TURNING WHEEL

Journal of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship *Summer 2000 $5.00*

Not Turning Away

BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP
P.O. BOX 3470
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BUDDHISTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

PLUS: AN INTERVIEW WITH BO LOZOFF

From the Editor

What *are* human rights, anyway? And who says we have them? When egg and sperm united and we each took human birth, did we come into the world clutching in our tiny fist a voucher for 12 years of public schooling and all our immunizations?

According to Buddhist teaching, to be born human is to be born to a life of suffering and dissatisfaction, not to be born to a life of guaranteed health care.

If humans have rights that other sentient beings don't have, it's because we make social contracts with each other. And in different times and places, different social contracts pertain. Human rights are relative, not absolute. In the Declaration of Independence it says, "All men (sic) are created equal, and are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights," including "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." But actually, we have these rights not because God gave them to us, but because our "founding fathers" made an *agreement* that God gave them to us, and because they were prepared to struggle for them.

We have also agreed, in the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that people have a right not to be enslaved, but to have "freedom of person." But what about prisoners? Society has taken away the freedom of some people so that the rest will, presumably, have greater freedom from harm. We promise freedom of religion, but Christian Science parents aren't allowed, by the government, to deny their children medical care.

Human rights are a promise we make to each other, and we need to work to keep the promise. It doesn't keep itself.

We say we have the right to an education and health care. But whose duty is it to provide them to us? Human rights imply human responsibilities. You can't have one without the other. If people in my society have the right to an education, and I am a propety owner, I must help pay for that education with my taxes. We could use a good deal more emphasis on the responsibility side.

I recently wept my way through the screening of a film called *Well Founded Fear*, about immigrants seeking political asylum in the U.S. The film, a project of the Television Race Initiative, is being shown on public television in June. It was filmed in an INS office in New York City. Applicants for asylum from all over the world talk in tiny cubicles with INS agents who ask them what kind of torture they experienced, and who then decide whether they are lying. I wanted *all* the applicants to get asylum, whether they were telling the exact truth or not.

But just one in five applicants is found to have a "well founded fear of persecution" in their homeland and is granted asylum. A sympathetic INS agent listens to a pregnant Algerian woman, with a toddler in tow. She says her family is targeted for persecution by religious fundamentalists, but the translator doesn't translate the part about her particular family. It doesn't appear to be a deliberate omission, just carelessness. The agent is one of several in the film who take their job seriously, and who listen with open hearts. Still, he concludes that the woman is in no greater danger than all the rest of her countrywomen, and he denies her asylum. (He says to the camera, "How do I feel? I feel like shit!")

At the end of the film, there are shots of the Statue of Liberty, with her invitation: "Give me...your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." The film reminds me that we're not keeping the promise of liberty very well. And, at the same time, that people *do* have rights in the United States that they don't have in other places.

Instead of taking human rights for granted, we need to keep on constructing, reconstructing, repairing, and remodeling this house of rights and responsibilities. ❖ —*Susan Moon*

Coming themes for *Turning Wheel:*
Fall '00: Buddhists of Asian Descent in the West. Deadline: July 3, '00.
Winter '00–'01: Aging. Deadline: October 2, '00.
Spring '01: Buddhism in the Americas. Deadline: January 2, '01.
Summer '01: Karma. Deadline: April 1, '01.

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Cover photo by Alan Senauke
Refugee children on the Burma border

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LETTERS

Please write to us. We welcome your responses to what we print. When you think we are one-sided, or leave out important perspectives, let us and our readers know. Tell us what you like, too. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

Buddhism and Class

I've been thinking about the issues of class and privilege brought up by Joe Parker in the Spring *TW*. I don't dispute the points that Mr. Parker makes. I myself have had to struggle to afford to practice in the way that I would like to. I've had to request discounts and scholarships, and have had to forego going on retreat because I couldn't afford it.

But I'd like to suggest a second perspective. It's true that I cannot afford to participate fully in the activities of the Dharma center I belong to, but what I want to know is, what can we, as Black people, do to make Dharma practice more accessible? Lobbying the predominantly White convert centers to adjust their policies is one thing (and I'm glad that there are people doing this work), but I'm personally more interested in hearing Black folks start talking about creating alternatives. And when it comes to the communal power of Black communities, we do have the resources to create alternative institutions that will be organized from the ground up to make the practice accessible. All we need is sufficient interest in the Dharma on the part of enough Black folks.

I am particularly sensitive to language that I experience as empowering and language that I experience as disempowering. Language that locates the center of power over my life (say, my ability to practice the Dharma) in the hands of others is language that I experience as disempowering. OK, so I can't go on retreat as much as other Buddhists do, I can't participate fully in the life of the more retreat-oriented convert Buddhist communities, but this does not mean I cannot practice the Dharma. Perhaps one of the reasons I am drawn to the Tibetan tradition is the emphasis it places on internal factors such as motivation. Accordingly, person "A" could be going to retreats left and right, motivated by an attitude of spiritual materialism or a narcissistic desire for personal peace, while person "B" is quietly meditating at home, attending lectures that are offered freely or by donation, and watching her mind throughout the day in the effort to purify her motivation so that the practice she does get to do is truly Dharma, especially Mahayana Dharma.

Maybe it's a question of audience. When writing to a predominantly White audience it may be more useful to highlight the ways the communities are structured so as to hinder access to people with fewer economic resources; but when writing to a Black audience, it may be more important to stress what we *can* do, despite the conditions in the external world.

—Lewis Woods, Berkeley, California

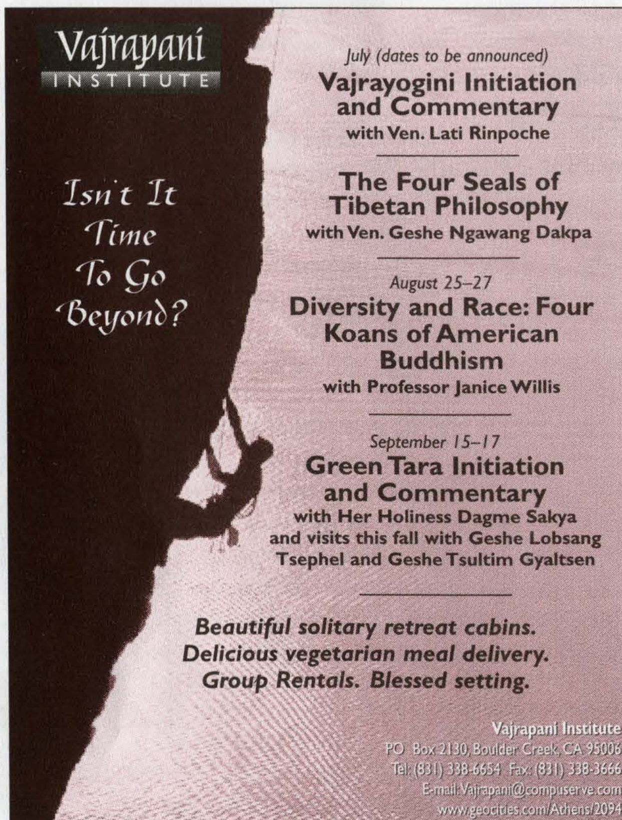
Today, I received the Spring *Turning Wheel* about class. I strongly recommend that anyone with access to the web check the World Socialist Web Site of the International Committee of the Fourth International: *www.wsws.org*. I also recommend reading *Globalization and the International Working Class—A Marxist Assessment.*

I have read *Turning Wheel* for some years and have marched in many anti-racist and peace demonstrations, sometimes with Buddhists. Unless the overall reasons for suffering in the world are clarified in terms of the ICFI's Trotskyist analysis, many people will feel that they are walking around in circles. It seems vital to understand the analysis before embarking on steps to put matters right, or more harm than good might follow for working people. The slogan "Workers of the world unite!" gains in importance every day. How many Buddhists agree with that?

—David Taylor, via email

Turning Wheel has always been challenging and inspiring for me, but the Spring issue is one of your best. Class is taboo to discuss in this country. It was brave of you to tackle it, and your contributors were very brave to discuss it so openly. I hope that this is the first of several issues on this subject. We all need to be educated about the impact of class differences—especially with respect to our own practice and access to the Dharma among other class groups. I can't thank you enough for raising this issue.

—Stephen Wilder, New York, New York ❖



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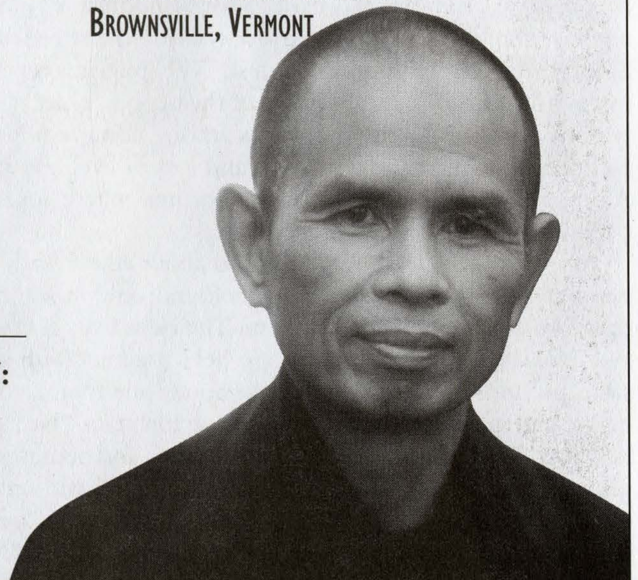

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NEWS FROM INDRA'S NET

Massachussetts Burma Law

The Massachussetts Burma selective purchasing law has been a key human rights tool. The law, modeled on legislation that was successful in putting economic pressure on the apartheid regime in South Africa, bars companies that do business in Burma (thus supporting the military dictatorship there) from receiving state contracts. But last November, European and Japanese companies persuaded the European Union and the Japanese government to challenge the law as an unfair trade barrier, as defined by the World Trade Organization. At the same time, the National Foreign Trade Council, a group representing 500 American companies doing business abroad, filed a suit against the law, alleging that it is unconstitutional.

The U.S. Federal Appeals Court in Boston struck down the Massachussetts Burma law, agreeing with the coporate arguments. In March, the case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, where a decision—which will have far-reaching effects on future strategies for human rights work—is expected by July. The Clinton Administration has gone on record as opposing the Massachussetts Burma law. —*M.D.*

✍ ACTION ALERT! ✍

Contact Vice President Gore, urging him to issue a statement opposing the Clinton Administration's position on the Massachusetts Burma Law: Vice President Albert Gore, The White House, Washington, DC 20500.

Dhamma-Yatra in Thailand

This April, for the fifth year in a row, Buddhist monks and laypeople walked for three weeks along the shore of Songhkla Lake, Thailand's largest. The pilgrimage is intended to strengthen the voice of the people, especially the poor, and nurture networks among communities facing environmental destruction and loss of livelihood. Along the way, organizers set up forums where local people, Buddhist and Muslim, spoke.

At one such forum, villagers talked about edible birds' nests and the birds—a sort of swift found only in some parts of East Asia—that build them. The birds live on five lake islands. Their nests, which are held together with a saliva produced by the females, take about one month to make, and are prized as a precious ingredient in "bird's nest soup." In six more weeks, eggs will hatch and nestlings grow to the point where nests can be collected without harming the birds. If its nest is removed before eggs are laid, the female builds another—but not as well. If that nest is removed again, she will build a third, still poorer, and eggs and some chicks will splatter on the rocks below.

The Ran Nok Laemthong Co.—a family-owned, politically well-connected conglomerate—holds the rights to the nests nationwide. Local people are forbidden on the islands and armed guards will kill those suspected of "poaching." Laemthong only hires harvesters from elsewhere, claiming locals could "steal" nests.

Local communities receive about 10 percent of the taxes paid by the company, and a very small portion of the profits. The nests sell for $1,200 per pound in Singapore and twice that in Los Angeles. Laemthong harvests three times a year, so the bird population is dropping. Local people feel they could do better than Laemthong at harvesting the nests in sustainable ways, and that one company should not be the main beneficiary of this public resource.

The Thai constitution stipulates that local people have the right to use and oversee local resources. The company and complicit government officials clearly violate both the law and Buddhist precepts of non-harming and non-stealing. In discussing ways to return the concession to ordinary villagers, meeting participants spoke of how easily the situation could erupt into violence, as powerful local people (often with criminal connections) try to wrest control for themselves. —*A.H.*

Source: Dispatches from Santikaro Bhikkhu, on the Fifth Dhamma-Yatra Bulletin: *www.suanmokkh.org.*

U.S. Sanctions in Iraq

The U.S. claims to be the protector of human rights around the world, but perhaps no action causes more needless suffering and death than our imposition of total economic sanctions on countries such as Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba.

Iraq, for example, has been reduced to 10 percent of its pre-1990 economy by U.S.-imposed sanctions. All the Oil-for-Food programs and humanitarian aid in the world will never make up for a functioning economy. Over 1.5 million Iraqis have died due to our sanctions over the past 10 years, most of them children. According to UNICEF, an Iraqi child dies every 10 minutes of malnutrition or disease resulting from critical shortages in nutritious food, safe drinking water, and medicine. Economic sanctions are a deadly form of warfare against defenseless civilians. Ironically, we have learned how to kill people by "peaceful means."

Though the Clinton administration blames Saddam Hussein for the need for these sanctions, it overlooks the fact that the sanctions help to lock him in power. Some argue that if Saddam would meet our demands to get rid of weapons of mass destruction and/or step down, sanctions would be lifted. But since chemical, biological, and radioactive materials can be stored in containers smaller than shoeboxes, it would be impossible to find and destroy all of them.

In February, 70 members of Congress called on President Clinton to lift the economic sanctions. Currently, Bill HR3825, which calls for providing the people of Iraq with access to food and medicine, has been referred to the House Committee on International Relations. —*D.S.*

✍ ACTION ALERT! ✍

- Write a letter to your congressperson and ask him or her to support HR3825.
- Learn more by looking at the websites of the International Action Center (founded by Ramsey Clark): *www.iacenter.org/iraq.htm*; and the Education for Peace in Iraq Center: ***http//leb.net/epic.***

International Justice

Disappointment and anger greeted the news that British authorities were allowing Augusto Pinochet to fly home to Chile rather than deporting him to Spain to face charges there. Few doubt that the British government acted out of national interest, not international human rights law. The case will nonetheless have a profound effect. It firmly establishes that signers of the United Nations convention against torture have the right to try foreign dictators charged with atrocities.

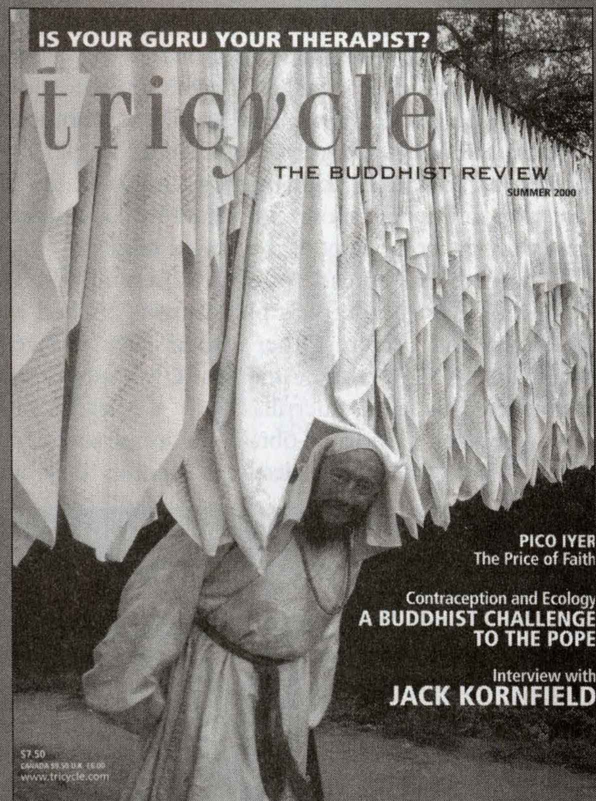
In one manifestation of this change, Senegal is poised to become the first country to try a foreign head of state. Last February, a Senegalese court indicted Hissein Habre, former president of Chad, on torture charges. Habre, ousted from Chad following an eight-year regime marked by killings, torture, and disappearances, took refuge in Senegal in 1990.

The vice president of the Chadian Labor Confederation, Yousnos Mahaddjir, who was tortured by Habre's security police, said the Senegalese judge's decision was a "triumph for those who are no longer with us. My friends who were tortured, the people I saw die in jail, have finally achieved some justice."

The point of justice is not vengeance, nor punishment, but the healing that comes for both the victims of atrocities and society when the truth is brought into public consciousness. If the cries of torture victims are never heard outside the torture chamber, then the suffering of survivors can never be soothed and the potential for awakened and compassionate action is stifled in all of us. This understanding has led human rights activists in Brazil, Guatemala, Argentina, South Africa, Rwanda, Cambodia and other countries to risk, and sometimes lose, their lives to gather evidence and make it public.

Perpetrators must be held to account, but support from Western countries kept Habre in power. Chad received substantial support from France throughout Habre's presidency. The United States let France shoulder "Western responsibilities" in Chad until the 1980s, when it started sending arms to Habre to fight Libyan "expansionism."

Human rights violations continue under Habre's successor, Idriss Deby, but U.S. support is unlikely to go away: the World Bank is proposing that Exxon-Mobil and Chevron, among others, develop oil fields in Southern Chad and build a pipeline to the Cameroon coast. The State Department aid request for Chad reads, "U.S. interest in Chad's economic development is spurred in part by



possibilities of U.S. firms' involvement in extracting and transporting oil reserves from Southern Chad." —*A.H.*

Human Rights for the U'wa

The U'wa, a community of about 8,000 who live in the cloud forests of the Colombian Andes, hunt, fish, gather plants, and grow crops on a reservation one-sixth the size of their original territory. In 1995, Colombia granted Occidental Petroleum the right to explore for oil on U'wa ancestral land. The U'wa threatened to commit suicide by walking off a cliff if Occidental started drilling. Last August, they issued a declaration stating: "We are seeking an explanation for this 'progress' that goes against life. We are demanding that this kind of progress stop."

An Occidental pipeline, built just north of U'wa land in 1987, has spilled 1.6 million barrels of crude oil. Water everywhere tastes of oil. The pipeline was bombed 79 times in 1999 alone by guerrillas seeking to expel foreign interests. Massacres, kidnappings, and incidents of torture have multiplied, most committed by paramilitary groups, with the complicity of the armed forces.

The violence has spread to U'wa communities. In 1997, their elected leader was pulled from his bed by hooded men and beaten. Other leaders have received death threats. In 1999, three American U'wa supporters were murdered by leftist guerrillas.

Last September, Occidental obtained a license to drill its first well. U'wa watched helplessly as workers built an access road and several hundred armed Colombian soldiers positioned themselves at the construction site and in surrounding land. Then, unexpectedly, a Bogota court ruled in March that drilling a well would violate the U'wa's right to life and issued an injunction against Occidental.

