecting the whole world. This was to be the first of 30, 40 ship-

I was sitting in meditation on New Year's Day, and a voice came to me and said: Stop the plutonium.

ments. And it wasn't just the transporting we were worried about. The Japanese government's support of the processing factories in England and France was a big part of what was keeping them in business.

So I traveled with Julian to Japan. And I met many Japanese women who work in the environmental and anti-nuclear movements, women who organized a beach clean-up campaign, producers on the radio and television, and people in the house of representatives – The Diet, it's called in Japan. I met the head of the environmental department of the Y.W.C.A., which is very active in Japan. I started to talk to them about what they could do to stop the shipment. They formed a women's network called Rainbow Snakes, because the rainbow snake is Earth's guardian.

We filed a petition against the plutonium shipment with the Japanese government. Before the boat left, we gathered signatures from over 2000 individuals and over a hundred groups from about 60 countries.

When we started this project, not many people knew about the shipment. We worked hard with many environmental organizations like Greenpeace, and when the plutonium shipment left France, there were about 400 press people there, and a huge amount of publicity came out.

BPF: So what happened with the shipment?

MO: The Japanese government went ahead with it. The ship "Akatsuki Maru" ["Dawn" in English] left as scheduled, but along the way, there were many demonstrations, and a lot of information came out, like the fact that Germany was transporting plutonium by air. People have really started to watch what's going on. Now that the cold war is over, there's an excess of plutonium and uranium from dismantled nuclear warheads, and Russia is trying to sell it.

BPF: Who are they selling it to?

MO: Some say to Japan. And the U.S. This is the time to ban plutonium and nuclear weapons, but instead the proliferation continues, in North Korea, for example. And because Japan is shipping so much plutonium, other Asian countries are worried that it might not be used just for energy. Maybe it's for weapons. It's a very important time for everybody to be watchful.

BPF: I'd like to ask you more about the personal side of this work. How did you feel when you were traveling in Japan with the lawyer and talking to people in the government and people involved in international law? How did you have the confidence to go into that new realm?

MO: I had to do a press conference in the Foreign Correspondents' Club in Japan, and I said, "I'm not a scientist, so I might make a lot of mistakes in describing the facts. But I'm just here to say from my heart

that I feel this plutonium shipment has to be stopped."

If I didn't do it, who would? There was a lot I *could* do, and when I realized that, I had to do it. I made mistakes but it didn't matter to me because it wasn't personal. This was a task I was given to do, and that kept me going.

BPF: Have you learned a lot about the scientific aspects of the situation?

MO: No, not yet.

BPF: Maybe you don't need to. Maybe you know enough.

MO: Enough to keep going. Enough to know that the plutonium production needs to stop.

BPF: And you're in touch with people who do understand it more from a scientific point of view.

MO: Exactly. They can explain to me what I need to know. People who work in alternative energy are consulting with us, too, and saying there are other ways to go. I don't like to do just "anti" activities; that's so negative. California is very advanced in the soft energy path, especially solar, and if we inspire Japan to go to soft energy, this could influence all of

Asia, and especially China.

My realization is that unless we do this work we will not have any future for our children. When I think about it, there's no choice.

BPF: Do you sometimes feel it's so depressing that you can't even bear it?

MO: Yes.

BPF: And what do you do when you get to that point?

MO: When I get to that point I try not to work too hard. I take a deep breath, and I say, *I have to have a joy*. Unless I take a breath and go slowly, I can't go on.

BPF: Your spiritual practice must help you here. Can you say something about how that fits into the work you're doing?

MO: It's the realization of how we are interconnected. And it's so beautiful to know that. We are still living and the whole world is living and every day we are breathing. Sometimes, though, because nature's so beautiful, it gives me more pain. So this pain and joy at once keeps me going.

BPF: Do you have a regular meditation practice?

MO: I sit in the morning. And I do chanting. The sitting really connects me with the world. I try to act from that place. I try to do as little as possible.

BPF: What do you mean, as little as possible?

MO: To do as little action as possible. Not to do extra.

BPF: What about your art work? How does that fit into your life as an activist?

MO: Kaz is an artist, too, and we both think of this as our creative work. The world becomes our canvas.

*Japan is shipping so much
plutonium, other Asian countries
are worried that it might not be
used just for energy.*

Instead of drawing on white paper, we can try to shape the world. We thought somebody else was shaping it for us, but they're not.

BPF: Do you still work on white paper in your studio?

MO: Less and less. I just feel like I don't need to make more crap. The world is filled with extra things. I've been painting goddesses for a long time, but now we better act like goddesses.

BPF: Do you feel resentment that you're being kept from your art work by your activism?

MO: No. Once in a while I really want to be in my studio by myself, painting. And a tear comes down and I say, "But I'm being asked to do this." When I find somebody else who can do this, I'll come back to my studio and paint. But for now, this is more important than painting.

BPF: Also you've used your art directly in the project. And because you've already established a reputation as an artist, you're able to give that back to the project. That's something special that you can offer.

MO: I'm grateful that I have that skill. That skill was given to me.

Kaz can write, and all the different Kai members have different skills – video makers, writers, artists. Everybody can use their own skills to the fullest.

BPF: Sometimes I worry, as a writer myself, that I shouldn't be making art, in my case, writing fiction, when there's so much urgent work to be done in the world. What do you think about that as an artist? Do you think it's still okay for people to make art that isn't directly political?

MO: Oh, yes. People need art to soften their hearts. It makes us more compassionate.

BPF: The lesson of your experience seems to be that whatever we feel moved to do, we should just do it, and not wait for somebody else to do it for us.

MO: Because nobody else will! That was the most devastating discovery! Everybody's waiting for somebody else to take action. Joanna Macy says if you're sitting around being depressed, that's the end. So why not transform this despair into hope by taking action? And if the whole planet goes into the dump, at least we know we tried.

BPF: I feel the same way. If the day comes when we're all choking to death on our own poison, I don't want to feel like I didn't even do anything about it.

MO: Yes, and if I didn't take action I would feel so guilty for the children. Besides, we *are* making a change.

BPF: What are some of your positive accomplishments?

MO: We made 5,000 copies of our pamphlet, "Plutonium Free Future," and we spread it all over. Someone took it back to Argentina and Chile and started a movement there, and the governments said

they would boycott plutonium.

BPF: In both Argentina and Chile?

MO: Yes. It's like planting a seed. You don't know what the next action will be, but you're connected to the whole world, and you're working together with everyone.

We got the Berkeley City Council to pass a resolution calling for a Plutonium Free Future, and we hope to get other cities to pass the same resolution.

Even though we didn't stop the shipment, we raised the level of awareness all over the world, about the dangers of plutonium and the nuclear industry.

BPF: Is there anything you want to say to people in general about how they can help?

MO: Everyone can do something. But I think environmental activists, especially the ones who practice a spiritual path, really should find out what we have in ourselves that is so toxic. What is it that interrupts the connections between us, and between people and the earth? There's something in us that hinders us.

BPF: How do you work on that yourself?

MO: Meditation, and being mindful. You listen to your heart.

If you really feel that you are part

of the world, you have to act. But unless you really feel it, it's dangerous to act. You get burned out. You lose your balance. When you feel connected, then you know what to do.

