



TURNING WHEEL

Journal of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship

Summer 1994 \$4.00



Joanne Yeaton, *Candlelight Vigil—Mourning the Toll of Violence*

VIOLENCE & NONVIOLENCE

*Buddha's Birthday at the Nevada Nuclear Test Site • Interview with
Sulak Sivaraksa • Teaching Meditation in a Women's Penitentiary
• Resisting the War in the Former Yugoslavia*

FROM THE EDITOR

As Buddhists we take it as axiomatic that the violence in the world springs from the violence in our hearts. And so we talk a lot about the importance of making peace in our hearts. But for the moment I want to speak about the violence in the world, because of course it's also true that the violence in our hearts is born of the violence in the world around us.

The world is steeped in violence. But my personal, everyday life is remarkably untouched by physical violence. I live in a relatively safe neighborhood, sharing a house with people I love. I can walk the half mile to work at the BPF office. The four of us here on the staff get along nicely—we hardly ever throw things at each other. I meditate at the Berkeley Zen Center, just across town. It's not in the safest neighborhood, but inside the zendo, sitting on a zafu, it feels serene. On weekends I sometimes go to the country, to walk, read, watch the turkey vultures drift overhead. The most violent thing that has happened to me for a long time was when I slammed my finger in the window the other day and got a purple fingernail.

And yet. And yet. Rwanda. It's happening right now. As I write this. As you read it. There and countless other places. Here in Berkeley, too, right in front of my face. The teenage girl who lives at my house knows a boy from her high school who was shot to death a few days ago, by mistake, while he and a friend were playing with a rifle. Across the street from the Berkeley Zen Center not long ago, a gunman held a family hostage in an apartment building. Next door to the BPF office, kids beat each other up at the junior high school. Riding her bike to work the other day, Staci (on the BPF staff) saw two motorists get out of their cars and have an altercation which escalated to the point where one of them beat the other to the ground and kicked him in the head repeatedly, for honking at him.

I live in a strange double exposure. In the back yard, I lie in a hammock and inhale both the sweet smell of jasmine and invisible toxins from local industry. I hear a mockingbird singing and a police siren wailing. Lucky as I am, I'm connected to the violence out there. I'm part of it.

How, then, do I practice nonviolence in my daily life? Nonviolence sounds like a negation, but it's a positive practice. Nonviolence is not a turning away from violence; it is rather a willingness to engage with violence, to meet it with love. In this issue of *TW*, people write about the practice of nonviolence on various journeys: to the Nevada Test Site, to the former Yugoslavia, on a peace walk to a local gun shop. These are wonderful and inspiring stories. How, too, do we practice nonviolence in everyday life? When we're not on a special mission?

Sometimes just bearing witness to the suffering in the world is what we can do—by reading the newspaper, for example. One of the extra causes of suffering for people in places like Bosnia is the feeling that nobody cares elsewhere in the world. So reading the reports of people who bring us the news is a way of bearing witness, even when we want to turn away. Nelson Mandela is President of South Africa partly because of the world's awareness of apartheid. Even reading this issue of *Turning Wheel* is a way of knowing that you are part of it. ❖ —Susan Moon

Themes for coming issues of *Turning Wheel*—

Fall '94: Education/Miseducation; Deadline—July 11.

Winter '94-'95: Consumerism; Deadline—October 10.

Spring '95: What is suffering? Deadline—Jan. 9. Please send SASE with ms.

Cover art by Joanne Yeaton, artist, psychotherapist, and vipasana practitioner. The drawing is of a mother and daughter at a candlelight vigil at the MacArthur BART station in Oakland, California. In December 1992, a young African American woman, Francia Young, was abducted from the BART station and murdered, and this vigil was the community's response.

Art on page 28 by Francesca Schifrin. Ms. Schifrin lives in Los Angeles, and works extensively in Haiti and the former Yugoslavia. She exhibits at Galerie Lakaye in Los Angeles and Trojanoska Gallery in San Francisco.



TURNING WHEEL

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LETTERS

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

Pornography

I am writing to comment on Arthur Weathers' letter regarding pornography (Spring '94).

As a Buddhist feminist woman, I wholeheartedly disagree with the premise that as long as pornography does not depict violence towards women and is "used in moderation, it can be helpful."

To WHOM is pornography helpful? Certainly not to women, whom it degrades, humiliates, demeans, and serves to keep "in their place," as sexual objects, as lacking credibility, as unworthy of respect, and as less than men. Pornography perpetuates the system of beliefs in which women exist, at least in part, as sexual objects to be used as masturbatory aids for men.

Is pornography helpful to men? Does promoting this power imbalance, as fed by pornography, help to teach men and boys to respect and treasure all beings? When we, as Buddhists, vow to save *all* sentient beings, are not women included?

Being "locked up for five years" in prison is no excuse, no reason, and no justification for the use of pornography. Pornography is never "proper."

—Robin A. Ray-Jackson, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Sex Tourism

Turning Wheel has published articles in the past about sex tourism and prostitution in Thailand. Recently, I came face to face with these injustices in a new way.

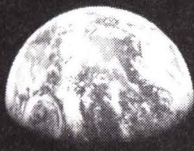
I received in my mail here in Los Angeles an envelope marked, "Sexually Oriented Ad," sent from a nearby address. How thoughtful, to give people notice of what's inside, so that the sensitive among us needn't be offended unduly or without warning. Or maybe it was meant to increase the chance that the envelope would be opened. Maybe both.

I opened it, and was actually offended, shocked, and enraged. And it wasn't by the sexually explicit material, of which there was little. If only the mailing had really been about sex in and of itself.

Inside the envelope I found a business card and two pages. The notices were each adorned with a picture of a naked young woman. One page promoted the sale of a travel guidebook called, "Southeast Asia: The Single Man's Paradise." It began with the information that not only were the women of Southeast Asia the most beautiful and exotic women in the world but also the most sexually available. The other notice promoted "Sex Tours to Thailand" conducted by the sender. The tours promised lots of sexual activity and, for "the guy who screws the most girls," a year's supply of vitamin E.

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There was not a word about the reasons for that "availability," nor about the tragedies and atrocities it represents: the destruction of village economies and the environment, and the general corruption of Thai society under pressure from world elites and from domestic elites and their armed forces. Nor was there anything about the parallel tragedy of those who travel the world in search of satisfaction, power, pride, or security.

Coming in contact with this was a piece of hell for me. Reading about it in less personal settings has been bad enough, but to find that it is real through personal contact with it, even the relatively remote contact of reading my mail, was much worse; it seemed more real, and thus more hateful. And if it's bad for me at this distance, what's it like for the abused and enslaved victims of this "single man's paradise?"

Maybe some of the women find it the only way to get the money their families need. If the case is that extreme, how great then is the need for change! But what can one do for the victims—the women victims, those to whom these sales pitches are made, and those who go for it? What do you say?

—Joe Maizlish, Los Angeles, California

Note from BPF: The following groups in Thailand need support for work related to the sex industry: EMPOWER (P.O. Box 1065, Silom, Bangkok 10504, Thailand), a self-help group for women in the sex and

"entertainment" trade, provides information for women about AIDS and violence against women, and helps women get into other jobs. FRIENDS OF WOMEN (1379/30 Soi Praditchai, Bangkok 10400, Thailand) does broader work on women's issues, including public education (on sex tourism among other things) and producing publications. WE-TRAIN (501/1 Mu 3 Dejatungka Rd, Don Muang, Bangkok 10210, Thailand) is a shelter for battered women, unmarried mothers, and women who want to leave the sex trade.

Hungry Ghosts

Robert Joshin Althouse's "Diary of a Hungry Ghost" (Spring '94) reminded me of the Catholic nun I met one morning at Grand Central Station. She was sitting on a chair at the bottom of a flight of stairs leading into the subway, her back against a pillar, her begging bowl on her lap. On either side of her, people were streaming into and out of the subway, hurrying on their way to work. She was an island of tranquility. I was racing down the stairs myself when I saw her. My own momentum and the press of bodies carried me past her before I could step aside and reach into my pocket. I doubled back to drop the money into her bowl and she rewarded me with a calm smile.

In Grand Central a few weeks later I saw a man who showed me the gulf between my experiences and those

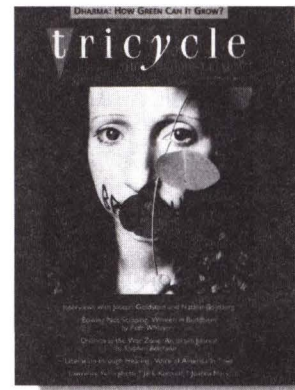
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of homeless people. Commuter trains pulled into the basement of Grand Central, unloading people from the suburbs of Connecticut and Westchester. I got out of one of the rear cars and joined the parade of suits swarming up the platform. Then I saw him. He came scurrying along in the space between the crowd and the train, heading down into the tunnels beneath the station to find a place where he could pass the day out of the heat, unmolested. We were streaming up from the platform to our days while he was hurrying down the platform to his. What made us so different from him? Why were we on our way to work while he was going to spend his day underground? I can still see him clearly, covered in a patina of body oils and dust, clutching to his chest a small bag and moving against the flow of our lives without making eye contact.

—Jeb Boyd, Austin, Texas

STRONG LESSONS FOR ENGAGED BUDDHISTS

Have you learned lessons only of those who admired you, and were tender with you, and stood aside for you?

Have you not learned great lessons from those who reject you, and brace themselves against you? or who treat you with contempt, or dispute the passage with you?

—Whitman, "Stronger Lessons"

In the middle of the Vietnam War, Thich Nhat Hanh and a few other Buddhist monks, nuns, and laypeople broke with the 2500-year tradition of Buddhist apoliticism and founded the Tiep Hien Order in an effort to relate Buddhist practice to contemporary social issues. Members of the order organized anti-war demonstrations, underground support for draft resisters, and various relief and social service projects. Though the movement was soon crushed in Vietnam, Nhat Hanh has carried on similar activities from exile in France, and the idea of "socially engaged Buddhism" has spread among Buddhists around the world. One of its main expressions in the West, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, defines its purpose as being to "bring a Buddhist perspective to contemporary peace, environmental, and social action movements" and "to raise peace, environmental, feminist, and social justice concerns among Western Buddhists."

The emergence of engaged Buddhism is a healthy development. Despite the bullshit that Buddhism shares with all religions (superstition, hierarchy, male chauvinism, complicity with the established order), it has always had a core of genuine insight based on the practice of meditation. It is this vital core, along with its freedom from enforced dogmas characteristic of Western religions, that has enabled it to catch on so readily even among the most sophisticated milieus in other cultures. People engaged in movements for social change might well benefit from the mindfulness, equanimity, and self-discipline fostered by Buddhist practice; and apolitical Buddhists could certainly stand to

be confronted with social concerns.

So far however, the engaged Buddhists' social awareness has remained extremely limited. If they have begun to recognize certain glaring social realities, they show little understanding of their causes or possible solutions. For some, social engagement simply means doing some sort of volunteer charitable work. Others, taking their cue perhaps from Nhat Hanh's remarks on arms production or Third World starvation, resolve not to eat meat or not to patronize or work for companies that produce weapons. Such gestures may be personally meaningful to them, but their actual effect on global crises is negligible. If millions of Third World people are allowed to starve, this is not because there is not enough food to go around, but because there are no profits to be made from feeding penniless people. As long as there is big money to be made by producing weapons or ravaging the environment, someone will do it, regardless of the moral appeals to people's good will; if a few conscientious persons refuse, a multitude of others will scramble for the opportunity to do it in their place.

Others, sensing that such individual gestures are not enough, have ventured into more "political" activities. But in so doing they have generally just followed along with the existing peace, ecological and so-called progressive groups, whose tactics and perspectives are themselves quite limited. With very few exceptions these groups take the present social system for granted and simply jockey within it in favor of their particular issue, often at the expense of other issues. As the situationists put it: "Fragmentary oppositions are like the teeth on cogwheels: they mesh with each other and make the machine go round—the machine of the spectacle, the machine of power." (*Situationist International Anthology*, Bureau of Public Secrets, p. 124.)

A few engaged Buddhists may realize that it is necessary to go beyond the present system; but failing to grasp its self-perpetuating nature, they imagine gently, gradually modifying it from within, and then run into continual contradictions. One of the Tiep Hien precepts says, "Possess nothing that should belong to others. Respect the property of others, but prevent others from enriching themselves from human suffering or the suffering of other beings." (*The Path of Compassion: Writings on Socially Engaged Buddhism*, Parallax Press, p. 152.) How is one to prevent the exploitation of suffering if one "respects" the property that embodies it? And what if the owners of such property fail to relinquish it peacefully?

If the engaged Buddhists have failed to explicitly oppose the socioeconomic system and have limited themselves to trying to alleviate a few of its more appalling effects, this is for two reasons. First, they are not even clear about what it is. Since they are allergic to any analysis that seems "divisive," they can hardly hope to understand a system based on class divisions and bitter conflicts of interest. Like almost everyone else, they

have simply swallowed the official version of reality, in which the collapse of the Stalinist state-capitalist regimes in Russia and East Europe supposedly demonstrates the inevitability of the Western form of capitalism.

Secondly, like the peace movement in general they have adopted the notion that "violence" is the one thing that must be avoided at all cost. This attitude is not only simplistic, it is hypocritical: they themselves tacitly rely on all sorts of state violence (armies, police, jails) to protect their loved ones and possessions, and would not passively submit to many of the conditions they reproach others for rebelling against. In practice pacifism usually ends up being more tolerant toward the ruling order than its opponents. The same organizers who reject any participant who might spoil the purity of their nonviolent demonstrations often pride themselves on having developed amicable understandings with the police. Small wonder that dissidents who have had somewhat different experiences with the police have not been overly impressed with this sort of "Buddhist perspective."

It is true that many forms of violent struggle, such as terrorism or minority coups, are inconsistent with the sort of open, participatory organization required to create a genuinely liberated global society. An anti-hierarchical revolution can only be carried out by the people as a whole, not by some group supposedly acting on their behalf; and such an overwhelming majority would have no need for violence except to neutralize any pockets of the ruling minority that may violently try to hold onto their power. But any significant social change inevitably involves *some* violence. It would seem more sensible to admit this fact, and simply strive to minimize violence as far as possible.

This anti-violence dogmatism goes from the dubious to the ludicrous when it also opposes any form of "spiritual violence." There's nothing wrong with trying to act "without anger in your heart" and trying to avoid getting caught up in pointless hatred and revenge; but in practice this ideal often just serves as an excuse to repress virtually any incisive analysis or critique by labeling it as "angry" or "intellectually arrogant." On the basis of their (correct) impression of the bankruptcy of traditional leftism, the engaged Buddhists have concluded that all "confrontational" tactics and "divisive" theories are misguided and irrelevant. Since this attitude amounts to ignoring the entire history of social struggles, many richly suggestive experiences remain a closed book to them (the anarchist experiments in social organization during the 1936 Spanish Revolution, for example, or the situationist tactics that provoked the May 1968 revolt in France), and they are left with nothing but to "share" with each other the most innocuous New-Age platitudes and to try to drum up interest in the most tepid, lowest-common-denominator "actions."

It is ironic that people capable of appreciating the classic Zen anecdotes fail to see that sharp wake-up tac-

tics may also be appropriate on other terrains. Both Zen and situationist methods use drastic means, refusing ready-made "positive alternatives," in order to pull the rug out from under the habitual mindsets; both are therefore predictably accused of "negativity."

One of the old Zen sayings is: *If you meet a Buddha, kill him.* Have the engaged Buddhists succeeded in "killing" Thich Nhat Hanh in their minds? Or are they still attached to his image, awed by his mystique, passively consuming his works and uncritically accepting his views? Nhat Hanh may be a wonderful person; his writings may be inspiring and illuminating in certain respects; but his social analysis is naive. If he seems slightly radical this is only in contrast to the even greater political naiveté of most other Buddhists. Many of his admirers will be shocked, perhaps even angered, at the idea that anyone could have the nerve to criticize such a saintly person, and may try to dismiss this statement by pigeonholing it as some bizarre sort of "angry leftist ideology" and by assuming (incorrectly) that it was written by someone with no experience of Buddhist meditation.

Others may grant that some of these points are well taken, but will then ask: "Do you have any practical, constructive alternative, or are you just criticizing? What do you suggest we do?" You don't need to be a master carpenter to point out that the roof leaks. If a critique stirs even a few people to stop and think, to see through some illusion, perhaps even provokes them to new ventures of their own, this is already a very practical effect. How many "actions" accomplish as much?

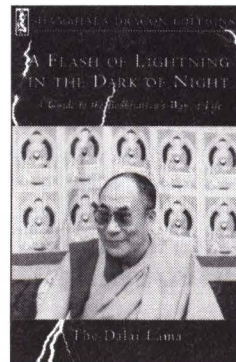
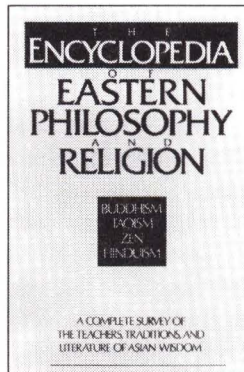
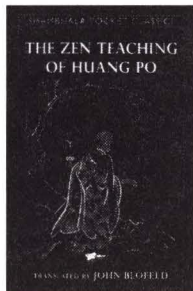
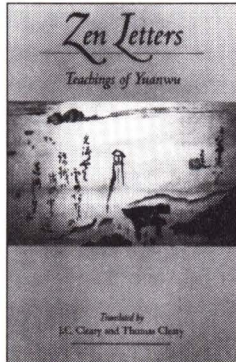
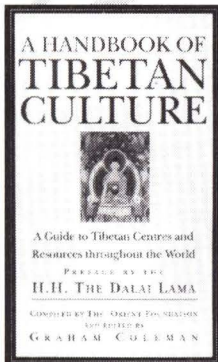
As for what you should do: the most important thing is to stop relying on others to tell you what you should do. Better to make your own mistakes than to follow the most spiritually wise or politically correct leader. It is not only more interesting, it is usually more effective, to pursue your own experiments, however small, than to be a digit in a regiment of digits. All hierarchies need to be contested, but the most liberating effect often comes from challenging the ones in which you yourself are implicated.

One of the May 1968 graffiti was: *Be realistic, demand the impossible.* "Constructive alternatives" within the context of the present social order are at best limited, temporary, ambiguous; they tend to be co-opted and become part of the problem. We may be forced to deal with certain urgent issues such as war or environmental threats, but if we accept the system's own terms and confine ourselves to merely reacting to each new mess produced by it, we will never overcome it. Ultimately we can solve survival issues only by refusing to be blackmailed by them, by aggressively going beyond them to challenge the whole anachronistic social organization of *life*. Movements that limit themselves to cringing defensive protests will not even achieve the pitiful survival goals they set for themselves.

—*Bureau of Public Secrets, Berkeley, California*

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Shambhala



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READINGS

Release the Gari 14!

According to recent reports from Tibet, 14 Buddhist nuns from Gari nunnery have been sentenced to prison terms for participating in a demonstration on June 14, 1993. A 15-year-old nun, Gyaltzen Pelsan, is among those arrested. (According to Chinese law this girl is too young to be imprisoned.) Twelve nuns, including Pelsan, were sentenced even though there is no documentation or evidence of a demonstration having occurred on that day. In a separate case, two nuns were sentenced for participating in a brief nonviolent demonstration in the center of Lhasa on June 4, 1993.

The Gari 14 have not been given a fair trial and are being held at a prison in Lhasa, except for Gyaltzen Pelsan who is incarcerated in a juvenile detention center. Seven of the nuns have been given sentences of two to seven years; the other nuns' sentences remain unknown.