But this is a fragile victory. Occidental is appealing. The Colombian government, under pressure to repay its international debt, is intent on increasing oil production. The Clinton administration is requesting $1.6 billion in aid for Colombia, 80 percent of it military, described as a one-time emergency measure for the "war on drugs." But the more likely motive is access to oil. A 1997 National Security policy report called Colombia's oil reserves a "vital interest" of the United States. In the past, the U.S. has acted to ensure the safety of "vital interests" with either direct intervention or military aid. Occidental is actively lobbying Congress to approve the aid package. —*A.H.*

✍ ACTION ALERT! ✍

• Contact President Clinton to express opposition to military aid to Colombia: The White House, Washington, DC 20500; phone: 202/456-1111; fax: 202/456-2461, email: <president@whitehouse.gov>.

• To find out more about the U'wa, see the website of the Rainforest Action Network: *www.ran.org* ❖

Researched and written by Annette Herskovits, Daniel Stone, and Maia Duerr.

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What You Can Do

Human Rights

The term "human rights" means different things to different people. What *do* we mean by "human rights." Let's be careful not to take our human rights for granted, and let's treat one another in a way that consciously recognizes our mutual human rights.

I. Learn about human rights

When we talk about human rights, we often frame the conversation in terms of human rights *abuses*. We can also look at the ways in which human rights are nourished by a society. Find out what rights are internationally agreed upon as human rights by reading the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. Obtain copies from Human Rights USA Resource Center, 310 Fourth Ave. South, Ste. #1000, Minneapolis, MN 55415, or look it up on the U.N. website at: *www.un.org/Overview/rights.html*. Did you know, for example, that the list includes the right to leave one's country, to return to it, and to seek asylum from persecution in another country?

II. Practice looking deeply at suffering

For many of us, our primary source for learning about human rights in our country and around the world is the mass media. Notice your emotional response when you see stories about murders, rapes, torture, and political oppression. What upsets you the most? In what ways do news reports allow us to embrace a dualistic view of the world, divided into those who "deserve" to suffer (citizens of Iraq, North Korea, Cuba) and those who do not (citizens of Kosovo, Chechnya, Kuwait). Also, consider that violations of human rights in this country are often under-reported, or not reported at all. Contact Amnesty International to learn about cases like the following:

- Immigrants seeking asylum, family unification, and employment often have their human rights egregiously violated by the U.S. Border Patrol and the INS.
- Prisoners suffer beatings, rape, and torture at the hands of prison guards. Inadequate legal representation, especially in capital cases, is common for poor defendants of color.

III. In your workplace

Learn about the non-discrimination policies at your job. Do they include protections based on class, sexual orientation, and immigration status? If not, begin a dialogue with your employer, board of directors, etc. about making changes to this policy. (See U.N. Human Rights Charter, Article 23: "Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.")

IV. Take action

1. Contacting Congressional Representatives can feel tedious, and sometimes produces few tangible results. By practicing mindfulness while letter-writing, phone-calling, or emailing, we can transform this practice into a kind of meditation. And when you do contact your Congressional Representative, ask him or her to:

- Co-sponsor Senate Resolution 237 ratifying the 20-year-old Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The U.S. is one of a small group of nations who have not ratified this international convention to protect the rights of all women.
- Sponsor a resolution calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

2. Organize a Human Rights Awareness group within your sangha, BPF chapter, classroom, or family. Discuss ways that you can support one another in cultivating compassion and insight into situations of grave injustice. Organize letter-writing parties to send clear messages to human-rights-abusing nations and leaders demanding an end to these abuses.

Resources

Amnesty International, 322 8th Avenue, New York, NY 10001; 212/807-8400; email: <Admin-us@aiusa.org>; *www.amnesty.org*.

Human Rights Watch, 350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor, New York, NY 10118-3299; 212/290-4700; Fax: 212/736-1300; email: <hrwnyc@hrw.org>.

—Michael Trigilio

Action Alert!

Gyaltsen Drolkar

Gyaltsen Drolkar

was arrested in 1990 in Lhasa, Tibet, for taking part in a peaceful pro-independence demonstration. She was 19 at the time. During her imprisonment in Drapchi Prison, she and 13 other young nuns composed and recorded pro-independence songs and messages, and the tape was circulated secretly in Tibet. As a result, all 14 nuns had their prison sentences increased.

Drapchi Prison is notorious for its poor conditions. Political prisoners are often beaten severely and shocked with electric cattle prods. Nuns and other female prisoners have been raped.

Please write to the President of China, asking for the immediate and unconditional release of Gyaltsen Drolkar and the other nuns currently imprisoned there. Write to: Jiang Zemin, Guojia Zhuxi, Beijingshi, People's Republic of China. *—Amnesty International* ❖

FAMILY PRACTICE COLUMN

Instructions for the Home Cook: Family Dinner Practice

by Mushim Ikeda-Nash

If you could cook only one meal for your family before everyone scattered to the far corners of the earth, what would it be? Food is primal, tribal, bonding. When my son was several months old, with sturdy fat legs and round cheeks, I remember looking at him and thinking, "Every cell in his body has been formed from my body and my breast milk." Breast milk, sweet and rich, served at body temperature, is original mammalian soul food. Newborns recognize their mother by the fragrance of her milk.

When my mother was dying of cancer, she loved to eat *okayu* (Japanese white rice simmered with water until it is soft and milky) and creamy baked custard. She couldn't taste much, but these foods felt good in her mouth and comforted her. Perhaps they reminded her of her first food.

> *At the end of the meal Dad actually licked the sauce bowl clean, as unaffectedly as a toddler in a high chair.*

In the well known essay "Instructions for the Zen Cook," Zen Master Dogen advises the monastery cook to "strive to maintain a spirit of joy and magnanimity, along with the caring attitude of a parent." I try to keep this in mind, because although I know approximately when each member of my family ate our first meal, I don't know when we'll eat our last.

I became the Ikeda family cook when I was around 14, the oldest of three children, living in rural Ohio. Julia Child's cooking show was my favorite TV series. Both of my parents worked full time, and they delegated much of the house and yard work to my brother, sister, and me from the time we were very young. Our father, having grown up on a farm in Indiana and served in the U.S. Army, believed that children should work for their keep.

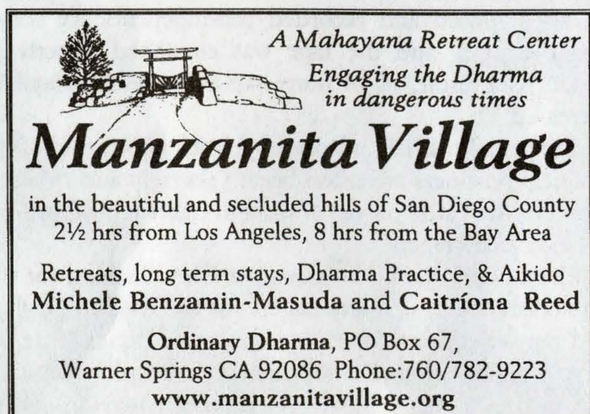
My Japanese American family somewhat resembled an Asian Buddhist monastery, in that the position of cook was a major responsibility and was regarded with great respect and appreciation. Both of my parents basically thought of me as a cook until they died, and my father's last meal was a lunch of boiled shrimp that my mother had instructed me to prepare while she was in the hospital for some tests. Planning the meals even though she couldn't be present for them was her way of showing my father she cared about him and was thinking about his needs. Although Dad was on a sodium-restricted diet, I doled out two tablespoons of shrimp cocktail sauce so that he could really enjoy himself, and he did, repeatedly offering to share the shrimp with me, and radiating bliss as he savored each mouthful. At the end of the meal he actually licked the sauce bowl clean, as unaffectedly as a toddler in a high chair, and thanked me graciously. He napped through dinner, and died peacefully in his sleep that night.

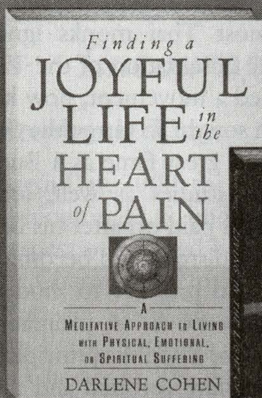
Although a family meal may sound like a simple practice, it took a few years for my husband Chris to feel comfortable enough to even come to our family table at lunch or dinnertime. He used to disappear into the bathroom or out to water plants just as I was plating the food. I had a hard time understanding this, until Chris explained to me that he had rejected eating meat when he was three years old, and his parents, concerned for his health, had tried to force him. He has many painful memories around food. I now understood how important it is that food not become the cause of a power struggle between parents and children, warring over issues of autonomy and control.

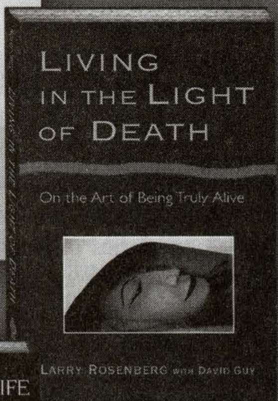
So, when I prepare a meal for my husband and son, what's most important to me is that we each feel cherished and truly nourished. The family dinner is an offering that affirms our caring for one another. We are grateful to be with one another, grateful to have food, and grateful to those who grew and harvested and packaged it. Almost every meal contains vegetables from Fully Belly Farm, the organic farm to which we've subscribed for the past six years. We always take a moment to bow together before each meal, and to say "Thank you, Buddha."

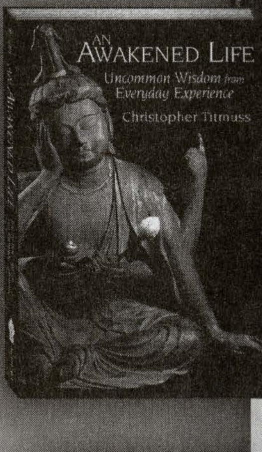
In order to live, we consume life daily. As the family cook, I want to remember: we take the earth's body into our mouths, and nourish ourselves together. This is a daily practice, a profound practice.

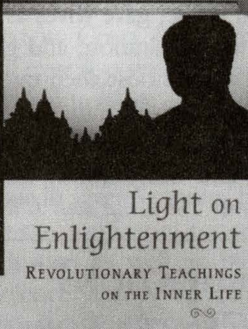
Sit down, eat!
This wonderful food
reminds me of our true home. ❖

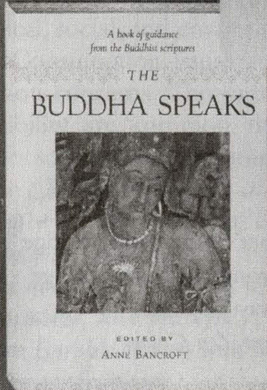


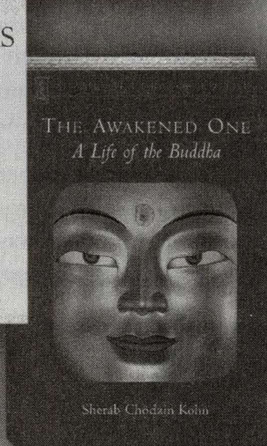












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King Mongkut

by Diane Patenaude Ames

It was 1804. Although the god-kings of Thailand, then called Siam, regularly traveled around Bangkok on jeweled palanquins, gloriously bedecked with gold and gems and followed by gorgeous retinues, few if any Thais were allowed to appreciate the spectacle; to look directly at the king's royal person meant immediate death. Outside the glittering royal court, almost all Thais were poor peasants and many were slaves. Women had roughly the legal status of cattle. There were no printing presses in the country. Since virtually nobody in Siam knew any Western language or knew anything of the world beyond southeast Asia, the government was ill-prepared to cope with the colonial powers that were already marching into the region.

And in 1804, Prince Mongkut Sammat-twongs, who would be given the posthumous title of King Rama IV (1804–68), was born to King Pra Puttalertlart Napalai and his principal wife. Superbly educated, the boy was expected to succeed his father. But his father died early, the Council of Princes, Prelates, and Nobles decided that he was still too young to deal with the colonialist threat, and his older half-brother Pra Nangklao was crowned. Prince Mongkut might have been in danger, because of being seen as a political threat to his half-brother, but he had just taken the wise precaution of becoming a monk.

The young man proved to be a serious Dharma student. He was dissatisfied with his teachers, however, declaring that he found most Thai monks ignorant, superstitious, and lax in their observation of the *Vinaya*. Within a few years he founded a movement, now known as the Dhammayutika, which sought to purge the Sangha of these faults. He also gained great fame as a Buddhist teacher and pursued secular studies as well, learning Western ways and English. This paid off after his brother died in 1851 and he agreed to disrobe and become king.

The colonialist threat created pressure to modernize, and the new king had already shown an inclination to reform institutions in the name of Buddhist principles. But since Thai reactionaries might have revolted and thereby given colonialist powers an opportunity to march in and take over, he could proceed only slowly. Nonetheless, he managed to limit the right of heads of families to sell family members into slavery, and he gave slaves the right to buy their freedom at a reasonable price if they could. He also instituted, for the first time, legal penalties for extreme spousal abuse; gave wives as well as husbands the right to demand a separation; and gave women who were of age the right to choose their own husbands. Finally, he miraculously preserved Siam's independence; groomed his heir, Prince Chulalongkorn, to carry out the reforms he had initiated; and was viciously libeled—there is no other word for it—in *The King and I*. ❖

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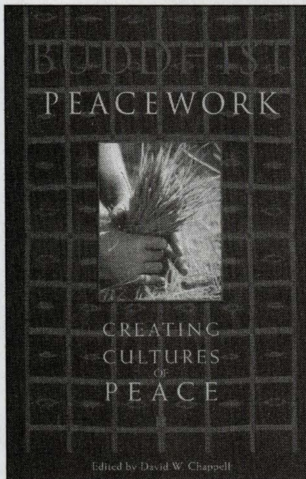

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ECOLOGY COLUMN

Encouraging Words

by Stephanie Kaza

On Earth Day, 2000, the new Earth Charter was unveiled in Washington, D.C. under the sponsorship of the Center for Respect of Life and Environment, the U.S. Secretariat for the Charter. This marked the culmination of a decade of effort to articulate global principles for sustainable human-Earth relations. Earlier efforts to draw up an Earth Charter at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 had met with only partial success. The Rio Charter had hoped to unify the peoples of the world in their declared intentions on behalf of the Earth. Instead, many of the suggested principles only heightened North-South tensions.

A new Earth Charter initiative was launched in 1994 by the Earth Council and Green Cross International. Three years later an international Earth Charter Commission was appointed and headquartered in Costa Rica. The final year-2000 draft is the result of over two years of discussion by 40 Earth Charter national committees and numerous conferences. Current plans are to present the document to the United Nations in 2002 for international adoption.

The document is remarkable in several aspects, but perhaps the most striking is that environmental concerns are framed in terms of social justice as well as biological integrity. Democracy, nonviolence, and peace are seen as crucial to environmental well-being. Eradicating poverty is "an ethical, social, and environmental imperative" (principle 9). Consumption issues are given equal billing with population concerns. Throughout the work, respect and responsibility are common themes. The four opening principles set an eloquent frame for the rest of the charter:

1. *Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.*
2. *Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love.*
3. *Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.*
4. *Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.*

Did Buddhist values make it into this declaration for the Earth? Though specific religions are deliberately left out of the document, one can identify key words that uphold important Buddhist ethics. In the opening preamble, the challenge is outlined: global cooperation for the Earth or the risk of destruction of ourselves and the wide diversity of life. The proposed solution? *Universal responsibility*..."To realize these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities." This phrase, "universal responsibility," is one H. H. the Dalai Lama has promoted consistently in his global peace talks; it is the cornerstone of his secular ethics for the new millennium.

Ahimsa, or non-harming, and compassion are second on the list of core values and practices. "Compassion" found its way slowly into the Charter; it was not in the original drafts. But some reviewers kept giving it a strong vote, and eventually it took an important place in the document frame. Ahimsa is reinforced in principle 6, the "precautionary principle": "Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach," and in related principle 15, "Treat all living beings with respect and consideration."

These are very encouraging words. At a time when the integrity and life-sustaining capacities of the Earth are challenged as never before, the Earth Charter is a testimony to the possibility of skillful means. Buddhists can support the strong intentions of the Earth Charter just as they now support the Human Rights Charter. In decades to come, the Earth Charter as international law could be significant in resolving environmental conflicts. Buddhist peacekeeping values may yet play a central role in shaping human actions on behalf of the Earth.

For updates on Earth Charter progress, see www.earthcharterusa.org. *For a current version of the Earth Charter with commentary, contact the Center for Respect of Life and Environment, 202/778-6133.* ❖

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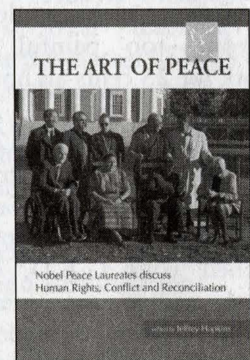

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PRISON PAGE

Imagine Living in Your Bathroom

by Diana Lion

(Adapted from a talk to the BPF National Board.)

Imagine that you live in a room the size of your bathroom, about 5 by 10 feet, with a person of the same gender whom you never met before. This space has two bunk beds, one locker for each of you to store your belongings, and an uncovered metal toilet at one end of the bunks with a small sink beside it. The standing space is so small that one of you must be on the bed if the other is off it. You can't sit up straight on either bed without hitting your head. Imagine that this is your home. And you are both living there for a whole day. Now imagine you are living there for a week...a month...a year. Or five or ten years.

The only time you have any quiet is between the hours of 2 and 4:30 AM. You never have privacy: you sleep, go to the bathroom, dress, eat, fart, and everything else with this other person. And with thousands of others in the institution. Each morning, you're woken at 4:30 AM and you eat breakfast with hundreds of others of your same gender. The food is often cold, with very little nutrition. You must use plastic utensils.

During the days, you work in shipping and receiving. You remember two friends who you worked with for years, the only people you could be real with. But one got transferred suddenly and you never got to say goodbye; the other got stabbed on the yard. That's when you decided to never again get close to anyone—too painful. You work for 23 cents an hour—a raise from 17 cents.

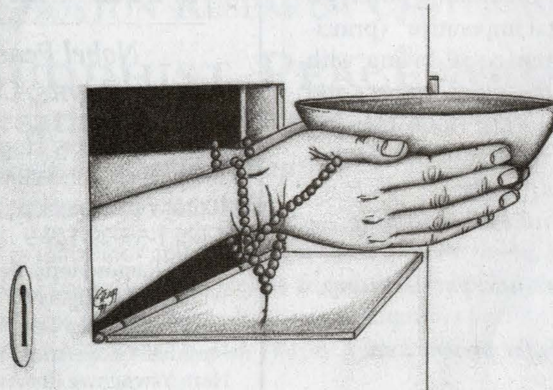
You have attended 12-step groups and church services, and you play on the baseball team. You feel proud to have earned your G.E.D. while inside, and you even completed a few community college courses: you are the first person in your family to go to college! You've gone to some of the Alternatives to Violence Project groups—partly to meet new people from outside, because how else can you do that behind bars? But also because you've realized that the drugs and alcohol problems were sitting on top of some deep pain, and that those groups might provide some healing for the rage that surfaces when things get tight. You've realized for the first time that the beatings your Dad gave your Mom, your brothers, and you when you were little might have been connected with the fury that explodes out of you at times, like the froth from a Coke that's been shaken vigorously. That insight gave you hope about maybe being able to change.