If you see the plastic lying on the beach, you just have to pick it up. You can't let it sit there.

BPF: But as you say, the balance is important, because people can get off balance by just picking up plastic all day until they drop. On the other hand, I think that people who take up a spiritual practice sometimes say to themselves, "I have to find peace in myself before I can do anything for the world, and I still have all this conflict within myself." So they just work on themselves, and never go out the door.

MO: But as long as they feel that way, maybe they should stay still, and try to work it out, and at least try not to do harm.

BPF: But you're never going to be able to say, "Now I'm completely peaceful within myself, and I'm ready to go make peace in the world."

MO: Right. You're never going to be perfect. You have to be willing to make mistakes. I certainly did. You work with people, and they give you great feedback, and you're part of a system.

It's really quite extraordinary that so many people have pure intention. And that's a joy. ♦

For more information, or to make contributions, contact Plutonium Free Future, 2018 Shattuck Ave., Box 140, Berkeley, CA 94704. Phone and fax: 510/540-7645.

[See "Readings" section of Turning Wheel, Summer '92 and Spring '93, for more information about Plutonium Free Future.]

*I've been painting goddesses
for a long time, but now we
better act like goddesses.*



Mayumi Oda, *Earth Ship*

zen walk

by Lawrence Di Stasi

"You cannot travel the path before you have become the path itself." – Gautama the Buddha

sometime in the last two years, the thought of a journey to various zen centers took up occupancy in my mind. at first the distances involved dictated that this would be a bicycle tour, but a knee that refused to heal eventually made that mode impractical. a walk seemed the only alternative – that, or giving up the idea entirely. when the idea would not go away, i began in the spring of 1992, memories of chaucer's aprille folk in mind, to plan a walking pilgrimage. what follows are some of the backings and forthings leading up to the actual doing of it in july – or rather, the doing of a first leg of what seems determined to continue.

i am going nowhere. i am going somewhere. i am going on a pilgrimage, which may be both. why? don't know. to keep the world going; turning. that is the reason for pilgrimage. or is it to slow the world down? us down. which, god knows, is needed. no more running. no more driving. or jogging either. walking. walking with the world. why? why is walking more attuned to the world and its turning? don't know. the world can only be known walking; loved walking; seen walking.

see the world walking. walk with it, with the world walking to its apotheosis. whatever that means. the world walks, and we have to walk with it. don't know why. only that if all had to walk, the world mightn't be in the sorry pass it is now: dying. so walk to not die. christ walked thus: to not die christ walked to his death that was not dying. buddha walked too, as did his bhikkhus. walked to sit his realization; then walked to teach his realization; saying in the end, "walk on." teaching socrates, peripatetic, walked; so did plato and aristotle; so did wordsworth coleridge kant freud kierkegaard who all walked to work.

napoleon rode, of course. so did caesar. so did colombo. as before him odysseus who rode the waves. had to. but riding water is something other than riding land. riding water is the way; riding land is not. why not? don't know. feet not fins maybe. land requires walking.

and so. he is. walking. walking fingers across the keys. key walking. dream walking. we are the walkers of the dream.

*

it is time, then, to go slowly. it is time to walk out of time, to places untimely, places with meaning, though what that meaning is remains to be seen. sacred maybe. the places to be walked will be sacred. though whether they will always have been sacred, or whether this walking

will render them sacred also remains to be seen. the sacred walk maybe. to sacred places maybe. to make places sacred maybe. to be made sacred by places. maybe.

to do this means leaving behind. attachment to place needs to be left behind; in order to find place. all that i am needs to be left behind; in order to find what i am. therein lies the meaning of pilgrimage. our stuff, our stuffed self has to be abandoned. for how long is not clear. perhaps only for a time. but for that pilgrim time at least, one must be essentially unhoused, displaced, a dis-placed person. with no attachments. no attachments to time: anachronistic. no attachments to place: utopic. no attachment to things: ureic? sounds like piss. no matter. what matters is no attachments, for only thus can the walk be focused on what is; in place.

but where is the place? is there one? should there be one? not clear. no direction: no direction known seems the condition of pilgrimage in our time. though once there was a place to go; though once there were guides

*if all had to walk, the world mightn't
be in the sorry pass it is now: dying.
so walk to not die.*

with directions, to whom the pilgrim gave up direction – here, now, no guides exist. no place exists. america, north america, white america knows no pilgrims, nor pilgrim places, nor place at all. no. the very word *america* can scan, as its namer, waldseemuller, may have understood, as "no-place-land."

america. amerigo. amerige. (from greek) a-meros-ge:
no-place-land.

no wonder we are lost as to place. no wonder we know only disneyland: disneyland the u-topic, the place that never was. and though books begin to appear about indian places – the mountains, the buttes, the ruins, the waterfalls, the mounds held sacred – they will not suffice. we cannot keep gawking over more indian places, disneyfying as always. it is time to walk others. sacralize others. sacralize the streets and ordinary places of no-place-land.

where are these ordinary places? not clear. not even clear whether one should go in company or alone. for this first time probably alone. because for this first alone time there will be false starts, wrong directions. the way has to be found anew here. the way has been lost. places are even now being both lost and sacralized and no one knows where. we are daily making them,

losing them, finding them, unknowing.

how then, to go? how did the indians, how does anyone know power places? does the setting of a place, or the settling in a place give it power? guesswork. san francisco is the marco polo zone, lamantia once said. which is one kind of power: the meeting of east and west, by chance. but the other places to which we flock, mock pilgrims – grand canyon, yosemite, yellowstone – these need us not, need not more trivializing by tourism. for tourism is not pilgrimage. tourism opposes, is the perversion of pilgrimage, for the tourist is acquisitive – laden with himself and his belongings, desperate to acquire something from where he has been. an experience. a picture. a souvenir.

the pilgrim, contrarily, must go empty. he begins empty and ends empty. he goes not so that he can occupy, or be entertained, or take something he can mount and catalogue and display as a time, a good time – but in order to. . . what? don't know yet.

*

pilgrims. america begins, mythically, with pilgrims. who tried to find a sacred space. tried to make their finding sacred. but on a different order, an imported, pseudo-hebraic order that ignored the place, which is the people, they took. and who from the beginning declared the land empty to justify that taking. which declaration/annihilation did not ever take. could not. the taking of paradise, the making of paradise on an imported plan, in a cemetery, creates only no-place. america: u-topia: no place.

now the land itself must call to place, to pilgrim, to pilgrimage. and it is not clear what that means. in this void of original ways, who knows where place is, or what its sign should be?

the not-knowing begets disorientation. fear. how be a pilgrim to places unknown? to no-place through no-place? but therein may lie the true american pilgrimage, as kerouac saw: the pilgrimage with no direction known; back and forthing in no-place-land; though that hyper nondirection now looks truly beat. surely pilgrimage demands something more. something more attuned to place, to places that are truly places, rather than cities, or parks, or the normally plotted, ephemeral destinations of speed-mad americans. slower. more deliberate. with something like a divining rod of planning. the divine rod. to divine a direction. something.

like a circuit, perhaps. a divine circuit. localized enough in time and place to be walked. so that out of a continental mass of no-places, reduced to a spate of possible places, distilled to a zone of zen places already thought, originally thought, reduce further to more local places. which can connect themselves in mind (is this how objects are always born?) to make a circuit. a zen place circuit. walk to green gulch. a place, it may be, sacralized via the zen there now. walk to sonoma mountain. a place maybe made sacred ditto. walk to

shasta. a place where sacred piles upon sacred. back to the bay and its several centers, an urban place sacralized. thus zen circuited (short circuited?), perhaps divine a way back to the old connections. what did the indians make of green gulch? was sonoma mountain as tamalpais or diablo? what of the places between? and which ones, which connections to make, for connection necessarily requires selection, but what performs that selection? mystery. mystery and the irrational hold sway here. the selection will be done via divine rod.