According to reports from Amnesty International and from refugee nuns in India and the U.S., Tibetan women in detention are routinely tortured by means of beatings, electric shock, insertion of rubber balls and electric cattle prods into their vaginas and mouths, and deliberate attacks by trained dogs as well other unspeakable horrors. The political prisoners are often subjected to unhealthy prison conditions, forced labor, and limited access to proper medical treatment.

Recently, international attention has led to the release of some Tibetan prisoners. Please contact the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet (ICLT) for information on how you can keep international attention focused on the terrors of the Gari 14 and all prisoners of conscience in Tibet. (ICLT, 347 Dolores St., #206, San Francisco, CA 94110. 415/252-5967.)

Nuclear Dump in the Mojave Desert?

If the company U.S. Ecology has its way, over 1,000 acres of beautiful Mojave desert at Ward Valley, California will be the future site of a nuclear waste

dump. The current proposal would bury highly dangerous and long-lasting radioactive waste from commercial nuclear power plants, such as cesium, strontium, and plutonium, in shallow, unlined trenches. This proposed nuclear dump could create disastrous health and ecological problems for today's generation and for countless generations in the future.

The nuclear waste could seep into underground aquifers that feed the Colorado River. The Colorado River is the prime source of water for over 17 million people in the southwest U.S. and Mexico. The dump would destroy critical habitat for the threatened Desert Tortoise and violate Native American land and water rights. The Fort Mojave Indian reservation, which covers 42,000 acres in Arizona, California, and Nevada, is 20 miles from the proposed site.

The dump has been approved by the state of California, but Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has said the federal land will not be transferred until the legal challenges have been resolved. On May 4, a Los Angeles judge ruled that the state must review a study conducted by scientists with the U.S. Geological Survey, who said the dump could contaminate the river.

We urge you to contact your representatives and the Interior Secretary, voicing your opposition to this underground nuclear dump site. Please urge them to support more responsible methods of dealing with nuclear waste such as above-ground storage-to-decay facilities, source reduction, reuse, and isolation of wastes from the biosphere.

✉ Please send letters to:

Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt, Department of the Interior, 1849 C St. N.W., Washington, DC 20240.

Nonviolence in Action

India's 20 million ex-Untouchable Buddhists have had their belief in nonviolence put to the test in the recent waves of communal conflict which have convulsed the country. Within the Hindu caste system, the Untouchables were the lowest members of society and regarded as ritually impure. But under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar (a Buddhist ex-Untouchable who rose to become India's first law minister and the architect of its constitution), millions of Untouchables left Hinduism altogether and converted to Buddhism. However, Ambedkar insisted that the conversions should not be nominal and that his followers live according to Buddhist principles.

In early 1993, many parts of India erupted in one of the worst outbreaks of communal violence the country has seen. The demolition of the Babri Masjid Temple at Ayodhya provoked a wave of Hindu-Moslem conflict across the country. In Bombay, almost 1,000 people were killed and 200,000 were forced to flee the city. Caught between the two factions were the ex-

Untouchable Buddhists, more than two million of whom live in Bombay, many of them in the city's vast slum tenements or on the streets.

Both Hindus and Moslems tried to persuade the Buddhists to join the fighting on their side with the threat that otherwise they would be attacked themselves. Bodhisen, a leader of the Buddhist community, was determined not only that Buddhists should stay neutral, but that they should try to have a positive effect on the situation. "On Black Sunday, when the violence was at its peak, we arranged a retreat in Worli [Bombay]. There was a curfew and the situation was very dangerous, but 124 people came to the retreat. In the middle of all the violence and fear we sat practicing Mettabhavana meditation to develop friendliness and loving-kindness."

In the weeks of violence that followed, Bodhisen was active giving lectures and holding meditation sessions and, in spite of the many pressures, the Buddhists remained neutral. Indeed, Bodhisen reports that Buddhists protected the Hindus and Moslems who were living in their area. "Very near to my own room some Hindus were about to attack a store which was owned by a Moslem. The Buddhists quickly gathered to protect the shop and the Hindus left it unharmed."

More recently the Buddhists have themselves been the targets of violence from Hindu fundamentalists after a decision by the Maharashtra state legislature in January 1994 to rename a university in Aurangabad after Dr. Ambedkar. Eleven people are reported to have been killed in a wave of violence, arson, and vandalism whose targets included Buddhist temples, libraries, and statues of Dr. Ambedkar.

[Submitted by *Vishvapani*.]

Stop Female Sexual Mutilation

A few brave women are risking their cultural status and possibly their lives to speak out against the widespread practice of female sexual mutilation in their native homeland, Burkina Faso in West Africa. They have formed the Committee to Fight Female Sexual Mutilation (CFFSM). It is estimated that 70-90% of females in Burkina Faso have their clitoris removed, their labial tissue scraped away, and their vaginal opening sewn shut by the time they are 12 years old.

Kuya (Nora) Minogue and Getsushin Brox, both BPF members, are working with the CFFSM to put an end to this mutilation. They hope to raise money for the committee's work, as lack of funds is their greatest barrier to publishing and distributing visually mediated information. (89% of Burkinabe are illiterate.)

Kuya has formed an organization called SAFE—"Stop All Female Excision"—here in the U.S., while Getsushin is working in Burkina Faso with the committee. Please send donations or requests for further information to SAFE/ Nora Minogue, C/O Dharma Rain Zen Center, 2539 S.E. Madison St., Portland, OR 97214.

Spreading Peace Step by Step

On April 30, 1994, the Dhammayatra, the third Buddhist walk of peace and reconciliation in Cambodia, was caught in the crossfire between Cambodian government royal soldiers and soldiers from the Khmer Rouge. A Cambodian monk and nun were killed and four other walkers were injured. Ten of the walkers were briefly detained by the Khmer Rouge soldiers, until the leader of the group established that the detainees were members of the Dhammayatra. The Khmer Rouge soldiers spoke of their desire for peace, and pleaded for neutrality and non-partisanship on the part of the foreigners working in Cambodia.

The Dhammayatra, led by Maha Ghosananda, has continued, though on a different route than planned. "Our journey for peace begins again today, and every day," said Maha Ghosananda. "We walk step by step. Every step builds a bridge. We will never be discouraged." Despite the change in route, villagers continue to come to receive the water blessings and to offer food and hospitality to all those participating in the peace walk.

The walk began in Battambang City on April 24, and is due to conclude on May 24 at Angkor Wat temple complex in northwest Cambodia.

Join an Interfaith Peace Pilgrimage

In response to all the suffering, misery, and affliction caused on the earth through war, an Interfaith Pilgrimage for Peace and Life has formed to acknowledge and deeply reflect on the history of military expansion; to pledge never to again enter into a war; to enlighten the troubled world with the beautiful precept of Not-to-Kill; and to create a peaceful world through adopting direct nonviolent practices. In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, the pilgrimage will begin on December 8, 1994, in Auschwitz, and walk through Eastern Europe, the Middle East, India, and Southeast Asia, ending in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1995.

Each walker's presence and participation will be a living prayer of peace. For more information please contact: The Peace Pagoda, 100 Cavehill Road, Leverett, MA 01054.

Assassination in Burma

We are deeply saddened to report the death last month of BPF's friend Mai Tin Maung, Executive Secretary of Green November 32, in Manerplaw, on the Burmese border. Alan Senauke came to know him through INEB and through work with GN 32, the nonviolent environmental action group based in Manerplaw. Losing a friend is very hard personally, losing a grassroots leader with ability and vision touches all of us. In his name and in the names of so many lost in Burma's war, we work for peace and justice.

[Readings section edited by *Staci Montori O'Lalor*.]

BRAVE NEW WORLD

by Stephanie Kaza

Tomato with flounder gene, potato with waxmoth gene, cornbread with firefly gene—guess what's coming to dinner? The brave new world of genetic engineering is upon us. Bacteria genes added to apples, human genes added to pigs—patents are pending for these transgenic foods. You may already be drinking cow's milk produced with bovine growth hormone (BGH).

Another popular application is the development of genetically-engineered herbicide-resistant plants. With bacteria assistance, Monsanto, Dow, and DuPont are creating plants immune to the hazardous effects of poison sprays. (But, we ask, what about the soil?) For use in medical research, engineers have produced 11,000 varieties of transgenic mice. Read the press releases—biotechnology is the new panacea for the world's problems! First the Green Revolution, now the Gene Revolution.

Recently I was asked to provide a Buddhist perspective on biotechnology for a day-long symposium in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Center for Respect of Life and the Environment. I struggled. What *would* a Buddhist have to say about genetic engineering? I am by no means an expert in this area, but two things came to mind. I suspect they both represent big-scale visitations of institutionalized violence. By this I mean wide-spread unethical practices sanctioned by dominant social institutions (academia, government, big business) which promulgate oppression and the intentional abuse of others.

The first is the practice of reductionism. Genes are commonly referred to as "the building blocks of life." A reductionist view promotes the universe as a collection of autonomous objects which can be manipulated by those with knowledge and power. The opposite view is holism—seeing the universe as "a communion of subjects," as Thomas Berry says, or as one interconnected reality. This view is much more congruent with a Buddhist perspective. For a reductionist, meaning is derived from content—of each small piece; for a holist, meaning is derived from context—the relationship of each piece to the whole. Biotechnology reduces organisms to "gene banks," collections of information that can be used for human purposes.

This reductionism seems violent to me because it denies the integrity of the organism and sanctions the invasion of biological privacy. It does not seem right to me to insert a gene from one wildly different species into another. Nor does it seem right to "pharm" animals as "bioprocessors" (yes, these are the real words in the agricultural trade journals). For example, growth hormone genes have been inserted into sheep to speed the growth of wool, and Australian scientists are trying to perfect a genetically engineered hormone to make

the sheep shed their fleece to avoid shearing costs!

The second form of institutionalized violence is what I call "genetic colonialism." Major food and drug companies are now exploring the vast frontiers of tropical genetic resources, looking for agriculturally beneficial crop traits and cures for disease. They are cutting deals with Third World countries to be able to collect plants and gain profit from their discoveries. (One pharmaceutical company is taking blood samples from indigenous people in order to develop cell lines of entire cultural lineages.) To profit from these findings, corporations take out patents, claiming intellectual property rights on their "inventions." I suppose this is the logical culmination of an ownership view of the world. But it does violence to the donor countries and perpetuates economic dependence on those with power. This, of course, then contributes to poverty, militarism, land degradation, and other sources of suffering. Thus the appetites of biotechnology become the business of socially engaged Buddhists.

There's more. It's a very very big multi-million dollar corporate-government-academic enterprise. But I'll save that for a longer article. I'm still sleuthing. ❖

For more information, contact the Vermont Biotechnology Working Group, 15 Barre Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, 802/223-7222, or a similar group in your state.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUDDHA

A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH INDIA AND NEPAL:

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balance of knowledge, insight, and
joy to those journeying with him in
of the Buddha. humor brings
the footsteps of
--Zen O'ascer, Thich Nhat Hanh

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SEEDS AND SALMON

by Patrick McMahon

Fifteen million pounds of salmon were harvested annually from the seas and streams of the Pacific Northwest prior to the Euro-American invasion. Now, in once-rich runs, they're numbered in ones and twos. So I learned recently, sitting around a campfire with conservationists, foresters, and fishermen, on a back country meditation walkabout.

Having no more than the average urban layperson's interest in the decline of the salmon, I nonetheless listened attentively to the conversation for parallels to my own field of education. From my work with children in public schools for the last seven years, I see evidence of a society-wide crisis of intelligence, as surely as the decline of the salmon indicates the environmental crisis. As ancient forests fall for short-term profit, so does traditional wisdom fall to instant gratification. As the diversity of species narrows under the pressure of industrial toxins, so does the diversity of language under the press of information. As watercourses are drained by the megapolopolis, so are intellectual discourses by megamedia.

As the conversation turned to salmon restoration, and the cooperation of all the agencies, technologies and disciplines required to that end, I wondered what parallel collaboration would restore our human intelligence? The starting point would be to build on the life still intact in the system, however damaged. Just as my campfire comrades have been carefully noting the dwindling salmon, I and my comrades in education have been keeping our own records. We find children from even the most oppressed habitats preserving still the wild, original intelligence of the species—children who against all odds fight their way upstream, learning in interaction with their environments.

I think of a specimen I recently spotted in the shal-

low waters of a child care center: 10-year-old Steve, bespectacled, grave, arms crossed, slouched in passivity. I had just come in from a hillside ramble, my ankles burred with seeds. Steve roused himself to pluck from my sock a corkscrewed, arrow-headed, whip-tailed passenger. After a few moments of scrutiny he reported: "See, this is how it works. When it falls the head gets stuck in the ground. Then the wind blows its tail around and around and screws it in." We tested it outside, sticking the head into soft earth, blowing on it. The tail did indeed twist around, and we could see how once in a thousand times, the conditions of angle, wind, and soil would conspire to bury the seed.

"How did you know?" I asked.

"Dunno. Just looked and thought about it."

Steve didn't need teacher or textbook to learn as he did, any more than the children who lived on this land long before schools and classrooms. Given seed and soil, original intelligence still sprouts here and there. But the sprouts are a thin indication of the lushness I imagine to have been the standard for children of native peoples. What would be the conditions necessary to restore such abundance?

I continued to listen to the campfire dialogue for clues. A forest ranger traded data with a wilderness advocate mapping old-growth stands. A river geologist working on restoring salmon to the Santa Inez watershed in Southern California exchanged information with an Alaskan fisherman. Disciplinary bottlenecks opened as information flowed. I felt confident that as my companions returned to their far-flung watersheds they would continue to network around other campfires, collaborating on perspectives as comprehensive as the crisis, solutions as complex, detailed, and integrated as the ecosystem. The salmon would in this century run again.

In like fashion, I reflect, a network of many players will be needed to restore mind, heart, and spirit to our young. Just as foresters, fishermen, and geologists make up a whole circle, so will parents and non-parents, educators spiritual and secular. The largest volume of communication is required. By large I don't mean numbers. There were only 13 around our campfire. A World Summit on Education is not called for; rather, small circles of wide scope. Our conversation, as it ranged from salmon to sutras, was vast because intimate. One glimpsed the flicker in the eyes around the fire, heard timbre, inflection, and accent in the voices, smelled sage and sweat in the ideas.

Up such a stream I can imagine our wild natures swimming home, down into such soil our seeds burrowing. ❖

Patrick McMahon is presently the coordinator for the Family Program at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, and invites communication from readers who have experience with dharma centers that integrate family life, parenting, and practice. He may be reached at: 2311C Woolsey St., Berkeley CA 94705. 510/704-9327.

❖ BPF ELECTRONIC CONFERENCE ❖

Buddhist Peace Fellowship and International Network of Engaged Buddhists can now be found on a peaceful country road leading to the electronic superhighway. For those of you who are on PeaceNet or any IGC or APC network, we have a new conference open to everyone. The address is: bpf.ineb

Please feel free to post materials to the conference, download from it, comment on what you see there, and enter into discussion with each other online. This is a valuable resource for engaged Buddhists. Please use it well.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

WHAT IS THE REAL POISON?

Seven Buddhist Activists Talk About the Nuclear Threat

In March 1994, while Aitken Roshi was visiting the Bay Area, I was lucky enough to get him and several other Buddhist activists to come together in Berkeley to talk about Buddhism and the nuclear threat, and to record our conversation for Turning Wheel. The participants may already be familiar to readers of Turning Wheel, but just in case they need an introduction, they were:

Robert Aitken Roshi: *co-founder of BPF, head teacher of the Diamond Sangha in Honolulu, and author of many books on Buddhism.*

Ty Cashman: *eco-philosopher, systems theorist, former Jesuit.*

Joanna Macy: *teacher, writer; leads workshops all over the world to empower people as agents of change.*

Mayumi Oda: *artist and activist, co-founder of Plutonium Free Future; grew up in Japan, now lives in Marin County when she isn't in Japan organizing for peace.*

Kaz Tanabashi: *calligrapher, poet, translator, co-founder of Plutonium Free Future, painter; grew up in Japan, now lives in Berkeley.*

And from BPF: myself and Alan Senauke: National Coordinator of BPF, musician, Zen priest.

There were only seven of us and a tape recorder in the room, but we felt we were in conversation with all of you. So please join us now. —Sue Moon

Sue: All of you have been concerned about the nuclear threat and nuclear issues for a long time. How does Buddhism help us understand the way in which the human use of nuclear power has changed the universe? Or is what has happened with nuclear power so large, so new, that Buddhism doesn't even know about it?

Joanna: There are a couple of ways the dharma really helps in perceiving the situation. One is in the teaching of karma. What technology does, and nuclear technology in particular, is to speed up the operation of karma. We get almost instant karma. Our delusions, our greeds, and our aversions become manifest very quickly.

The dharma also helps us deal with the poisons. The dharma tells us that the real poisons are not uranium isotopes or cesium 137, but the greed, delusion and hatred that allow us to produce these materials. And the Buddha's teachings about interdependence have made me particularly aware of our interdependence with beings of the future time, and motivated me to consider how we can protect future generations from the nuclear legacy that we are bequeathing them.

Sue: Kaz, I know you're interested in how we understand crisis. What does it mean that we are facing a crisis?

Kaz: As it says in the Third Ancestor's verse: "Extremely

small is extremely large." And from a scientific point of view, if you work on very very small materials, something extremely large and powerful happens. This illuminates the ancient teaching. But I don't know whether traditional Buddhist teaching can catch up with the current global crisis. We need to re-examine what crisis is. I think crisis occurs when knowledge does not catch up with the expansion of ignorance.

Knowledge is how we see things, do things or make things. But also, more importantly, it is how we do *not* do things, do *not* make things. For example, we know how to solve problems by killing people. But it's the worst way. There are other ways, which may take more time or more patience. Real knowledge is how not to kill. Possession of new information, which science seeks, is not enough.

Roshi: I'm reminded of James Hillman's paper "And Huge is Ugly." It's been said that nuclear power is a fancy way of boiling water. But it's an extraordinarily huge and elaborate way of boiling water. And the more elaborate things get the more dangerous they are.

When people started splitting atoms it brought immense violence to the culture.

I just intuitively feel it.

We have forgotten the wisdom of the Buddha that ideal organization is really in very small units. This is the perennial structure of human society, really. And it's the structure of the sangha. I would hope that we could encourage the memory of this original structure, the way Ariyaratne is encouraging village self-reliance among his folks in India. This was the ideal set forth by Gustaf Landauer, the anarchist whose thinking led to the *grupo de afinidad* in the Spanish Civil War, which in turn gave rise to the "affinity groups" that we're familiar with today, and influenced the base communities of Liberation Theology. Joanna's Nuclear Guardianship Project is also made up of small groups. And we have our BPF chapters in place. We can build on what we have, and take action through networking. In this way we move in a different direction, away from the kalpa fire.

Sue: But at the same time that we organize in small communities we need to deal with the fact that technology is organizing us into a large community, whether we like it or not. Pretty soon everybody's

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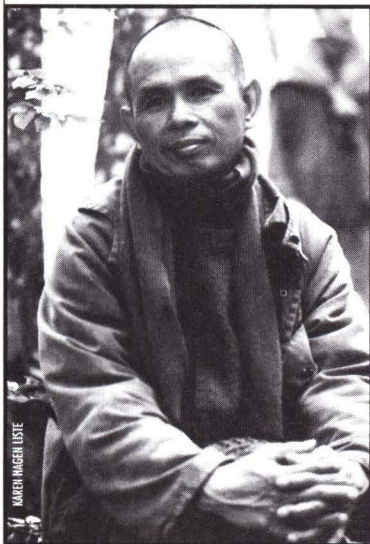


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going to be hooked up to everybody else on the same computer, willy-nilly.

Ty: I'd like to address that. Along with systems theory, the dharma helps me understand why huge is ugly. It has to do with ignorance, ignorance in the sense of *ignore-ance*. What we are ignorant of is what we ignore. When things become large, when there is the rule of many by the few, you have greater ignorance of the effects of what is happening. That's why small is beautiful.