Imagine you've got only four months left in this place. Excitement and fear are competing inside you. Freedom—you can almost taste it! What a kick to drink a beer when you want, and scratch your butt without anyone watching. To get up in the morning when you like, and earn more than 23 cents an hour. To be able to touch your girlfriend or boyfriend with no one else watching. Free—to cross the street, buy a soda, see your kid, and smell the night air. And scared—knowing you're gonna walk out the gate with just $200 in your pocket and what you've got on your back. With a prison felony record, and the only people you still know outside being your Mom and some drug dealers. Your parole officer may keep you on a tight leash. (About 70 percent of ex-cons are back within a few months for some "serious" parole violation, like being in the wrong neighborhood, or calling their parole officer five minutes late.)

You're worried that the stress may get to you, and it's a short ride back down if you turn to the relief of that sweet feeling—mellowed out, smooth, energized, confident, unafraid—who wouldn't want that? Still, that choice you might make to go back to drugs is nothing more than your one-way ticket back to the pain and the pen.

Imagine being told to find a job when you have no clothes to interview in; no home address to give; no phone number people can reach you at. Imagine trying to find an intimate relationship. Trying to accept someone and love them in a way you've never had a chance to learn. Imagine trying to be cool about all the changes since you were last on the streets: pagers, cell phones, clothes, music, street names, freeway exits, even area codes.

You're out of prison but you're afraid of the prison that still resides in your mind—which, of course, is totally portable.



Richard Lee Gregg

❧ ❧ ❧

• A big welcome to Heidi Strupp, new Assistant Coordinator for the Prison Project. Her warmth, energy, knowledge, and work are much appreciated.

• If you have started a Dharma prison project, please send us a short description about what you do and how you got started. We are often asked to assist others in starting prison projects, and we'd like to share our collective experience and wisdom.

• If you live in the Bay Area and want to volunteer at the Prison Project office, please call 510/655-6169 or email <heidi@bpf.org> to sign up for an orientation. ❖

Vowing Peace in an Age of War

By Alan Senauke

The following essay is based on an address delivered at the Dogen Symposium at Stanford University in October 1999. Eihei Dogen (1200–1254), poet and scholar, was the founder of the Soto school of Zen in Japan.

Awake or asleep
in a grass hut,
what I pray for is
to bring others across
before myself
—Zen Master Dogen

San Quentin Prison sits on a bare spit of land on San Francisco Bay. This is where the state of California puts prisoners to death. The gas chamber is still there, but for the last five years executions are done by lethal injection in a mock-clinical setting that cruelly imitates a hospital room. About 550 men and 11 women wait on California's death row, usually for 15 or 20 years. The voting public supports this state-sanctioned violence. In fact, no politician can get elected to higher office in California without appearing to support the death penalty.

On a stormy evening in March of 1999, several hundred people came to a vigil and rally to protest the execution of Jay Siripongs, a Thai national and a Buddhist, convicted of a 1983 murder in Los Angeles. Sheets of rain and a cold wind beat on everyone gathered at the prison gates: death penalty opponents, a handful of death penalty supporters, press, prison guards, and—right up against the gate, gazing at San Quentin's stone walls—75 or more Buddhist students and meditators bearing witness to the execution, sitting in the middle of anger, grief, painful words, and more painful deeds.

Across a chain link fence, helmeted guards stood in a wet line, rain falling as hard on them as on ourselves.

My robes were soaked through and my zafu sat in a deepening puddle. Across a chain link fence, 10 feet away, helmeted guards stood in a wet line, rain falling as hard on them as on ourselves. I felt a moment of deep connection: black-robed meditators sitting upright in attention in the rain, protecting beings as best we know how; black-jacketed police officers standing at attention in the rain, protecting beings as best they know how. Is there a difference between our activities? Yes, of course. But recognizing unity, even in the midst of difference and turmoil, is the essence of peacemaking. I imagine there were guards who were aware of this unity.

Our witness at San Quentin is part of a great vow that Zen students take. Bearing witness is the bodhisattva's radical act of complete acceptance and non-duality. In this time and place it leads me to active resistance and social transformation. We vow to bear witness where violence unfolds. We vow to recognize the human capacity for violence within our own minds. We take true refuge in the Buddhadharma, and seek to resolve conflicts. We vow never again to raise a weapon in anger or in complicity with the state or any so-called authority, but to intervene actively and nonviolently for peace, even where this may put our own bodies and lives at risk.

Who will take this vow? Am I ready? Are you?

Carrying Forth Realization Into The World

Meditating on peace, echoes of Dogen ring in my ears. In "The Bodhisattva's Four Methods of Guidance" Dogen writes, "You should benefit friend and enemy equally. You should benefit self and others alike." His radical language cuts to the heart of peace. His thirteent-century world was different from our own, but the conflicts and twisted karma of suffering beings are the same.

In every age, the dream of peace and the practice of peace arise together with war and conflict. They are deeply related. In every age, war compels people to cover their hearts and act in unimaginably cruel ways. No other animal is capable of such cruelty. The color and shape of the victims, heroes, and perpetrators may differ, and the landscape itself, but the face of war is always ugly. The victims need our help. So do the perpetrators.

"Because there is the base, there are jewel pedestals, fine clothing." This is Shakyamuni Buddha's great teaching of Dependent Origination: Because this is, that is. In an age of war this is an encouraging fact. Because there is war, I know there is also peace. But if I create a concept called peace and cling to it, conditions for war arise. So what am I to do? How can I sustain upright sitting in the midst of grief and conflict?

Let me offer three approaches to Buddhist peacemaking: Giving, Fearlessness, and Renunciation.

Giving

The essential practice of peace is giving, or *dana paramita*. Giving attention, friendship, and material aid. Giving spiritual teachings and community. Giving is the first perfection and the first of the bodhisattva's four methods of guidance. It includes all other perfections. In "Bodaisatta Shisho-ho," Dogen advises us that:

> Giving means non-greed. Non-greed means not to covet. Not to covet means not to curry favor. Even if you govern the Four Continents, you should always convey the correct teaching with non-greed.

Giving begins with oneself. I give myself to practice and practice offers itself to me. In my search for peace and liberation, I find there is always the smell of war. The taste of tears, corrosive doubt, and decay fall within the circle of my own body and mind. The war is here, right where I hide behind a mask of self-attachment, a shelter of privilege, cutting myself off from others. True giving is receiving the gift of zazen mind and passing it to others in words and deeds. It means not hiding.

We offer gifts and guidance in many forms. Dogen's four methods of guidance—giving, kind speech, beneficial action, and identity action—expand on the Buddha's own teaching of peace and the Foundations for Social Unity: *dana*, (generosity), *piyavaca* (kindly speech), *atthacariya* (helpful action), and *samanattata* (impartiality or equal participation). At the heart of these teachings is the understanding that peace is making connection. On a simple level, material goods are given. On a higher level, teaching is shared. And on the highest level there is just connection, the endless society of being, the vast assembly of bodhisattvas. In Lewis Hyde's wonderful book *The Gift*, he describes dinner in a cheap restaurant in the South of France:

Vigil at the gates of San Quentin Prison. Photo by Alan Senauke

> The patrons sit at a long communal table, and each finds before his plate a modest bottle of wine. Before the meal begins, a man will pour his wine not into his own glass but into his neighbor's. And his neighbor will return the gesture, filling the first man's empty glass. In an economic sense nothing has happened. No one has any more wine than he did to begin with. But society has appeared where there was none before.

When we really embody the bodhisattva vow to save all sentient beings, then zazen itself is a quiet and transformative gift. We receive it in gratitude from the buddha ancestors and from our all-too-human teachers, and we pass it on. Again, Lewis Hyde:

> I would like to speak of gratitude as a labor undertaken by the soul to effect the transformation after a gift has been received. Between the time a gift comes to us and the time we pass it along, we suffer gratitude. Moreover, with gifts that are agents of change, it is only when the gift has worked in us, only when we come up to its level, as it were, that we can give it away again. Passing the gift along is the act of gratitude that finishes the labor.

During the NATO bombing in Serbia last year, a friend of mine proposed that the U.S. offer a four-year university education in the United States to every Serbian and Albanian youth of military age. This would provide them with intellectual and technical tools for peace. It would be much cheaper than the billions of dollars spent on weaponry and death.

Such proposals are usually dismissed as naive. They fail to reckon with the power of arms dealers, the greed of corporations, and the fears of politicians that are sold as truth to ordinary people. But shouldn't we dare to be naive? What is there to lose in speaking obvious truths? Can we skillfully speak the truth of *dana* to those in power?

Fearlessness

The practice of peace is fearless. Again this comes back to dana—giving and giving up. To give anything to an enemy or opponent, one must be fearless. There is a story in "The Tiger's Cave" that has stayed with me for years:

> When a rebel army swept into a town in Korea, all the monks of the Zen temple fled except for the Abbot. The general came into the temple and was annoyed that the Abbot did not receive him with respect. "Don't you know," he shouted, "that you are looking at a man who can run you through without blinking?" "And you," replied the Abbot strongly, "are looking at a man who can be run through without blinking!" The general stared at him, made a bow, and retired.

Peace is not just quiet words and gentle demeanor. There is strength and sinew in it. I often think about Maha Ghosananda of Cambodia simply deciding to walk across his country in the midst of a violent civil war. His saffron robes were both refuge and target. I also think about Thich Nhat Hanh, whom Richard Baker described as "a cross between a cloud and a piece of heavy equipment." I have met these inspiring teachers and felt the steel of intention at the heart of their actions.

In meditation we become intimate with all kinds of fear. We come to see that fearing death or great loss is not so different from fearing more humble events like meeting one's teacher face to face or performing a new ceremony. Fear itself provides an opening into the unknown. If we continue to make peace in awareness of our own fear, there is room for everyone's fear to fall away. Mutual respect arises.

Renunciation

A third element is renunciation, or relinquishment. Of course this is also inseparable from giving. Dogen writes, "If you study giving closely, you see that to accept a body and to give up the body are both giving."

Renunciation is a difficult principle for today's Western

Buddhists. The Buddhist path, as it exists in our materialistic world, gives mere lip service to renunciation. After mind and body drop away, the work has just begun.

The second bodhisattva precept is "not stealing," or "not taking what is not given." For people in the so-called developed world—America, Europe, Japan—this is almost impossible. Many of us, even priests, lead privileged lives in rich countries whose economies are built on stealing the limited resources of the earth and the labors of poor people around the world. The injustice of poverty and wealth is itself a kind of violence. Really, we can't step outside of this system. But if each of us cultivates awareness of the links between consumption and violence, we can begin to make choices about what is of true value in our lives and how much we value the lives of others. Just at that point of relinquishment, renunciation is possible. But our efforts need to go further.

There is an old Quaker adage: "Speak truth to power." The truth is that global corporations and armed nations further theft and oppression in the world. As renunciates, we must link up with each other, just as we join with and support each other in the zendo. Together we can deconstruct institutions built on greed, hatred, and delusion, and build new structures of liberation and spiritual value that belong to everyone. I honestly don't know what this will look like, but I know it is the responsibility of all communities of faith to be present right in the middle of these changes.

An Army of Peace

There is a movement among socially engaged Buddhists and people of all the faith traditions to create a nonviolent army of peace. How many lives might have been spared in Serbia and Kosovo if we had provided 10,000 witnesses instead of billions of dollars of bombs? How many people would benefit if we stood up to corruption, violence, and drug dealing in our own neighborhoods? The practice of "active nonviolence" includes bearing witness and peaceful intervention. In the midst of local, regional, religious, and national conflicts and wars, this peace army could replace armed soldiers, land mines, tanks, and jet fighters.

A peace army's tools would be ears to hear, words to share, arms to embrace, and bodies to place in opposition to injustice. This army would be trained in meditation, mediation, reconciliation, and generosity. Its discipline would include patience, equanimity, selflessness, and a deep understanding of impermanence. Its "boot camp" would be very different than military training, but every bit as rigorous. Its social organization would include supply lines of food and medicine and clothing that could be shared with others.

A peace army might sit down on the battlefield, right in the line of fire, in order to save others. It is necessary to take risks in Buddhist practice. It is just as necessary to take risks in peacemaking. I think of this as a true expression of identity action: identifying with soldiers, guerrillas, and displaced people, identifying with the bombed and shattered earth itself. Is this suicidal? Maybe so. In an extreme way Thich Quang Duc was practicing his vision of identity action when he publicly immolated himself in Vietnam in 1963, while his fellow monks and nuns were being targeted for repression and his country was in flames. Even today, this image shocks us and raises challenging questions. But I am not advocating suicide. Peace is the point. Identity action, as Dogen renders it, is the peace army's rule of training.

Bodhisattvas Walk Among Us

In any single breath each of us can become an enlightening being. In the next breath we might fall into our old habits of thoughtlessness and violence. Our meditation reveals that this choice is always with us. Our deluded actions contain seeds that can flower as either wondrous peace or terrible harm. Our vision can sustain the world if only we dare to look deeply. Our great ancestor, Layman Vimalakirti, described the bodhisattva path this way:

> During the short aeons of swords,
> They meditate on love,
> Introducing to nonviolence
> Hundreds of millions of living beings.
>
> In the middle of great battles
> They remain impartial to both sides;
> For bodhisattvas of great strength
> Delight in reconciliation of conflict.
>
> In order to help the living beings,
> They voluntarily descend into
> The hells which are attached
> To all the inconceivable buddha-fields.

Two thousand years later we are still living up to the challenge, falling short, and vowing again. Let us take our vows seriously and be bodhisattvas. Respect our Dharma traditions and buddha ancestors, but be truly accountable to all beings. Please bring peace and zazen mind right into the middle of our messy, grieving, wondrous world. Watch your step. ❖

A number of people knowingly and unknowingly helped with the writing of this essay: Robert Aitken, Santikaro Bhikkhu, Laurie Senauke, Helen Schley, Greg Mello, Ken Jones, and Diana Winston. Nine bows to them.

Hozan Alan Senauke has been Executive Director of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship since 1991. He also serves on the Executive Committee of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, where he works closely with Buddhist activists from Asia, Europe, and the U.S. Alan is a Soto Zen priest in the family of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, and received Dharma Transmission from Sojun Mel Weitsman Roshi in September of 1998. He lives with his wife, Laurie, and their two young children at the Berkeley Zen Center in California. In another realm, Alan is well known as a performer (singer and guitarist) of American traditional music for more than 35 years.

THE DHARMA AND THE TORTURER

by Judith Stronach

In the soiled bathroom of a police station, a weeping teenager stomps on the photograph of a lively girl—his girlfriend—as an older man in uniform looks on. This is one glimpse of Turkey. This is the making of a torturer, portrayed in a film made by Amnesty International. One point of the film is that torturers are not born but created. A young boy, from impoverished circumstances, susceptible to authority, can be made to go against his most innate tendencies, his "original mind" and its inclination toward love and connection. He can be made to see a loved one as a thing. He can be taught to torture. The film also implies that most of us under certain conditions can be turned into torturers.

The film changed me, changed me by opening my compassion for the torturers. The boy was not the only one in a hell realm. The man who was "training" him had himself undergone a similar breaking down process.

A few years later I began a meditation practice that opened my heart further—to suffering, to the need for human rights advocacy, and to understanding torture. Through Buddhist insights, especially into non-duality and emptiness, my intention to work for the end of torture in the world took on greater meaning and rested on more solid ground.

Over time, I learned that ill will and cruelty move through us all. I became familiar with the torturer in myself and painfully intimate with the conditions that lead to the arising of hatred in myself. I inquired into my relationship with the torturer inside me. How do I treat this aspect of myself: with anxiety, impatience, denial, avoidance, fear, more hatred? Increasingly I saw the imperative for a healing that could happen only through reconciliation, through being present to the shadow aspects of myself and integrating them into a more complete sense of who I am.

The parallel in my human rights work was to see the torturer not as someone different or other, but as a product of the whole society. I saw that bringing torturers to trial was not only a matter of justice, but of healing the society that had split off these unwanted parts of itself, of making it whole.

I want to tell of one organization that is helping to make this healing possible, and of a case where the circle has been completed and the torturer as well as the victim has found some measure of peace.

The organization is the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA), founded to seek redress on behalf of victims of gross human rights violations. Its founder, Gerald Gray, is a therapist who has worked with trauma survivors. He learned it was not uncommon for torture victims who had sought asylum in the United States to run into their torturers on the streets here. Seeing the perpetrators again often led to their re-traumatization. Gray himself found the presence of these perpetrators in the United States intolerable. He and others view torture as a crime against humanity and, as such, subject to no limits for prosecution in time or place. One of his goals is to demonstrate that the United States will not be a safe haven for torturers.

> *It is not uncommon for torture victims who have sought asylum in the United States to run into their torturers on the streets here.*

The law that allows CJA to prosecute these cases is almost as old as the United States. It is the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA), enacted in 1789. The statute grants federal courts jurisdiction over crimes by aliens now residing in the U.S., no matter where these crimes were committed, as long as they were in violation of the law of nations or a treaty of the United States. The use of this act to call human rights violators to account began in 1976.

The test of the law began with the killing of Joelito Filártiga by torturers in Paraguay. His family demanded an investigation and the prosecution of his murderers. The government's response was to threaten them and their attorney and to slip Filártiga's torturer, Americo Peña-Irala, out of the country. The family traced him to New York City and brought suit against him in a U.S. court. They won. The landmark decision in the *Filártiga v. Peña-Irala* case opened the way for victims of international human rights violations to sue in U.S. courts. Since 1980 the courts have repeatedly upheld the victim's right to sue. The tort does not have to occur in the United States; nor does the plaintiff have to be physically present here. And the defendant does not have to be a U.S. citizen. In recognition of the importance of these cases, Congress in 1992 enacted an important statute to reinforce and expand the ATCA. The Torture Victim Protection Act defines specific legal responses to torture and extrajudicial execution done by both U.S. citizens and aliens who were acting under the law of their own nation.

Thich Nhat Hanh's famous poem tells how he is not only the 12-year-old refugee raped by a sea pirate but also the pirate himself. His words came to mind when I read the words of the Second Circuit in *Filártiga:* "[F]or purposes of civil liabilities, the torturer has become—like the pirate and slave trader before him—*hostis humani generis,* an enemy of all mankind." Most people working on tor-

ture cases seek redress for the victims, who find some measure of balance restored when their torturers are brought to justice. As a student of Thich Nhat Hanh, however, I would suggest that if torture is a crime against humanity, it is a crime against the humanity of the torturer, too, who was acting in hell realms separate from his original nature. I see the possibility of a justice that will allow restitution on his behalf as well.

I want to give three examples of the kind of work CJA takes on.

One is the lawsuit of *Mehinovic v. Vuckovic*, the first legal action against a Serb human rights violator now residing in the United States. The lead plaintiff, Kemal Mehinovic, was the former prisoner of the defendant, Nikola Vuckovic. Vuckovic now resides in the Atlanta area where he works in a compressor plant. In 1992 he served as a guard at the detention facility in a Bosnian town slated for "ethnic cleansing." Three additional plaintiffs have come forward to join the suit. For a six-month period in the detention facility, Vuckovic subjected the plaintiffs to interrogation and beatings, kicked and hit them with bats, pipes, and police batons, injuring them and leaving them to fear imminent death. At one point Vuckovic forced Mehinovic's legs apart and beat his genitals, stating, "You won't be needing these any more."

The second case is part of CJA's El Salvador project. CJA has drawn up a list of Salvadoran human rights violators reported to be in the U.S. who were named in the UN-sponsored Truth Commission. Working with private investigators, CJA has been able to confirm the whereabouts of Salvadoran violators and their assets here. It has contacted officials in the INS and/or Department of Justice to begin investigations into these cases, which could lead to deportment or criminal proceedings. It has undertaken outreach and education with Salvadoran refugees regarding their right to seek redress against the individuals in the U.S. courts.