*

now it is time to train oneself. not so easy. the pilgrimage is a long walk, a marathon for which one needs condition. physical, yes, but also mental; spiritual; the spiritual condition of pilgrimage being openness. openness to the repetition of long days walking. openness to the pain. not least the pain of "non-eventfulness," no goalfulness. such walking takes discipline – to dissipate the fear: the fear of what may be met on the road.

*tourism is the perversion of pilgrimage,
for the tourist is acquisitive, laden with
himself and his belongings.*

and yet, there is the way. what is the way? where are you going? why are you? why is the way. how is the way. imponderables.

what does the pilgrim take? not clear. he takes only those few items that are indispensable: a change of shirt, underwear, socks. a water bottle. but maybe not. maybe it is necessary to trust to others even the giving of water. the same regarding food, shelter. trust them to others, for that forms the core of pilgrimage: the pilgrim must trust the good will of others, and in america, now, this forms the core problem. the entire ethic of america is mobilized to scorn the emptiness, the near immobility of the pilgrim – one without wheels to 'make time,' without even water to drink, or shelter to own, or self to suffice. nothing. migrant. in need of the handout. in the land of no migrants allowed. the land of no handout save to that hand for sale.

the pilgrim upsets each of these notions. the pilgrim professes to no place of his own, no bed, no food, no water, no income, no vehicle. and this profession of no possession infuriates by its upsetting of the most sacred of american values: owning. so as to be beholden to no one. yet only in such deep upsetting can that which has been trivialized be sacralized. only in such root reversal can the land be reclaimed. can the roads be redeemed. can the fundamental condition be accepted: *we are all beholden.*

*

now it is time to get going, to stop speculating about all this. so write a few letters. talk to a few people. decide on the route and the supplies, and set out.

called sf zen. the *tanto*, [practice leader] was standoffish at first, but also human, vulnerable. told him what i had in mind. though interested, he remained cautious, especially when i mentioned the buddhist tradition. he knew a lot about that tradition, he said, having been a mendicant monk in thailand, but clearly america has no such tradition. i said that was one reason i wanted to try it. fine, he said; but we usually have guests who are monks, and we know how to respond: they come announced, credentialed. i said i was certainly no monk, but a longtime zen student and. . . a kind of pilgrim. that word – if i was shy of using it, he seemed even more nonplussed. and without credentials . . .

he then said that in any case there was someone, john, who was in charge of accommodations (thus the american way: always a specialist in charge). i asked if that meant a fee? it did, \$16, including meals; if i called john, he could arrange it. but that, i groaned, was what i wanted to avoid: a weekend excursion where one calls motels for accommodations. besides, i couldn't say exactly when i'd arrive. this nonplussed him too: i might show up and john could be out on errands. i said i was prepared for that; if i had to wait, so be it.

he was warming to it now. told me that people come demanding that things be just so. i said i had no intention of that. he said that in thailand once a monk just pointed to a concrete floor for him to sleep on; and he slept on it. i said ok; if that's the way it goes, that's what i have to accept.

finally, he wanted to know if i was definitely coming, or whether this was just a fishing expedition. i said i was pretty sure i'd be there either thursday or monday

– all i needed was an overnight accommodation. i also hoped to talk to him about the center, the sense of place it had, its history, and so on. it would depend on his schedule, he said. of course. so we left it: i'd call john, let him know when.

all in all, a strange encounter. on the one hand, perfectly understandable: on the phone, zen centers, particularly prominent ones like sf zen, have to be wary. calls from cranks and crazies all the time.

on the other hand, it's odd in the extreme. american in the extreme: one is expected to have money; friends to stay with. zenists play it the same: you can't just arrive on our doorstep! in japan, he assured me, without a letter of introduction, forget it; they don't receive *just anyone*. but isn't this the problem? with zen. buddhism. religion. society. who *does receive* just anyone? what has happened to the way, as in *the odyssey*, of hospitality? the guest code? suppose i were a god in disguise?

*

back from the first leg, this being friday july 24. strange to be back. looked forward to getting home, and yet, walking up russell st., the feeling kept arising that pilgriming across one's own place sets up some kind of cross-vibration that confuses one's cells. there is the pull to walk in the known way, towards home. and there is the pull to simply walk on, according to the mind one must develop along the way. and those two magnetisms confuse the cells, homecoming is so easy, and so strange. ♦

Lawrence Di Stasi is a writer living in Berkeley, and a student of Joko Beck's.



A MOMENT OF PEACE, A GLIMMER OF HOPE

The following report was compiled by three participants in the 1993 Cambodian Peace Walk: Bob Maat SJ and Liz Bernstein of the Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation, and Yeshua Moser of Nonviolence International. All three are currently living in Bangkok, Thailand.

"Our journey for peace begins today and every day . . . Slowly, slowly, step by step. Each step is a prayer. Each step will build a bridge." – Ven. Maha Ghosananda

In this spirit a group of over 400 Buddhist monks, nuns and lay people left Angkor Wat, Cambodia's national shrine, on the afternoon of May 4, 1993. These were the first steps of a 350-kilometer, cross-country journey through the war-torn provinces to the capital city of Phnom Penh. It was the beginning of a walk for peace through areas of Cambodia which have known nothing but war for years. As some people along the route testified, "Since the United Nations' peacekeeping forces came here less than a year ago, the fighting has increased. The Khmer Rouge never used to shell the village directly. Now they often do."

The Dhammayatra, a Buddhist walk of peace and reconciliation, almost ended before it began. The pagoda in the city of Siem Reap where we were staying before we began our journey became a battleground. A hand grenade was thrown into the room where 200 participants, including the Venerable Maha Ghosananda, Supreme Patriarch of Buddhism in Cambodia and the leader of the Dhammayatra, were gathered, and shots were fired. The grenade did not explode. When the shooting finally subsided, the participants gathered around the beloved Supreme Patriarch who smilingly said, "Buddha saved us." (Two days later he told a Catholic monk among us, "Christ saved us!" with an ecumenical smile.)

The obvious question after this violent episode was: Should the walk go on? "Indeed, this is why we must walk," Maha Ghosananda said. Echoing his commitment, the most seriously wounded walker also sent

word from his hospital bed that the walk must continue. "Please keep walking . . . so that we may have peace soon." Some of the organizers suggested riding in vehicles the first day through the "rough spots." Yet the next morning, the eve of Vesak, the highest holy day of Buddhism, as the walkers prepared to walk to Angkor Wat, a busload of over 100 walkers from various provinces arrived from Phnom Penh. It was soon followed by another bus of Thai participants, both having been delayed, but not dissuaded, by the fighting. Upon seeing the first bus pull into the temple compound, one of the organizers affirmed, "We can forget about riding. We're walking!"