Mayumi: To me, splitting the gene—I mean the atom—is intrinsically violent. When people started splitting atoms it brought immense violence to the culture. I just intuitively feel it. It produces so much power that people become trapped in it. Remember, nuclear energy was originally designed for weapons. This has brought great fear, and we haven't been free from that fear for all these years. This is not the model of compassionate society.

Sue: So are you saying that nuclear power is necessarily tainted because it springs from nuclear weapons?

Mayumi: Yes, definitely.

Joanna: There's something almost mythic about nuclear power. Those particles are held together by the strongest power in the universe. To go in and split them unglues our world. There's a disintegrating force; things are out of control. This is registered in the body! These free radicals are coursing around our systems from the contamination in our environment. They're pulling apart the membrane of the cell, and pulling apart the instructions of the genetic code. That's a part of the profound suffering of our time.

Sue: Do you think we might develop just as much power for creativity as we already have for destruction?

Kaz: It's possible. The crisis is an opportunity, especially if we really understand that it *is* a crisis. It's an opportunity for us to come together.

Mayumi: When we think about the character of the nuclear age, it's really dependent on secrecy and denial. I was a child in Japan when Hiroshima was bombed, and I know how scared I was. In Japan, there are 45 reactors in an area smaller than California. To live in that situation, with that fear, not *feeling* the fear—people have to be in tremendous denial to do that. Recently, the whole nuclear secrecy in the United States has been coming out, thanks to Hazel O'Leary's immense courage.

Roshi: The process of letting go of secrets is the process of healing. We know from our acquaintance with psychology, and indeed from our own personal histories, how poisonous secrets can be, because they cannot remain secret. They work themselves out in poisonous ways. The unconscious fear that the Japanese people feel as a result of living with 45 reactors surely has its effect on everything they do and say.

Joanna: When you listen to the stories of the downwinders from the Nevada Test Site or the Hanford reservation, where they were subjected to great emissions of radioactive iodine and other toxins, it sounds as if the physical suffering was *matched* by an acute spiritual suffering. That their government would lie to them was a violation that seemed almost as great as what happened to their endocrine systems.

Roshi: And think of people in powerful positions, senators and high level government people, who are the repositories of secrets. They know things we would not dream of. Imagine how this must effect their ongoing decision-making process.

Joanna: One reason Susan Griffin's book *A Chorus of Stones* is so remarkable is because she looks at the nuclear secrets of our nation in connection with what's coming out about family secrets and abuse within families, and addictions. The dynamics are very much the same. The release of secrets brings vitality, and that's why it will triumph, because that's where life is.

Alan: To go back to the secret medical experiments with plutonium, it seems to me that the secrecy was driven by great fear and great dread. I can't imagine anyone doing the kind of experimentation they did on fellow citizens without being motivated themselves by tremendous fear. Especially at the same time as the Nuremberg Trials.

Ty: I'd like to turn to renewable energy. In the last ten years, renewable energy has developed to the point where it's ready to take over the big job of powering civilization. Not just part of it, but all of it. It really is ready. We can begin gradually. In the next five years, renewable energy could provide 20 or 30 percent of our power. But they're trying to keep this a secret, too. And after the Second World War we became convinced as a people that you cannot have large amounts of energy unless it is dangerous energy. This goes back to the taint of the weapon. Energy and danger go together. However, energy for industry or our homes has no reason to be dangerous.

Mayumi: It's just to "boil the water."

Ty: Solar energy and wind energy and hydro energy are really not dangerous. So we think they're weak.

Sue: But in another way, renewable energy is seen as dangerous by the existing power structure because it's locally controlled. It's revolutionary. You can't stop somebody from putting up a windmill.

Ty: Yes, that's a different meaning of danger. But you can't make renewable energy into a weapon. It isn't going to destroy houses and cities and cause genetic damage for thousands of generations.

Mayumi: It actually distributes power.

Ty: Yes, both kinds of power. Nuclear weapons are really a boys' game, like the video games designed for 14-year-old boys. But renewable energy comes from a female understanding.

Mayumi: And like boys after they've finished playing with their toys, we don't know what to do with the mess we leave behind. It will affect the children for many generations. So the feminine aspect has to come in.

Joanna: I imagine the decisions were made by men who didn't even have to pick up their socks, let alone their nuclear waste.

Kaz: We have to figure out what is sustainable garbage. When we design an automobile or a house, this has to be the primary consideration—whether we can recycle the material. If it doesn't recycle, we shouldn't use it. Like nuclear waste. To transmit to future generations problems caused by our own desire for convenience now—this is an act of greed.

Mayumi: When science became the new religion, then spirituality lost its power. Morality—we lost that. Modern technology is a very Faustian idea: we have sold our souls. People who are engaged in spirituality really have to bring back these ethics.

Roshi: So where do we go from here? For better or for worse, and apparently for worse, we have accomplished the liberation of the atom, the liberation of the inner cohesion. This can't be undone. So how do we proceed?

I'd like to look at ignorance here. Just as Buddha said, we *can* liberate that ignorance. It's the third point of the Four Noble Truths. When we discover ourselves to be this boundless container with nothing in it, then we realize the other is no other than myself. And we realize also that the other is empty too, coming together in a *most* temporary way. Inevitably there is that outpouring of *com*-passion, which is suffering with others, living it through with others. So the spiritual equivalent of this process of releasing the bonds of the atom is releasing the bonds of ignorance—releasing of the bonds of self-centeredness. True release of the bonds is the experience of love.

Joanna: Mega-tonnage of it.

Sue: This makes me wonder if it's just a question of time. Is it just up for grabs whether we can do it in time or not? Joanna, you said technology speeds up karma.

Roshi: Well, zazen speeds up realization!

Alan: So it *is* a race—

Joanna: There's been something that's been striking us recently in the Nuclear Guardianship Project. People who are looking carefully at the legacy of nuclear waste we produce, and this means *all* nuclear materials—"waste" is really a misnomer—these people are saying our biggest enemy is hurry. Don't put it into geological burial, don't dump it, just wait! If we just hold on

fifty years, which we have the technology to do, there may be extraordinary technological advances. We can turn to the Buddhadharmā for the teaching of patience. The dharma also tells us we can't ever be certain, and not to try to be certain. That kind of humility is hard for Americans, especially for American technicians. But we don't know what to do yet. We just have to muddle along, and hold onto this stuff carefully, aware of the limits of our knowledge.

Ty: I think that's true for the nuclear materials that are civilian. But I have a feeling we *are* in a race right now. To quote from today's issue of the *Economist*: "If nuclear or biological weapons came into the possession of a half dozen more countries, or a dozen more, or two dozen, any hope of a rule-governed world would almost certainly vanish." That's actually the historical brink we're at.

Mayumi: Japan is using plutonium for its fast breeder program, and there's fear that they may use it for nuclear weapons. And many other Asian countries will use Japan as a model.

Kaz: Environmental ethics is a new concept. It's confusing for most of us. For corporations and governments, environmental ethics is an extremely hard thing to deal with. I think we need a new kind of democracy. Democracy usually means that people who vote have power to control their own government. But this isn't enough. Democracy should also mean that people in the Third World who are affected by the actions of industrial nations should have some power to control

that. Nations and corporations should be obliged to listen to the people whose lives they touch.

Roshi: This makes me think of the importance of reminding, as in *re*-minding. In what prison work I've done I have never met an inmate who didn't know really, in his heart, what was right. And I think this is true of the most benighted nations. Not *U*-nited, but *be*-nighted. Somehow we can appeal to that memory, to that unconscious knowledge of what's right and wrong.

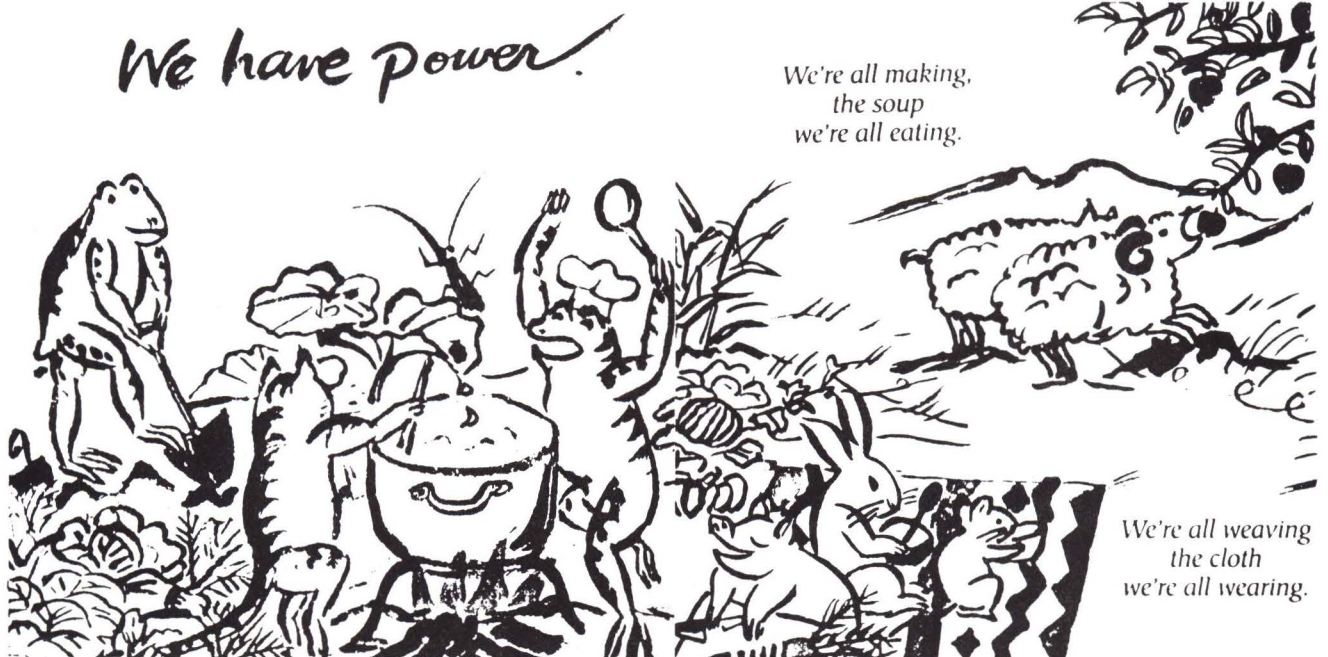
Joanna: Several times, Roshi, you've spoken of remembering. Remembering how it was, remembering our true nature, remembering what we want. What blocks us is fear. It's fear that drives people to arm. It's fear that drives groups to take fundamentalist postures of hatred. What does the dharma have to say about this fear?

Roshi: Every pilgrim on *every* religious path encounters fear. Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, whatever faith you choose. Christians call it the "fear of God." I think in Buddhism we would call it the "fear of non-being." Out of this fear come all these elaborate and convoluted defenses. Out of our fear of non-being, we are destroying ourselves.

Joanna: You spoke of release from ignorance, but perhaps people need to be released from fear. Anyone can relate to being afraid, it's harder to relate to being ignorant.

Sue: It's always *somebody else* who is ignorant.

Roshi: Time after time people have spoken to me of the fear they face in their meditation practice.



Two-page spread (reduced) from *Random Kindness and Senseless Acts of Beauty*, an accordion book by Anne Herbert and Margaret M. Pavel, with art by Mayumi Oda. Book sales benefit Plutonium Free Future.

Order from Volcano Press, P.O. Box 270, Volcano, CA 95689. 209/296-3445. fax 209/296-4515.

Kaz: It seems that nuclear technology is based on the fear of lack of power and lack of abundance.

Alan: Actually you can see why a nation would want to have the bomb, in the same way that you can see why any of the less developed nations would want to have the full so-called benefits of the First World. Only ethics and morality can point us away from that fear-based model. Otherwise it's just: "You've got it, and I want it too."

Ty: But a different fear could get us to disarm—the fear of destroying ourselves. Suppose the five major nuclear nations gave up their weapons to the United Nations or to a political unit which has no adversaries? Any time you have a political unit which has adversaries, you don't want weapons of mass destruction in their hands. These weapons must reside where there are no adversaries.

Sue: Do you think it's possible for human beings to conceive of no adversaries? Can we actually function as if there is no "them?"

Joanna: Maybe that's what we'll explode into. Our fears of each other are destroying our chances of life, destroying the soul. There hasn't been any mental security in the world since the development of nuclear weapons. Fear isn't new under the sun, but it seems to have intensified to the point where it just can't go on.

Roshi: The analogy in our practice is the journey through the valley of the shadow of death. In Christian terms, you're trusting God. In Buddhist terms, you're trusting the process. So we really must find the way to encourage this trust. When people grasp the full implications of our current crisis, if they don't have a practice and don't have trust, they will be like the teenager who is facing a world of no hope. And no hope turns into dope, and all kinds of awful things.

Joanna: We've destroyed the power that holds the nucleus together, but there's another kind of glue. There's another kind of coherence, and it's love!

Roshi: At the beginning of our discussion, Mayumi also had the gene in mind. It slipped out when she spoke of gene instead of atom. This has been kind of niggling at me ever since. We are not only violating the way things are by exploding the atom, but we're doing it in medical research, too. And so what we need to address is the broader human tendency to create huge ugly accomplishments.

Sue: To play the devil's advocate for a moment, I wonder: Are we really violating the way things are? Or is the way things are *now* just different from the way they were *before*? Everything keeps on changing, as Buddhism says, and we keep facing new and different situations. When other major technological developments have occurred in the past, people also said, "This is a complete violation of nature." Is this a violation that is somehow theoretically different?

Ty: I think so—splitting the gene, splitting the atom. One is the core of life, and the other is the core of the universe. The hearts of things should be left to God.

Roshi: There are two ways for the calligrapher to draw the circle. It's interesting that Suzuki Roshi always drew it around to the left. This is *withershins*, which is counterclockwise. The word is Scottish, and it implies very bad luck. When the circle goes around to the left, it's going against the grain, so to speak—going against the circulation of the sun, counterclockwise. It seems like a violation, but actually it's the way of hard practice, going against our tendency to take things as they come. It's like the kid who carries his books to school under his left arm, even though it's harder, so it will become as strong as his right arm. We have to encourage the way of practice *which is not natural*. We have to cut off the mind road, as Mumon says. Cut off the mind of self-preoccupation. We need to find the secular equivalent of Buddhist practice. I was talking to a chap at San Francisco Zen Center who is teaching meditation to corporate executives. He can't teach it as Buddhism, but he's teaching Buddhism. How do we teach practice?

Kaz: It occurs to me that harmful intentions used to be the primary cause of destruction. But now, with the enormous expansion of technology, harmful intentions may have become a smaller factor. One person's mistake could cause an explosion that would effect millions of people, it could change the surface of the earth. Mindlessness might be the greatest danger. We need to learn what mindfulness really means. ❖

THE QUICK SPARK

*Hard
To imagine*

*The first hours
Of this
Created Universe*

*The Darkness
How far it loitered
Wider even Than
The Universe*

*Pellet of Acetylene
Greased Rope of Dawn
Deserted Noun
Immortal Feather
Pray for Me Pray for Us*

—John McKernan

MAKING BUDDHISM RADICAL

A CONVERSATION WITH SULAK SIVARAKSA

by Donald Rothberg

Sulak Sivaraksa of Bangkok, Thailand (or Siam, the more traditional name he prefers to use for his country), is probably that country's most prominent social critic and activist, and one of the major contemporary exponents of socially engaged Buddhism. Now sixty years old, he has for the last 30 years combined provocative intellectual work with continual grassroots organizing in Thailand. He has founded rural development projects as well as many non-governmental organizations dedicated to exploring, in Thailand and internationally, alternative models of sustainable, traditionally-rooted, and ethically- and spiritually-based development.

Periodically, Sulak has been persecuted by the various dictatorships that have mostly ruled Thailand since 1932. In 1976, following a coup and the deaths of hundreds of students, Sulak was forced to stay in exile for two years. In 1984, he was arrested by the government for *lese-majeste* (defamation of the monarchy), but after an international campaign on his behalf, he was released. In September 1991, he was again charged with *lese-majeste* and also with defamation of the Army Commander, General Suchinda Kraprayoon, for a speech given in Bangkok on "The Regression of Democracy in Siam"; Sulak went immediately into exile. In December 1992, he returned to face trial. The trial finally began in June 1993, and is still continuing a year later. In the meantime, Sulak was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in both '93 and '94.

Sulak's main works published in Thailand include: *Siamese Resurgence: A Thai Voice on Asia in a World of Change* (1985), *Religion and Development* (1986), *A Socially Engaged Buddhism* (1988), and *Siam in Crisis* (1990). A U.S. edition of some of Sulak's work, *Seeds of Peace* (Parallax, 1992), includes the August 1991 speech. A book of documents about his legal case, *When Loyalty Demands Dissent*, is available from the BPF office.

The following conversation took place in Berkeley, California, in July 1992, following Sulak's participation in BPF's Summer Institute on Engaged Buddhism.

Main Influences

Rothberg: What have been the main influences on your own connection of Buddhism with social action?

Sivaraksa: I have been very much personally influenced by Thich Nhat Hanh. He has suffered more than most monks have, and has been involved more in working for social justice.

I have also been very influenced by Gandhi and by the Quakers. Gandhi experienced and responded to the dreadful suffering connected with the British occupation of the Indian subcontinent. His radical approach was to be with the poor, and to use nonviolent approaches, to use spiritual strength. Later, I came across the Quakers.

I was especially interested in the radical Quakers and the idea of a Religious Society of Friends. The Quakers regard friendship as central, just as did the Buddha. I was also very attracted by the Quaker notions of the sacredness of a human being and nonviolence. I found the Quakers more articulate than Buddhists on the need to question and resist the powers of the state, to question the status quo; Buddhists have been coexisting with the state for too long.

The new Western Buddhists and groups like the Buddhist Peace Fellowship really have been good for me. Particularly helpful have been people who have had a



Sulak Sivaraksa [Photo by Alan Senauke]

radical (and sometimes Marxist) background before they become Buddhists, who come to Buddhism with critical social awareness. For me, the Marxist systemic analysis of society, of the seeds of oppression, is very useful, provided it is placed in a nonviolent context. Perhaps radicals (including Marxists) can learn from Buddhists to be more humble, more mindful, to have some spirituality.

Buddhists must take on the system rather than focusing on individuals. And E. F. Schumacher (*Small is Beautiful*) helped me in particular to think about the development of economic systems not based on greed and consumerism. Here, too, radicals and Marxists can learn from Buddhists; we hate the dreadful system, not the people. In Christian terminology, we hate sin, not the sinners.

A Buddhist Approach to Social Action in the Contemporary World

Rothberg: In your essay on “Buddhism and Contemporary International Trends” (in *Inner Peace, World Peace*), you wrote that traditional Buddhist approaches and categories have not yet been adequately translated into modern terms. What do you think has to be done to make Buddhism relevant for modern social problems?

Sivaraksa: In making Buddhism more relevant for the contemporary world, it is important not to compromise on the essentials, such as the ethical precepts (*sila*). However, these ethical precepts need to be rethought in order to make sense of life in contemporary societies. Buddhists traditionally have lived in rather simple societies, largely agrarian, as is still often the case in Southeast and South Asia. In such societies, ethical issues may also be simple. One can say, “I am a good person. I don’t kill. I don’t steal. I don’t commit adultery. I don’t lie.” But when the society becomes much more complex, these simple interpretations of ethical norms don’t work so well.

For example, to follow the first Buddhist ethical precept, to refrain from killing living beings, is not so simple now; social reality in the modern world has become much more complex and interconnected. We have to ask questions like these: Do we allow our tax money to go for armaments? Do we keep ourselves separate from the political realm, and not challenge the government? Should we breed animals for consumption?