The case itself is a civil lawsuit filed in Florida against General Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova (the Director of the Salvadoran National Guard from 1979–83 and later Minister of Defense of El Salvador) and General José Guillermo Garcia (the Minister of Defense in El Salvador from 1979–83). Both generals now live in Florida. The suit seeks damages for torture, extrajudicial execution, and other human rights violations

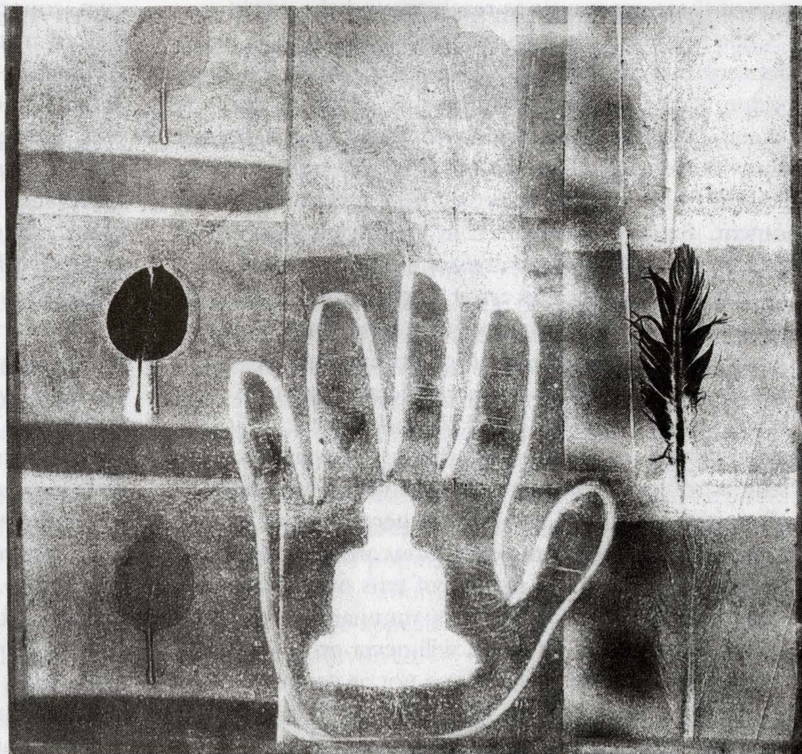
The plaintiffs in the suit are a Salvadoran doctor who was abducted and brutally tortured by the National Guard in late 1980, and a lay church worker who was abducted, tortured, and raped by Guardsmen in late 1979.

The doctor is Juan Romagoza Arce, who was abducted after providing medical care to *campesinos* through a church in Chalatenango. The injuries he received in his three-and-a-half-week detention damaged his hands so that he is unable to perform surgery. He now serves as the director of a health clinic serving the Latino refugee community and other underserved populations in Washington, D.C.

The lay worker and anonymous plaintiff "Jane Doe" has a co-plaintiff, her infant son Baby Doe. She was picked up from a market by National Guardsmen who recognized her as a peaceful demonstrator against military violence upon the rural population. She was eight months pregnant at the time. Because of the atrocities she suffered, her son was born with broken bones, bruises, and severe indentations on his face. He died from these injuries two months after his birth. In 1990 she witnessed a massacre of children and had a mental breakdown. She fled to the United States where she received political asylum and undergoes treatment for trauma.

Asylum for these two individuals cannot be genuine refuge as long as the generals responsible for their torture live in comfortable retirement here. Suspicion also exists about U.S. complicity in these cases. Justice, therefore, extends beyond the plaintiffs to an entire society. It extends, in fact, to us in whose name our government acts, in the name of those who buy clothes made by Salvadoran women, pears from Argentina, coffee from Guatemala, sea bass from Chile.

Gray says one reason a victim files a suit is to answer the question "Who did it?" which often means "Who



Dan Noyes

really did it?" Who was behind it? Who ordered it? Accountability concerns all of us, and justice is needed to restore trust and safety in a government that had strong ties with the two generals and allowed them to emigrate here. Healing extends beyond the victims to the places where the generals live and to the society that invited them into its midst.

Florida is the home of another officer CJA has a suit against, Major Armando Fernandez-Larios, who served as an agent of Chile's secret police during the regime of General Pinochet. The plaintiffs in this suit are the siblings and mother of Winston Cabello, an economist for the leftist government of President Allende. Cabello was summarily executed by the Chilean military, along with at least 72 others who supported Allende's government. Cabello's body was later recovered in the desert. It bore signs of torture and had been beheaded.

The message is that the U.S. will not be a haven for torturers, and that a crime against humanity cannot escape prosecution anywhere.

The lawsuit alleges that Fernandez-Larios committed summary execution, torture, crimes against humanity, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, wrongful detention, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and civil conspiracy. He was also directly involved in the Washington, D.C., car bombing of Orlando Letelier, Allende's former Ambassador to the U.S.

Again, the message is that the U.S. will not be a haven for torturers, and that a crime against humanity cannot escape prosecution anywhere. The reverberations of these prosecutions reach around the world.

Chile is a good place to see interdependence at work. "Because that is, this is." Chile has been in the news because of the Spanish government's effort to extradite General Pinochet from Britain to face trial for human rights violations, and his return to Chile when these efforts failed. In Chile, he can't be prosecuted, at least not for the moment. But CJA is involved in identifying Chileans in the U.S. who will serve as witnesses in his trial, if and when it does take place. Since his arrest, people have felt encouraged to come forth. Former political prisoners are preparing to file the first criminal complaints accusing the General and some of his former officers of torture. The Chilean courts have also dared to question the military's immunity with the arrest of 25 officers. Other arrests from a long list of those thought untouchable are expected.

Because of this, that. The General's arrest ended decades of avoidance of the executions and disappearance of 3,000 people and the torture of tens of thousands of others. Chile's Defense Minister summarized the new attitude, "You deal with it or it will never go away."

This, that. Victims seek redress not as vengeance but as a sign that society has noticed what happened to them, and cares. The possible extradition of the former General had been such a sign. Before this, the victims had felt abandoned, stigmatized, and cheated. The publicity has retraumatized many by stirring old memories, but it has also allowed a healing process to begin for others. Victims who lived with shame, paranoia, and embarrassment, often expressed in alcoholism, family violence, and unemployment, now experience some measure of legitimacy. This has allowed many to seek therapy for the first time.

Others have found relief with the end of what one health worker called "a macabre phenomenon of silence." For someone it might mean a decrease in pounding headaches. For Viviana Uribe, a 48-year-old human rights activist, it has meant the end of her own silence. She always believed her own torture took second place, and it was not until General Pinochet's arrest that she told her daughter how she was raped four times and given bolts of electric shock during interrogation. She told *The New York Times* that telling her story "was like vomiting, all the horrible things flowing out uncontrollably. The torturers are always inside me." (*New York Times*, 1/13/2000, p. 11.)

Viviana Uribe travels now on what Franciscan activist Ken Butigan calls the path from woundedness to completeness. (Ken Butigan. "We Travelled to Seattle: A Pilgrimage of Transformation." *Earthlight*, winter 2000, Issue 36, pp. 8–9.) Even with the failure of Spain's extradition attempt, a process has begun. The General faces over 70 criminal charges of torture and execution in his own country, and Chilean society continues to move toward truth and reconciliation.

For some, this inner reconciliation has come through reconciliation with the so-called other who had been seen as the cause of harm. Then indeed larger circles become complete, and the concept of restorative justice enters in. This is the idea that punishment alone cannot heal the harm one person has done to another, and that victims, offenders, and their communities need to be included in the healing process.

Two former enemies in World War II exemplify this spiritual journey. Eric Lomax was a British soldier who was captured by the Japanese and forced to work on building the Burma-Thailand railway. He was tortured for hiding a radio and for making a map of the railway. Takashi Nagase had been educated in English in an American university and so served as an interpreter with the Japanese army's secret police. It was Nagase's voice that Lomax remembered from his torture, and for years he was obsessed with the desire for revenge against that voice.

Nagase was also tormented by his memories. The Allies took him to locate the graves of those who died building the railway. When confronted with the evidence of Japanese brutality in the form of one death for

(continued on page 22)

No Taxes for Torture

by Michael Trigilio

In 1998, while living in San Antonio, Texas, I organized a demonstration and vigil to raise awareness about the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. San Antonio is host to five military bases, and my wish was to alert my community to the abuses perpetrated by the School of the Americas (SOA), known internationally as the "School of Assassins." I was determined to use the Four Noble Truths as my model for social action and to avoid approaching this demonstration in a dualistic way. I did not want to think of the SOA supporters and employees as evil enemies and those of us advocating change as pure.

1. Suffering exists

Based in Fort Benning, Georgia, the SOA is a training school for Latin American officers, where they receive instruction in counter-insurgency techniques. Often these techniques are masked as counter-narcotics tactics. In 1997, the Inspector General of the Pentagon found that the SOA was training Latin American officers in methods that directly contradicted U.S. policies. Specifically, training manuals at the school included the use of kidnapping, torture, extra-judicial execution, and injection of truth serum as appropriate counter-insurgency tactics. Though the Pentagon has charged the school with the creation of new training manuals and policies, no funding has been provided to make these changes happen.

Training manuals at the School of the Americas included the use of kidnapping, torture...and injection of truth serum.

To date, 300 alumni of the SOA have been involved in the greatest human rights abuses in modern Latin American history. More than just a "few bad apples," as the SOA contends, graduates include Manuel Noriega, Robert D'Aubisson, and 10 of the 13 officers involved in the Acteal Massacre in Mexico in December 1997.

2. There are causes and conditions for suffering

It was important for those of us organizing the demonstration to be clear about why we were demonstrating. Were we demonstrating against something? What did we want to have happen? With the support of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Christians for Peace in El Salvador (CRISPAZ), the offices of U.S. Representatives Henry B. Gonzalez and Ciro Rodriguez, as well as a number of local Catholic clergy, we worked to develop a message that was palatable to a largely conservative community of strong U.S. military supporters.

The SOA is not our enemy; torture is our enemy. I was emphatic that our coalition must not *attack* the SOA. Nor must we make a mockery of the U.S. military. At one point in our strategy meetings, a young man proposed that he wear Army fatigues marked with fake blood and anti-war slogans to the demonstration. I tried to explain that, in a military town, defacing the United States Army uniform would only alienate veterans, soldiers, and those sympathetic to the military. It seemed to me that the singular issue we wanted to make clear was that the SOA promotes torture. We wanted the innocent civilians and the combatants in El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil, and other countries not to be raped, kidnapped, threatened, or humiliated anymore. It was important to emphasize that we also didn't want the employees, officers, or students at the SOA to be tortured. The young man understood my reasoning and decided not to wear the defaced uniform.

By looking deeply together, our coalition analyzed the causes and conditions that validate a curriculum of torture. People suffer so much from fear and insecurity. Some people are raised in such a way that they find it difficult to see those unlike themselves as human. Some people are motivated by anger, fame, and profit, and suffer from the delusion that these poisons will bring them happiness. Some are ignorant of the nature of impermanence and interbeing that define our relationships to one another. Such factors are causes and conditions for suffering, and it is suffering that can lead to an ideology that considers torture acceptable. I asked my organizer friends, "Don't we all sometimes suffer from these frailties?" Realizing the interdependent nature of our lives and the lives operating the SOA, we were able to formulate a more compassionate and effective campaign.

3. Suffering can cease

Our approach was simple. We had a handful of sound bites that both elucidated the problem and avoided simplistic dualism. We called a press conference a few days before the demonstration and made our case to the people of San Antonio. Our message: Let us insist that the federal government not use our tax money to teach torture. Our feeling was that the general public in San Antonio did not want to see our government facilitating human rights abuses in Latin America. Appealing to the majority Latino population in San Antonio, we invited Catholic priests, labor leaders, and U.S. Representatives to make public appeals that appreciated the integrity of all positions involved.

4. There is a path to transform suffering into peace

San Antonio is not a particularly political town, and turnout at demonstrations is routinely low, so we were

excited when more than 100 people gathered in a small church for a prayer vigil led by myself, a Catholic priest, and the Director of CRISPAZ (Christians for Peace in El Salvador).

We invited a young woman to speak whose father had been killed by the Guatemalan military in 1979. The killer had graduated from the SOA. The vigil was followed by a slow walk through downtown San Antonio, ending at a courthouse across from the Alamo. The Alamo is a Catholic mission at which soldiers from the Mexican army defeated Texan soldiers in the penultimate battle for Texan independence. Some in our organizing committee had felt very strongly that we shouldn't gather in front of the Alamo, as it is a relic of Spanish colonialism, but after much heated debate, we decided that we would indeed gather at the Federal courthouse, facing the Alamo, primarily because this courthouse functions as an immigration court, and also because we were aware of the exposure we would garner from both news media and tourists visiting San Antonio's famous landmark.

We were clear as we spoke to the wide variety of media representatives covering the event that our mission was based on a compassionate understanding of human rights. We emphasized our belief that the American people did not want to support torture and the violation of basic human rights. We practiced mindfulness of speech, conduct, and attention. The following day, San Antonio's only major English newspaper covered the story on the front page of its Metro section. I gathered from conversations with acquaintances at my university and elsewhere that there had been very little, if any, knowledge of the SOA, much less its curriculum. A few months later, the newspaper ran an in-depth front-page story on the SOA and its role in Latin American human rights abuses.

Our enemies are not other people; our enemies are fear and hatred, which engender violence. But fear and hatred are not manifestations to be destroyed; they are mental formations to be embraced and transformed through mindfulness practice. The perpetrators of fear and hatred are also victims of fear and hatred. Mindful social action must include compassion for those so consumed by these formations that they victimize others. We see ourselves in them, and we see them in ourselves every day, because we all contribute in some way to the conditions that allow such injustice to exist.

By cultivating understanding of the causes and conditions that lead people to work for the SOA, I was better able to appreciate the real cause of suffering, and to look deeply with other practitioners at ways to address the alleviation of suffering. ❖

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Dharma and Torturer, continued

each railroad tie, Nagase twice tried to kill himself. Since then he established the River Kwai Peace Foundation, which raised $800,000 from Japanese who wanted to make reparation. He has returned to Thailand 100 times for his own atonement and to build a Buddhist temple and finance a health clinic there. He has also brought dozens of former POWs and their captors together.

Eventually Lomax understood that his hatred was tearing him apart. He had the insight of the *Dhammapada* that hatred does not end hatred, and that to seek vengeance on another means to harm oneself. In 1993, the two men met in Japan to begin a process of reconciliation. It became the subject of the Noh-like play *Return to Kanburi*, which explores how two enemies in hell found a way to forgive one another. (*Macalester Today*, August, 1999.)

Punishment cannot create the kind of healing these men have achieved. They healed themselves of the greed and delusion that led to war, and this healing has extended to all of us whose karma is bound to the suffering of World War II.

Most victims seek to understand what happened. They want to have a human being answer them. They hope to find their lost relatives so they can give them a final resting place, even if only in their own hearts and minds, so that grieving may complete itself. Finally, receiving financial reparations may restore a sense of life's fairness, particularly since the victims have lost a great deal physically, materially, emotionally, and spiritually. Only a few go through the final stages of forgiveness. Certainly most torturers are not on the path that Nagase walked. Nonetheless, the work of CJA and others create a just society that can be a large container for a more inclusive response to destructiveness.

One way of stating the Second Noble Truth is that the cause of suffering is a failure to recognize the oneness of all beings. We are one, and human rights work fulfills its task when compassion exists for all parties so that self and other may experience their connection and justice be complete.

We are one. Safety for the victims is safety for us, and, ultimately, for the torturer. We are one. To know oneness we accept and integrate the split-off parts of ourselves and the people marginalized by the society we have produced. The Eightfold Path may then work to end the suffering of all those involved in human rights violations. We are one. This oneness can be touched through restoring the state of wholeness that violence, like torture, disrupts. Through sitting with, accepting, understanding, and finally feeling compassion for the fears that manifested as violence, the twelve spokes of the wheel of the Dharma will naturally turn to mend our ancient, twisted karma. ❖

Judith Stronach lives, writes, and teaches in Berkeley, California, where she also manages a fund for nonviolent social change.

Leaving the Palace of Justice

Some Problems of Human Rights Work in a Buddhist Setting

by Beth (Kanji) Goldring

"So my understanding is that the suffering [of the Cambodian people under the Khmer Rouge] was created by someone of the big people. There were many people killed, many children orphaned, and they separated husband and wife. The suffering was because the leaders created it....

"The people are like grass because the grass accepts everything: rain, sun, cars driving over it, storms. It accepts all seasons. The grass accepts all. So I think people are like the small grass.

"If we want to build a house we have to take a big log out of the forest and move it over the grass. If we compare this to the suffering of the common people: If the leaders need power to do something and the people get injured and killed that is separate. This is since long ago up until now...This is why we compare people to grass. The grass accepts all suffering and the people accept all suffering."

—Ieng Sonnary, the speaker, is the personal assistant and cleaner for Maha Ghosananda in Phnom Penh.

This paper is about two problems in human rights work from a Buddhist practitioner's perspective, one structural and one experiential. The structural conflict concerns the use of judicial and legal mechanisms to achieve human rights; I believe this acts as a barrier to successful human rights work in Buddhist environments. The experiential problem concerns the way in which much of standard human rights practice acts as a barrier to the development of compassion in the practitioner. Although these are far from the only problems, I believe they are important and illustrative. My own experience of these conflicts comes from almost 20 years as a human rights worker and even longer as a Zen practitioner.

The concept of human rights has failed to touch the hearts or empower the actions of the Cambodian people.

In America we pay a lot of attention to personal problems; we spend months or years examining why a relationship has not worked, why our career path hasn't given us what we wanted, etc. But we tend not to give the same attention to problems at the international, political level. With regard to human rights, we export assumptions, strategies, and practices based deeply in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition and fail to examine why they don't work. If we are actually to be of compassionate assistance in real suffering, we must move beyond the idea that because we have good intentions we already know what is best.

I would like to make four preliminary points:

1. Human rights are not about a specific form of government. The human rights conventions, declarations, etc. are an attempt to define and realize what human beings should be able to expect under any and all forms of government.

2. The deeper social visions of human rights and Buddhism are compatible. Both envision societies in which people are fed, educated, and live in harmony with themselves, each other, and the environment; in which they have access to meaningful work, health care, sustaining family life, and freedom of religious practice; in which they are free from abuse at all levels, from sexual trafficking to torture.

3. The structures through which Buddhism and human rights attempt to achieve these visions are deeply different. The Buddhist social vision is one of a hierarchical society purified at the top by adherence to the Dharma, one in which the purity at the top is the primary agent of morality, ethics, and social harmony. Multiparty democracy, separation of powers, managed competition among factions, and the Rule of Law, while not altogether incompatible with this vision, are not part of it.

4. These social visions have not been realized in practice by either the human rights movement or existing Buddhist societies (as in existing Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, and other societies).

I came to Cambodia in 1996 expecting that living in a Buddhist environment would provide deep support for the integration of human rights work and spiritual practice. I found this not to be the case. Initially I blamed this on human rights work having been imported into Cambodia as part of an international agenda focusing on voter education and civil and political rights, without consultation as to what was important to the Cambodians themselves. While there was certainly political conflict, it seemed very far from people's most pressing concerns, from the social disintegration, disease, and destitution everywhere apparent.