The concept of a Dhammayatra is as old as



Peace Walk, 1993. Maha Ghosananda (center) and Kim Teng (immediate right).

Buddhism. Over 2500 years ago, Buddha led his monks and nuns in long processions across the countryside preaching words of peace. The Buddha would walk to areas of conflict. Following in that tradition, Ven. Maha Ghosananda announced the second Dhammayatra (the first was in 1992) in support of peace for Cambodia and peace for the world. Our particular route was chosen to go through war zones. "We must walk where the troubles are," Maha Ghosananda told the participants.

Ven. Kim Teng, one of the principal organizers of the walk, explained to the 150 monks gathered for the Dhammayatra, "We as monks must serve our people. We depend on them. Indeed, they are our rice bowl,

they sustain us. If the people are suffering, we too suffer. We cannot sit and meditate in our temples. We must walk where the suffering is the greatest. We are not peacekeepers like the U.N., but peacemakers, so we must walk where there is yet no peace to keep."

The walkers would usually begin their daily treks at four or five in the morning, before the heat was too great. Even at 4 AM, families would wait outside their huts with a bucket of water, a candle, and incense sticks. As the monks and nuns filed past, two by two, they would bless the people with water and words of peace. "May peace be in your heart, your family, your village, our country. . . ." In turn, many a walker had her or his feet "blessed" – washed by those waiting alongside the road: "May your journey be as cool as this water." The incense sticks would then be extinguished in the water as a symbol of dousing out the flames of war.

Minefields on either side of the road, temperatures over 100 degrees, and rainstorms did little to dampen the spirit of the walkers or those patiently waiting by the side of the road to greet us. One afternoon of scorching heat, a woman by the side of the road called out encouragement to the sweating walkers, praising us for withstanding the high temperatures. "Your walking in this heat has *got* to bring peace!" A man answered, "This heat is nothing compared to the flames of war," and his wife added, "I'd walk in heat much hotter than this if it would bring us peace!" Another oppressively hot day one old grandmother by the side of the road said, "Bless you all for walking in this heat," to which one of the nuns answered, "The weather may be hot, but our hearts are cool!"

In many areas the walkers literally traversed a war zone. Not a day went by when the sound of thumping artillery or exploding land mines was not heard. And we heard tales of great suffering from people along the road who had been disabled by years of conflict, or from people living in temporary shelters.

The Dhammayatra walked through areas where the U.N. peacekeeping forces are not allowed to travel further than 500 meters from their home bases for the sake of their own security, through areas where people's prayers were hauntingly simple. "May we sleep above the ground again" was the prayer of people who were gathering their children for another night in the bunker. "May we just stop fearing the night," pleaded a mother of five.

Even soldiers would lay down their weapons as the monks filed past, and ask to be blessed. And at one stop several soldiers came into the temple in which the monks were staying and put their weapons on the floor. They bowed in front of the monks, asking for a blessing of protection. "We don't want anyone to be killed or hurt," one said. "I have no ill will in my heart," he continued. "Please bless us so that our bullets don't hurt anyone, and so that no one else's bullets hurt us."

One of the express purposes for Dhammayatra II

was to encourage a peaceful environment during and after the Cambodian elections of May 23-28, 1993. In some towns local government officials tried to discourage people from welcoming the walkers, seeing the peacewalk as a threat to their political interests. Ironically, our warmest welcome was in a town where the people were clearly forbidden to come. Old men and women would whisper to the walkers as they made an offering of food, "We were told not to come, but they cannot stop us. This is our religion. And we hunger for peace so much."

A young man from another village which was likewise told not to receive us said that there had recently been a massacre of 30 people at the temple. "But this time," he said, "we couldn't stay away. It is the first time we have dared to gather together again in a large group. This time everyone is here. The market is closed, people left their jobs, their children, to come and greet you. The U.N. has sent people from all over the world to keep peace, but it hasn't worked. All we have left is the monks and Buddhism. They must lead us out of this mess of killing one another."

By the time the Dhammayatra reached the city of Phnom Penh, a city tense with the fear of violence, our numbers had swelled to over 3000 people. A coalition of women's groups, student associations and human rights groups coordinated the walk through the streets of Phnom Penh. A Cambodian office worker said, "People were so afraid of the elections. Here in Phnom Penh they had started to stockpile rice. But the walk has relieved us all, inspired us with hope."

For two days the walkers marched through the streets of the city, stopping to hold silent vigils for peace. In rain or scorching heat, thousands joined along the way, coming out of their offices and shops. After 15 minutes of silence at what is usually a busy traffic intersection, a boy asked, "Do you have peace?" An elderly man who had walked all the way from Siem Reap chanting one phrase in Pali, teaching it to many on the way, answered with his oft-repeated prayer, "*Nanti santi barange sok kang*" – there is no greater happiness than a peaceful heart.

On the morning of May 24th, Prince Sihanouk greeted the walkers with words of deep gratitude for the Dhammayatra. In front of the Royal Palace the walkers once again meditated in silence, praying that all beings be free from suffering, fear and sorrow. Then the Prince made a solemn plea to all of his compatriots for peace and called on all parties to "put an end to violence and hatred . . . from this day forward."

Days earlier, on a lonely stretch of road which has known no peace for the past 25 years, a farmer cradling his young son said, "If the Dhammayatra brings us even a moment of peace – ahhh, I offer my deepest gratitude. For then we can hope." ♦

A REPORT ON THE WESTERN BUDDHIST TEACHERS' CONFERENCE WITH THE DALAI LAMA

by Venerable Thubten Chodron

"Let's do a visualization. You're a man interested in Buddhism. Coming here, what do you see? Her Holiness, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, a woman in all 14 incarnations." So began the presentation on sexism by Sylvia Wetzel at the Western Buddhist Teachers' Conference in Dharamsala, India, in March, 1993. Sylvia continues, "Above Her Holiness is Tara, a female Buddha, and the 16 Arhats, all women. All the well respected people sitting at the front are women. You see a few men sitting in the back and you wonder if there's discrimination against men in Buddhism. You ask one guru and she responds, 'No, there's no prejudice, but if you practice well, you can be reborn a woman in your next life.' Another teacher tells you, 'There's no discrimination against men: in emptiness there is no female or male.' Yet another says, 'Oh, men are well-respected in the tantra. You can become a *daka* [male *dakini*] and serve the female practitioners.'" By this time, the 22 Western teachers were rolling in laughter, while His Holiness and the other Tibetans smiled but looked serious.

His Holiness reaffirmed men's and women's equal ability to attain enlightenment, and emphasized the need for all Buddhists to be humble and develop genuine respect for others' qualities. "Women on their part must act, studying and developing their qualities, and not get stuck in simply accusing others of sexism. If they run across prejudice in the process, they should speak up, and we must tackle those problems." Later His Holiness commented that he too felt uncomfortable with certain sexist passages in Buddhist literature. While the language of the sutras cannot be altered, he was committed to changing the wording in ritual text written later.