Our understanding of the second precept, to refrain from taking what is not ours, must also be extended. We may not literally steal in our face-to-face interactions, but do we allow the rich countries to exploit the poor countries through the workings of the international banking system and the international economic order? Do we allow industrial societies to exploit agrarian societies? The First World to exploit the Third World? The rich to exploit the poor generally?

We can ask similar questions on the basis of the third precept, to refrain from improper sexual behavior. We need to think not just about adultery and hurting others, but also to think more broadly about other sexual and gender issues, about male domination and the exploitation of women. For instance, we use women for advertising in ways that promote sexism, lust, and greed.

In fact, to participate in the system of consumerism is already to violate the first, second, and third precepts. Following the fourth precept, to refrain from improper speech, is also very difficult. Think of all the advertising and all the political propaganda, all the lies and exaggerations in the media and in education. We

have to challenge all this even when it is legal. Buddhists in Asia often have liked to coexist side by side with the state and legal system. I think we have to re-examine ourselves.

Buddhist social ethics traditionally have been entirely personal. We have not looked at the system which is violent, the system which is oppressive, the system which, in fact, involves theft.

The Buddhist notion of enlightenment and understanding (*panna*) also needs to be extended, so that enlightenment is not always internal enlightenment; here also Buddhism has been weak. *Panna* must involve a real understanding of yourself and of society. If you understand society, and if that society is unjust, exploitative, and violent, how do you respond? With all

*Buddhists have been
coexisting with the state
for too long.*

the *paramitas*—humbly, without much attachment, seriously, with vigor, with patience, with awareness, with a great vow to change things. But Buddhists have too often been “goody-goodies” and not really responded to all the suffering in society.

We also need a different understanding of suffering and the causes of suffering (the first two “Noble Truths” taught by the Buddha). Suffering at the time of the Buddha was certainly often dreadful, but it was easier to understand; the interrelatedness of all phenomena that is a main teaching of the Buddha was simpler then and is much more complex now. We Buddhists need help from the social scientists: from sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, etc. We should be very open and translate the findings of these disciplines into Buddhist understandings. Of course, one must have the right view of things and use these sciences to help against greed, hatred, and delusion; otherwise, all these methodologies and sciences could lead one astray. But without the work of these disciplines, we may become deluded and think that Buddhist practice can solve everything. It doesn’t. Without transforming the Buddhist sense of wisdom to bring in understanding of and response to social reality, Buddhism will not be so relevant and might only appeal to the middle class. If we are not careful, it will become a kind of escapism.

Rothberg: Sometimes when I read Buddhist texts or talk to Buddhists, even many socially and politically concerned Buddhists, they often seem to suggest that the basic problem is internal greed, hatred, and delusion, as if working on the individual is most fundamental. According to this way of thinking, whatever problems there are with societies or systems are just an expression of what is “inner.” There is little sense of a more “dialectical” relationship of individual and system, of how greed, hatred, and delusion are formed by systems, while the systems are then supported further

by greed, hatred, and delusion. How might we develop a vision of socially engaged Buddhism as integrating inner and outer work more fully, so that the one informs the other?

Sivaraksa: Ambedkar, the leader of the untouchables in India, who became a Buddhist at the end of his life, challenged the Buddha in a wonderful way. He said that it was not enough to speak of the cause of suffering as being greed, hatred, and delusion. The social structure is also a cause of suffering; as an untouchable, he could see that very clearly.

The Buddha's intention was certainly to change individuals; the ultimate aim was liberation. However, he intended to help liberate not only individuals, but the whole society. His method was to create the sangha, the community, as a kind of alternative society within the larger society that would influence the larger society indirectly.

But we should also remember that the larger society at that time was not all that wicked. The system wasn't too rigid. One changed individual could make a big impact. A rich man named Supata, a kind of banker at the Buddha's time, became the supporter of all the poor in the region. In our time, you can get one good banker and nothing particularly changes. Now you have to change the whole system of banking! We must be very demanding in transforming ourselves, but I think we would be deluded unless we also have a clear understanding of how to change the oppressive society.

The Bodhisattva vow to save all sentient beings is a very special challenge to all Buddhists. Without that vow, we may become very selfish.

Rothberg: When I visited earlier this year the monastery of Pah Ban That (in northeast Thailand) founded by Ajahn Maha Boowa, I had several conversations with Bhikkhu Pannavaddho, an English monk who is probably the senior Western monk in Thailand. He questioned whether it was really possible for socially engaged people to live fully the spiritual life, no matter how helpful they might be. For him, to live the spiritual life is to work for liberation by uprooting the "defilements" that block one's basic love and understanding. However, this requires living in a highly supportive environment like that of a *wat* (monastery).

This is a major concern for many people in the West. Our intention is to work socially in a way which brings much spiritual depth, as well as social depth, rather than somehow act superficially in both dimensions.

Sivaraksa: Of course, it is a great danger that those who are socially engaged lack spiritual depth, inner calm, and peace; some activist Buddhist monks (for instance, in Sri Lanka and Burma) have sometimes even become violent. But what Pannavaddho said is applicable only to a small minority of monks, those

who are convinced that their prime duty is to get rid of defilements. It is unrealistic to expect that all monks should have these intentions. Even at the time of the Buddha, many monks did not. In the Theravadin Buddhist tradition, there is the custom of having town monks, who help and lead the people in various ways, for instance in education and medicine; this is the traditional expression of socially engaged spirituality.

Without the spiritual dimension, however, those working socially will burn out. We must have joy, peace, and rest for ourselves, in our families, among our neighbors. If we are to connect ethical norms and social justice, we must have time for spiritual development, time to meditate, time to be harmonious with ourselves, integrating head and heart, and then time for renewal and retreat several weeks a year, sometimes with teachers who help us and question us. This is why centers of renewal like Buddhadasa's Suan Mokkh, the "Garden of Liberation" [in south Thailand], Thich Nhat Hanh's Plum Village [near Bordeaux, France], or the center I myself started, the ecumenical Wongsanit Ashram near Bangkok, are so important.

The more self-reliant we are, growing our own food and so on, the less important money becomes. Whatever we grow we are willing to share with others.

Without this kind of inquiry and practice, those trying to transform society will be more likely to be greedy, wanting to be big shots, or full of hate, wanting power, or deluded, wanting an impossibly ideal society or being a naive do-gooder. Meditation and critical self awareness help one to see these questionable motivations, or at least to ask oneself: "Am I doing that out of greed or hatred?" even if there is no clear answer.

But meditation alone is not sufficient—because people suffer so much. One must also act; one must do what one can.

The Importance of Community

Rothberg: A life integrating social engagement and spiritual work in the West is quite hard for many reasons, especially because there are not so many support structures. At the Buddhist Peace Fellowship summer institute in July 1992, you spoke about community as an important form of nonviolent resistance, as a support for questioning consumerism and the structures of domination and oppression.

Sivaraksa: It is important that daily life be lived in community. The present daily life in industrialized

societies, so much based on separation, individualism, and consumption, is not conducive to socially engaged spirituality. The Buddhist tradition, on the other hand, emphasizes the centrality of community life based on simplicity. There is the old tradition that monks should not have more than three robes, only one bowl, one thread, one needle, and one pair of sandals. We are also taught not to be attached or give great significance to money (even if we lay people need money for survival). The more self-reliant we are, growing our own food and so on, the less important money becomes. Whatever we grow we are willing to share with others. That is why you need to live close to nature and be with people. In our traditional society, it has always been like this. Whatever you cook, you share with others. It would be good for this approach to come back.

In our society, especially in the countryside, we still have extended families in most of the country, except in Bangkok, which is just like any Western city. We still

*If you get attached to right and wrong,
you become tiresome and full of hatred,
and ultimately you may have to kill.*

respect our parents and grandparents, and have feelings for the poor, the blind, and the mentally retarded; we don't feel ashamed if we have mentally retarded people in the family. We have to reinforce what is positive in the traditional approach (in areas like agriculture, medicine, food, and dress); otherwise, modern trends will wipe everything away.

Rothberg: In the United States, Buddhism is often interpreted very individualistically. Gary Snyder once said that sangha or spiritual community is the least developed of the "Three Jewels" of Buddhism [the Buddha, the dharma or basic teachings, and the sangha].

Sivaraksa: As a Buddhist, if one is not radical and does not work to eliminate suffering, one may end up only taking a little bit of Buddhism for one's individual ego. But Buddhism is not often radical; it coexists too easily with capitalism and consumerism. If Buddhism is not radical here in the U.S., it will one day simply become a kind of Americanism, and not make much of a contribution, just as Buddhism is often a mere decoration of Japanese culture.

Many attempts to create community in this country have failed, largely because individualism has become so strong in American culture, and because communities have not been firmly based on ethical guidelines. I think of your Declaration of Independence, that would make possible "life, liberty and the pursuit of (what

they call) happiness." Too often, of course, the pursuit of happiness is really the pursuit of property. The traditional member of the Buddhist sangha has no property whatsoever. All members are equal economically and socially. Lay people can look at the sangha as a model, and try to have less property, not be so attached to what they do have, and work for greater economic and political equality.

The community must also be based on ethical precepts. Of course, ethics is not just about not killing or stealing or abusing another sexually; it is also about respecting others, sharing our resources, being generous, seeing how we can contribute, living harmoniously, and so on. If we can develop Buddhist communities that rest on simple living, are close to nature, and challenge consumerism and the status quo, that would be an important contribution.

First World and Third World: Working and Learning Together

Rothberg: At the present time, socially engaged Buddhists from the "First World" and "Third World" are having more and more contact with one another. How can we best work with each other? What can we learn from each other?

Sivaraksa: Each person must develop critical self-awareness, and then dialogue is possible, listening is possible, good friends are possible. Once we work together, particularly in relation to suffering, then the gap between rich and poor, First World and Third World, North and South, is gone; we become partners and friends. Alone you can't do very much, but with your friends, you can do a great deal. If you want to gain exposure to the South, then you need people from the South to help you. If I want to go to Sri Lanka or Burma, then I need friends from those countries to help me, so that I can learn from them, and they can learn from me. I need to respect them, be genuine and sincere, and be at their level, not wear a big cap.

The conditions in the U.S. for socially engaged spirituality are difficult. Consumerism, greed, loneliness, manipulation of political power, and hatred have become so strong in American society. Worst of all, the people are so deluded, most of the time unknowingly. Perhaps working with us in Asia may be helpful, working for half a year, or a year, with the Tibetans, or the Ladakhis, or the Thai, or the Burmese. But this shouldn't be escapism. You might work in Asia and see that the source of suffering there is perhaps in the First World. When you come back to the West, after you have lived with Asians in community and close to nature, you may have more motivation to live like this in your own country.

It can also be helpful to be exposed to a society

Continued on page 25

THE SAME SILENCE

Working Towards Nonviolence in a Women's Penitentiary

by Judith Stronach

I entered the meditation hall late. 24 women were already settled into their breathing, and I was grateful for the quiet they had created. A clear winter morning, pine trees, and blue sky outside the window. I could have been anywhere, but to reach this hall I had been escorted through several lines of chain link fence, each inscribed with a tangle of barbed wire. And my companions were women at the Federal Correctional Institute, in Dublin, California.

I closed my eyes, and joined in an effort no different from the effort made in any meditation hall: the silence was the same. A few snores punctuated the stillness. For some women this hour is the only quiet time available inside prison. A whispered voice translated into Spanish the words of teacher Wendy Palmer: "Bring your attention back to this breath. Steady your mind."

The meditation class is one of the 30 hours a week of classes in the Prison Integrated Health Program, the only program of its kind in the federal prison system. Clinical director Dr. Tracy Thompson came up with the idea in 1990 of teaching stress management, a valuable skill in a facility built for 300 that now houses 900 women. Meditation, communication, and conflict resolution skills have been at the core of a program that has steadily expanded to include yoga, body work, art, writing, and voice workshops. The Bureau of Prisons validated the success of this all-volunteer effort by funding a building where most of the classes now take place.

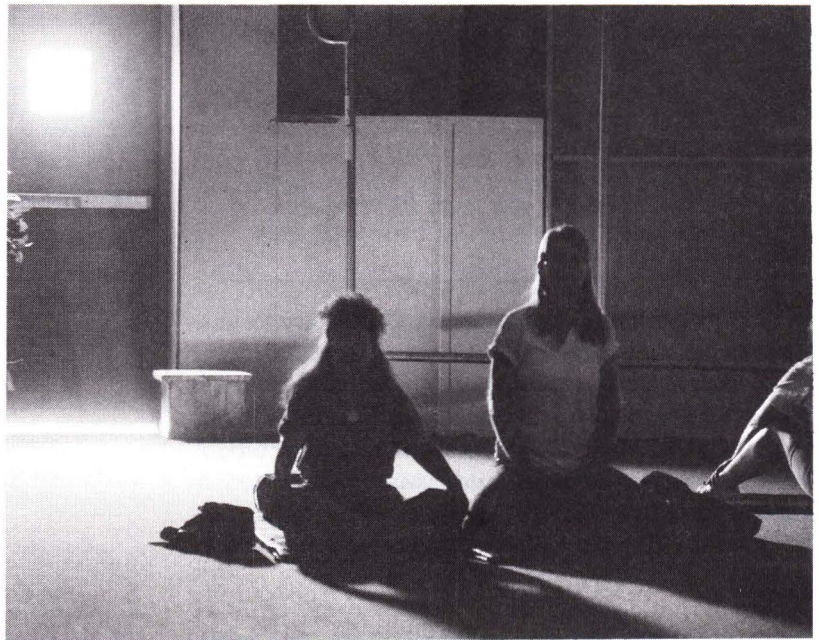
Not that success was automatic. Some staff members and even inmates have resisted the program. Many of the bosses in the workplace and kitchen resent the time their crews take off for classes, and they create obstacles for the women by taking an inflexible position about work schedules. Others think the women are in prison for punishment, not special treatment. The born-again Christians and white supremacists among the inmates see the teachers as devil-worshippers. Even the weather can be an obstacle, because when the fog comes in and the fence cannot be seen, no one may go from one building to another without a staff escort, and all classes are canceled.

The meditation classes themselves do not resemble a

standard sitting. Many women come late because of difficulties with their passes. Sometimes a class may be interrupted for a prisoner count. Before the building of the new site, classes were held in the gym, and staff, from custody to maintenance workers, often swung through the doors, their radios crackling, their chains rattling.

Palmer challenges the class, "Yes, this is hard. And you can do it. Think of Mother Theresa's sisters praying while the horns are honking in the middle of Calcutta. It takes strength and courage."

The number of women coming off their medication and the decrease in conflict testify to the courage many



Meditation in Prison [Jim Ketsdever, courtesy of *Contra Costa Times*]

have found. Palmer refers to the program as passive security. Women convicted for acts of violence ranging from terrorism to murder have learned to use conflict resolution in place of the usual prison law, conflict retribution. Such a shift is significant not only for the individual women but also for the prison community and society at large. Until now, prison has been little more than a warehouse and prisoners are released with no more tools of responsible citizenship than they had at the time of their arrest.

The compassion and commitment of the program's staff account in part for the fact that 100 women are now signed up. Dr. Thompson embodies these traits. She did not start her job with the devotion she now feels. Like most doctors in the prison system, she held

her position only to pay off a government loan for her medical tuition. Like the inmates, she too was just checking off the days of her contract. When she reached a breaking point, she looked into an aikido class, and from that training she began to transform herself and the sense of what her work was about. Rather than counting the days, she became involved. She invited somatic educator, Kathy Park, to teach stress management, and she in turn invited Wendy Palmer to teach "conscious embodiment."

When her four years were up, Dr. Thompson took on an extra two. It is almost unheard of that someone would want to stay on out of choice. But Dr. Thompson felt she could not leave the women. "I wanted to be of service. I thought I could help and make a difference." Each of the women I spoke with feels cared for by the doctor, a caring that is healing and has allowed them to open to the source of nonviolence within themselves.

Palmer's understanding has developed over 22 years of formal meditation practice and aikido training. She holds a fourth degree black belt and is Co-Founder of the Aikido of Tamalpais Dojo in Mill Valley, California. From aikido, Palmer learned empathy, seeing the situation from the attacker's point of view, trying to protect the attacker, who is considered to be off-center and in trouble. She says she found it easier to comprehend nonviolence in this setting than on the zafu, where she encountered with some horror the violence in her own mind and her inability to work with it. Through the long process of studying her own fear and aggression, she came to understand that we are not separate from one another. "If there is no you or I, aggression is not possible. In the moment when I completely accept you, you are disarmed."

From both practices Palmer has learned strength and courage, and these are the skills she tries to instill. "It is one thing to be mindful. It is another to be really centered and strong and mindful. If you are not strong in your base, you cannot be compassionate. If you open yourself, you will be hurt. The goal is not to avoid being hurt. You probably will be. But if you are strong, you can work with your pain." This stability lays the ground for genuine compassion.

But compassion is not what motivates the women to enroll in a class. Trouble usually does. Janet Carlyle signed up when a group of inmates began to hound her for supposedly getting a friend sent to solitary confinement. They had taken to slapping her in the face and throwing rocks in her room. A 27-year-old from a California suburb in prison for drug dealing, she did not know how to handle herself. Denise Casanova, convicted of embezzling, was also ill-prepared for prison life by her background as an investment banker with multi-million dollar accounts. Throughout the day she encountered abusive language, insults about her Brazilian accent,

face-offs in the shower stalls. Others who sign up for Palmer's class are the trouble-makers, aggressive women who end up in the hole and could face extended sentences unless they learn to control themselves.

Most of the abuse is verbal rather than physical. But this can be cruel, and is omnipresent. Palmer comments that "all the racism of our nation is compressed in a small place, and anger is a constant between different races and within racial groups, between South African blacks and West Coast blacks, and between Latinos from L.A., South America, and Mexico."

As for me, I have to struggle to keep my equanimity when a driver makes a left-hand turn in front of me. These women must come to terms with being deliberately insulted and pushed. They must contend with the injustice of unfair sentences. (One woman was given life without parole, for conspiracy in her husband's embezzlement, while another woman with a murder conviction in a drug case will get out in ten years.) They must endure the body searches that are so necessary for the security of prison life, but are also so humiliating.

We struggle to stay calm when our children exasper-

The women discover to their amazement that shifting attention to their breath can transform even the most dangerous interactions.

ate us. These women must cope with the pain of separation from their children, who frequently must survive on the 25-50 cents an hour wages their mothers can send home from prison, children whom many know are being abused in their absence, while they can do nothing to protect them.

Palmer says, "They do not come to the meditation cushion from a decent home or a decent anything or feeling good about themselves. They have lost everything. They come from hell. This hell is more out front than ours. We may discover we have hoogy-boogies inside us, but their hoogy-boogies are right there. They have little to hide behind. There are not so many distractions, and no privacy. Living in a hell realm, they find great relief in sitting down and concentrating on their breath for one moment."

Palmer's first focus is concentration. "No past. No future. Only this moment." She teaches the women in her meditation class to calm down, to maintain a steady mind in a stable body, to discover a self to return to under stress. She encourages them to use their time walking around the compound and in meal lines to contact their breath and the lower part of their bodies, and to find a centered point of reference. And the women discover to their amazement that shifting atten-

tion to their breath can transform even the most dangerous interactions.

Self-inquiry reveals to the women that habits from the past imprison them, and that a clear mind can lead to inner freedom. In meditation they learn how to make conscious decisions rather than yield to habitual reactions of fight or flight. Palmer holds up Gandhi frequently as a model of someone who knew how to fight, but also how to choose his battleground. "If someone bumps you in the meal line, it may not be worth getting upset about. Or those of you who habitually back off and say, 'Oh, that's okay. You go right ahead,' may decide to say, 'No that is not okay' and speak your mind."