Moreover, Cambodia had been undergoing massive, internationally managed political reform, especially since 1991 when the Paris Peace Accords were signed. While all this had significant effect, it nonetheless left the same leadership at the top and most centers of power untouched. While some people, including those in government, have learned to speak the language of human rights, that language has made no significant connection to either their behavior or their beliefs. The concept of

human rights has also failed to touch the hearts or empower the actions of the Cambodian people.

To be fair, human rights work in Cambodia is also developing away from its restricted beginnings into a larger agenda more appropriate for the country, especially in such areas as land reform, the right to health, the prevention of domestic violence, and the protection of workers and children. It is also addressing such essential political and civil issues as legalized impunity, the independence of the judiciary, and the effects of endemic corruption on legal processes. There has also been massive reform in education, health, and development, some of which has been both well intentioned and effective.

But in the years I have lived here I have seen no lessening of destitution; rather the gap between rich and poor has increased. Trafficking in drugs and prostitution continues to rise. Many of the 85 percent of Cambodians who are farmers are losing their land. The work of getting rid of landmines that is supposed to provide poor farmers with land instead provides land for investment and for friends of high government officials. Usurious interest on loans (10 percent/month), high health care costs, and land grabs for purposes of commercial agriculture, deforestation, and casino building deprive people of what little land they possess. AIDS has begun to overwhelm what little had been achieved in health reform and to further decimate the adult population of the country.

Two Cambodian nuns leave a shrine containing the bones of victims of the Khmer Rouge. Photo by Val DuBasky

Over time, I have come to believe that the problem for human rights in Cambodia is deeper than endemic corruption, neocolonialism, and the importation of Western values; that the failure of human rights work to reach the hearts of the Cambodian people is neither accidental nor intended but a matter of deeper structural conflict. I have come to believe that there is a lack of deep resonance between the strategies of human rights work and the way in which Cambodian people understand reality.

I believe this failure happens primarily because international human rights work has taken legal process and the adjudication of claims as its fundamental organizing principle. Within the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition this is completely meaningful. God is a judge. To envision human law aspiring to the perfection of God's law is to attempt to bring human society into alignment with God's purpose. This model for human rights work—defined rights, competing claims, articulation and adjudication of claims, appeal and resolution within a judicial framework—is so deeply set within the Judeo-Christian-Islamic ontology that it is difficult even to imagine an alternative.

But these assumptions have no place in Buddhist cosmology. God is not a judge. Law is not the visible reflection of divine social ordering. Even though Buddha was a practical social reformer, especially with regard to such issues as Brahmanism and the religious status of women, the Buddha's vision of social harmony is not one of setting structural limits on the exercise of absolute power; it is one of purifying the use of power, including absolute power, so that it operates for the good. It is the Wheel of Dharma that reveals the ruler's purity of intention and goodness, not the legislature and Supreme Court acting as checks and balances. Karma is a natural law, like the laws of physics, and punishes offenders far more effectively than any court system. While courts and legal systems of course exist, they do not have the same imaginative or ontological force that they have within Judeo-Christian-Islamic societies.

This failure of the judicial structure to link with deeper understandings of reality limits the effectiveness of current human rights strategies within Cambodia. In Cambodia law is no match for power and people do not envision legal reform as a way to fix this. If they cannot find a powerful person to intervene they take matters into their own hands. (Mobs routinely beat to death motorcycle thieves; in one case involving monks, the *wat* defended the practice.) Or they remain powerless: "The grass accepts all."

Certainly the Cambodian people's understanding of power and powerlessness has been profoundly conditioned by their traumatic experience over the past 30 years. But this does not explain why the vision of human rights fails to bring hope to the situation as it does in other places, or why it fails to empower people's imaginations.

I believe that one important reason for this failure is the human rights movement's unthinking use of the legal/judicial framework, the narrowness of its strategic vision. To be effective in Buddhist contexts, human rights work needs fundamental strategic broadening. It must leave the palace (and temple) of justice and enter

the forest—the unknown, complex reality where the potential for genuinely enlightened action dwells.

Such strategic broadening can only come from people deeply grounded in both the aspirations of human rights and their own cultural traditions. This work is happening. Thich Nhat Hanh, Maha Ghosananda, and the Dalai Lama are three powerful examples of the embodiment of human rights aspirations within the Buddhist traditions in Asia. Less visible are the many women engaged in the same or related efforts. Such creative work will not only help to provide a genuine link between Buddhist and human rights visions of society but will also deeply enrich the strategic practice of human rights workers everywhere.

This first problem, that of the strategic narrowness of the legal/judicial framework, primarily harms the effectiveness of human rights work within a Buddhist context. The second problem, obstacles to the development of compassion that are created by the work itself, primarily harms human rights workers themselves. As religious activists, we see activism as a powerful vehicle for spiritual development. But when we fail to pay enough attention to the aspects of our work that act as impediments, the work drains rather than strengthens us. In Buddhist terms, we succumb to such "near enemies" of compassion as grief and despair.

We no longer see human beings, only the traumatic events which have misshapen them.

I would like to insert a few caveats here. Of course there are many compassionate people doing human rights work. And, of course, many people go into human rights work because of compassion. Moreover, burnout is hardly a problem restricted to either Buddhists or human rights workers. But my concern here is with human rights work as spiritual practice. Traditional human rights work can be a formidable obstacle to the development of genuine compassion.

Within human rights work, documentation is a particularly problematic area, since it focuses precisely on the moment of atrocity. We decontextualize traumatic events from the lives of the persons undergoing them, with their histories, beliefs, understandings, and processes, and we recontextualize these events within the human rights framework. We look at events—the torture of a child, for example—in isolation and also in relation to 1) the definition of torture within the international sphere and 2) other instances of torture within the same or other political/social contexts. We compare cases and look at patterns. ("It's worse than Kazakhstan but not as bad as Rwanda.") It is essential that we do this, so that the work is not partisan or biased. It is also crucial to obtaining a larger understanding of the violations themselves. Inevitably our comparisons affect everything, from the sympathy we experience toward victims to the allocation of such resources as time, money, effort, and media focus. Less dramatic or older events are overwhelmed. Sustained effort becomes difficult. The international community becomes "compassion fatigued," and resources needed for continued effort disappear. Human rights workers ourselves often move from country to country, to where the work feels most pressing, or where there are resources to sustain us.

I am not suggesting that this is either wrong in terms of human rights work or a personal moral failing on the part of the workers. This form of documentation is an effective set of strategies for understanding and dealing with massive human rights violations. But we no longer see human beings, only the traumatic events which have misshapen them. This emotionally static fixing on trauma comes at a deep cost to compassion. It is an easy path to grief and despair: to cynicism, burnout, exhaustion, post-traumatic stress disorder, and a host of other ills. We become inured to the various horrors and then drained by them. The compassion that leads us to the work becomes vulnerable within it.

In order for compassion to develop properly, we are required to understand suffering as both real and empty. We must see into and through the specific suffering we are faced with to the universal compassion and emptiness behind it. In this way we bring redress within the larger realm of *bodhicitta*, of compassionate emptiness. We dissolve both the suffering and the self and are nourished rather than drained.

Within the contexts of injustice, atrocity, and people's own anger, rage, frustration, helplessness, agony, suffering, and despair, it is not an easy task to find ways to use the work as a genuine vehicle for practice. Although our specific strategies will vary, certain principles are clear. We need to ground ourselves in the larger context of both our own lives and the lives we touch. Community support is of tremendous importance, as is having rest and beauty in our lives. Having time and space for extended formal practice is crucial. The more deeply we are grounded in emptiness and compassion, the more strength we will have available for sustained effort. We also have powerful traditional tools: mindfulness practice, *metta*, and *tonglen* among them.

But all these are external to the moment of working with the suffering directly in front of us. And, as all Buddhist traditions emphasize, it is precisely that moment which needs to be transformed. How can we do this? We need continually to ask the question: "Where are the eyes and arms of Kanzeon Bodhisattva right here and now?" ❖

Beth Kanji Goldring was a student of Maurine Stuart Roshi. A former academic, she worked on Palestinian human rights in the West Bank and Gaza Strip from 1986–93, and was a Fellow at the Bunting Institute before moving to Southeast Asia. She currently works with destitute AIDS patients in Phnom Penh. Her home community is with her dharma sister Susan Postal at Empty Hand Zendo, in Rye, New York.

The Law of Force or the Force of Law?

A Case Study of Tibet

by Eva Herzer

Every day we make choices about the suffering of others. Sometimes we try to alleviate suffering, and sometimes we become co-conspirators through our silence. I learned about the latter at an age when I was barely old enough to comprehend the horrors people can inflict on each other. When I was six, I met a boy my age at a ski class in Switzerland. We liked each other right away and had a great time playing together in the snow. The next day, however, he returned to class and told me that he could no longer be my friend because he was a Jew and I was a German. To my dismay, he did not talk to me again. This was in the late fifties.

That evening I asked my mother, "What is a Jew?" and she told me about the Holocaust.

As I grew up, I became aware of the great number of German people who had abhorred Hitler's actions, and who at the same time felt powerless to take any action themselves. I learned that silence in the face of injustice can be as deadly as the injustice itself, and that individual action for peace and justice is essential. Thus, when I first traveled to Tibet in 1986 and witnessed the Chinese occupation and annihilation of Tibet's ancient culture, I realized that it was my turn to make a choice between silence and action. Together with other lawyers and human rights activists, I co-founded the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet, which advocates for the Tibetan people's right to self-determination. This work, in which I have been involved for the past dozen years, has led me to examine the contradictions and gaps between international politics and our international legal system. Following are some of my thoughts about the dilemmas faced today by the Tibetan people and the international community.

Maia Duerr

For 50 years, the Tibetan people, under the extraordinary leadership of His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, have waged a desperate, nonviolent struggle to regain their freedom. For much of that time, the international community has chosen not to intervene, while 1.2 million Tibetans lost their lives and the survivors suffered under a brutal cultural genocide in Tibet. Persistent and sincere attempts by the Tibetan leadership to engage China in peaceful negotiation about Tibet's status have been unsuccessful to date. This is principally the result of four factors: A significant power imbalance; China's lack of motivation to negotiate; the totalitarian nature of the Chinese state, including its use of force which escalates the conflict; and insufficient international insistence on the rule of law in Tibet.

First, the power imbalance: China, is the world's most populous nation with 1.2 billion people. Tibet is remote and has a population of less than 6 million. Though one of the most spiritually evolved nations, it has little to attract the international corporate world or the political powers who represent its interests, especially when compared to China, which boasts the world's largest developing economy and a huge potential market for Western goods.

Second, China's failure to recognize that resolution of this conflict would promote its own stated goals of security and stability undercuts China's motivation to negotiate. Yet, China's ongoing political and religious repression in Tibet creates and feeds political instability and conflict. It is also costly in terms of Chinese military and security expenses in Tibet. Further, China's expenditures serve Chinese settlers in Tibet, are not responsive to Tibetan needs, and often violate Tibet's culture, as was the case when China built a huge hydroelectric dam on a sacred lake. The resulting poverty, ill health, illiteracy, and loss of cultural identity are all destabilizing factors. The economy of the "Western Storage House," as Tibet is called in Chinese because of its immense natural resources (40 percent of the mineral reserves in what China claims as its total territory), will not flourish so long as the Tibetan illiteracy rate is 54 percent or more (Chinese figure), and so long as 60 percent of Tibetan children are literally shrinking in size due to malnutrition.

Third, China's totalitarian regime does not tolerate differences in political view and suffocates voices of dissent. The regime imposes its will on the Tibetan people by force, which undermines the possibility of future cooperation between the Chinese and Tibetan people. Many Tibetans today are resistant to the Tibetan Government in Exile's plans for negotiations for any arrangement for Tibetan autonomy that falls short of independence, because China's brutality has made them

deeply distrustful of the Chinese government.

And lastly, lack of international support for Tibet's right to self-determination under international law has allowed the painful status quo to persist. The right to self-determination, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter, is the right of a people to determine their own political, economic, and social status. The exercise of that right can take many potential forms, ranging from independence to limited autonomy to integration into another state. While the United Nation's General Assembly repeatedly recognized the Tibetan people's right to self-determination prior to China's joining of the UN, it has failed to actively support the Tibetans in their quest to implement this crucial right.

Not even one state recognizes Tibet as a nation entitled to independence, and most make it clear that they consider Tibet a part of China.

The conflict between China and Tibet follows a familiar pattern. What motivates a people to rebel against its government is their loss of dignity, human rights, and cultural identity as a result of state repression. Generally, the graver these losses are, the stronger the resistance becomes. States, rather than responding to the peoples' needs, which would de-escalate the conflict, respond with their military might to any perceived threat to their sovereignty. This in turn causes voices of resistance and requests for reforms to develop into absolute demands for independence. Typically, the international community characterizes these conflicts as domestic disputes over which, they insist, the international community has no jurisdiction. Further, states are loath to question the sovereignty of other states, fearing similar scrutiny with regard to their own actions toward unrepresented peoples living in their territory. They believe that their own security is furthered by not questioning the practices of other states.

Yet this international tolerance of grave human rights violations frequently leads to cultural annihilation, or to the violent escalation of conflicts: to war, huge refugee populations, terrorism, and other forms of violence. This tolerance indirectly rewards grave breaches of international law, such as hijacking and other forms of terrorism, by focusing critical attention on violent conflicts and assisting in their resolution. On the other hand, the international community effectively discourages nonviolent resistance by largely ignoring it. In the case of Tibet, which has pursued a nonviolent strategy, it has been and still is almost impossible to engage diplomats and politicians in dialogue about Tibet's legal right to self-determination. Not even one state recognizes Tibet as a nation entitled to independence, and most, keeping their business interests in mind, make it clear that they consider Tibet a part of China. Diplomats even tiptoe around issues of solidly proven fundamental human rights violations, afraid of angering China. Thus for example, this April, the U.N. Human Rights Commission, which is mandated to examine human rights violations, voted, at China's request, not to even discuss a U.S. resolution criticizing China's human rights violations in China and in Tibet.

Not only has this behavior injured millions of Tibetans for the past five decades, but it practically rewards violence and seriously undermines the international rule of law. In fact it goes against the very purpose of the United Nations, which was created, according to its charter, "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination." The U.N.'s charter and treaties which comprise our current body of international law were created to protect *all* human beings against human rights abuses. These international laws, enacted in response to the horrors of the Holocaust, define human rights and make human rights abuses wherever they occur a matter of international jurisdiction. Before the establishment of the United Nations system, human rights violations were a matter of state jurisdiction only. International law today recognizes our interdependence as human beings: the suffering of any one of us is the concern of all of us, and the elimination of human rights violations in any one part of the world is essential to the wellbeing of us all.

However, international behavior does not reflect this understanding. Rather, U.N. member states have consistently resisted enforcement mechanisms for international human rights laws. Governments have avoided criticizing each other, hoping that this, in turn, will protect them from accusations of violating international norms. Theory is way ahead of practice when it comes to international law; unrepresented peoples who do not use violent means have received little international governmental support, even though their international rights are grossly violated, often for decades. What then is the path toward a more civilized world ruled by law, and not by force? The last decades have shown that it is civil society's demands that can bring about fundamental changes. Apartheid in South Africa, for example, was eradicated because people all over the world expressed their outrage through persistent grassroots actions. Their moral force and determination were so strong that states had to find a way to respond. Through economic and political pressure, the international community brought the South African regime into compliance with international law. This is one example of a New Diplomacy in which citizen advocates, working with progressive politicians, have become a powerful force for change.

The challenge today is for citizens of the world to create a culture of peace, a culture based on tolerance, compassion, and nonviolent conflict resolution. Such a culture will practice what international human rights law

has already codified. It will protect and enhance individual human rights, including civil, political, economic, cultural, social, and environmental rights. It will promote human dignity and cultural preservation and diversity. It will be a culture in which security will be redefined in terms of human and ecological needs rather than in military terms. Conflict will be resolved through negotiation and mediation, not through war. In other words, the force of law will replace the law of force.

While skeptics will say that such change is impossible, those who are committed to it see it as a gradual path of implementing concepts already set forth in existing international law. The number of peace activists has increased sharply in recent years. In May 1999, 10,000 citizens gathered in The Hague for The Hague Appeal for Peace, the largest peace conference ever. The conference brought together grassroots activists from all continents and walks of life, 2,000 youth activists, environmental, conflict resolution, and human rights experts and people from different sides of a number of currently violent conflicts. The conference finalized the Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century (*www.hague-peace.org*), a blueprint for world peace. It addressed the root causes of war, development of a culture of peace, disarmament, the strengthening of human rights law, and the prevention and resolution of conflicts through nonviolent means. It mapped out specific peacemaking initiatives on issues ranging from small arms control to removal of landmines and peace education in schools across the world. The conference and its resulting Peace Agenda specifically addressed the issue of conflict resolution between states and unrepresented peoples. If there is one message which emanates from The Hague it is that peace and justice can be achieved if each one of us becomes a small link in the global chain of peacemakers.

The Tibetan freedom and support movement, while not yet having achieved its goals, is an excellent example of how international citizen involvement can move an issue from total obscurity to presidential discourse. Until the late '80s, the Tibetan situation was hardly mentioned by politicians or the media. Yet today, as a result of nongovernmental initiatives, the Tibetan freedom movement has grown: citizens in over 60 countries, organized in more than 300 Tibet support groups, work for Tibetan self-determination. The U.S., for example, is home to the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet, the International Campaign for Tibet, and other support groups, whose memberships total over 40,000. Youth organizations for Tibet are mushrooming. In just five years, the U.S.-based Students for Free Tibet has developed branches on 500 campuses in seven countries. The Beastie Boys have introduced hundreds of thousands to the Tibetan cause through their Tibetan freedom concerts. Not surprisingly, Hollywood has followed this popular interest in Tibet with the release of several major films, which have motivated thousands of people to participate in the Tibetan movement to persuade their political representatives and to pressure China for a nonviolent, negotiated resolution on Tibet.

In response to this movement, the U.S. Congress and the European Parliament have passed well over a dozen resolutions each over the past 10 years, urging China to change its course in Tibet. The U.S. Congress declared Tibet to be an occupied country whose rightful leader is the Dalai Lama. Dozens of similar Tibet resolutions have been passed by parliaments from Germany to Australia. The public outcry over the continued colonization and repression of Tibet has become so loud that even President Clinton found it necessary to urge China's President Jiang Zemin to commence negotiations with the Dalai Lama and his exile government.

However, the public demand for effective state action is not yet strong enough. While the U.S. and the European Union, for example, express concerns over human rights violations in Tibet and urge negotiations, they are unwilling to take political or economic steps to back up these concerns. On the other hand, when U.S. business interests are harmed by copyright violations, the U.S. moves swiftly and effectively toward trade sanctions, and as a result very quickly obtains Chinese cooperation and compliance. Why the difference? Businesses insist on effective state action. They will not accept less. Civil societies around the globe, on the other hand, do not insist on human rights law compliance as a condition for normalized political and economic international relations. The current state of affairs is well summarized by a quote in *The New York Times* from a U.S. State Department official describing talks between Madeleine Albright and her Chinese counterpart in Beijing: "Human rights was prominent but not dominant." Our challenge thus is to achieve a political climate in which human rights are dominant, not merely prominent.