For the first four days of the conference, the Western teachers, from Theravada (Vipassana), Zen, Tibetan traditions and Friends of the Western Buddhist Order discussed our concerns among ourselves. For the next four days we made presentations to His Holiness, had lively discussions, and received excellent advice. For the last two days, we Westerners again met among ourselves, to plan where to go from there. I was impressed by the frank atmosphere and by everyone's willingness to discuss the difficulties we have faced, both personally and in our traditions, in bringing Buddhism to the West. His Holiness, too, enjoyed the direct discussions.

Teacher ethics was a hot topic. His Holiness explained that the position of teacher depends on students considering that person as a teacher. One isn't authorized as a teacher by a higher authority.

Therefore students must investigate a person's qualities over a period of time before taking that person as their teacher. If one's teacher asks one to do something that contradicts Buddhist ethics, one should refuse. As for crazy wisdom, there is no such thing. Everyone is accountable for her or his behavior. If one has a genuine realization of emptiness, then one's respect for karma and its results increases.

Why then do some teachers who seem to have deep experience of emptiness in meditation still misbehave? Although there have been highly realized beings who display unconventional behavior, His Holiness questioned whether most contemporary teachers with unorthodox behavior had a correct understanding of emptiness. Our defilements are eliminated in stages, not all at once, and we must not underestimate their power. Actual realization should effect a change in one's life.

Western teachers brought up the importance of being socially engaged and His Holiness concurred that we should follow the Christian example of participating in social welfare work. Except for a few people who have the resources and inclination to devote their entire time to meditation, the majority of Buddhists should remain active in helping their communities. Without social commitment, one's altruism may remain in the head, not in the heart. But without maintaining a solid meditation practice, one's social work may not be a true expression of the Dharma. Balance is required.

While lay teachers and practitioners are important in the West, so are monastics: the Buddha stated that the indication of Buddhism flourishing in a place was the existence of the Vinaya (monastic practice) and the four types of disciples – fully ordained monks and nuns, and male and female lay disciples who keep the five precepts. One of the most moving moments of the conference followed Ven. Tenzin Palmo's presentation on the difficult situation of and lack of support for Western monastics. She concluded, "Let's pray the Western monastics won't be lost in the mud of indifference." At this point His Holiness began to cry and the room fell silent for several minutes.

The conference participants drafted an Open Letter, which follows. At the end of the conference, a Network of Western Buddhist Teachers was formed. We plan to have similar conferences in the future so that more Western Buddhist teachers can contribute to and learn from such gatherings. ♦

Thubten Chodron, an American Buddhist nun and teacher based in Seattle, is the author of Open Heart, Clear Mind (Snow Lion).

An Open Letter from The Network For Western Buddhist Teachers

On March 16-19, 1993, a meeting was held in Dharamsala, India, between His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and a group of 22 Western dharma teachers from the major Buddhist traditions in Europe and America. Also present were the Tibetan lamas Drikung Chetsang Rinpoche, Panchen Otrul Rinpoche and Amchok Rinpoche. The aim of the meeting was to discuss openly a wide range of issues concerning the transmission of the Buddhadharmas to Western lands.

After four days of presentations and discussions we agreed on the following points:

1) Our first responsibility as Buddhists is to work towards creating a better world for all forms of life. The promotion of Buddhism as a religion is a secondary concern. Kindness and compassion, the furthering of peace and harmony, as well as tolerance and respect for other religions, should be the three guiding principles of our actions.

2) In the West, where so many different Buddhist traditions exist side by side, one needs to be constantly on one's guard against the danger of sectarianism. Such a divisive attitude is often the result of failing to understand or appreciate anything outside one's own tradition. Teachers from all schools would therefore benefit greatly from studying and gaining some practical experience of the teachings of other traditions.

3) Teachers should also be open to beneficial influences from secular and other religious traditions. For example, the insights and techniques of contemporary psychotherapy can often be of great value in reducing suffering. At the same time, efforts to develop psychologically oriented practices from within the existing Buddhist traditions should be encouraged.

4) An individual's position as a teacher depends on the request of his or her students, not simply on being appointed as such by a higher authority. Great care must therefore be exercised by the student in selecting an appropriate teacher. Sufficient time must be given to making the choice, which should be based on personal investigation, reason and experience. Students should be warned against the dangers of falling prey to charisma, charlatanism or exoticism.

5) Particular concern was expressed about unethical conduct among teachers. In recent years both Asian and Western teachers have been involved in scandals concerning sexual misconduct with their students, abuse of alcohol and drugs, misappropriation of funds, and misuse of power. This has resulted in widespread damage both to the Buddhist community and the individuals involved. Each student must be encouraged to take responsible measures to confront teachers with unethical aspects of their conduct. If the teacher shows no sign of reform, stu-

dents should not hesitate to publicize any unethical behavior of which there is irrefutable evidence. This should be done irrespective of other beneficial aspects of his or her work and of one's spiritual commitment to that teacher. It should also be made clear in any publicity that such conduct is not in conformity with Buddhist teachings. No matter what level of spiritual attainment a teacher has or claims to have reached, no person can stand above the norms of ethical conduct. In order for the Buddhadharmas not to be brought into disrepute and to avoid harm to students and teachers, it is necessary that all teachers at least live by the five lay precepts. In cases where ethical standards have been infringed, compassion and care should be shown towards both teacher and student.

6) Just as the dharma has adapted itself to many different cultures throughout its history in Asia, so is it bound to be transformed according to conditions in the West. Although the principles of the dharma are timeless, we need to exercise careful discrimination in distinguishing between essential teachings and cultural trappings. However, confusion may arise due to various reasons. There may be a conflict in loyalty between commitment to one's Asian teachers and responsibility to one's Western students. Likewise, one may encounter disagreement about the respective value of monastic and lay practice. Furthermore, we affirm the need for equality between the sexes in all aspects of Buddhist theory and practice.

The Western teachers were encouraged by His Holiness to take greater responsibility in creatively resolving the issues that were raised. For many, His Holiness's advice served as a profound confirmation of their own feelings, concerns and actions.

In addition to being able to discuss issues frankly with His Holiness, the conference served as a valuable forum for teachers from different traditions to exchange views. We are already planning future meetings with His Holiness and will invite other colleagues who were not present in Dharamsala to participate in the ongoing process. His Holiness intends to invite more heads of different Asian Buddhist traditions to future meetings.

The proceedings of the meeting will be disseminated to the wider public by means of articles, a report, a book, and audio and video recordings.

For further information and comments, please contact: The Network For Western Buddhist Teachers, 4725 E. Sunrise Drive, Suite 137, Tucson, AZ 85718.