In addition to meditation, Palmer teaches a movement class in which she gives the women practice in being pushed and standing stable. She developed these exercises in "conscious embodiment" from her knowledge of aikido. In one exercise, the women stand as firmly as possible while Palmer leans against them. They study their reactions, whether they push against or pull away from a push, and how to find center. They learn to stay still and be responsible for their reactions rather than blame the problem on others. "Instead of calling a situation good or bad, call it intense, and then see how you can meet that intensity." By showing the women how to get in touch with the energy of a situation, Palmer hopes they will learn to make the content less personal and therefore more manageable.

Another exercise entails changing the position of one's feet while maintaining contact with one's breath and center, remaining steadfast in a situation of change. Later, in a situation of conflict, the women can return to the physical memory of this experience of solidity. Palmer emphasizes that "the difference between a calm person and someone not calm is simply that the calm person returns to center more quickly."

Centered, the women may be able to extend accep-

tance to those they normally would react against. Palmer does not expect unconditional acceptance of fellow-inmates, but even a slight degree of acceptance in a conflict may be sufficient to alter its outcome. She teaches the concept of *irimi*, or entry. Rather than attacking or withdrawing, one learns to meet a situation as we meet the breath in meditation, by feeling in, by going toward.

Deborah Rico demonstrated this with me. I pushed against her forearm, the push representing "the energy of any number of common prison events: someone bumping, someone pushing, someone spitting, someone stealing, someone insulting; the energy of someone coming up in your face." Rico did not resist my push. Her arm relaxed, and she gently deflected my arm to the side. When she yielded, I felt I had nothing to push against. She told me, "I just let go of the situation. If I had focused on you, I would have given you all the power. I did not say, 'You are wrong.' I said, 'I can see and accept your point of view. And this is my position.' I don't have to be tough. I can be relaxed and not be a target. If you are tough, it's dangerous. But because I changed, you were changed."

Lovingkindness meditations conclude each of Palmer's classes. "May I be happy, so I can spread happiness. May I be peaceful, so I can spread peace. May I be full of love, so I can spread love."

For those women ready to hear the lesson, Palmer passes on the teachings of *her* teacher, Morihei Uyeshiba, the founder of Aikido: The goal is not to defend yourself, or even to protect the attacker. The goal is the protection of all things. To open the women to this understanding, she asks them questions about people who act in a seemingly cruel way. "What do you think makes him act this way? Is this the action of someone who is happy and self-confident? What kind of pressure and insecurity does he live with?"

The effectiveness of Palmer's line of inquiry was manifested in the changed relationship between some prison-

LUCY RODRIGUEZ AND THE CAT

"I am here for my activities with the Puerto Rican Liberation Movement. I've been in this facility since 1985. I'm 43, and my sentence is until I am 63. Violence came into my life from the violent attitude I had toward myself. I led a very numbed existence so I wouldn't be hurt again. Meditation has helped me dissolve the psychic walls I've put around me.

I had a feline companion, Mama, who for four years used to walk around the grounds with me. She knew the kitchen routine and would meet me outside the dining room while I was waiting for it to open. One morning she was sitting in my lap, and we were approached by a kitchen worker. I knew this woman to be very abusive with the animals here, the cats, the birds. In the past I might have told her to go away. Instead I kept stroking Mama. The worker asked me, "Does that cat feel that?" And I thought that was a very telling question, that she wouldn't know. It made me think about some possible abuse in her life. I looked at the woman and said, "Yes, Mama feels this. Mama also feels it when she is kicked. Mama also feels hunger. Mama feels pain. Mama feels love." That made the woman sit down next to me. Her attitude toward Mama changed. In the past it was, "Get out. Ick! Keep her away." But this time she sat close to me while I continued to touch Mama. We talked awhile. I think because I didn't cop an attitude with her, I may have touched her, and helped her think differently about animals. I know the exchange touched me, because I remember it distinctly after three years.

This program has let me feel deeper and deeper and deeper change. It has made me a stronger person, stronger not just for myself but so I can affect changes that need to occur on this globe."

ers and one particularly hated woman. Palmer asked the women to close their eyes and to bring onto their internal screens images of the hated woman as a little girl. When asked what they saw, each woman offered a different scene of abuse and neglect. Not one of them had visualized the woman's mother as loving her. Palmer then instructed them to observe the woman closely, to see how often she smiled. The women discovered they never saw her smile. And Palmer asked what it would be like never to smile. As the weeks passed, the women altered their perceptions of her. One woman commented that she could see her fear now. Another, who used to say, "I hate the bitch. I hope she hurts herself," now comments, "I really looked at her, and I saw she was in so much pain." From this deep looking the women have adapted skillful strategies of relating to her that have decreased her aggression toward them.

*Instead of calling a situation good or bad,
call it intense, and then see how you can
meet that intensity.*

Palmer's long training has allowed her to integrate and thereby personalize lessons in nonviolence, which she discusses in a vivid style. I think the women respond to her direct language. On Gandhi, she exhorts, "Dig it! There is a man who changed the course of an entire nation against a violent, oppressive country, and he did so nonviolently. He worked under greater duress than any of us are experiencing. It takes a lot. It's not easy. But don't whine to me that it's not possible to work with some person. It is absolutely possible."

Seeing how violence begets violence, seeing the pain from which a person acts roughly, has allowed a kind of healing to occur for many of the women. The ideas of Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, and Mother Theresa have proved transformative on a personal and political level. Individual women have changed the way they conduct themselves under stress. And Lucy Rodriguez and other members of the Puerto Rican Liberation Movement have embraced peaceful means to encourage change in their country.

Prison. The fruit of violence in our country. Dr. Thompson told me that she did not want me to stereotype prison as a place of violence. "It is no more violent than the streets. The streets are very violent with drugs and abuse. The women are here because of the violence there. And the staff is as much caught in the system as the prisoners. What is clear is that everyone is in pain."

Society has conditioned these women to violence and then punished them for it. Who is the criminal? Women who act out our shadow are incarcerated so we do not have to see this shadow. Whose is the crime?

These very women are taking hold of their lives and with vehement determination are ending the violence within themselves. When they told me how they were putting into practice the precept of non-harming, I thanked them. ❖

The Prison Integrated Health Program welcomes contributions of used zafus and books, tapes and videos on holistic health, spirituality, and conflict resolution, as well as offers of time or money. Please contact Wendy Palmer: 415/472-1619.

Wendy Palmer's *The Intuitive Body* is due for immediate release from North Atlantic Books.

Judith Stronach lives, writes, and practices in Berkeley.

Continued from page 21

where it is clearer that there is delusion, where power is clearer. In my society, for example, you can see that the generals kill people openly. In this country, the generals never kill your people. They're much more clever, and the people stay deluded; the wars are all supposed to be for justice and freedom.

Oppression, Reconciliation, and the Middle Path

Rothberg: Although engaged Buddhists may identify systems of domination and oppression, they often question the tendency among many leftists to polarize oppressors and oppressed; Buddhists more often emphasize reconciliation. How do we identify systems of oppression, as well as the specific people who are in many ways responsible for oppression, without forming a rigid distinction between "good" people and "bad" people?

Sivaraksa: This is the most difficult question. This is where you need serious spiritual practice. It is easy to condemn the oppressors, but actually when you condemn others, you also condemn yourself. You have to have a deeper understanding of karma and interdependence over vast periods of time and space. We must cultivate this deeper understanding, thinking also about the nature of social systems, rather than just focusing on individuals.

If you get attached to right and wrong, you become so tiresome and full of hatred, and ultimately you may have to kill; in Christian terms, you become God. We must develop more mercy and compassion. Here, the West can learn from the Buddhists. Our ability to forgive is our strength. But of course you have to practice; you have to go deeper and radicalize yourself, going beyond thinking about "an eye for an eye." ❖

[A longer version of this interview appeared in *ReVision*, Winter 1993.]

Donald Rothberg is a long-time vipassana practitioner and former BPF Board member. He teaches at the Saybrook Institute in San Francisco, is a co-editor of the journal ReVision, and writes frequently on engaged Buddhism. He divides his time between Vermont and California.

A NONVIOLENCE WORKSHOP IN PRISON

by Peter Wood

Our classroom is in the Education Center inside San Quentin Prison in California. Three of us from the Alternatives To Violence Project have come to facilitate a workshop. The room feels dreary, and I don't have to look far for reasons why: the school desks in neat rows facing the blackboard, the mostly empty walls, the fluorescent lighting, the lack of windows, the sense of being watched.

We start putting up posters with ground rules and agendas. I feel nervous about this, my first workshop inside a prison. I wonder what I'm doing here: a middle-class professional white male, encouraging these men to consider nonviolence—here, in the midst of an oppressive system. In three days I'll be gone; they will be staying.

Around 9 AM, the inmates filter in from their cell blocks dressed in prison blue jeans and work shirts, some with jackets and caps to protect them against the chill outside. Except for the clothes, they look like regular guys—stiff and uncomfortable in this setting, eyes looking everywhere but directly at each other.

But behind the masks I sense some curiosity and excitement. The program is full: we have more people interested in attending and in becoming facilitators than we can handle.

Our first task together is to open up the space. We move the desks into a circle so we can face each other on an equal footing. Someone finds a way to turn off the buzzing light, and the next few days are filled with exercises, games, brainstorming, role plays, and discussions together, three hours at a stretch.

The techniques are fun and simple. At the beginning we do an adjective name game, where each person chooses a positive adjective that starts with the same sound as their name. Someone named Dan might choose a workshop name of Dancing Dan; a Jack, a name like Jubilant Jack. As we go around the circle choosing our names, we repeat the workshop names of all who have gone before us. Predictably, it brings out some laughs.

After breaks we gather with sentence completion exercises like: "A time I resolved a conflict nonviolently was . . ." or "A safe place I went as a child was . . ." As the trust level builds, space opens. Simple sentence completion transforms into sharing stories of old wounds, sometimes spoken for the first time. Time and again I am deeply moved.

We play games. A favorite is "jailbreak," a rambunctious variation on musical chairs done in pairs.

At some point, we brainstorm on what violence is, what nonviolence is. The list fills several sheets of

newsprint, and I'm impressed by the connections the participants make. It seems to me the problem is not in identifying the institutional and personal kinds of violence, or the roots of nonviolence: caring and respect for self, others, the earth. The problem is in how to make the change.

We talk often of the difficulty of showing vulnerability in our cultures, and particularly in prison and on the streets. There is a clear distinction between what the men are willing to share or try in our group and what they are willing to try out on the yard.

We practice making "I" statements, to express feelings and criticism by focusing on the behavior, not the person. We experiment with role-playing different responses to tough conflicts. Some come to a nonviolent solution, some do not.

As the sessions progress, we become closer, the body language less stiff, the laughs more frequent, the eye contact more direct.

Finally it's time to end. During the closing, shoulder to shoulder in a tight circle, we do our final sharings. For some it's been the first group they felt they could trust; for others, a chance to practice new skills, or look more deeply at themselves. I'm honored to have shared this remarkable time with them. We return the room to its former order, exchange hugs, and walk out together.

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops were initially developed in 1972 by Quakers at the request of some inmates in New York's Greenhaven Prison. The Project has spread to many states and several countries.

San Quentin has had AVP workshops for about three years. The response has been positive, workshops are full, and several inside facilitators have been trained. AVP hopes to expand the program to other prisons soon.

The aim of AVP is to build self-esteem, community, communication, and conflict resolution skills. Emphasis is on showing respect, using positive language, listening, shifting criticism from the person to the behavior, and opening to something called "transforming power." Transforming power is the spiritual basis for the workshop; the various techniques just help open space for it to emerge. It is sometimes described as a natural force that can help us transform potentially violent situations through love and compassion. Participants learn to look into their own lives for examples of this power. ♦

For more information on AVP workshops, call Peter Laughingwolf, in the San Francisco Bay Area, at: 707/585-0913.

Peter Wood is an AVP facilitator, a PeaceNet staff member, a Vajrayana practitioner, and a student of nonviolence. He lives in Penn Grove, California.

HOW DO YOU NOT FIGHT?

by Claude Thomas

I was recently in Bosnia-Herzegovina for one month. During that time I was in the city of Mostar, 90 kilometers south of Sarejevo. The fighting was much more intense in Mostar than in Sarejevo. We see in the news mostly what's happening in Sarejevo because that's where the journalists are. It's safer there. The destruction in Mostar and the surrounding areas is even more severe than in Sarajevo.

The last time I was in a war zone, I was a soldier in Vietnam. The last time I was in a war zone, I carried a gun. The last time I was in a war zone, I was responsible for the deaths of hundreds and hundreds of people. Before I went to Vietnam, I could have told you what the war was about. But just two or three days after my arrival in the country, I couldn't have told you. Because what I believed in before I went made no sense once I got there. And if you asked me today, "Why are they fighting in these territories in the former Yugoslavia?" I couldn't tell you. Nor can most of the people there. Most of the people there want to live in peace. Most of the people I spoke with, and I spoke with many, don't want to fight, including those who are carrying guns.

I don't like to distinguish between one ethnic territory and another because the distinctions are arbitrary. These borders have changed many times. People there often said to me, "We don't care where the borders are. Because after a while, they'll all change again anyway. We just want the fighting to stop."

So I went into this area—went in not because I felt I had anything in particular to give, but because I wanted to learn from these people about how a place of war and violence could become a place of nonviolence, a place where conflict can exist without it having to be settled by guns, bombs, planes, fists, knives, or words that cut even deeper than knives.

I walked onto the front lines of the city of Mostar, where one army was shooting at civilians on one side, while another army was shooting at civilians on the other side. You see, the targets are not military targets. But what's the difference? In war there isn't any difference. I had the opportunity to go into the bunkers where the snipers were, and to talk to them about not fighting. I walked into an armed camp without a gun, into the headquarters of the "Ustache," the Fascists, and I talked to them about not fighting. They all said to me, "How do you not fight?" I said, "You just don't fight. It's that simple: you just don't fight." They said, "It's not possible." I looked at my watch and said, "We've been talking for half an hour, and for half an

hour you haven't been fighting. It's entirely possible."

I felt I was given a tremendous gift, to be able to go to a place like this without a gun and talk about not fighting. When I was fighting in the Vietnam War, there was nobody doing this that I knew of. And I believe that from the grassroots, this war—all war—can be ended, when the people who don't want to fight anymore raise up their voices, move into nonviolent action.

I sat with wounded soldiers in hospitals. I talked with one soldier in particular for four days in a row, for several hours each day. I told him that I had spent nine months in a military hospital because of the wounds I suffered in Vietnam—I have an artificially rebuilt shoulder. When I was initially treated I was told that I would probably lose my arm at the shoulder. But the army doctors and medical technology saved my arm by rebuilding my shoulder. This young man had been shot at the elbow, and he was told that he might lose his arm above his elbow. But he didn't, because enemy doctors kept his arm from being amputated, and sent him back to his side where the hospital conditions were better, so he had a chance.



Claude Thomas talks with a wounded soldier in Mostar

The first day all he could talk about was the beasts on the other side. The second day he began to talk about his own experience of the war, as I shared my experience of my war, because our wars weren't different. At the root of war there's no difference. On the third day he let me know that his girlfriend was of a different ethnic origin than he was. He told me how stupid this war was. He asked me, "How was it for you when you came home from your war?" I said to him, "When I came home, my society and my culture pushed me aside. They didn't particularly want to talk to me." He said, "Here, it's no different. When you're on the front line fighting, you're a hero. But when you're wounded and you can't

fight anymore nobody wants to know you." I asked him what I could give him and he said, "I have everything I need, except someone to talk to who understands. You and I are brothers. You understand in a way that not even my family understands."

I talked with a schoolteacher about not fighting, and she said, as most of the people I talked with said, "It's easy for you to talk about not fighting, but what do you know about war?" So I told her, as I told others, about my war experiences, and as I talked I could see her face change and become more open. She said, "You know, we don't talk about this much, but each day, coming from and going to school, at least one child is killed by snipers." I said, "This is what we need to talk about."

I was smuggled over to the east side of the city, and told I had to wear army plating and a helmet. I refused, because the people who live in these areas don't wear helmets or army plating, and I wanted to be as little separated from them as possible. I slept in bombed-out buildings and alleyways, like the people who live there. I carried as much food as I could, as discreetly as possible, and I gave it away.

Now in the city of Mostar there's a cease fire. They're really not fighting. And I can't help but think that the presence of people like myself is an encouragement. That just by being there and bearing witness, we remind them that they have the voice to stop this war.

On the way home I had a chance encounter with former Senator Paul Tsongas in an airport. We were both snowed in. I recognized him and introduced myself. He asked me what I did, and I mentioned that I had just come back from these territories. When I brought up the idea of nonviolent conflict resolution he asked, "What would you tell a mother whose three children were just killed by an artillery barrage while they were out sledding? What would you tell that woman?" In

that moment I had nothing to say to him. I felt as I had when I was standing in the most destroyed section of Mostar, where every time I crossed the street I was being shot at by people on the other side. I thought to myself, "What can I do here? What can I possibly do?"

"You know, we don't talk about this much, but each day, coming from and going to school, at least one child is killed by snipers."

And in reflection it came to me. What I could say to this woman was simply that I understand her loss, because I've held young boys while they have died. I've been covered by their blood. I understand the overwhelming power of grief. I would say to this woman, "Mother, part of this grief is a powerful anger." And I would invite her, "Mother, let me help you sit with this feeling. Because if you allow this feeling to sweep you away in its grasp, and if you return the violence, then how are you different? If you return the anger, someone else's son or daughter will die, and there will never be peace." I would invite her, "Mother, find your compassion, touch with your compassion these people who are shelling you. Understand their suffering." That's how I came to understand my "enemy," the Vietnamese. My enemy, my only enemy, is me.

People get swept away in a particular nationalistic point of view. But the reality in these territories, in this time, is that on all sides they are killing each other. They are all raping women, they are all killing children, they are all shooting priests, they are all burying people in mass graves, all of them. *No one is innocent in war.*

I invite us all to transcend our politics and our nationalism, and to reach for compassion. And in looking at how to help people in the Balkans, let's also look at how to help ourselves, our families, our neighborhoods, and our communities. As we look deeply, our actions to help others become more effective. As we heal, so do our towns, cities, and countries. We become peace. ❖

Claude Thomas is a disabled Vietnam combat veteran and a student of Thich Nhat Hanh. He leads retreats on nonviolence and reconciliation, and is planning a return trip to the Balkans. In December he will go on the peace walk from Auschwitz to Hiroshima. He has two books forthcoming from Parallax: Foothills of Eden, and Roots of War. He lives in Massachusetts.



Francesca Schiffrin, *War Room — Sick Bed*

[From a series of works on the former Yugoslavia. See inside front cover.]

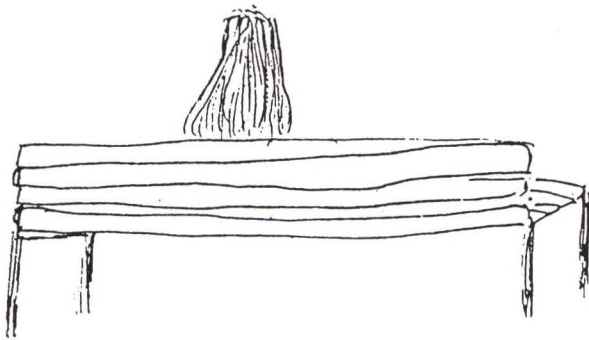
I REMEMBER

Refugees in the former Yugoslavia Tell Their Stories

by Fran Peavey

The war in the former Yugoslavia is a complex one. On each side there is a peace movement which we hear little about. In Croatia people against the war teach conflict resolution skills in mixed ethnic refugee camps and towns. There is massive draft resistance in both Croatia and Serbia. It is a very authoritarian culture, yet young men disobey. Towns hide their young men. Women go to generals demanding that their sons and lovers be returned to them.