International support is indispensable because victims of human rights violations are usually the most marginalized people who do not have the power to bring about change by themselves. The Tibetan people, surrounded by the snow-covered Himalayan mountains, are particularly isolated. And yet, in this interconnected world, each of us has the opportunity to speak up for those who cannot do so without risking their liberty and life. We can create the conditions in which our politicians will insist on international human rights law compliance. Whether Tibetans have a chance to resolve their situation peacefully and to preserve their culture lies in all of our hands. The rule of law can and will prevail over the law of force, if we truly insist. ❖

Eva Herzer is an attorney and mediator in Berkeley. She chairs the International Law Committee of the National Association of Women Lawyers. From 1995 to 1998, she served as president of the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet.

TURMOIL AND HOPE on the Thai-Burma Border

by Hal Nathan

My interest in Buddhist practice first led me to Southeast Asia in 1993. Since then I have returned at least once a year. As my love for the people and culture of Thailand, Burma, Tibet, and Nepal grew, I realized that when I could free myself at least partially from my work, I would like to share some of my good fortune with them. Last year was that time. I cut back on my hours at work, and soon after, I left again for Southeast Asia.

In May 1999, I arrived in Mae Sot, a Thai outpost on the Burmese border, to visit a clinic for Burmese refugees. Just a few weeks earlier, another newcomer had arrived, a teenage girl, whose story would change my life. She did not arrive as I did, in an air-conditioned van with a guide who spoke my language. When she was found, the young girl was lying in the roadbed, emaciated, alone, near death. The Burmese teenager had been drugged, tied up, and raped. She had rope burns on her wrists and ankles. No one knew who had abandoned her in the road. She couldn't say. She was in shock.

Dr. Cynthia Maung

Alan Senauke

Rape of Burmese women on the border is common, for Burmese refugees make easy targets. Though they are fleeing horrendous political and economic conditions in Burma, they cannot gain asylum or even official refugee status in Thailand. In fact, it is often men in authority, in the Thai military or the police, who are the perpetrators. Often, the rapists leave their victims in the jungle, alive or dead. But someone found this young woman, brought her to a place where she would be helped, and slipped away without being identified.

She was not dumped randomly. She was left in front of the Mae Tao Clinic. The staff took her in and cared for her. When I arrived a few weeks later, I met the young woman. She was still in a state of shock, staring blankly into the distance, and unresponsive to human contact. I gave her my baseball cap, but she just held it in her hand, not noticing.

The Mae Tao Clinic

In 1989, the first big wave of Burmese students fled into Thailand to escape the massive military crackdown that followed student demonstrations for free elections. Dr. Cynthia Maung, a recent graduate of the University of Rangoon medical school, was among them. She thought she was leaving Burma for only a short time—coming to the border to provide medical assistance for fleeing students.

Eleven years later, her Mae Tao clinic still operates in thatched-roof buildings on the outskirts of Mae Sot. In 1989, the clinic saw just over 1,000 clients. By last year the number had risen to 29,000.

As refugees streamed to the border in increasing numbers throughout the nineties, Dr. Cynthia expanded the services of the clinic. The clinic now provides inpatient and outpatient care, including immunization, family planning, and treatment for a variety of conditions ranging from malaria to prosthetics for refugees who step on the Burmese military's landmines as they flee their homeland. The clinic also trains mobile medical teams and midwives, who courageously cross back into Burma to bring medications and treatment to people who have no access to health care under the brutal Burmese military dictatorship. Dr. Cynthia's clinic also oversees satellite clinics in refugee camps on both the Thai and Burma side of the border.

Her work has not gone unnoticed. In 1999, she received The Jonathan Mann Award for Global Health and Human Rights.

Were it not for Dr. Cynthia's clinic, the Burmese teenager's chances for survival would have been slight. As I left the clinic in May, I promised myself that I would find a way to be of use in this tragedy.

Back in the U.S., with the help of Alan Senauke and Tova Green of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, and other people who care about Burma, I founded the Burma People's Relief Group and began raising money to fund projects like Dr. Cynthia's. All along, the slight figure of the nearly comatose teenager was with me.

February 2000

I returned to the Mae Tao Clinic nine months after my first visit, and asked Dr. Cynthia about the girl who had haunted me. Surprisingly, Cynthia told me she was still at the clinic, living there along with hundreds of other people. Many of them work there, others are there for long-term or short-term medical care, and some, like the girl I met, are there because they have nowhere else to go. Dr.

(continued on page 31)

OPEN EYES, OPEN HEART

by Karen Musalo

In the 1980s, I took my first job working with refugees as a staff attorney with a community-based program in the Mission District of San Francisco. We provided free legal representation to individuals who had fled persecution and were seeking asylum in the United States. Most of my clients were from the civil wars in Guatemala and El Salvador—situations for which the U.S. bore clear moral responsibility. In Guatemala, the CIA was instrumental in the 1954 overthrow of the democratically elected reformist president Jacobo Arbenz. This led to years of military dictatorships and repression, including a well-documented genocide against the indigenous people of Guatemala, in which over 400 Mayan villages were obliterated. In El Salvador, U.S. complicity was even more direct: throughout much of the 1980s the murderous military of El Salvador received $1 million a day of our tax dollars. This is the same military which killed and disappeared tens of thousands of its own civilians, raped and murdered three U.S. nuns and an Ursuline layworker, and assassinated six Jesuit priests because of their advocacy of liberation theology.

The testimony I took from these Central American refugees affected me profoundly. The stories that they and other refugee clients have told me are examples of the unspeakable atrocities that human beings can perpetrate against other human beings. Sometimes the things they recount are so painful and difficult that I want to close my eyes and turn away—the way I often reflexively do during violent scenes in an otherwise worthy movie. But there is no turning away in this context.

I remember one client recounting how he was forced to watch the torture, mutilation, and murder of a close family member, and was then so brutally tortured himself that his captors thought he was dead and threw him on a pile of bodies in the back of a truck which they dumped in a remote area. He made his way to the home of a family whom he did not know. Even though it was dangerous for them to do so, they took him in and helped him contact his parents. He later learned that all the members of this family were killed by the military.

In recent years, the stories that I have been told are predominantly those of women, who because of their gender, are singled out for particular mistreatment. During times of conflict, in situations where men are subjected to brutal beatings, cuttings, electric shocks, near asphixiation or mock executions, women are all too commonly tortured with attacks on their sexual integrity, including gang rapes and forcible impregnation. Until very recently, the rape of women during war was considered to be a random and unavoidable consequence of soldiers taking advantage of social upheaval to satisfy their sexual appetites. It took the conflict in Bosnia in the early 1990s, and the overwhelming evidence of the Serb use of rape against Muslim women, to show us that rape is seldom a random occurrence, but more often than not is a calculated part of war strategy.

But it is not only in times of war that women are singled out for unique forms of mistreatment because of their gender. In Afghanistan, the Taliban rulers have banned girls from attending school, and have prohibited women from working or from leaving their homes unless in the company of a male relative. Women have been beaten, raped, and killed for disobeying the Taliban edict. In Pakistan, Jordan, and other countries in the Middle East, women are the victims of "honor killings" in which male relatives think themselves duty-bound to kill a female family member who is considered to have shamed the family. A young woman can be murdered for an act as innocent as spending an afternoon with a male acquaintance. In many cases, women who have been raped are then killed by their fathers or brothers because of the "dishonor" the rape has brought on the family. In other countries, women are forced to submit to female genital mutilation, which, in its most extreme form, involves the removal of all external female genitalia and the sewing shut of the vaginal opening, leaving only a pin-prick

"Buddha-to-be," by Barbara Parmet, from a series of photos of teenagers in South Central Los Angeles

size hole through which urine and menstrual fluids are eliminated. In other countries, women (and children) are trafficked against their will and sold to brothels where they become sexual slaves. I recently became involved in the case of a young woman from Central America who was kidnapped at gunpoint from her university and kept at a brothel where, under threat of death, she was forced to prostitute herself for almost a year until she was able to escape.

For over 20 years, I have worked with refugees and listened to these and similar stories. As the situation in the world changes, so does the flow of refugees—from Haiti, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo—the list goes on. As long as human rights violations continue, so does the stream of beings seeking a safe haven from these violations.

One might assume that over time it could become too painful to be so intimately aware of the violations and abuses that go on in every corner of the world, and that I would have wanted to close my eyes and ears to these stories. There are those moments, but the miracle has been that the opposite is more often true. Being present with each refugee has helped to dispel the grief and despair that I often feel in contemplating the many seemingly hopeless situations in the world. I've often thought about why this is so. Part of it is the fact that, although I listen to stories of pain and suffering, I am able to be of assistance in a way that has concrete results. By being a part of the process that secures protection and legal status for a refugee, I contribute in a small but significant way to righting the wrong that has been done to him or her. The opportunity to do such work prevents me from falling prey to paralysis and alleviates the pain that comes from looking at suffering and injustice. Right Action becomes a healing practice for me in the face of suffering in the world.

But there is another explanation for why I have not become overwhelmed with hopelessness. Without romanticizing those who have suffered, many of them have taught me deep lessons. Although they have endured heart-rending losses and witnessed or been the victim of tremendous brutality, so many have not given up their belief in life and in the basic goodness of humankind. Nor have they resorted to bitterness and hatred for their oppressors. They have had the ability to transform their suffering and to work toward forgiveness and reconciliation. The experience of working with and walking alongside such individuals has taught me much about courage and the resiliency of the human spirit. It has opened my heart even more, and deepened my ability to look at and be present with the suffering of the world. ❖

Karen Musalo is a member of the Fragrant Earth Sangha, which practices in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. She is an attorney and Resident Scholar at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, where she directs the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies.

Burma Border, continued

Cynthia called for her. I was startled when she entered the makeshift office. She smiled and greeted me. She had gained weight and wore a flowered dress. She was obviously proud to be a part of the clinic family, working to help others who arrive in desperate condition, as she did.

What lies ahead for her? Her only home is the clinic, a tenuous structure in a country that does not want her. She lacks education and marketable skills. Her uncertain future is much the same as that of hundreds of thousands of other Burmese refugees in Thailand. Without official refugee status, these people have no recognized rights in Thailand. They cannot legally work to support themselves. They cannot go home to Burma without facing the arbitrary and brutal policies of the military junta. And even if they try to return home, many would find that their homes and villages have been burned to the ground by a military intent on "pacification" of its own citizenry.

Amid the uncertainty, however, there is some hope, thanks to Dr. Cynthia, her staff, and a few other organizations that work on the border to provide basic humanitarian relief. The task is monumental, due to continual political harassment and a complete lack of economic infrastructure. But the people who work on the border take life a day at a time. They know that the Burmese military government will not last forever. When the collapse of the government comes, the people who are left along the border will return home.

For most of the refugees along the Thai/Burma border, the centuries-old Buddhist tradition survives intact. This tradition and the experience of community and solidarity being built in the worst of conditions may one day serve as a foundation for a unified, peaceful, and hopeful society. ❖

☞ Anyone interested in helping the plight of the Burmese people both inside and outside their country can contact the Burma People's Relief Group through Hal Nathan at 415/486-6516 or 415/669-1945 or email at <hnathan@senecacapital.com>.

Hal Nathan is a partner in Seneca Capital Management in San Francisco and has been a Buddhist practitioner for over ten years.

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BUDDHIST WOMEN IN LUMBINI

by Phelps Feeley

"It's so colorful here! I am very happy to see you all. I feel that the second Buddha must be here somewhere amongst us!" —Tibetan nun

7:30 AM, January 31, 2000, Kathmandu, Nepal

The morning is cold and wet. The small crowd outside is huddled and awaiting the "let's go" signal. I climb onto the bus and am instantly immersed in a community of smiles and shy to jovial hellos. As I make my way toward an empty seat in the back, I pass by robes of dark red, mustard yellow, soft pink, pristine white, muted gray, and black. I sit down between a woman from the Netherlands about to embark on her first solo film documentation project, and a woman from Boston who has recently changed her life around to focus on meaningful writing. In front and in back of me sit six Cambodian nuns, all with shaved heads, dressed in white down to their sandals. They converse with a scholar from Sri Lanka, while all around me there is the buzz of introductions in a mosaic of languages.

On our ride on narrow, breathtaking roads, we pass hillsides full of green: bright rice fields, dark stalks of mustard plants about to burst into yellow blossoms, and the terraced and ashen croplands of Nepal in the dry season. Against the white-gray sky, this vegetation contrasts starkly. And the contrasts *inside* the bus—culturally, traditionally, linguistically—are no less stark and just as lively.

"You can change your own karma! Be you a man, be you a woman—the same chariot will take you to Nibbana!"—Dr. Hema Goonatilake, "Transforming Concepts of Gender"

This bus ride was the entry point for the next week of presentations, workshops, performances, meditation instruction, and hours of conversation, all of which took place at the Sakyadhita: Sixth International Conference on Buddhist Women held in Lumbini, Nepal from February 1 to 7. The theme for this conference was "Women as Peacemakers: Self, Family, Community and World."

Sakyadhita was founded in 1987 to support Buddhist women, particularly in Asia, around issues such as ordination, education, and equity rights.

The site chosen for the conference was a natural fit. Lumbini was also the place where, in a grove of trees, Queen Maya gave birth, out of her side, to Prince Siddhartha. Seven days later, the Queen passed way, and her sister Mahapajapati became Siddhartha's caretaker. Many years later, it was this same woman, Buddha's aunt, who first asked Buddha to take women into the sangha. Indeed, Mahapajapati's activism centered around an issue still being raised by Sakyadhita today: that of ordination rights for women.

"We can restore the bhikkuni order. There are no doubts about it!" —Rajani deSilva, "Reclaiming the Robe: Restoration of the Bhikkuni Order in Sri Lanka"

Coming from the Western and largely lay tradition of California Zen, I found the presentations on Asian monastic practice for women both educational and motivating.

Venerable Wun Weol spoke on "Life in a Korean Zen Monastery." Recently in Korea, full ordination for women has been flourishing; there are now 4,000 *bhikkunis* (nuns) to 4,100 *bhikkus* (monks). (In Taiwan, a similar flourishing has resulted in a three-to-one ratio of nuns to monks). Many of these new nuns surpass the high school graduation requirement for entering a Korean nunnery, with graduate and Ph.D. work behind them. The training program for nuns in Korea is one of the most rigorous. Starting with a year of etiquette intensive, women are taught the correct forms in which to chant, sit, eat, walk, and perform ceremonies. They are allowed no personal space and many of their "secular habits" drop away. After novice ordination, they follow a four-year course which combines Sutra and Zen studies, before bhikkuni ordination is offered.

Ven. Weul said that after their training, the nuns have a high level of individual authority and self-agency. When asked, "What do you do after all this?" she replied, "It is our option. No one can tell us [what to do]. Sometimes we serve the community but no one can tell us."

But in other countries, as we heard, women are still struggling for ordination rights and respect. In Cambodia, female practitioners are currently transforming their roles from being temple and housekeepers for monks to trained counselors and teachers. Of course, this is not an easy transition and there have been many obstacles along the way. Venerable Karma Lekshe Tsomo, Sakyadhita's secretary and co-founder, spoke of responses she commonly receives when raising the issue of gender imbalances in Buddhism—including dismissal, intimidation, trivialization, and denigration. It has been a long struggle just to get the subject on the table. Even so, she finds that when she and fellow organizers actually talk to bhikkus face to face about the bhikkuni issue, most of them understand the need for full ordination rights for women. This is good news, as men (especially those in monastic positions of power) are vital allies in this struggle.

"Do Buddhist women have human rights? What are the appropriate actions when our rights are violated?" —Lin Chew, "Gender, Buddhism, and Human Rights"

At each conference, Sakyadhita supports the struggles of nuns and laywomen in the host country. A recur-

ring theme of the conference, one that has local significance and is keeping Nepali women and girls away from nunneries or studying the Dharma, is the high rate of trafficking of Nepali females into sex industries in the urban centers of India and Nepal.

Trafficking (defined by Human Rights Watch [HRW] as "the illegal and highly profitable transport and sale of human beings for the purpose of exploiting their labor") of girls and women into the flesh trades is a longstanding problem not only in Nepal but in other Asian countries such as Thailand, Burma, Japan, and, increasingly, Tibet and China. Trafficking of females in and out of Eastern European and former Soviet block countries has also been documented as widespread.

In Nepal, families can be paid "as little as 200 Nepali rupees (U.S. $4)" or tempted by "promises of future earnings" when selling their daughters, nieces, or sisters. Dr. Chandresh Ratna Tuladhar, a Nepali physician who works in monastic and municipal free clinics, told conference participants saddening accounts of poor village families for whom the birth of a daughter is seen as an economic opportunity for the future. Girls and women are given false promises of jobs, marriage, or educational opportunities by trafficking agents. Often family members (uncles, stepfathers, cousins) play key roles in the deception (HRW).

The author (middle) with friends

Each year, approximately 1,600 Nepali girls are sold to work in the sex industries of India and Nepal. Seventy-five percent of these girls are Buddhist, and most come from ethnic minority groups, reported activists Patti Bory and Khandu Lama in their presentation, "Trafficking in Buddhist Girls: Empowerment through Prevention." Before the conference, Bory spent several months working in a rural Nepali village with the Helambu Women's Development Association (HWDA), a grassroots organization which Lama cofounded and coordinates. Helambu is one of the poorest and least developed areas of Nepal and "is also notorious for the high numbers of girls who are sent to the sex industry." Yet even though trafficking in the region is widespread, Bory found that in the Helambu village where she lived and worked it is still a phenomenon shrouded in silence and taboo.

Law enforcement has done little to curb trafficking. According to HRW and HWDA, Indian and Nepali government officials knowingly allow trafficking to continue, sometimes with covert government protection of brothel owners and trafficking agents. It is well known that Indian police, as well as foreign tourists, frequent brothels in which trafficked and underage girls work. Lama and Bory noted that 20 months has been the maximum jail sentence served for trafficking crimes.

Disturbingly, the underage population of girls working in brothels is growing. According to HRW, while in the 1980s the average age of recruitment was between 14 and 16, by 1994 it had dropped to between 10 and 14. A 50 percent HIV-infection rate for women in brothels reinforces the demand for younger and younger girls. Brothel clientele request "virginal" and thus presumably uninfected girls, instead of using prevention measures such as mandatory condom use.

Lin Chew, an advocate working for the Asian Human Rights Commission in Hong Kong, brought a human rights perspective to trafficking in her presentation "Gender, Buddhism, and Human Rights." Chew has worked on trafficking with a variety of organizations in both Asia and Europe during the past 20 years. In discussing possible solutions, she was quick to voice a concern shared by many in the anti-trafficking field: how do we put anti-trafficking measures into action without victimizing the women a second time? The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), a movement based in Bangkok, notes that many of the current anti-trafficking measures "criminalize and stigmatize women" rather than "foster the development of human rights, immigrant workers', and migrant women workers' rights." Additionally, many of the NGOs working in related fields are based in urban centers, rather than in the rural areas in which the cycle of trafficking often begins. HWDA is therefore launching a girls' outreach project to help girls and their families see other options besides the sex industry. In an experimental residential school, girls will learn relevant trade skills. GAATW also facilitates discourse and action on the international level.

Thanks to the exploration of this issue in presentations and focus groups, conference participants decided to push for Sakyadhita to take on a new resolution: "To work for the abolition of trafficking in girls and women in Nepal and throughout the world."