Signed:

Fred von Allmen, Ven. Ajahn Amaro, Ven. Olande Ananda, Martine Batchelor, Stephen Batchelor, Alex Berzin, Ven. Thubten Chodron (Cherry Greene), Lama Drupgyu (Tony Chapman), Lopon Claude d'Estrée, Edie Irwin, Junpo Sensei (Denis Kelly), Brendan Lee Kennedy, Bodhin Kjolhede Sensei, Jack Kornfield, Dharmachari Kulananda, Jakusho Bill Kwong Roshi, Lama Namgyal (Daniel Boschero), Ven. Tenzin Palmo, Ven. Thubten Pende (James Dougherty), Lama Surya Das (Jeffrey Miller), Robert Thurman, Sylvia Wetzel. ♦

INNER PEACE, WORLD PEACE
ESSAYS ON BUDDHISM AND NONVIOLENCE

EDITED BY
KENNETH KRAFT



*Inner Peace,
World Peace:
Essays on
Buddhism and
Nonviolence*

edited by Kenneth Kraft
SUNY Press, 1992. \$14.95

**Reviewed by Donald
Rothberg**

For those interested in developing a deeper grounding for a socially engaged Buddhism or for engaged spirituality in general, Ken Kraft's edited volume of essays provides a very welcome resource. Kraft, a student and scholar of Zen who is presently a BPF board member, has collected eight important essays, some of them focused on the meaning of nonviolence in Buddhist traditions, and some focused more on contemporary issues of Buddhist activism.

Much of the value of the book for me, in fact, was in how it helps to clarify questions about the connection between Buddhist tradition and contemporary Buddhist activist approaches. To what extent can Buddhist nonviolence as a way of living provide a basis for contemporary social transformation? To what extent is Buddhist teaching and practice, despite the emphasis on no-self and interdependence, primarily centered on individual transformation? While the reader is left in the end without a full resolution of these issues, the various essays provide much help, both in identifying core Buddhist principles and in suggesting new directions.

Several of the authors, including well-known Buddhist scholars Luis Gomez, Christopher Chapple, Donald Swearer and Robert Thurman, reconstruct traditional Buddhist approaches to nonviolence. Their accounts bring out the variety of historical understandings of and rationales for nonviolence in Buddhism. For instance, the Dhammapada tells us: "All beings fear violence, all fear death. Considering them like oneself, one will not do violence to others or cause them any harm." In other texts, nonviolence is explained as the best path to "self"-development and enlightenment. Yet some Mahayana traditions and texts leave open the possibility of a bodhisattva of high level bearing arms and killing in some extraordinary situations.

The historical record of Buddhist societies regarding nonviolence also varies. On the one hand, there are the quite remarkable achievements of the Buddhist ruler Ashoka of the third century B.C.E. Ashoka implemented laws restricting the consumption of meat, established numerous hospitals, including hospitals for nonhuman animals, and limited greatly all hunting and

killing. On the other hand, rulers of Buddhist countries have at times (including the present) been violent, both in defense and in aggression.

The other authors (Ken Kraft, Cynthia Eller, Gene Sharp, and Sulak Sivaraksa) are most concerned with contemporary Buddhist nonviolent activism. Kraft gives a broad and insightful overview of the main contours and figures of socially engaged Buddhism; his sympathetic but critical perspectives and questions concerning the role of BPF and the values and limits of Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings made me realize how little discussion of this kind there really is in our communities, and yet how important it is. Eller's essay contrasting and connecting Buddhist and Christian social ethics was particularly intriguing. Her claim is that the link between the personal and social occurs differently in the two traditions. In Buddhism, "self"-development is more basic; in helping the self, one helps the other. In Christianity, however, helping the other is more basic, yet to do so is to help the self.

I found the essay by Thai activist Sulak Sivaraksa, a participant in last year's BPF Summer Institute and a nominee for the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize, most stimulating. Especially helpful is his development of the global implications of the basic Buddhist ethical precepts, linking killing and violence not just with individual greed and aggression, but also with particular political and economic systems that support inequality, excessive individualism, waste and overconsumption, and control by the wealthy "First World." He places a special responsibility for responding to world suffering and violence on the citizens of the richest nations: "The way out of our predicament is for all of us to recognize that the problems on earth are our own personal problems and our own personal responsibility. . . . Unless the citizens of the richest nations seriously change their lifestyles, and do it soon, there is little hope."

I felt well nourished by these essays; there is much important information relevant to engaged Buddhism that is not easily accessible elsewhere. Of course, there are many areas and issues that were not treated or just barely touched on. Particularly interesting for me would have been some current first-person accounts of the experience of attempting to live and act nonviolently. I also would have liked to have read more engaged Buddhist strategies in relation to contemporary violence, perhaps on the Gulf War, or the war in Yugoslavia, or the explosion in Los Angeles. There still remains much more to be said and done (and, in a Buddhist sense, much more to be not said and not done). ♦

Donald Rothberg is a former BPF board member and has helped to organize the BPF Meditation in Action Summer Institutes. He is a teacher and writer on the faculty of the Saybrook Institute in San Francisco, and has edited a collection of essays on socially engaged spirituality, to appear as an issue of the journal ReVision in the summer of 1993 [See "Classifieds," p. 45].

BOOKS IN BRIEF

by Alan Senauke

BOOKS IN BRIEF is a new column of short reviews. Not all of the books here are directly Buddhist or engaged Buddhist in subject matter. But Buddhists are reading them. And in a universe of complete interconnection, maybe they all are relevant after all.

Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity, by Martin Smith (Zed Books, 165 First Avenue, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716, \$25) is an encyclopedia of the Burmese conflict, a highly detailed account of modern Burmese history, chronicling the rise and fall of insurgent groups. Martin Smith spent more than ten years in and out of Burma, winning the trust of many people, along the way writing for the BBC, the Guardian, the Anti-Slavery Society, and others. This is not an easy book to read, but I come back to it often to check facts and fill out a necessary understanding about the roots of present events, because so many of the tensions there make no sense without history.

For many years I have admired the words of early Chinese Zen masters and poets offered up by a skillful translator named Red Pine. Red Pine, otherwise known as Bill Porter, reveals himself and his own voice in a wonderful new book, *Road To Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits*. Venturing into the Chungnan Mountains near Sian, where reclusive types have felt at home for fifteen hundred years, Porter and photographer friend Steven Johnson met with Buddhist and Taoist hermits. His discussions with these men and women far from the red dust of town are often inspiring, for they have been carefully guarding the flame of practice through decades when Buddhism has been all but extinguished in China. Published by Mercury House, 201 Filbert St., #400, San Francisco, CA 94133. \$14.

Western Buddhism has been shaped by the feminist movement in a way that I hope is irreversible. But we still have precious few models and texts that unveil the feminine nature of the absolute. Lex Hixon's *Mother of the Buddhas: Meditation on the Prajnaparamita Sutra* is a passionate and practice-oriented corrective. Based on the *Prajnaparamita in 8000 Lines*, a fundamental Mahayana text, Hixon's gift for poetry brings us much closer to the Perfection of Wisdom than the scholars have brought us before. Published by Quest Books, 306 W. Geneva Road, P.O.Box 270, Wheaton, IL 60189. \$16.

Last year after we put together an issue on Buddhist practice in prison, I came across a copy of *The Angolite*, an astonishing and award-winning prison newsmagazine edited by Wilbert Rideau at

Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. While no mention of Buddhism may be found in these pages, the writing is thoughtful and scathingly honest. What impressed me even more deeply is the implicit (and sometimes explicit) vision of Angola as a walled community of prisoners, guards, lawyers, judges, families, administrators, cooks, maintenance people, and so on, that functions interdependently within a society that is sometimes equally harsh. If this piques your interest, send \$12 for a year's subscription to *The Angolite*, Louisiana State Prison, Angola, LA 70712.