In Serbia there is an active anti-war women's group, "Women in Black," which is made up of local women and refugee women from all ethnic groups, working together in a spirit that is truly a joy to behold. With courage and commitment, the Women in Black stand in the main square of the city of Sarajevo every Wednesday holding a sign announcing their opposition to the war. The government-controlled media tells the citizens lies about the war, so the Women in Black go out and gather the drawings and stories of refugees and displaced women, and publish them in posters and booklets. They hope that through this strategy, called the "I Remember Project," the stories will penetrate the government's lies and move their fellow citizens to act against the war.



Uvijek mislim na
tebe

"I always think of you."

This picture and these stories are part of that project.

The drawing was made by a refugee woman who now lives close to Belgrade: "We were always together, the two of us. To mention me without saying anything about Aida, to be with Aida and not to be with myself—was impossible! We were the epitome of friend-

ship, of sincerity. To whom otherwise could I complain, with whom could I laugh to tears, whose secrets would I listen to if you didn't exist. You, my dearest one. Don't be sad tonight if you are awake! We shall be together again, you and me. We shall complain together about our teachers, about our parents' understanding. To carry together kourbans for Bairam, [colored eggs for Easter.] To get ready to go for a walk in the city in warm summer's evenings. We will not be afraid of anyone then, nobody will be able to separate us tonight and don't cry for me! I shall certainly come back. I shall certainly come to hug you, and we talk and laugh as only we know how. Remember all the beautiful things we've experienced, and they will become the future."

Another refugee writes: "I remember that very 4th of April when I left my home and my Mostar. The night before there was shooting everywhere. The next day the barricades appeared. My sister-in-law with her grandchildren was leaving for Belgrade by helicopter. What are we going to do? Where to go? What to do? We didn't know. We were in a panic. I was preparing the lunch and it was almost finished, but we left it on the table because we were making the decision to go somewhere. We are leaving. Myself, my granddaughters and my son who will drive the car. We were ready in 20 minutes. The granddaughters are saying good-bye to their grandfather and their mother who are not leaving. The grandfather is sobbing loudly and mother too. We went by car via Nevesinje, and we arrived to Niksic where we spent the night. The war started the next morning."

Just now we hear that much of the resistance is under attack by the governments. You can fax them your support, you can send them articles from the newspaper you think they would appreciate, you can send them greetings. Everyone can do something. The International Bosnian Students' Association is looking for connections with campuses. Children's camps on both sides are eager for volunteers.

Contact Fran Peavey or Tova Green at 510/428-0240 for addresses and fax numbers. They also have a list of other ways you can help.

Antiwar forces and refugees in the entire region would request that you hold their society in the gentlest place in your heart. ♦

Fran Peavey's latest book is By Life's Grace: Musings on the Essence of Social Change. She is a social change worker on the community and international levels. She and her partner Tova Green have been working with the women in the former Yugoslavia on three trips this year.



Saigon, 1963
AP Photo

Thich
Quang
Duc
burning

some
questions
by
Michael
Jones

[Photo reprinted by permission of Wide World, Inc.]

The rise of American Buddhism and the rise of many Americans' compassion for the people of Vietnam were intertwined. This image seared our minds with doubts about our government's actions and questions about the struggles in Vietnamese society. For me, and I wonder how many others, the shock was more personal and long-lasting. It brought up questions of commitment, discipline, and the power of spiritual practice which prepared the monk for his act. I share some of the questions with you here. It seems to me that Thich Quang Duc in flames was one of the sparks that lit America's dharma candle.

What was your reaction the first time you saw this picture?
What is your reaction now?
Can suicide be "right action?"

How did this act affect your feelings about the war?
What about the straight spine?
Did this image have anything to do with your interest in Buddhism or your decision to meditate?
What would the act have been worth had the news photographer not been there?
Does this picture prod you to examine your own sense of commitment?
Do you feel gratitude toward Thich Quang Duc? ❖

Michael Jones is a longtime member of BPF. He worked with the American Friends Service Committee in Saigon during the Vietnam war. Since then he has been involved in peace activism, publishing, parenting, Buddhist practice, and now farming. He lives in Wisconsin.

PEACE WALK '94

DOUBTING MIND TAKES TO THE STREETS

by Maylie Scott

I was one of the walkers on a week-long peace walk from Richmond to Livermore, in Northern California, in April 1994. I was also on the planning committee, and this planning itself was an important part of the experience. The theme was peace in a violent society; our route would take in relevant points of interest along the way, such as a toxic waste dump, a gun shop, and a prison, and would end up at the Livermore Weapons Lab, in time for the annual Good Friday demonstration there. We would be housed at night in churches along the way, and local community groups would provide our lunches and dinners.

For all our planning, we had no idea to what extent the venture would come off. Few registration forms came in. Privately I remembered Peace Pilgrim's solitary conviction and braced myself; four or five of us marching could do it.

I needn't have worried. Early in the morning of Friday, March 25, forty or so of us stood in a circle in the cloudy pre-dawn, at Keller Beach in Point Richmond, the last natural beach in the Bay Area. Even the Mayor of Richmond had come. Small waves lapped the shore, and a reporter held out her microphone to record them. We were led in prayers: Buddhist, Christian, and Native American. We collected sand in a handkerchief to carry along; we would add sprinklings of dirt from each city we passed. According to Native American custom, we dipped our heels in the ocean and set off. A determined band, we carried blue "Peace Walk '94" banners in front and behind, and made our chilly way along the vacant streets of outer Richmond.

Gradually we learned the routine of living as one body. The route was demanding; we needed to walk at least 10 miles a day, and we needed to be on time for scheduled events. We stored our sleeping gear in a van that waited wherever we were going to spend the night. A support car drove with us, so people who were very tired could ride for a while. Otherwise, we walked at group pace. No time-outs for snacks or toilets. If you *had* to take a special

toilet break, the whole procession waited.

Sometimes we grew to 40, but our core group—people who walked the whole way—numbered about 15. We were Black, White, and Asian, straight and gay, and ranged in age from 4 to 91. Yamato, a Japanese Soto-Nicherin monk was our most noticeable member. He wore yellow-orange robes, beat a drum, and chanted "Namu Myo Renge Kyo" [Homage to the wonderful Lotus Sutra] with penetrating and inexhaustible voice.

* * *

We reached the First Unitarian Church in downtown Oakland at the end of our longest day. The large old building serves by night as a men's shelter and by day as the site for a variety of community-oriented programs. We stowed our sleeping gear in a Sunday school room upstairs, and came down to eat an open dinner with perhaps 50 to 100 men and women, who were already waiting outside the church.

The street guests lined up on one side of the buffet and we walkers lined up on the kitchen side. Our plates were filled by servers in short order, but the food ran thin by the end of the street line. Something wasn't right; a few of us noticed and stood in the long line. But most of us were tired and

hungry enough to take what we could get.

The street guests left and we helped clean up the room, making it ready for a program on homeless activism. Meantime, a line of men waited outside for the shelter doors to open at 9. We were, uncomfortably, part of the problem we were studying.

The speakers, Homeless Union activists, described their experience finding and administering low-cost housing in Oakland. One of homeless-activist Terry Messman's specialties is breaking into HUD foreclosed houses and "taking over," until police arrive. The take-over can include making beginning improvements on the property, and often results in the house actually being turned over to homeless families. Dorothy King, Director of Dignity Housing West, a non-profit that builds and administers low cost housing, described how her own history as an abused, homeless, single

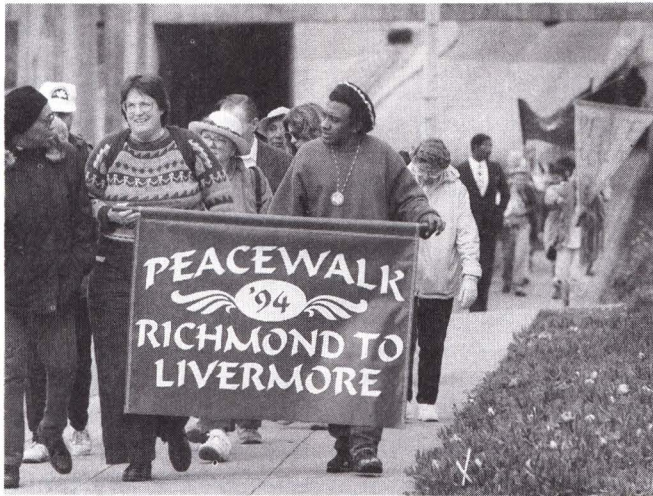


Photo by Mary F. Calvert, *Oakland Tribune*

mother had led her to discover the power that a union of homeless people can wield.

I felt distracted, alienated by doubts, as I helped clear the room of chairs so the men could sleep in it. I envied the completeness of Terry's and Dorothy's work. They make a sustained, focused effort and are rewarded by solid results. I take on a little here, a little there, allowing myself the leisure for a peace walk. Is this *serious*, or just a semi-indulgent play on the margins? Beyond the front door, I glimpsed the long line of men waiting singly and in groups. Even though the room was ready, the blue, canvas cots set down, they could not, by shelter rules, move in for another half hour. I worked with a small, tired, but efficient team in the kitchen. The chief cook came in, angry. The coffee and eggs for tomorrow's breakfast had disappeared. And no one had told him we would be spending the night. He hoped we were not expecting breakfast. I felt the relentless, exhausting aspect of the work here. We commiserated with him and assured him that we were self-sufficient for breakfast. (We carried a seemingly inexhaustible supply of oranges, tea, and bagels.) Somehow the mountain of cooking and serving dishes got washed, from one spigot, in one small sink.

The next morning I walked with Rush, who had joined us the evening before. He's wild-haired, thin, fortyish, with a missing front tooth and a riveting gaze. A homeless activist in San Francisco, he lives with other squatters in abandoned buildings. There is never enough space; he rides his bicycle around town, always on the lookout for more "squats." He told me his people are "drug-addicts, alcoholics and rage-oholics." And that he helps care for a baby girl born to two "rage-oholics" last Thanksgiving. "Can you imagine—her arriving as a gift to these two angry people on Thanksgiving Day?" The peel of his full-bodied laughter had an eerie, triumphant note.

He was critical of last night's program. Why did we eat first, from our own line? He had waited at the end of the line with the street guests. Did I know what it felt like to wait a couple of hours and then have the food run out before you get your plate? His standard for a well-organized event is one in which you can't tell the "helper from the helpee." I felt the truth of what he said; there is too much to do, too much I am not ready for. We drifted apart, walking at different ends of the procession.

* * *

Walking, like everyday mind, contains and opens. As we got used to and learned to trust our relentless walking, the fixations, confusions, low energies cycled through. The continuity, day by day, of change—passing scenery, conversations, rhythm of feet against the ground—supported. We depended on one another and were grateful.

We arrived at the New Growth Community Baptist Church in East Oakland for Palm Sunday service. The church was small and our group was about the same

size as the congregation. I had never attended a Baptist or an exclusively African-American service before. We were welcomed warmly and our effort was praised. We were told several times that it doesn't matter what people wear to worship, a welcome reassurance, as we were a scruffy lot compared to the carefully dressed congregation. We sang a number of hymns, vigorously, encouraged each time to "throw *more* of ourselves into it." Any residual stiffness was dissolved by the ardent, participatory choruses of "Amen! Yes, Sister. You said it. Alleluia. Say it again, Brother. Praise the Lord!" As a couple of hours passed in that room, I felt the mounting of palpable faith, of the *foundness* of God, of confidence in the living presence. The members' support of one another appeared unconditional. People testified to the struggle of life—demonic forces challenged from all sides—but no one was alone. Set-backs were cause for stronger resolution.

* * *

The people who walk the streets because they are just walking; are they homeless? crazies? bums? prophets? They comment on who we are in our houses, our settled lives; they can mirror what is hard for us to see. One morning I noticed a middle-aged woman in a red cap and leather jacket walking along with us, and I moved up to join her. A patch on her sleeve said: *It's a beautiful day, but watch some bastard come along and fuck it up.* She and I fell into step.

She's glad we're for peace. She asks if anyone in our group is Jewish. She is. She lives in Hayward and is a Hell's Angel, but life is never right. She can't find the Jews she needs to talk to. Right now she's pursuing her man, who has run off. He's walking about half a block ahead of us. He's "dysfunctional," and she has to spend all her time trying to keep him out of trouble. She can't do it. Nobody will help anybody.

I tried to encourage her, but I sounded ridiculous to myself. At that point her man took a different route from ours, and she dropped off.

* * *

It was just nine in the morning when we approached Traders, one of the largest gun stores in the Bay Area. Lorenzo Carlisle, tall, suited, wearing a bright embroidered African cap, stood outside the door. Lorenzo, United Church of Christ Pastor, has participated in many nonviolent actions. He was concerned by a sign taped to the gun shop door with a quotation from Martin Luther King: *A right delayed is a right denied.*

"How *could* they pervert Martin Luther King like that? He was a nonviolent man and he died by a gun." King had been mentor and hero to Lorenzo during the Civil Rights protests.

Gradually more people assembled for our demonstration in front of the store. The press arrived. Traders opened its doors for business. We had phoned Traders before the walk began to tell them we were coming and

to ask if we could talk to them, but they weren't interested. "We're too busy making money," the manager had said. Now, a young employee seemed nervous and kept coming out to remind us not to block the door.

We set up a small speaker system and began a brief program. Wilson Riles spoke about the connection between local and global gun sales, and reflected on the loss guns cause to communities everywhere. We read a list of the names of nearly 200 people killed by guns in Bay Area cities in the last year, ringing a bell after each name. When the long, sad list was finished, Lorenzo sang a hymn—"Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"—and preached a homily. Many of us talked to the press. Finally we put our hands on the wall of the building itself, and Lee Williamson, Methodist pastor, performed an exorcism, praying that the violence in the building would leave and be replaced by goodness.



Lorenzo Carlisle, Cassie Scott. [Photo by Curt Grove]

Then Lorenzo invited the clergy present to go with him into Traders and demand that the Martin Luther King quotation be taken down from the door. About five of us walked in. The store was filled with rack after rack of guns. About 20 customers—men of all races—stood at the counter waiting for help. Lorenzo, friendly and assured, asked to speak to the manager. When people objected to his request, he handed them cards. "I'm Pastor at United Church. Drop by, Brother—we'll talk." When the manager appeared, Lorenzo told him he wanted the sign down, and that if it didn't come down today, he would have to picket every day until it did.

"Are you threatening us?" someone asked.

"No, I'm promising in the name of love."

The manager made no objection to our un-taping the sign. Lorenzo tore it into pieces so each of us could keep a fragment. We were just packing away the sound system when the police arrived. They had been called because we were a threat to Traders' business, but as it was clear we were leaving anyway, they drove off.

* * *

At the Hayward BART Station, we were joined by a large group from the Hayward Methodist Peace Fellowship. After our peace service, a police car drove up.

A cop stepped out and approached a tall, dark-skinned man, who held a sleeping bag under one arm and a paper bag in the other. The policeman pointed his finger at the man and lectured forcefully. The man looked from one side to the other, but never at the policeman. The paper bag seemed to be moving of its own accord. The police car drove off and the man turned to our group.

"Who will take Henrietta? Anyone can take her. The only rule is you can't kill her." As I approached, he opened the bag to reveal a hen, twisting her neck, blinking her tolerant yellow eyes to the sun. But no taker came forward.

I was tired, and at my suggestion the two of us sat down on a bench. Someone brought the man a peeled orange, and he offered me a section. Henrietta sat very still in her bag on the ground. The man told me he had rescued her from boys who were throwing stones at her. Then a woman had offered to buy her, but she would have killed and cooked her. He was determined to find someone to take good care of her, but the problem was the police: "They just go hunting for people to push around—always wanting someone to hassle, someone to put down, just to make them feel important." I called over to someone I knew to be a local resident, who might have some idea of a refuge for Henrietta. The two began to talk.

A few minutes later, I glimpsed the man wandering off, sleeping bag under arm, Henrietta gone.

* * *

The walk ended; seventy miles, seven days, many adventures. I was exhausted and sick from a flu we had contracted passing water bottles from one to another. While it was fine to have my own bed and quiet, I missed the gang, its steady beat and concerted purpose. And still there was the old question about activism: *So what?*

Carlos Fuentes said, "Cruelty is caused by failure of the imagination." How do we break out of habits of heart and mind enough to learn a little more of what we have not imagined?

A few days later, when I was somewhat recovered, I had occasion to ride BART into San Francisco. Musing, I scanned the faces about me, recalling the many faces of the walk. Suddenly there was a slight adjustment of vision; I could see the goodness in each face, young, old, however it was. How each person carried, along with the lines and scars of wounds and failed attempts, the simple, unselfish desire to be happy. It was comforting. I took it as a message from the peace walk and stopped fretting—we each do what we can, according to our particular calling, to bring good into the world. When I got home there was a message on my answering machine with the date of the first planning meeting for Peace Walk '95. ♦

Maylie Scott is a priest at the Berkeley Zen Center. She gives time to an AIDS center, a homeless shelter, and a variety of weapons protests.

IMPRISONED BY RAGE

by Micky Duxbury

Several months ago I was returning home on BART after an exhausting day at work. I was lucky enough to have a seat, and my hour-long train ride would be a chance to relax. Soon after I got on, two African American teenage boys sat down directly behind me and began playing loud music on a boom box. There was no place else for me to sit on the crowded train, so I decided to ask them to turn the music down. Knowing that any "attitude" at all would not be a good idea, I took a moment to quiet myself, then turned around and asked in as respectful a voice as possible, "Could you please turn it down a little?"

They turned the music down; I breathed a little thanks and relief. A minute later, they turned it back up, louder than it had been before. (I say *they* even though I recognize they were two individuals. I couldn't see their faces, and it felt like *they*.) I knew it would be foolish to say anything more—this was answer enough. I chose to stay seated and accept the blast, rather than stand. I was aware of some frustration but I didn't let it grow. This was a dynamic I thought I was familiar with: for these two African American youths, who I assumed had little self esteem and very few positive ways to express power, my small request had been an opportunity to set some terms.

About 10 minutes later they got up to get off. The next thing I knew, I was hit in the face with a donut and coffee. It sounds funny, writing this now—I can even laugh a little, as they might have laughed. White girl sitting on the train with pieces of honey-glazed donut on her face, coffee in her hair.

I was shocked. I felt humiliated, rageful, and victimized. I tried to clean myself up, and then I started to cry—not whimpering tears, but the kind that come up from deep in the belly, bringing everything along in their path.

The space I occupied on the train was too confining for the size of the rage pouring out of me, and I started to shake. This small violence (they could have had a gun) tapped into a well of rage that had been buried pretty effectively, or so I thought. Rage towards men? No, dare I say it, not just towards men in general, but towards black men in particular. Hatred was rising up my spine—hatred that in their powerlessness, they had to make me powerless; that in their victimization, they had to make me a victim.

The car was crowded with people of all colors, but nobody said anything to me. Was everyone paralyzed because the boys were black and I was white? Finally my stop came. Crying and averting my eyes, I left the train. I didn't want to see the faces of people who had said nothing, done nothing. Did I deserve this? Had I

no right to ask for my space?

As I walked to my car, I could hardly hold back the torrent of crying. This small violation had triggered the rage from a much bigger violation 20 years before when I was beaten and sexually molested by three black men in an attempted rape. It was 1972. I was an "anti-imperialist," they were "oppressed peoples," and I felt no right to my rage.

Once inside my car, the full strength of my anger came out, and I started to scream, "I hate you! I hate you!" Astounded by the intensity of my rage, I found myself shouting racist epithets. I had never let out the depth of hatred I felt for those three black men who kicked me repeatedly while I was down on the ground with one of them on top of me. They kept screaming "fucking white bitch!" and I kept screaming, "Please, brother, I didn't do anything to hurt you!"