"What did I like most about the conference? Discussion. The sharing of cultures and traditions. The group questioning each other. I liked it very much." —Ani Tenzin Kalsang, Tibetan nun living in North India

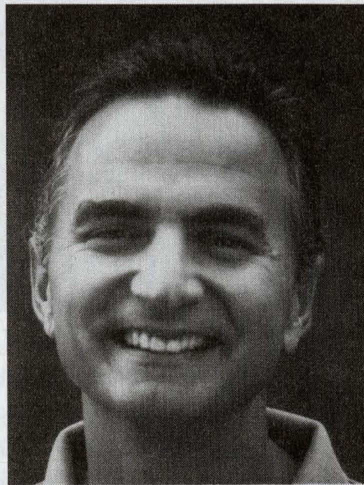
Throughout my time at the conference in Lumbini, I felt a strong connection not only with my dharma sisters of today, but also with the ancestral line of Buddhist women. This line stretches back to Mayadevi, who gen-

(continued on page 42)

YOU CAN DO THIS, SWEETHEART

An Interview with Bo Lozoff

Bo Lozoff and his wife Sita have been working with prison inmates for many years, and building bridges between those of us on the inside and those of us on the outside. They started the Prison Ashram Project in 1973 to further this work. When they aren't on the road, they live at Kindness House in Durham, North Carolina. Bo is the author of We're All Doing Time, *and* It's a Meaningful Life *(reviewed in* TW, *Spring 2000). The following interview for* Turning Wheel *was conducted in Berkeley in November, 1999, by Diana Lion, BPF's Prison Project Director.*



Diana Lion: Can you tell us a little about how you got into prison work in the first place?

Bo Lozoff: My wife Sita and I were radical activists in the '60s, at a time when the scene was pretty violent, and we all got burned out. We wound up on a sailboat for awhile, just sailing away from everything. It calmed our souls a lot to be out on the ocean.

My brother-in-law and the captain of the sailboat we were on used the boat to smuggle 1,400 pounds of pot. Sita and I left the boat, and we were drawn into prison work when they all got busted and drew long prison sentences.

Shortly thereafter, we took a meditation course and got involved in an ashram in North Carolina. At the same time we became close friends with Ram Dass. He had sent copies of *Be Here Now*, his first book, into prisons around the country, and he was getting mail from prisoners who'd read it. He asked if I would take care of the correspondence.

We started a newsletter because so many of the questions were the same: "How can I be kind in prison without it being mistaken for weakness?" "How do I meditate when there's so much noise around me night and day?"

The project just grew of its own accord. To our surprise, most of the people we were hearing from had never heard of meditation or yoga. They were the mainstream prison population, people with no education, people who had been abused as children. We had third, fourth, fifth-time losers. That made us become real straight real quick, you know, in order to be honest with people like that and still have something useful to tell them.

Diana: Can you explain that with an example?

Bo: My first prison workshop was in 1974, at Death Row in Central Prison in Raleigh, North Carolina. I was 27 years old and I had never been on Death Row before. The whole way there my heart was in my throat and I was thinking, "What the hell am I going to say to these guys? They're probably going to be mostly black, subjected to racism all their lives, really angry at the system. I'm this white boy coming in from an ashram. What do I have to say to these guys? Who do I think I am?"

When I got there, there was a psychologist, myself, and seven death row inmates in a locked room, and the guard says, "I'll be back in a couple of hours." As soon as I sat down, a Black Muslim just started roaring at me, "Who the hell do you think you are, some little white boy, coming onto death row, and we're black men in the South!" He went on and on, really venting. And when he stopped, he said, "What do you have to say to *that*?"

I said, "You know, I was thinking all those same things all the way here. And I'm not really sure I have anything to say to you, and I'm really sorry."

That kind of took it all out of him. He calmed down, and I said. "We can talk for a little and see whether there's anything at all to talk *about*." And in the end we had a great workshop. It was very tender, very honest, and the psychologist took photos at the end, and this Black Muslim guy had his arm around me.

What I learned from that experience was that the very first thing that has to be established is that you're being straight. If you don't think you're anybody really special, there might be some trust that opens up.

I also learned in that first workshop that people really want friendship. There has to be some kind of affection. I think a lot of spiritual people are more involved with what they come to offer rather than the people who are receiving it. First, you have to establish yourself as a friend, and then you can say, "This meditation has done wonders in my life, and that's why I really want to share it with you."

Diana: How did your own spiritual background influence your approach to prison work?

Bo: Our approach emphasized spiritual friendship right from the start. My clear message from my guru, Neem Karoli Baba, was to honor all traditions. He used to say all the religions are the same. It's like the blood. It goes through the heart and the rest of the body, but it's all one. Like His Holiness the Dalai Lama told us when we were

in India with him, "You're not trying to make more Buddhists in prisons, are you?" I said, "No sir, not me." And he said, "Because the world doesn't need more Buddhists." I said, "Then why did you invite us to tell you about our prison work?" He said, "Because it's called the Human Kindness Foundation, and that's the point. We don't need to convert more people to any particular religion. We need kindness and compassionate friendship."

We've worked with hundreds of thousands of prisoners in the last 26 years. We've learned a lot about friendship. People have the erroneous idea that when somebody is terminally ill you go in and you say, "Oh, you're so brave. I admire your courage! I think I would fall apart if I were in your situation." But people don't benefit from hearing that. We think that it's praise and admiration, but it's not. What people really need when they're in a desperate situation like prison or terminal illness is to hear somebody say, "You can do this. You can do it, sweetheart. You've been handed a really, really tough one. And you can do this."

> *I'm this white boy coming in from an ashram. What do I have to say to these guys?*

But there's got to be something behind it. We have to know from the depths of the practice and the depths of the teachings that *we* can do this, too. If we say, "Oh, I'd go nuts in prison. I wouldn't be able to stand it," we're not helping. Such people make the prisoners into more romantic figures than is really appropriate, and they pump up the prisoners' egos. And that's not valuable. Prisoners have big enough egos.

We're all on the route to ego annihilation together. We're all learning to handle it, whatever IT is.

Diana: How do you address people's actions—the actions that may have put them in prison in the first place?

Bo: We're all in the same boat. We're all dealing with the consequences of our actions. But in our current criminal justice system, the punishment is so much worse than the crime that I don't see it as tit-for-tat.

We try to help them take a deeper view. We say, "None of us understands why this is happening to me, why that's happening to you, but *Why*? is the fool's question. And there are teachings that have come down through the ages, from all the great traditions, for just these circumstances."

It's not a stretch to bring dharma teachings into difficult situations like prisons and hospices. That's really what dharma teachings are for. So we always just acknowledge: "Your situation really sucks. And the teaching of all the ages has always been: Each one of us has the opportunity to begin waking up in the middle of all of it, without waiting for something to get better. Do you want to do that, or do you not? You're going to be in here for the rest of your life? Well, do you want it to be this violent, noisy, hellacious place for the rest of your life? Why don't you begin getting together with some guys who also don't like it, and do a little community organizing and change the vibes?"

Diana: Has there been any explicit Buddhist influence on your work?

Bo: To me it's about friendship. That's been my guru's guidance from the very beginning. It's not about converting people to your particular path. It's about using what your path has given you to go in and offer friendship. Any really great tradition is going to help somebody to develop compassion and respect for others, and to approach the great mystery in his or her own heart.

A lot of times the role I play in prisoners' lives is that I'm the first person who's ever said, "Listen, life is very deep, and you haven't been acting like it. You're a deep being and you need a deep, philosophical view. Buddha, Christ—they're talking about the same thing."

Diana: Do you ever find yourself working with somebody for whom you don't feel friendship?

Bo: I've done somewhere between 500 and 600 prison workshops now, as far away as India, and just about every time I walk into a prison, on the way into that room I get the same cold feet I had in that first workshop. "What the hell am I going to say to these people?" I always begin with at least a few seconds, if not minutes, of centering, with my eyes closed. My prayer is, "May I respect everybody in this room." When I open my eyes and look around, I'm filled with that respect and affection. And then I just speak from my heart.

So I can't think of when it ever arises that somebody really rubs me wrong. People are going through a lot just to walk into that room, sit down, and hear somebody like me talk about this kind of thing. And a lot of their friends are making fun of them even for attending.

Diana: I remember you once said that the most hated man in America was Timothy McVeigh, and that you really couldn't afford to hate him because he might be the next person you received a letter from. Have you ever had to overcome revulsion about what somebody has done?

Bo: Oh, yeah. I testified at the death penalty sentencing phase of a trial for a young man in Texas. He wrote beautiful letters, a very intelligent guy, and we were very deep friends. And when I went to testify at his trial, the prosecutor had these huge color photographs of his victim up all over the courtroom. I knew what he had done, but not the details about exactly how he had killed her and in what circumstances. And I had to look at those pictures. Then I realized that my friendship with him had been a little simplistic, especially when he was talking about forgiving the people who had

wronged him and who had been trying to sentence him to death. *You* forgive? Holy cow!

You need to be really sober about how much suffering people have caused. I need to hear that people are truly honest about their history of hurting others. I mean, to me the whole journey of awakening is about becoming whole. And I don't think you can make that journey if you just move on and leave all of that painful history under the covers.

Some of the people we deal with have done really horrible, heinous things. That doesn't mean that they don't still have a decent soul, or they don't still have all of the reasons that made them do what they did. But it means that we're not on somebody's side. What we're doing is dharma work, not advocacy. We're trying to help people awaken, whether it's victims or cops or lawyers or judges or inmates. Everybody has the opportunity to awaken, even if the gun is still smoking, even if the victim is still bleeding. We all have the opportunity to awaken.

Diana: I get overwhelmed sometimes with how much work there is to do. What do you do to keep the work sustainable for yourself?

Bo: I accept total failure, and then I do what I can. I think we're all going down the tubes. We're being flushed down the toilet of existence very, very quickly.

Seriously, I see very little hope for really turning things around and entering an age of compassionate government, so I don't really get frustrated by the lack of success. But there are people who are really suffering and struggling to whom we can extend friendship. And right away that's the kingdom of heaven. Right away there's success. Because when we're involved with each other in a compassionate way, with friendship and good will, it instantly "works." We have success constantly.

Diana: How have you engaged prisoners themselves in your work?

Bo: I'm always telling prisoners that they themselves are the most overlooked resource. They've got to become the activists. We come in and teach them meditation, and some perspectives about how to regard other human beings, and we do that so that then they can look around, as their minds clear and their hearts open, and they can act. They can come up with things they can do in their cell blocks that we never would have dreamed of.

Diana: Like what?

Bo: There's Tall Tom in Texas. He's in one of the worst prisons, and there was a theft—somebody's radio got stolen in his cellblock. That can spark a lot of violence, because if you just allow yourself to be ripped off, then everybody's going to rip you off for everything. So you think you have to fight back, and you're wondering what to do. But Tall Tom convinced the guy not to try to retaliate in a brutal way. He posted a sign in the cell block saying, "There's a thief on this tank, and we the undersigned find it unsatisfactory to live where we have to worry about stealing from each other. It's uncivilized, it's beneath us, and we won't tolerate it." Just about everybody in the cellblock signed it, and there was never another theft.

There are people like Tall Tom all over the place. All we need to do is give Tall Tom some tools to quiet his mind and open his heart, and then we just stand back and watch.

Diana: We get letters from people saying, "What can I do? I'm a prisoner, I have no money, I'm in lock-down 90 percent of the time." What can we tell them?

Bo: We hear from a lot of people who are in complete lock-down, and so we have a good-will meditation they can do for up to an hour a day, which starts with bringing the people right around them into their hearts and blessing them. Then it expands outward to encompass the world, but it starts with prisoners and guards.

We also encourage people to check into what's happening in their prison. At most institutions, there's something already going on, where the prisoners are trying to do some kind of good works.

We don't have to think of all the things they can do. We bring in the tools and the ideas with which they can quiet their own minds and open up their compassion, and then we tell them, "Now, you look around, you come up with what to do. You're the one who lives there. You can do something—you can always do something."

Diana: Have you ever thought about how you would respond if your son, Josh, were murdered?

Bo: Well, this dharma stuff is for the worst, most rugged situations. The only two options are that I apply these teachings that I really believe in even to that most horrible of all situations, or that I fail to do so out of personal weakness. I don't think that it's just arbitrary, which one I do. If I came upon it while it was happening, I might kill the guy, but if I had time to ask myself, "What do I feel is right, as hard as it is?"...well, people who have deep faith know that hatred is never conquered by hatred, that only love conquers hatred. It's hard, it's a bitch, but people are living by that belief.

I spent about a year in retreat, and one of the practices that I was doing every day was to repeat the mantra, "Anything that can happen to a human being may happen to me, and I accept this."

Your willingness to be a human being is your willingness to work with that mantra: "Anything that can happen to a human being may happen to me, and I accept that." Not "I enjoy it," but "I accept it." And so in that retreat I became more fully willing to live. I became willing to be involved in the whole adventure of life, in which some horrible things happen to people, and they may well happen to me and to you. We have to know—if we're telling people "you can do this"—we have to know that we *can* do this, and we have to really believe it. ❖

BEING BPF:
The Meaning of Membership

by Terry S. Stein

Once there is seeing, there must be acting...
We must be aware of the real problems of the world.
Then, with mindfulness, we will know what to do,
And what not to do, to be of help.
—Thich Nhat Hanh, from *Engaged Buddhism in the West*, Christopher S. Queen, Ed.

When I read Thich Nhat Hanh's call to social action, I appreciated his clarity, certainty, and wisdom. I also wondered how often I actually "know what to do, and what not to do, to be of help." Reflecting on recent discussions I have been a part of, about the mission of BPF and the involvement of members, I realize that social action, like spiritual practice, must be grounded in moment-to-moment mindfulness. Breathing each breath, my awareness of what to do meets my experience in the world around me and within me. Given this recognition, I would like to share with you some of the ideas that the Board and staff of BPF have been considering, as well as a few of my own reflections on membership.

Four years ago, my partner and I moved from Michigan to the San Francisco Bay Area. Soon after, I decided to participate in BPF's BASE program, to teach meditation and journal writing within prisons, and to fashion a life that allowed me to deepen my practice as a Buddhist and to dedicate more of my life to social action and service. Out of the crucible of my meditation practice and interactions with others on a similar path, I have been clarifying my intention, but with each step forward new questions arise, and I find myself challenged to feel each breath. Sometimes it is even necessary to take a step back in order to see again what I have forgotten.

> *An organization is not a sentient being—but it is, ultimately, a reflection of the many sentient beings who believe in it.*

BPF, I have learned, faces similar challenges. Of course, an organization is not a sentient being—but it is, ultimately, a reflection of the many sentient beings who believe in it, contribute to it, and enact its mission. BPF shares characteristics—both strengths and weaknesses—with other small, nonprofit, faith-based activist groups, including a passionate commitment to goals and a sense of integrity, as well as a fluctuating level of energy and a sometimes wavering sense of direction. Like myself, BPF steps forward most of the time, but also steps back from time to time to reflect, to breathe, and to remember.

The Board and staff of BPF have been engaged in a visioning process that is helping the organization to imagine its future and plan its activities. A high priority in this process has been to respond more directly to the needs of our members. During recent years, BPF has grown: it now has over 5,000 members and an annual budget that exceeds $400,000. BPF's Board and staff believe that it is essential for the organization to develop programs and undertake actions that reflect the widest possible understanding of membership priorities.

As a result of these considerations, a joint board and staff work group formed to explore membership issues. Some of us felt that certain barriers, such as distance from the BPF office, lack of information about BPF events, or lack of communication with other socially engaged Buddhists might prevent members from fully participating in BPF. But we also quickly discovered how many existing opportunities there are for members to involve themselves in BPF activities. *Turning Wheel* remains the single most significant vehicle for expressing BPF's message of engaged Buddhism, both to BPF members and to the larger Buddhist community. In *Turning Wheel,* members can read about BPF activities, connect with local chapters and other members, become informed about important topics relevant to socially engaged Buddhism, and contribute to dialogue through letters and articles. The Buddhist Alliance for Social Engagement, or BASE, the innovative BPF training program combining service and practice, is another way members can become involved, either by participating directly in a BASE program or by supporting BASE and informing others about its goals and accomplishments. Members are also increasingly involved in BPF's Prison Project and with BPF's growing Prison Sangha (BPF members who are currently incarcerated)—corresponding with prisoners, setting up chapter prison projects, and volunteering to teach in prisons. Members can also join local chapters, attend BPF local and national events, visit the BPF website (*www:bpf.org/bpf*), join BPF e-groups (send an email request to <bpf@bpf.org>), serve on committees and work groups, volunteer at the BPF national office or at BPF-sponsored events, join with other BPF members for social actions, and support our international programs.

Ultimately, of course, our work as socially engaged Buddhists extends beyond BPF activities. Through activism, witnessing, educating, providing service, and building community, BPF members become part of a larger web. In the fellowship of BPF, we can share our involvement in the "world as lover, world as self," to use Joanna Macy's words.

With an awareness of this wider commitment to

socially engaged Buddhism on the part of BPF members, the work group also considered other ways for members to engage in the work of BPF. Some suggestions are extensions of what BPF already does—for example: expanding our training and education programs, developing position papers, scheduling events, networking with similar organizations, establishing interest- or experience-based chapters, and providing membership "perks," maybe even tee-shirts! Other ideas involve structural changes in the organization, such as establishing an email communication network with all members, designating a board position specifically to represent BPF members, and rotating annual membership meetings through different parts of the country. Finally, several exciting new possibilities were imagined by members of the work group, including: developing a socially engaged spiritual pathway for members, which could involve taking vows and forming a sangha; developing a BPF training institute for socially engaged Buddhism; establishing a socially engaged Buddhist home, where people could live communally, and which could serve as a center for meditation and dialogue; and defining different categories of membership that would allow members to identify varying levels of engagement.

Everyone in the work group agreed that we should not make any such changes before we better understand the actual interests and wishes of members. Thus, this exploratory article, and the member survey also included in this issue of *Turning Wheel* (see page 24). We are aware that staff time and other resources are limited, so that new programs may require either reconsideration of existing services or identification of new funding.

As each of us turns to the membership survey, we might reflect on Buddhism's Three Pure Precepts, translated by John Daido Loori as "not creating evil, practicing good, and actualizing good for others." How can we act on these principles in our own lives, and specifically in the engaged practice envisioned by the founders of BPF over two decades ago? How do we live in a manner that does not harm, creates happiness and well-being, and supports others? As we sit in our meditation practice, how do we encourage these precious intentions, which are both enduring and fragile, in a world that often ignores or denigrates our efforts? When we take actions to serve or to protest, how do we determine what is skillful and avoid what injures in our interactions with others? We might even take a moment to appreciate the many conditions that have led us to walk together into a new millennium as members of BPF. From this vantage point, let us imagine our next steps in the fellowship of socially engaged Buddhists. ❖

Terry Stein is the Vice President of the Board of BPF. He lives with his partner Chris in Oakland, CA, where he writes and is a Zen student. Terry also teaches meditation and journal writing at the Federal Corrections Institute for Women in Dublin. He is a Professor Emeritus in Psychiatry at Michigan State University.

the tidepool

zen furniture, designs, and accessories

tables

sitting benches

rakusu supplies

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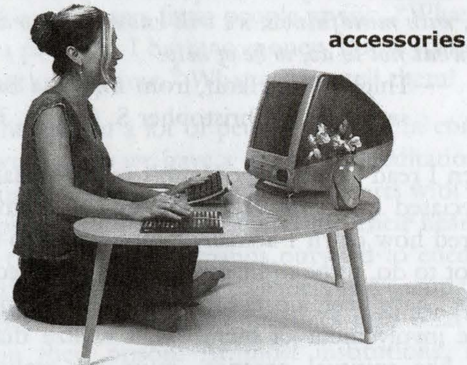

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Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism

Edited by Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft
Shambhala, 2000, 491 pp., $24.95 paperback

Reviewed by Linda Fair

"What does it mean to practice Buddhism during a time of environmental crisis? What are the spiritual and moral dimensions of the ecocrisis?" These are the questions posed by the editors of *Dharma Rain,* a collection of visionary reflections on Buddhist environmentalism. The book transcends any single spiritual practice in its humanistic approach. Its 40 contributors are writers who have wandered into the Middle Way from all walks of life: ecology, political science, and religion teachers, musicians, monks, political leaders, anthropologists, poets, storytellers, environmental activists, Pulitzer and Nobel Peace Prize recipients. They are joined by the Buddha and his early followers.