At age 87, in seriously failing health, Achaan Buddhadasa, abbot of Suan Mokh in southern Thailand, remains a towering figure in 20th-century Buddhism, particularly for those of us exploring socially engaged Buddhism. Several of his key books have been published in at least serviceable English. I hope we might see a compendium that does for his important writings what Parallax's *Seeds of Peace* has done for Buddhadasa's student Sulak Sivaraksa. In the meantime, I recommend Buddhadasa's slim volume, *Patibcasamuppada: Practical Dependent Origination*, translated by Steve Schmidt and available from the Uddhidhamma Fund, P.O. Box 26, Nonthaburi 11000, Thailand.

D.S. Lliteras' *In the Heart of Things* fuses narrative and haiku into the tale of two Vietnam War veterans, master and student, following a zen path through the streets of working-class Baltimore. It is a thoughtful and introspective novel raising questions about what we challenge, accept, and resign ourselves to in coming to terms with our own urban lives. Published by Hampton Roads Publishing, 891 Norfolk Square, Norfolk, VA 23502. \$8.95.

Ven. S. Dhammika and Susan Harmer have come up with a well-drawn and well-told Buddhist children's book. Aside from the timeless Jataka stories, *Rabula Leads the Way*, relating the wanderings and mutual questions of a novice monk and his young friend, is the first such book I've seen that seems accessible to Western kids. At least my daughter Silvie likes it. Available from Buddha Dhamma Mandala Society, Towner P.O. Box 1442, Singapore 9132.

The Balancing Act: A History of Modern Thailand, by Joseph Wright Jr., documents the twists and turns of the Thai government from the rise of so-called "democracy" in June of 1932. Wright does a detailed and readable job with a history that is often difficult to interpret. I don't know any book that better covers this ground. Published jointly by Pacific Rim Press in Oakland, CA and Asia Books in Bangkok. ♦

Saving History

by Fanny Howe

Sun & Moon, 1993. \$12.95

Reviewed by Susan Moon

"When people decided to mix inventions into the real things - cement in water, steel pipes in earth, tiles under fields - they were only a few steps away from putting nails into hands, people into ovens, needles into arms."

What would you do if the only way for you to save your child's life was to serve an evil man in his evil pursuits?

Saving History moved me more than any novel I've read for a long time. If it wasn't so well written, so deeply religious, it could be a best-seller. It's about what is sacred in an unjust society. It's about money and what happens when you don't have it. It's about borders.

It's about a homeless mother, Felicity, who wanders with her two little girls back and forth across the border between California and Mexico ("It's women who cross boundaries.") looking for help for her younger daughter who desperately needs a liver transplant. Felicity doesn't have or like money. "She had begun to feel close to the ground. The poverty line was dollars above her." But without money, how can Felicity help her child?

An old friend of Felicity's offers to help her, if she will do as he tells her. His name is Temple, and he's the perversion of everything sacred. He has money (a transvestite named Money works for him) and power; he trades in drugs and body parts on the California-Mexican border. To him, the human body is devoid of spirit, a machine made of interchangeable parts. Howe says, "In a materialistic world, the body is the ultimate possession of value." Felicity's friend Tom, a good man, asks her, "Can anyone be saved by someone evil?"

To save history is to save the experience of the poor from being forgotten, to tell the story of the marginalization of women, children, people of color, saints. For Howe, "history" is the opposite of materialism and greed. History is the life story of the spirit. To read *Saving History* is to participate in saving history, by hearing Felicity's story. "I know that consciousness does not dwell in me, but I dwell in it," she tells us. ♦

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COORDINATOR'S REPORT

There's trouble in the world. Where must we intervene? And how? Is armed force or support for armed force ever justified? I want to be clear that these are my own questions. As an organization, BPF, like all other Fellowships of Reconciliation, is completely committed to the path of nonviolence, heeding the first Pure Precept to avoid all harmful action and the first Grave Precept not to take life. Our modern day teachers are Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Cesar Chavez, Thich Nhat Hanh, Maha Ghosananda, and many lesser known men and women who risked everything for freedom and dignity.

We have a world where addiction to violence and the greed of arms merchants conspire to make war. A thousand points of light are tracer bullets and mortar shells on a thousand scattered battlefields - in Bosnia, Burma, Guatemala. Even from my seat in the meditation hall it's no longer unusual to hear the snap of small arms fire three blocks away, where at times crack seems to have a higher street value than life.

In our last fundraising letter to BPF members we included some preliminary thoughts and suggestions about a Buddhist response to war in Bosnia and elsewhere. A member wrote back that ". . . there are times when military action is necessary. Bosnia is one of them." She may be right; much of the world thinks so.

During the Gulf War we ran a short piece about "Bodhisattva Warriors" by Chagdud Rinpoche. Telling the story of the bodhisattva sea captain saving his passengers from death by taking it upon himself to kill a pirate, Chagdud Rinpoche walks a very narrow line following the first precept, not to take life. The question is: when does one take life to save life? In this case, the captain acted with a pure mind to protect life, which included saving the pirate from the terrible karma of his own intended acts. A bodhisattva might take such an extreme step, in full awareness that killing another may create painful repercussions in his or her own life.

In the case of Bosnia, the closer I look, the less I can see where armed forces might intervene, short of a complete military occupation, which would just keep the lid on and settle nothing. And how is it that the Western world is quite willing to sit quietly by while non-Europeans in more remote regions oppress each other in equally shameful and murderous ways? I also ask myself are our political and military leaders motivated by wisdom and compassion? Are they bodhisattvas? I don't think so. Look at last weekend's bombing of Iraq. I can't see very far past the spectacle of our once antiwar president trying to prove his "manhood" to his own generals and to the world as he feels his political authority slipping away. Political authority is sadly different from moral authority. Like many of us, Bill

Clinton and Saddam Hussein see themselves trapped in a system of suffering. In ignorance and desperation they pass their own suffering on to others, turning the wheel in darkness.

At the International Network of Engaged Buddhists meeting in March, an angry member from India, representing former untouchables who were converted to Buddhism by Dr. Ambedkar forty years ago, asked the conference how untrained, unarmed people should respond to systematic violence. He was met with an uncomfortable silence. At the same conference a number of our Burmese friends raised similar questions – these Buddhists say they want to help, but what are they willing to risk? Again there was silence, I think because most of us have not really searched ourselves to discover either our true mind or its shadow.

I don't know the right response in these or other places where there is war and violence on all sides, or even where there may seem to be a "right" side. But suffering deserves better than an uncomfortable silence. I'm sure many of you are thinking about these issues. The hard part is to investigate deeply right as the world is burning – a lotus blossom in the flame. We must do this work now while some of us still have magazines to read and write, words to help each other find the truth, and the unique opportunity of Buddhist practice. I invite you to share your discoveries here in *Turning Wheel* so we may all walk a surer path to peace.