Now I wanted to stand in front of the two young men on the BART train and scream at them until they understood what they had done. I hated them for the violence of the present and the violence of the past. I hated them for turning the key that opened the old wounds from years before. I hated them for making me

*I sat in my car, shaking, holding both
hatred and understanding.*

feel so vulnerable. I hated them for reminding me of the hatred inside myself.

But then the searing pain in my heart changed, and it was about this country, all of us, and the roots of violence that we refuse to talk about as a nation. I felt an overwhelming sadness that we have come to this. I saw myself imprisoned in racism and its effects—imprisoned in my hatred. I felt locked in my reaction to these angry young men, who seemed to have so little fullness inside their hearts that they responded to a request to turn down a radio as though it was an act of war.

I understood some of the helplessness that leads to despair, the emptiness that leads to self destruction. I sat in my car, shaking, holding both hatred and understanding. It was excruciatingly painful. And I felt compassion for myself, for all those years of denying my rage at the men who had violated me. Finally I was left with the knowledge that both me and the teenagers were trapped in a history that none of us had much to do with creating.

My sadness was compounded, knowing that many white people in this country feel this sometimes shameful combination of understanding and racism. Some of us hide in our fear, some of us leave the inner cities or take our white children out of public schools. Others, without understanding, turn to thinly veiled racist solutions like "three strikes and you're out," relying on prisons that can never address the horrible injustice in this

society. Mostly, I was left with a question: How do we, black and white, exercise understanding and compassion for the perpetrator of violence without accepting that behavior? How do we heal the hatred between us? ❖

Micky Duxbury has been doing AIDS work for almost 10 years. She began a counseling program for inmates at Santa Rita Jail who have HIV/AIDS. Active in solidarity movements since the Vietnam War, she is now trying to find more of a balance between self-healing and social and political activism.

FEAR AND THE OTHER

by Lewis Aframi

That the distinction between inside and outside, self and other is not absolute is a central facet of the Buddha's teachings. The racism of our society is present in each one of us; the hatred and rage in my neighbor can be found in me.

Micky Duxbury clearly put a lot of care and willingness to be vulnerable into the above piece. Yet, this black man sensed the racism of our society manifesting itself in the absence, and therefore the denial, of black subjectivity. The black men who appear in the article are defined solely by assumptions about powerlessness and oppression, by attempts to "understand" them, and by the generous but patronizing view of blacks as oppressed people who are not responsible for their karma. Additionally, black readers are served up a confession of hatred towards black men without any stated recognition that this might be painful to read—maddening really—that it might in fact spread the contagion of rage rather than contribute to healing.

Reading the article, I felt angry. Why must her legitimate rage find expression in racist terms? When will black agency and responsibility cease to be so difficult for the mind to grasp? The ability to understand violence without excusing it hinges on this recognition of the humanity of the perpetrator. Violent acts have internal causes no less than external, environmental ones. No matter how degrading the conditions in which many blacks live, we are responsible for our actions and accountable to our brothers and sisters. To deny this is to deny our humanity. I also felt apprehensive that her piece would confirm some readers in their blanket fear of black men, and thereby strengthen the forces of racism.

Instead of asking the question about healing the hatred between us—as if racism were an insufficient condition for hatred to arise in the heart—I would ask: where does the fear and hatred of blacks *really* come from? Why, when blacks are far more likely than whites to be targets of violence, are we so often portrayed in the media—as in Micky's article—as the perpetrators? And how can we end the racism that so imprisons and dehumanizes us all? ❖

Lewis Aframi is a Zen practitioner and staff associate at BPF.

TO REACH A READINESS

by Barbara Brodsky

In the sixties I spent a lot of time working with human rights. One day I was one of four participants in a sit-in to integrate a restaurant in a small town in the southern United States. There had been several such attempts in prior weeks; each was met with increasing violence. We all knew the risk of participation. Of course we had some fear.

We four spent all night in a small local church, surrounded by loving people, each of us coming to as deep a level of honesty about our egos and fears as was possible. We each knew that there couldn't be ego in this action, nor pride, nor need to prove ourselves. Such ego solidifies the self. In any moment where violence needs only a small flame to start it burning, ego becomes the spark.

In late morning we were driven to the restaurant, entered, and sat down. We were a middle age black couple, a young white man, and myself, also white. The place was empty except for the manager and ourselves.

Outside we could hear angry people gathering. We sat at the table for some time, hands joined, and together seemed to reach a readiness to meet this crowd. Each of us had come to a space of deep inner peace, of acceptance, even of the possibility of death. I know we each felt acceptance for our own fear and loving compassion for those who were threatened by our presence.

We walked to the door, still holding hands. Standing in the doorway, fear arose again as I watched that sea of angry faces. People held pipes and bricks. How could one not be afraid? But we had all learned deep lessons of non-duality through meditation, prayer, and mindful participation in many such demonstrations. We saw our fear and were not frightened by it. Love is a more powerful force than fear; the habit of love held strong.

Somehow the crowd could feel it. As we walked out, arms dropped to sides, and people stepped back. We walked through the crowd and I looked into so many eyes, saw so much fear, pain, and shame, but also dawning respect, not just for us but for themselves. There was no separation there. It was not our victory nor their loss. It was all of our victory over the forces of fear and hatred in ourselves, all of our joy, and all of our pain. ❖

[This anecdote is excerpted from a dharma talk on nonviolence.]

Barbara Brodsky is a vipassana teacher, Quaker, and longtime peace and civil rights activist. She lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Editor's Note: The preceding three pieces are the beginnings of an essential dialogue about the violence of racism, which we hope to continue in *Turning Wheel*. The next issue will contain a feature article written in response to Micky Duxbury's piece. Please write to us.

THE PRICE OF GASOLINE IN LAS VEGAS

by Bárbara Selfridge

Dear Reader,

What happened? I went to the Buddhist thing at the Nevada Test Site, non-Buddhist that I am, and I was all alienated and judgmental, but during the three days of conversations and activities I kept being moved and having insights and pretty soon I fell in love. It felt like I fell in love with all forty-five other participants.

The last day, when we stood in a circle next to the test site and bathed the baby Buddha and said our individual dedications and meditation—walked our way over to the cattle-guard, I was on air. I walked across, fell in love with the deputy who warned me to turn back or face arrest, prostrated myself to “The Jeweled Mountain” (our name for the test site after defining Buddhist environmentalism as thinking “There’s nowhere on earth it’s okay to spit”), got cited, and as I came back across the cattle-guard, I was greeted with a bell and a bow.

I WAS BOWED TO. How wonderful. I turned around and joined the bowers, bowing with them as the other arrestees returned.

“I’m doing it!” I thought. “I’m using THIS body to make people feel honored!”

But then what happened? I started writing this article for *Turning Wheel* and decided I had to leave out all the people I’d fallen in love with. Because at best the article would be a gossip sheet and make non-attendees feel excluded. At worst, if I described how odd and alienating I found people initially—because where’s the romance in falling in love with lovable people?—it would just beg for hurt feelings.

So I’d leave out the people.

I told myself I could still record my insights about nuclear weapons and activism, but I had to reshape everything so that those insights didn’t come out of my interactions

with the forty-five. (And that gave me an insight into all the things I’ve read that only quote what’s said in speeches and only describe nature or interactions with strangers. It’s not that those writers are any less people-oriented than I am, just that they’re protecting people’s privacy.)

I was also trying to be glad that by removing the forty-five love-affairs I had more room for facts. Like that 1994 is the world’s best chance for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. (While Mitterand’s still in power in France, the next Conference on Disarmament in Geneva really could come up with something, especially if we all apply a ton of pressure—petitions, protests, phone calls, etc.—before they convene on July 25.)

I could put in that fact and facts about the Western Shoshone and the down-winders and how Las Vegas is growing out over the desert, one walled development after the other.

I had lots of facts, but when I thought of putting them in an article, I began to be sorry I went.

Because I went to Nevada to participate in an anti-nuclear action, and as long as I was in love with the other forty-five people, that’s what it was. But as soon as I left them out, our Sunday morning witness at the test-site turned stupid: small and unseen and totally insignificant.

That’s what my despair says: that the nuclear machine is so huge and so entrenched that there’s nothing we can do, really, except repeat facts to each other, awful facts about the danger and the lies, and each time we repeat them, we pretend that we’ve “taken action,” or that we’re moving someone else to action (someone like you, dear reader).

The truth is that facts never make me take action. They make me take naps. So I’m starting over. This time I’m starting with the quote from Ghandi: “Almost anything you do will seem insignificant but it is important that you do it.”



Buddha’s birthday ceremony at the gate of the test site

Start Here

Because of a moratorium begun under Bush and extended by Clinton till September 1995, the United States is not currently testing nuclear weapons. We went anyway. (They *could* start up again; every day, 7,000 workers keep the test site *ready* to test.)

Some 45-50 of us gathered in Las Vegas on the occasion of Buddha's birthday to participate in a program prepared by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and the Nevada Desert Experience, an ecumenical group that has been holding test-site protests since 1981. Our three-day witness included an official Department of Energy tour of the test site, meditation sessions, information talks, discussion groups, a dharma talk, and a group-designed action on the final day.

Permission to Disagree

Our tour guide had a British accent so strong I couldn't understand him unless I watched his lips. That's why we could discuss disagreements, I thought: because the official mouthpiece for nuclear weapons testing wasn't raised American. No matter what we said, he wouldn't take it personally. And in that strong



Bomb shelter test [Photo by Jigme Palmo]

British accent he said he didn't think testing would ever resume there. Only his opinion, he said, and also his opinion that we protesters could have achieved that goal years earlier if we'd used DC lobbyists instead of test-site demonstrations. Perhaps now, he suggested, we should turn our efforts to conversion. The Nevada Test Site, he said, could be rededicated to develop solar energy and eventually supply a quarter of the country's energy needs.

It was funny how that suggestion enraged me. If I'm so powerful, I thought, I want some official acknowledgment. I want to see banner headlines: "Test Site Workers Beg Ban-the-Bomb Buddhists to Save Their Jobs."

What is Sangha?

A friend of mine has a story about a man screaming JESUS LOVES YOU!! at pro-choice marchers in

North Carolina. When my friend, as a march monitor, tried to introduce himself, the screamer snarled, "Get out of my face, asshole!"

This story perfectly reinforces my anti-religious upbringing. Hanging out with Buddhists doesn't. But I told myself I was going to feel like a non-Buddhist no matter what I did, so why deny myself the bodily pleasure of trying on the chants and bows, etc. Who would know I used the sitting session to do shoulder exercises?

And after Reb Anderson (Abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center) lectured on keeping your eyes open during meditation, I tried that too. The next time we sat, I looked around, taking one deep consciously-shared breath with each person in the room. It was very moving, though not—I discovered—what Reb was doing.

Open Eyes

Elsewhere in Reb's dharma talk, he took us through his effort to distance himself from the system responsible for making and testing nuclear weapons, and how he eventually saw the illusion in that distance. We are all *part of it*, just as the statues of Buddha all show him with his eyes open, being *part of it*.

Zen Master Seigen, when asked "What is the essence of Buddha's teaching?" replied: "What is the price of rice in Lu-Ling Province?" Maybe now, Reb said, we should ask "What is the price of gasoline in Las Vegas?"

Photo-Op

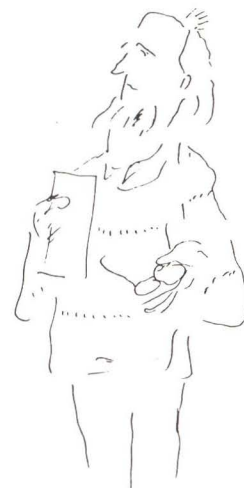
My idea for an *action*, when I thought the group was supposed to design one, was for us to fan out in downtown Las Vegas, each approaching ten strangers and letting them talk to us about nuclear testing. We wouldn't talk, just listen, like "The Listening Project" described in the BPF nonviolence handbook. And like the test site tour, it would push us up against the scars of nuclear testing, this time the psychic scars. ("This sounds *harder* than being arrested," somebody said at dinner.)

After we finished listening, we'd gather at the lion in front of the new MGM Grand Casino/Hotel, and we'd perform the ceremony Reb described for opening the eyes of statues of Buddha. That gigantic lion, open-eyed, would bear witness to both the Strip and the test site.

This would give the press a photo-op, and even if they made fun of us, it was better than being invisible.

The Long String

But no. I never raised my idea because really, our



Father Alain
by Davis TeSelle

action was already planned for the test site. Our only decisions: what kind of ceremony, whether and where we wanted to be arrested.

Father Alain (a peace activist with Pace Bene in Las Vegas) had a French accent even stronger than the tour guide's British accent, which again made me feel he was a visitor from a less wounded place.

When he put us in small groups, I was with Lana, who's from Vallejo, California, and Chuck from Provincetown, Massachusetts. We were feeling more sorrow than anger, and not particularly drawn to being arrested. Not effective enough. Not risky enough. Not our home issue. But why spend so much money to come so far and not be arrested?

Father Alain told us you have to see your arrest as one in a long string of the thousands and thousands of arrests at the test site. I remembered Thoreau saying that in a society where slavery is legal, the only place for a free man is in prison, and I felt better.

Arresting Facts

Federal authorities are annoyed that test site trespassers aren't being punished, but county authorities have basically stopped prosecuting nonviolent protesters. *Too much money, they say, too much trouble.* And this time, for the first time, they didn't even bother to segregate us into male and female holding pens. "Our walking meditation must have convinced them we're too slow to be sexual," one pen-mate suggested.

Giantismo

We held Buddha's birthday ceremony just outside the test site. One by one, each person went up to our desert altar and bathed the baby Buddha, and those who wanted to spoke a few words. When it was my turn, I told the circle that I wanted to let go of my *giantismo*, which is that sense that once I know of an injustice, it becomes my obligation to right it, and if the injustice remains unrighted, it becomes my fault it even exists.

I'm not a giant, I told the forty-five. I'm just here, *part of it.*

Afterwards I was thinking: *I am the Buddha who*



Davis TeSelle, *Approaching the test site*

needs her eyes opened, and I talked to my seatmate on the plane about how she was losing her 24-year job with Unocal, San Francisco, because the company was running away to Oklahoma.

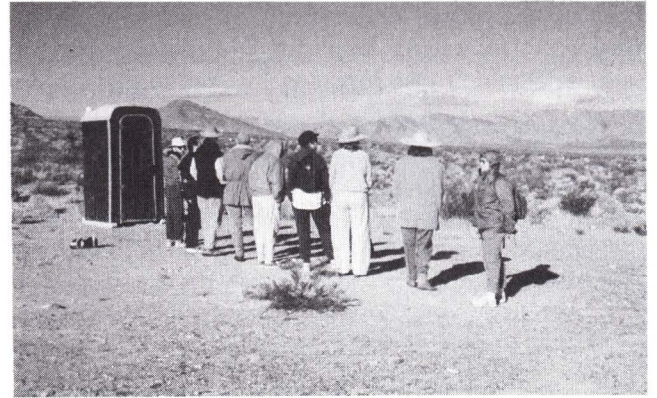
What is the price of gasoline in Las Vegas? I asked her. Not really, but I did mention our protest.

What It Takes

"We're thinking of coming back!" I'd called to the sheriff's deputies. "Maybe Hiroshima Day!" They'd laughed and the female deputy tried to keep her voice hard-edged when she called back: "We'll be here!"

Maybe then we'll do the listening/eye-opening action in downtown Las Vegas. And maybe, you know, this Hiroshima Day will be the one we point to. "That was it," we'll say. "That was the beginning of the Post-Nuclear Age." ♦

Bárbara Selfridge is a writer and paste-up artist with closer connections to BPF than this article would indicate.



Empty Bladder, Empty Mind

untitled

When I was a baby my heart was a tiny fish swimming in a gargantuan sea of things to come.

When I was a toddler my heart was a trout swimming in a large lake of thoughts and feelings.

Now my heart is becoming a salmon ready to go to the sea of the troubles I will have to face.

When I am old my heart will be a whale swimming in a sea of memories.

When I die God will become a whaler.

—Orion G. Misciagna, age 11

Orion is a BPF member who lives in Santa Cruz, California. He and his father were part of the BPF witness at the Nevada Test Site, and he read the above poem at our sharing circle on Saturday night in Las Vegas.

The Nevada Desert Experience Campaign for a
Nuclear-Weapon Free World proposes:

August 6, 1994—August 6, 1995

(fiftieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima)

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF REFLECTION

When the former archbishop of Brazil, Dom Helder Camara, visited the Nevada (Nuclear) Test Site in 1986, he said, "This is the site of the greatest violence on earth; therefore, it should be the site of the greatest nonviolence on earth. [Nearly 1,000 nuclear weapons have been exploded at the Nevada Test Site since 1952, making it the most heavily bombed nuclear battlefield on earth.] Again at the gates of the Test Site in 1991, he called on people everywhere to work toward a new millennium with no weapons of mass destruction, and enough food, clothing, shelter, and education for everyone on the planet.

In December 1992, in a closed-circuit television address to the employees of the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in California, Edward Teller congratulated people on the work they had done to "keep the world safe" and called for "another thousand years of nuclear weapons" to maintain that security. One year later, in December 1993, the new Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary opened the doors to the secrets of the Cold War with her Openness Initiative: she revealed 204 previously unannounced nuclear tests at the Nevada Test Site and released information about radiation experiments conducted by the government throughout the Nuclear Age.

At the Nevada Desert Experience, we are inspired by the prophetic vision of Dom Helder Camara, encouraged by the actions of Secretary O'Leary, and horrified by the scenario proclaimed by Edward Teller. We believe we have reached a crossroads in our nuclear history, the place where we can choose between the path of life and the path of death. We believe we can choose a world free of nuclear weapons and nuclear fear, a world where children can grow up with hope in the future.

Our first step in choosing this world will be to make peace with our past: to look clearly at our nuclear history of the past 50 years, to take responsibility for what we have done, and with the help and guidance of the great spiritual traditions of our planet, begin the healing of ourselves and the earth. We believe that people of faith, religious and spiritual leaders, and religious institutions have a unique role to play in making these concerns conscious and in activating people's consciences. Therefore, we call on all these individuals and groups to

join us in observing an International Year of Reflection on Nonviolence in the Nuclear Age from August 6, 1994 to August 6, 1995. We hope that this year can be a turning point for humanity where we can change our reality by laying down our swords and turning them into plowshares, by dismantling all nuclear weapons and beginning to cultivate a culture of peace. ❖

For further information about nonviolent witnesses and actions at the Nevada Test Site and elsewhere, as planned by the Nevada Desert Experience, or for suggestions on how to support the International Year of Reflection, please contact Pamela Meidell, Nevada Desert Experience, P.O. Box 220, Port Hueneme, CA 93044-0220. Phone: 805/985-5073; fax: 805/985-7563.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Ending nuclear testing is a crucial step towards diminishing the threat of nuclear war and ending the multi-national nuclear arms race. The world is now closer to achieving a Comprehensive Test Ban (CTB) than ever before. The Conference on Disarmament, an international agency connected to the U.N., will have its last meeting of the year in Geneva July 25-Sept. 7, and now is the time to urge them to negotiate a treaty, or at least an agreement-in-principle, during that session. It is particularly important that a CTB be negotiated before the final conference on extending the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in April 1995. If the nuclear nations keep testing nuclear weapons, how can they (we) expect the nuclear have-nots to sign an NPT? It's also important to get a CTB while Mitterand is still in office in France, because he is more open to signing a CTB than anyone who is likely to replace him. In order to add your voice to this effort, you can write to President Clinton, thanking him for extending the U.S. moratorium, asking him to announce September 7 as a target date to complete negotiation of a CTB, and urging deep cuts in funding for ongoing nuclear weapons research and development. And you can circulate the petition on the other side of this page and send it to the address printed at the bottom of the petition, by July 15. ❖

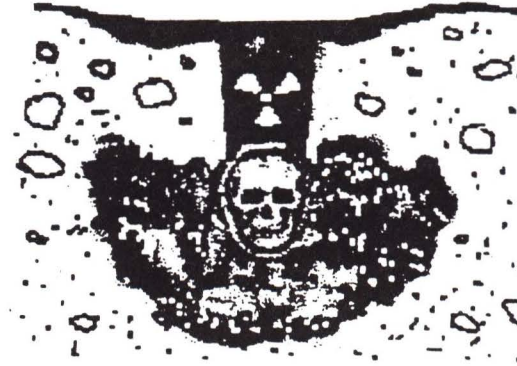


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One Million Signature Appeal to End Nuclear Tests



A petition to the leaders of the nuclear weapons countries:

We the undersigned urge you to complete and sign a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty outlawing all nuclear explosions by the end of 1994.

A Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty will:

- Prevent resumption of nuclear testing by nations that have stopped temporarily.
- Protect the environment from further underground nuclear explosions, each of which creates an uncontrolled nuclear dump.
- Save the world untold billions of dollars.
- Impede further development of nuclear weaponry.
- Contribute to efforts to de-legitimize and abolish nuclear weapons world-wide.

NAME	ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
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* This petition will be presented to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on July 25, 1994, the opening day of the year's final negotiating session. Return petitions before July 15 to: Western States Legal Foundation, 1440 Broadway, Suite 500, Oakland, CA 94612; (510)839-5877.

Bodies first*

The voice is wailing in a way
now thin and sharp, now bubbly.
"This is the voice of a child who is dying
of starvation," says a narrator
on the McNeil-Lehrer News Hour.
The child sits alone in a dark hut
staring at the videocamera
that comes nosing in.
Next to him on the floor,
his brother's corpse.
In a Mogadishu kitchen
an 8-year-old shoves food
into the mouth of a baby
who could be 1 or 2 but looks 100
bones of the head showing through
a strange fuzz on the skin.
They glance at the curious lens.
I am pushing hard
to get my book done.
It is about religious practice in an Asian country
and theories of cross-cultural study
the dense intertwining of culture with history
consciousness with skin, organs, bone.
I strive to hone each argument
to a fine edge
to impress my judges
and to scare my opponents.
I know my further life
of privilege and honor
depends on this.
But even say I give the games
of self-aggrandizement the slip
and bring forth liberating knowledge,
views that undo
violent modes of thought,
will this touch the baby
with visible hair on its face?
Will the warlords in Somalia read my book?
Will the men in suits on the Security Council read my book?
Will even my colleagues, pressed to distraction
by overcommitment and the need to produce
their own research
read my book?
If I weren't writing
the book, would there be time
to put my physical hand on the child's face,
to place food in its mouth
with my fingers?
My left arm is trembling
with too much computer use.
Damp little sparks are popping off
in my wrists, a danger sign.
My head grows large,
disproportionate, the body
weak as a 7-month baby's
in the womb, barely able
to sustain life
in the outside world.
A thin, sharp voice zings
through the air of my office,
lingering. It fades. It will return.

—Linda Hess

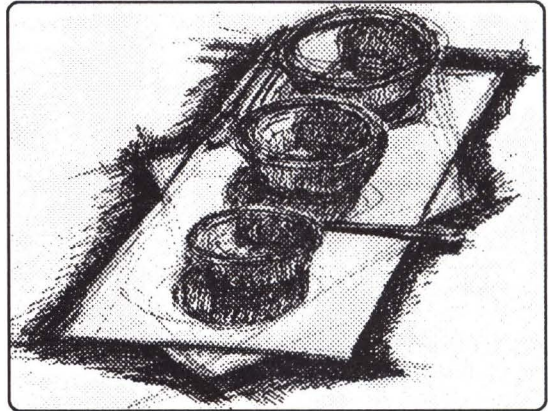
*Early in 1992, first film from the Somali interior broadcast on U.S. TV.

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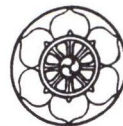
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Hidden Casualties: Environmental, Health and Political Consequences of the Persian Gulf War

Edited by Saul Bloom, John M. Miller, James Warner, and Philippa Winkler

Arms Control Research Center
North Atlantic Books, 1994, \$20

Reviewed by Sandy Eastoak

It may shock American Buddhists that the price of the Gulf War included U.S. support of China's policy in Tibet, bartered for control of the Security Council—a passing detail in this chronicle of pain.

In this book we also learn that intertidal invertebrates were wiped out from Abu Ali to Khafji; that oil lakes take a terrible toll on ducks, swallows, and “incredibly beautiful birds called bee eaters;” that in doing clean up work, Saudi men and women worked side by side; that 142 marine scientists from 15 countries took a 100-day damage assessment cruise; that a virtual news blackout shields us from knowing conditions in postwar Iraq; that money to analyze data is withheld; that oil fires may have been the cause of a violent cyclone in Bangladesh, severe flooding in China, and the coldest European spring on record; that the region is littered with depleted uranium, unexploded bombs, mines, and shells; that sewage backed up in Iraqi streets after pumping stations were destroyed; that the price of flour in Iraq rose 5,000%; that bombing industrial sites released hazardous materials into Iraqi soil, water, air, neighborhoods.

At the heart of Buddhist perception is the continuity of the human and non-human world. This book not only brings the fate of humans and non-humans into one comprehensive study, but informs us of growing international understanding that this continuity belongs at the heart of policies dealing with peace and war. The endangered hawksbill turtle searching among mines for an oil-free nesting beach, the Iraqi mother watching her child die for lack of food and medicine, a

new Jordanian proposal for global protection . . . these are all brought together in this book.

What I missed was the emotion appropriate to massive suffering. Expert testimony on both human and ecological suffering is given in objective and often quantified terms. Evidence of pain is piled thick, but isn't breathed as pain. I kept longing for breaks in the text—interlaid poems, letters, field notes, nature writing—to aerate the compaction of bad news. As an American far away, I would have been helped in understanding the disaster of the oil spills by a naturalist's prewar wonder at shorebirds along the Saudi coast—and a fisherman's postwar lament. I would have been helped in grasping the struggles of Iraqis under sanctions by a prewar diary description of pleasures in a Baghdad restaurant—and a postwar letter about tapping contaminated water mains.

The strength of the book is that very different viewpoints are expressed, sampling the scope of events and interpretations. Some authors know that the “impact on the Iraqi people cannot be fully understood until one encounters them inside their homes.” Some scientists let their feelings about birds, desert fox, the futility of war break through their facts and figures. But the consistent tone is “professional,” and in my opinion suffers from our inordinate respect for “objectivity.”

The authors can't really be taken to task. They did a monumental job, already bucking societal norms. Yet if we seek to uproot war and grow a wise and compassionate peace, we must go further. Currently, there is a dichotomy between unreliable sensationalism and dry objectivity. Neither helps us turn conflict into peace. As we question our reading, discuss it, and seek supplementary materials, we must wed reliable fact to heartfelt revelation.

The final section is a brief overview of recommendations. Perhaps the most important is that international law be applied *impartially*. One contributor suggests that if the American people, Congress, and the world community had held our government accountable for illegal actions in Vietnam, we may have prevented the Gulf War. As Buddhists, we learn to value all beings equally with ourselves. We need to take our nondiscrimination into global politics, ending bias and double standards, requiring all governments and other institutions to heed the laws and principles protecting all beings.

Is it possible to say of a chronicle of massive suffering, “You've got to read this book?” I share the editors' conviction that to stop such wars many people must know the consequences. However difficult and painful to read, this information is crucial. Kanzeon, the bodhisattva of compassion, needs a few thousand extra ears on this one—if you can, please offer yours. ❖

Sandy Eastoak is an artist, environmentalist, home school parent, and Zen practitioner living in Santa Rosa, California. She is the author of a new book about family practice, Dharma Family Treasures.



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COORDINATOR'S REPORT

A monk asked Seigen, "What is the great meaning of Buddhism?"

Seigen replied, "What is the price of rice in Luling?"

This enigmatic dialogue is recorded in the *Book of Serenity*, a famous collection of Zen koans, or public cases, compiled a thousand years ago in China. At our Buddha's Birthday Witness in Nevada, Tenshin Reb Anderson of San Francisco Zen Center updated Seigen's response by asking, "What is the price of gasoline in Las Vegas?" Barbara Selfridge also writes about this elsewhere in the issue.

During our three days in Nevada, about 50 of us from BPF, including the whole staff and almost half the board, toured the Nevada Nuclear Test Site courtesy of the Department of Energy, stopping to view atom bomb craters and twisted relics of 1950s atmospheric testing, pausing at the test site commissary in Mercury for vending machine snacks at 1960 prices. We meditated together, talked about the dharma and disarmament strategy, shared meals cooked by the Catholic Workers. At night, after our business was done, some of us made slightly guilty forays into the glitterdome, to see at least a bit of what people usually come to Vegas to see.

The last morning we met just outside the test site gates and built an altar on stones left by thousands of others who had come over the years to witness this scarred and beautiful place. We placed a statue of the infant Buddha in a bower of branches and flowers, surrounded by offerings of food, water, and words written on scraps of paper. Each of us bathed the Buddha and spoke our hearts, for just that moment purifying the desert, ourselves, and all beings whose lives are touched by the testing that has gone on here. Then we walked in a long slow line to the gate. Some crossed over and were arrested, others turned aside and continued a circle of walking meditation and witness on the legal side of the line. After the ringing of 108 bells, each side bowed to the land and to each other. I'll never forget these moments.

What is the price of rice in Luling? What is the price of gasoline in Las Vegas? These are urgent questions about interdependence. To come together for this witness we drove cars and flew on airplanes to Las Vegas, taking advantage of expensive and wasteful technologies and the lowest-priced gas in the world. We have such privileges partly because of the nuclear weapons we have quietly but steadily used to intimidate other nations. So, even as we do the work of peace, we are embedded in a system of war. At best we can look directly at the painful truth of our own nearly unavoidable complicity, and try to work a transformation from the deepest roots of soci-

ety. Of course we hope to succeed at this work, but finally we do it regardless of success or failure.

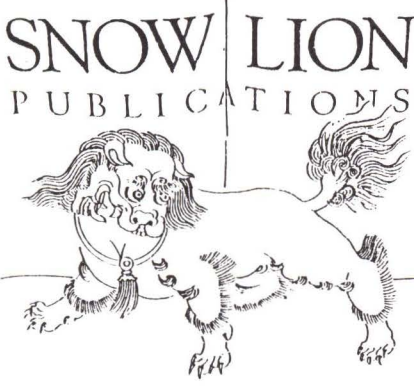
An ocean away, the war in Southeast Asia is not over. On Saturday, May 1, the peace walk in Cambodia, Dhamma Yietra III, led by Samdech Preah Maha Ghosananda, was caught in a crossfire between Khmer Rouge and government forces in Batambang Province. A Cambodian monk and nun were killed, several others wounded and a number of Westerners (including several close friends from INEB) were briefly detained by the Khmer Rouge. You can find further details in the Readings section of this issue. But the same crossfire has been raging for 15 years. As part of our "great power" game and plain vindictiveness towards Vietnam, the United States has quietly been arming the very factions that are now killing each other, while publicly excoriating the Khmer Rouge for mass murder. This time it happens that our Dhamma brothers and sisters stood in the path of violence. But the crime is no worse than the everyday death toll of those we may never know.

Several months ago U.S. trade restrictions were lifted against Vietnam. That very day Asian newspapers touted a "cola war" between Coke and Pepsi, each vying for the largest market share. And only yesterday, NPR radio reported the suicide of Lewis Puller, Marine veteran and Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Fortunate Son*, an autobiographical account of his time in Vietnam. When he was 48, the physical and psychological wounds from a war he fought a quarter of a century ago were more than he could bear, despite the inspiration he had given to many others over the years.

Again, we can ask about the price of rice in Luling. What is our acknowledged or unacknowledged relationship to these events? What price do we pay, what dubious benefit do we derive from complicity in a system that arms all sides for profit, sells sugar water and the good life to people whose dreams have been stolen, and stands by while its sons and daughters take their own lives in anger or desperation? At last, what can we do that promotes peace, without falling into blame, bitterness, and another cycle of violence?

An experiment to suggest before closing this column—In the BPF office we have a short sitting each workday at about two o'clock. We shut off the lights, phones, computers, printers, etc., and sit quietly for just ten minutes. Sometimes it's hard to do. There's so much going on, such busy-ness, that it seems impossible to set these things aside for even a few minutes. But it's really quite simple. Please join us wherever you are—at home, at the office—at two o'clock California time. We can all keep each other in mind. If you try this practice, let us hear about it. We like to know who is sitting with us in the measureless meditation hall. ♦

—Alan Senauke



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CHAPTER NEWS

In March, East Bay BPF co-sponsored an Interfaith Service for Peace with Berkeley Zen Center and the Bay Area Interfaith Council. Sabbath candles were lit in the BZC zendo to begin the program, and representatives of Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Islamic, and Sikh faiths participated with words, chanting, and music.

The chapter organized one of its famous waffle breakfasts—this time with the additional offering of foot massages—to raise funds for “Peace Walk 94,” a week long walk from Richmond to Livermore, California, focusing on the need to face enormous problems of violence and environmental degradation in our communities, and the ways that our local problems are linked to national and international issues of arms production and proliferation. [See article, page 31.]

Members also helped serve homeless people at an interfaith service and dinner outside San Francisco City Hall. The Religious Witness with Homeless People is calling for an end to San Francisco’s oppressive Matrix program to remove homeless people from the streets, calling instead for “the creation of policies that uphold the dignity and sacredness of all people.”


Sonoma County BPF is taking part in a county-wide day of nonviolence on May 20, a model that BPF chapters might propose in their own locales.

With regret and thanks for past efforts, we note that the **Durham BPF Chapter** has been inactive in recent months and is unable to find someone to continue as the chapter contact. But we know that with or without a formal chapter affiliation the work of compassion and dharma continues to be strong in North Carolina. Gassho.

Cherry Blossom BPF, in the Washington D.C. area continues their year-long study from *Path of Compassion*. Some members are volunteering to staff a van that feeds the homeless in D.C. Chapter members are also helping to organize a weekend retreat, June 17-19, in Charlestown, West Virginia, with Dai-en Binnacle, a Soto Zen nun and experienced teacher, who leads the Mt. Equity Zendo in Pennsylvania and is involved in prison work. For information about this retreat, call Mitchell Ratner at 301-270-8353. ❖

BPF BOARD NOMINATIONS

We are starting our nomination process early this year so as to have more time to fill vacant places on the board for next year. Several places will be open, both nationally and locally. The local board meets monthly and acts as an executive committee for the whole organization. If you’d like to nominate a candidate or wish to serve yourself, please send a letter including name, phone, qualifications, and details of practice. We’re looking for a balance of skills, gender, ethnic background, and other factors. Thanks for your participation.



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"In your daily life, please accept yourself as you are and your life as it is. Be intimate with yourself . . . take good advantage of every chance you have to be a really intimate being . . ."

-Zen Master Taizan Maezumi, Roshi

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ANNOUNCEMENTS & CLASSIFIEDS

Announcements

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

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

NEEDS OF HOMELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN. Can you donate personal care items, towels, washcloths, sheets, blankets, or cereal/soup bowls, to help the people served by the Women's Daytime Drop-in Center in Berkeley? For more information, please contact the center at 510/548-2884, or 510/548-6933.

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

TO SEND LITERARY materials to prisoners: Prison Library Project, 976 W. Foothills Blvd. #128, Claremont, CA 91711.

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

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

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

VOLUNTEER M.D.'S AND NURSES are needed to provide outpatient care at the Tibetan Clinic, a small facility in Bir, India, administered by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Minimum commitment: 1-2 months. Contact Barry A. Samuel, M.D., 18324 Newell Rd., Shaker Heights, OH 44122.

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

CHUSHI GANGDRUG is the organization that escorted the Dalai Lama and others in their flight from Tibet.

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

PEN PALS FOR PRISONERS: Men of various ethnic backgrounds incarcerated in federal prisons are seeking Pen Pals. For further information contact: Families in Action For Incarceration Reforms, 29 John St., Suite 1405, New York, NY 10038 USA. Tel: 212/233-8987; Fax: 212/233-7941.

Classifieds

NEW THERAVADA LAY MINISTRY Project. Traditional Buddhist monasticism has had limited appeal in the West but a need remains for trained and ordained lay Theravada dharma teachers, chaplains, and ministers. A lay group in the U.S. is collecting information on the prospects for this ministry for men and women. We need help in assessing your concerns, criteria, need for a seminary, etc., for North American Western Buddhists, Euro-Buddhists, Asian Americans, etc. For a questionnaire, please contact: Mr. R.A. Reed, Denver Central Vipassana Group, 1566 S. Dover Ct. Lakewood, CO 80232.

MEDITATION AND LIBERATION one-day retreat for people of color sponsored by the Interracial Buddhist Council. Sunday, October 9, 1994 at Spirit Rock Center in Woodacre, CA with Michelle Benzamin-Masuda and Jack Kornfield. Information: 510/869-2767.

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

VEN. DHYANI YWAHOO:

Native American and Buddhist teachings from visiting Cherokee Elder. Friday July 1, 7:30 pm, Holy Redeemer Church, Berkeley. \$10. Saturday July 2, 10:00 am—5:00 pm, Holy Redeemer Center, Oakland. \$75. For more information: 415/456-6896.

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

ALL-BUDDHIST MONASTIC

Conference. This will be a conference for ordained monastic sangha, of any Buddhist tradition, to be held at Land of Medicine Buddha in Soquel California, July 8-10, 1994. During the weekend we will meet other monks and nuns, explore our common issues, strengths, obstacles, solutions, and resources, discuss what it means to be ordained in the West, and practice together. We will emphasize finding ways to support and strengthen our respective lifestyles and practices, so that our lives can be of most benefit to ourselves and to others. For information, please contact Ven. Jigme Palmo, c/o FPMT Central Office, P.O. Box 1778, Soquel, CA 95073. Tel: 408/476-0865; fax: 408/476-4823.

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

ADOPTION: After years of trying to adopt without success, a loving San Francisco Bay Area couple seeks your help in finding a baby. Call Micky and Steve collect: 510/848-0240.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ZEN

students to study in Hawai'i with Robert Aitken Roshi while living in a Zen resident community at Koko An Zendo of the Honolulu Diamond Sangha. Some single and double occupancy rooms (\$400-550) may be available beginning June 1995. Located in Manoa Valley near university, bus stops. Call or write Honolulu Diamond Sangha, 2747 Waiomao Road, Honolulu, HI 96816; 808/735-1347.

STILL TALKING about forming a community? We are interested in joining or beginning a Buddhist, spiritually based community devoted to social change work. Would like to talk with anyone with similar interests who is also ready. Activist credentials, spiritual practice, willing to relocate. Call Margaret or Gary, 408/753-1874.

LONELY BUDDHIST

prisoner wants a woman Buddhist pen pal. Arthur Weathers #246107, Central C.I., 4600 Fulton Mill Rd., Macon, GA 31213-4099.

A CALL TO ARTISTS:

"Liberation By Seeing," an exhibit of contemporary Buddhist art. Oct.-Nov. '94 at the American School of Japanese Art in Santa Rosa, CA. For a prospectus send a SASE to: The Gold Ridge Sangha, 1885 Burnside Rd., Sebastopol, CA 95472. Entries by Aug. 26.



Shoshone elder Bill Rossi & Jigme Palmo in Las Vegas. Drawing by Davis TeSelle.

Gratitude

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

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

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