We have a new staff person in our office: Staci Montori, who is also an environmental activist and yoga student. Special congratulations go out to Staci and Mark O'Lalor who were married in Santa Cruz on June 26. ♦

— Alan Senauke

CHAPTER NEWS

All the **Bay Area chapters** are pitching in to organize our 1993 National Member's Meeting, October 22 to 24 in the San Francisco area. The weekend meeting is built around Thich Nhat Hanh's Day of Mindfulness at Spirit Rock Center on Saturday, October 23. But we expect there will be ample time for us to talk with each other, share our common questions, and do some kind of training that may be useful in our work back home. All chapters are strongly encouraged to come. Contact the national office for details and help.

The **Vermont Chapter** recently sent their Spring newsletter. They are planning a second annual Day of Interdependence and Mindfulness on July 5 (weeks ago, as you read this). Chapter members are closely involved with the Tibetan Resettlement Project, which has placed all twenty six of its assigned Tibetan immigrants in the Burlington area. Vermont BPF is also sending small packages to women in Bosnia, respond-

ing to Fran Peavey's request that went out with the last BPF fundraising letter.

Seattle BPF has a new chapter representative, Rick Harlan, taking over from Susan Baldwin, who has held that position since 1986. Susan notes that almost every cell in her body has changed since then. Ros Weiner participated in INEB's witness delegation to Cambodia, and offered a slide show on her return. In March, chapter member Vana Jakic presented a paper at a "Seminar on the Contribution of Religion to the Culture of Peace," in Barcelona, Spain.

The **Sonoma County, Ca Chapter** (along with ACLU and Amnesty International) sponsored an evening vigil to abolish the death penalty on June 21 at Santa Rosa's Court House Square. Earlier in June, the chapter also organized a Burma slide show with National Coordinator, Alan Senauke.

Robert Aitken Roshi testified on behalf of BPF and other local Buddhist organizations against a gambling initiative up before the **Hawaii State House of Representatives**. They were successful — the bill was withdrawn.

Cherry Blossom BPF, in the Washington DC area, has been alternating monthly chapter meetings and monthly discussion. Recent guest speakers for the chapter have been Michele Bohana, director of the Institute for Asian Democracy, and Patrick Hamilton, a Buddhist scholar, hospice worker, and Theravadan practitioner.

Marin County BPF has recently reorganized itself with regular chapter meetings and seasonal days of mindfulness at Green Gulch Farm. The chapter co-sponsored a slide show at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, with Alan Senauke, just back from the Thai/Burma border.

Ordinary Dharma, home of the **Los Angeles Chapter**, has a new country retreat center, Manzanita Village, on eighteen verdant acres between Los Angeles and San Diego. Teachers Christopher Reed and Michele Benzamin-Masuda expect to divide their time between Ordinary Dharma in Venice and Manzanita Village. They have invited BPF to make use of this wonderful rural space in the future. We wish them much luck.

Our **Sydney, Australia** affiliate has got some ambitious undertakings. In August they are organizing a first "Empowering the Heart Mind" conference, at an old sheep-station near Moss Vale. Visiting teachers will be John Seed and Fran Peavey. They are also making packets for women in Yugoslavia, which they'll give to Fran in August. Members have been visiting individuals and leading some classes in several local prisons. ♦

ANNOUNCEMENTS & CLASSIFIEDS

Announcements

BUDDHIST BOOKS FOR PRISONS.

Please consider sending dharma books you do not wish to keep in your personal library (and some you do!) to Prison Dharma Network, 155 Beacon St., Hartford, CT 06105-2927 for redistribution. BPF has also received a special appeal for books to be sent directly to: Pastoral Care, Westville Correctional Center, P.O. Box 473, Westville, IN 46360, and to Chapel Library, c/o Chaplain M. Yadron, Indiana State Prison, P.O. Box 41, Michigan City, IN 46360.

BUDDHISM AND ECONOMICS,

a working group that formed at the last INEB conference, is gathering material for ongoing dialogue and publication in a book. If you have information, resources, writings by yourself or others, please send them to: Nonni Welch, 150 Downey St. #4, San Francisco, CA 94117.

INT'L BUDDHIST CHILDREN'S RELIEF PROGRAM

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

NEEDS OF HOMELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

The Women's Daytime Drop-In Center in Berkeley needs donations of the following items for homeless women and children: toothbrushes, toothpaste, towels, blankets, sheets, kitchenware. For more information, please contact the center at 510/548-6933, or call Thelma Bryant at 510/524-2468.

Coming Events

THE 1993 PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

will convene Aug. 28-Sept. 4, 1993 in Chicago. This event marks the centennial of the first Parliament, which was the beginning of interfaith dialogue in the modern world - and the starting point of Buddhism in the West, as well. Thich Nhat Hanh (who will be the Keynote Speaker), H. H. the Dalai Lama, and Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne will be among the Buddhist teachers participating this year.

Registration at the Parliament is open to the public. Contact: Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, P.O. Box 1630, Chicago, IL 60690; tel. 312/629-2990; fax 312/629-2991.

THICH NHAT HANH is touring the U.S. this fall, speaking in the Chicago, Boston, New York, D.C., and L.A. areas from Sep. 4-Oct. 10, and the S.F. Bay Area Oct. 12-Oct. 23. For general information, call the Community of Mindful Living, 510/527-3751.

Tickets to Thich Nhat Hanh's talk at the Berkeley Community Theater, Oct. 19 at 7:30 PM, can be obtained by sending a donation of \$15 per person with an S.A.S.E. to: BPF, P.O. Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704. For more information on this talk only, call 510/525-8509.

Classifieds

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THE CONCH-US TIMES is the

newsletter of the Dead Buddhists of America, for those appreciating both Grateful Dead and Buddhist cultures. Summer issue features the Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Karmapa, Kalu Rinpoche, Geshe Gyaltzen, Shakyaputra, Jerry, Bobby and Vince and much, much more. . . \$8/year (\$10 outside U.S.),

payable to: Ken Sun-Downer, Box 769, Idyllwild, CA 92549.

SOCIALLY ENGAGED SPIRITUALITY

is the focus of a special issue of *ReVision* edited by Donald Rothberg. It includes an interview with Sulak Sivaraksa on engaged Buddhism; Jim Forest on Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton; and articles by bell hooks, Stephanie Kaza, and Richard Falk. Send \$7 to *ReVision*, Heldref Publications, 1319 18th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036-1802.

TEACHING CIRCLE is a bi-annual

journal by and for educators with a meditation practice. For more information contact Patrick McMahon, 2311 C Woolsey St., Berkeley, CA 94705.

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- ⊗ T-shirts (blue or white) with black BPF logo: \$12. Specify S, M, L, or XL and desired color. (Supply variable.)
- ⊗ BPF buttons, with our logo: \$1.
- ⊗ Thich Nhat Hanh tapes: "The Practice of Peace" talk in Berkeley, April 1991. 2-tape set \$14.
- ⊗ Sulak Sivaraksa talk: "Buddhism with a small 'b,'" Spring 1992: \$14.
- ⊗ Thich Nhat Hanh letterpress broadside, beautifully designed, 6" x 12"; text taken from *Peace Is Every Step*. Suitable for framing. \$3 for first one; \$1 for each additional.

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