The offerings of these eco-scholars, from new ideas on composting to issues of world peace, nuclear waste, and planetary destruction, are woven together into an illuminating fabric. Buddhist teachings on the interdependent nature of existence are served up in contemporary form, fleshed out so that their meaning is accessible to anyone who wishes to apply the principles of compassion and right action to the world we live in today.

The book is organized into seven sections, each prefaced by a concise and illuminating introduction by editors Kaza and Kraft. Part One, "Teachings from the Buddhist Traditions," presents sutras, stories, and writings from some of the great scholars of Buddhism: Dogen, Daito, Basho, and Buson. This section prepares the reader for the discussion that follows of how to bring Buddhist practice into contemporary life.

Part Two, "Contemporary Interpretations of the Teachings," presents essays by Thich Nhat Hanh, Joanna Macy, Lily de Silva, and others. Nhat Hanh's essay, "The Sun My Heart," moved me to meditate upon his teachings of interbeing and how they are directly applicable to our relationship with the earth and the beings with whom we share it. De Silva takes a more scholarly approach, sharing early Buddhist teachings, drawn from the Pali suttas, on human morality and the natural environment. *Panca niyamadhamma,* the five natural laws, "demonstrate that people and nature are bound together in a reciprocal causal relationship with changes in one necessarily bringing about changes in the other." (p. 94)

In his essay "Buddhist Solutions for the Twenty-first Century," Prayudh Payutto warns that the planet is threatened by the pervasive view, spread by "economic development," that happiness is dependent on material possessions. He theorizes that modern human civilization is deluded by three misconceptions: the perception that humankind is separate from nature; that fellow human beings are not fellow human beings; and that happiness is found in material abundance. Our planet is no longer able to support this kind of thinking.

I encountered this book both as an environmentalist and a meditator. The possibilities proposed by *Dharma Rain* are very inspiring. Nothing is more frightening than the enormity of the task ahead of us, and the resulting discouragement can blunt activists' energy. The Buddhist approach to "doing," motivated by right intention and mindfulness—paying attention to what we are doing, moment to moment—has immediate application to safeguarding our natural resources, honoring the rights of all non-human beings, and bearing responsibility for the consequences of our actions.

Part of the magic of an anthology is that every reader can find a voice that speaks directly to them. For me, Stephanie Kaza's simple story of doing walking meditation in a California river valley, to the background presence of the gas fumes and grinding gears of logging trucks, struck home: "It seems like an indulgence to take off time to cultivate mindfulness when so much is being lost. But this is the tension—to find a considered way of acting not based on reaction. Building a different kind of sanity requires a stable base for careful action. It means being willing to know all the dimensions of the reality of destruction, being willing to breathe with the tension of emotional response, being willing to cultivate tolerance for unresolved conflict." (p. 310)

Part Five, "Home Practice, Wild Practice," reminds us in myriad ways how we can bring environmental consciousness into all aspects of our existence, from what we eat to how we walk upon the body of the earth. Elias Amidon, co-founder of the Institute of Deep Ecology, takes us along on a meditation walk through a mall with a group of graduate students. Philip Glass, Helen Tworkov, Gary Snyder, and Bodhin Kjolhede reflect on the spiritual lessons we glean from what we do, or do not, choose to eat.

The essays present us with the everyday contemporary choices and issues that face us, from the perspective of mindfulness and compassion. Most important, they remind us that, like our own bodies, the earth body will begin to respond to our mindful caretaking gradually, like the slow ripening of awareness that Buddhists invite in sitting meditation. Healing the earth will take time, patience, passion, and compassion toward all.

In Part Six, "Challenges in Buddhist Thought and Action," Robert Aitken shares his vision of a Dharmic society. He imagines us "walking [a] path of compassional understanding, discerning the noble option at each moment and allowing the other options to drop away." Too idealistic? The culture in power now would say yes. The earth would say no. ❖

Linda Fair is a writer, artist, and environmentalist working with Amigos Bravos, Friends of the Wild Rivers, in Taos, New Mexico. She has practiced vipassana for the last ten years.

Engaged Buddhism in the West

Edited by Christopher Queen

Wisdom Publications, 2000, 544 pp., $24.95 paperback

Reviewed by Ken Jones

On the face of it, this book seems just another in the growing succession of anthologies on socially and ecologically engaged Buddhism. But on closer examination, and when read with its companion volume *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia* (SUNY, 1996), it turns out to offer much more.

Here are 20 substantial, well-organized, and readable contributions on diverse groups and topics: Thich Nhat Hanh's Order of Interbeing; the BPF; Roshi Glassman's Peacemaker Order; Nipponzan Myohoji; environmental activism; Soka Gakkai; the Free Tibet movement; "Activist Women in American Buddhism"; the "Gay Buddhist Fellowship"; "Social Action among Toronto's Asian Buddhists"; meditation and stress reduction; the Naropa Institute; Buddhist prison ministries; "Right Livelihood Co-operatives of the FWBO"; four surveys of engaged Buddhism in Britain, German-speaking Europe, South Africa, and Australia respectively; and a concluding essay by Ken Kraft.

Some contributors, such as Susan Moon, Paula Green, and Stephanie Kaza, will be well known to *Turning Wheel* readers. Some of the essays are by personally involved practitioners; others have been crafted by academics doing a professional job, and others, again, by authors with both orientations. All are painstakingly thorough and yet they always held my interest. Production is up to Wisdom's usual high standards, with an extensive bibliography and index.

Old hands will doubtless check out their own patch first, where they are almost certain to make interesting new discoveries. There is also pleasurable browsing in other areas, prompting new connections and insights. As Kraft writes, "the collaboration is unprecedented for the writers as well as for readers." For example, in a report on "Meditation, Healing and Stress Reduction," focusing on the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn, Andrew Olendzki refers also to the many other areas of professional practice in which mindfulness meditation is now being introduced. Although the potential of this particular brand of meditation is necessarily limited, as compared with the ancient path of Buddhist enlightenment, it has the advantage of being much more widely accessible. Surely these are the growing points of what Stephen Batchelor calls a "culture of awakening." Without such a shift in a sufficient number of people, how will it ever be possible to turn the world around and avoid the follies of the past?

However, in reading some of these essays I felt a familiar disquiet. In meditation practice we learn to open to whatever discomfits us, and through wholehearted acceptance to find an at-oneness. So why do so many of our writings on Buddhist organizations, movements, and leaders commonly lack this inclusiveness (and the compassion and sensitivity that goes with it)? Why do we shy away from the shadow side?

Here Kraft has broken the ice in two paragraphs headed, "Are Assessments of Engaged Buddhist Leaders Too Restrained?" (p. 504) Some contributors do give space to critical voices, as in the essay "All Buddhism is Engaged," by Patricia Hunt-Perry and Lyn Fine, which refers to Thich Nhat Hanh's allegedly quietist social engagement. Sandra Bell, writing on the British scene, demonstrates the merits of having a fair and perceptive academic outsider who knows the insides well. Much the same may be said of Judith Simmer-Brown's measured assessment of BPF. "Respect does not obviate the need for constructive criticism," as Kraft observes of Bernie Glassman's highly innovative and controversial Zen. Yet the contributions on Soka Gakkai and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order fall far short of addressing the widespread disquiet that has been felt about these two movements.

Kraft's stimulating endpiece, "New Voices in Engaged Buddhism," is highly significant. Engaged Buddhism has now established its credentials. It has initiated a wide range of activities, documented in a rising flood of publication. Now is the time to inquire more deeply into what we are up to, and to explore new directions.

Kraft's essay brings up a whole raft of increasingly urgent questions. For example, arising from divergent responses to the Kosovo crisis, are there circumstances in which Buddhist pacifism might be seen as ideological attachment? Is a Buddhist "Just War" conceivable? (pp. 491–3) Again, a striking absence in the emergent Buddhism of modernity is an intellectually sophisticated theory of society based on Buddha's theory of the person. And, as Kraft asks, "What Becomes of the Quest for Enlightenment?" Has Buddhist activism become so preoccupied with oiling the wheels of radical social change that it has lost sight of "inconceivable liberation"? Does engaged Buddhism need to be freed from the secularizing weight of modernity so that it can become truly modern?

As a next step, do we not need, as Kraft suggests, "an Engaged Buddhist Forum...that can accommodate both sangha thinkers and academy scholars"? The day I read this essay I received in the mail the latest issue of the journal of the INEB Buddhist think tank, *Think Sangha*. The articles on "Buddhist Perspectives on Modernity and the Pitfalls of 'Saving the World'" might have been written in direct response to Kraft's essay. They confirmed my belief that the publication of this book could well mark the opening of a new phase in the history of engaged Buddhism. ❖

Ken Jones lives in Wales and is founder and secretary of the Network of Engaged Buddhists (UK). He has just completed his third book on engaged Buddhism, provisionally titled Liberation is Indivisible: The Convergence of Buddhism and Modernity.

What Her Body Thought: A Journey into the Shadows

by Susan Griffin

HarperSanFrancisco, 1999, 328 pp., $24.00 clothbound

Reviewed by Tova Green

Susan Griffin begins her latest book with a quote from John Berger: "I have never had the impression that my experience is entirely my own, and it often seems...that it preceded me."

What Her Body Thought is a collage of stories, social analysis, and sections of short, intimate prose poems. Two main stories are skillfully woven together in this book. The first is the author's own ten-year experience with a debilitating illness, CFIDS (Chronic Fatigue Immune Deficiency Syndrome). The second is the story of the nineteenth-century French courtesan, Marie Duplessis, who died of tuberculosis. Duplessis was immortalized in the novel *La dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas *fils,* Verdi's opera *La Traviata,* and the classic film with Greta Garbo, *Camille.* Underlying these stories are the author's reflections on the ways our society marginalizes those with chronic illnesses.

CFIDS in particular was first dismissed by the National Institute of Health and referred to in slang as the "yuppie flu." The NIH focused on a single study that looked for a psychological cause, overlooking other possible factors. "In the first decade after CFIDS was identified," Griffin writes, "a prejudicial and nearly tautological reasoning was applied to the illness, as if its existence could be explained away. The medical establishment drew a profile of the person most likely to come down with the disease. A mature woman, professional, upper middle class, white, and overly ambitious, she did not know how to rest, and this is why she was fatigued. The description recalls those tracts from nineteenth-century medicine warning that higher education could damage a woman's ovaries." (p. 94)

The notion that CFIDS is a white, middle-class women's ailment has lingered. But, in fact, children, African American, Hispanic, and Asian men and women of all classes and ages suffer from the disease. "It is difficult to describe the effect of being told you are not really ill when you are," writes Griffin. "You are left hanging. Disoriented. Strangely lonely." (p. 95)

Griffin raises the likelihood of the connections between illness and ecology: "We are part of the earth, and the effects of ecological damage can be seen in the human body." And she makes the link personal: "I felt as if the destruction of the environment were occurring in my own cells." (pp. 96–7) At last the connections between cancer and environmental pollution, first discussed by Rachel Carson in *Silent Spring,* are beginning to be explored. This exploration often brings together issues of class, illness, and environmental degradation, as when toxic waste dumps are located in poor or working-class neighborhoods and a high incidence of cancer ensues.

Throughout the book, Griffin shows the relationship of illness to poverty. For many in our society, a serious or chronic illness is the first step to homelessness. As a poor young woman, Marie Duplessis was forced work to for long hours in poorly ventilated rooms, doing piecework for subsistence wages. She lived in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in neighborhoods that had the highest concentrations of tuberculosis.

As in her other works, including *Woman and Nature* and *A Chorus of Stones,* the importance of *What Her Body Thought* is Griffin's ability to link the details of her personal suffering (and, in this book, that of Duplessis) to our common history. "Illness of every kind holds up a mirror to society," she writes. "Democracy relies on the telling of stories...In my lifetime, I have seen democracy begin to expand, not only to include those who have been excluded, but to provide a listening arena, a vocabulary, an intelligent reception for stories that have been buried. Not just stories of the disenfranchised and the marginalized, but marginalized and disenfranchised histories even in the lives of the accepted and privileged." (p. 276)

We learn the truth through listening to the stories that have not yet been told, and these stories change us as we tell them and hear them. Near the end of her narrative, Griffin returns to an awareness of our interconnection. "Isolation is an illusion. Society, like nature, is one body really. Each life reverberates in every other. Whether or not we acknowledge it, we are connected, woven together in our needs and desires, rich and poor, men and women, alike." (p. 306)

What Her Body Thought invites close reading. It will be useful not only to those who suffer from a chronic illness and their family, friends, and caregivers, but to all of us. As Griffin writes, "The knowledge of every possible human experience is in everyone." Stories like the ones in this book enable us to tap into this knowledge. ❖

Tova Green, Associate Director of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, enjoys reading stories of women's lives.

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Azim's Bardo: A Father's Journey from Murder to Forgiveness

by Azim Khamisa

Rising Star Press, 1998, 204 pp., $23, hardcover

Reviewed by Susan Moon

"The criminal needs the victim's forgiveness to heal. And in one of human nature's strange twists, full healing for the victim may require him to grant that forgiveness."

Azim Khamisa's only son, Tariq, a 20-year-old college student, was murdered while delivering pizza on his summer job. Tony, the 14-year-old boy who pulled the trigger, was obeying the order of his gang leader.

Azim's Bardo tells an important and inspiring story. Through his shock and loss, author Khamisa realized that "there were victims at both ends of that gun." He writes of his deep faith in his Ismaeli Muslim religion, and his longing to honor his son and recover his own life by transforming his grief into beneficial action. With the help and support of family and friends, in 1995 he started the Tariq Khamisa Foundation, dedicated to working against youth violence (see sidebar). Participants in the Foundation's Violence Impact Forums visit schools and juvenile detention facilities with the goal of sending a "simple, powerful chain of messages to young people: the impact of violence is terrible and irrevocable; violence is a chosen behavior; making that choice brings grim consequences; alternatives are always open."

For me, the most moving part of this very moving book is about the friendship and collaboration between Khamisa and another extraordinary man, Ples Felix, Tony's grandfather. "I was coping with terrible pain, on two levels," Felix says. "I had lost my one and only grandson to prison, and that grandson had been responsible for the death of Azim's one and only son. Azim showed me the road to healing by inviting me to work with him on something deeply meaningful." (p. 90)

These two deeply spiritual men standing together in a school auditorium must make a persuasive pair. Khamisa is a Muslim of Indian ancestry; Felix is African American. Khamisa tells the students, "You all deserve to be able to walk without fear. You deserve a future...We need you to help us. Will you do your best to help stop violence?"

And Felix tells them, "You are perfect; you are beautiful; you are precious...The responsibility you have as you move forward is to make choices...Tony made a series of poor choices, and they resulted in consequences he will have to live with for the rest of his life." Then the two men embrace—"a simple, powerful symbol to show the children friendship and unity in our mission." (p. 107)

This book is about engaged spirituality in action. It shows how working with the negative karma of the past can create positive karma in the present. There is an excellent chapter on restorative justice. *Azim's Bardo* and the Tarik Khamisa Foundation are valuable resources for anyone working with the prison system, youth violence, gangs, or gun control.

In the last chapter, on forgiveness, Khamisa relates that Tony Hicks, his son's murderer, has asked for his forgiveness, and that he has given it. "I'm ready to do something I've been turning over in my mind for a long time," he writes. "I'm ready to meet Tony Hicks." ❖

Susan Moon is Editor of Turning Wheel.

The mission of **The Tariq Khamisa Foundation** is to:

- Create safer communities
- Stop children killing children
- Foster nonviolent choices
- Cultivate personal responsibility through critical thinking and awareness

Azim Khamisa, Ples Felix, and others active with the Foundation are available as speakers. For more information, contact The Tariq Khamisa Foundation, 550 West C Street, Suite 1700, San Diego, CA 92101-3568; phone: 888/435-7853; email: <tkfl@juno.com>.

Buddhist women, continued

erously carried Siddhartha for nine months in her womb, and Mahapajapati, who trudged barefoot for miles to prove her dedication to the sangha order. It includes the three Japanese women who in 590 CE were ordained in Korea and brought the Dharma to their homeland. It includes the thousands of Tibetan and Taiwanese nuns who face discrimination and regulations of silence based on Chinese international influence. It includes the new Sri Lankan bhikkunis, and all who work for a woman's right to fully ordain.

At the closing ceremony, the Pali refuges were chanted, as a repeated refrain, in a multitude of melodies, accents, and intonations. *Buddham Saranam Gacchami, Dhammam Saranam Gacchami, Sangham Saranam Gacchami.* "I take refuge in Buddha, I take refuge in Dharma, I take refuge in Sangha." The experience will do much to carry me along this long practice road. ❖

The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women can be contacted at: GAATW, International Coordination Office, P.O. Box 36, Bangkok Noi Post Office, Bangkok 10700, Thailand. Tel: (66-2) 864-1427/8; Fax: (66-2) 864-1637; Website: *www.inet.co.th/org/gaatw;* Email: <GAATW@mozart.inet.co.th>.

Phelps Feeley is currently practicing and traveling in Asia, where she is working with women's advocacy groups and organizations.

Director's Report

I spend a lot of time listening to radio—public radio, of course—so I can't help but be aware of all the tragic anniversaries this spring: one year after the Columbine High School shootings, five years after the Oklahoma City bombing, seven years after Waco. And, in a different vein, 25 years after the fall of Saigon.

I remember that day long ago, an intensely bittersweet point of time. My bluegrass band performed at an impromptu rally in the college town of Ithaca, New York. Some band members got into an argument about whether we were rejoicing over the end of a long and nightmarish war or celebrating a North Vietnamese victory over the United States. Inflamed by this argument, some of us stopped speaking to each other for several weeks. We played that night, and other nights, finding ourselves in the strange fix of having to sing together across a microphone but not speaking, and hardly even looking at each other. I suppose there may have been substance to our political differences. They were distinct outlooks. But each person's feeling of not being fully seen by the other was there before this night, and long after.

Going further back in history, we observe Passover and Easter at this time of year: the flight of Jews from Egypt and the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. These are signal moments of fear, exploitation, and violence transformed into liberation and redemption. This is also the time of year that Vesak is celebrated in Buddhist cultures—Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death rolled up into one. Bathing the baby Buddha, rejoicing in his awakening, marking the Buddha's liberation from the cycle of birth and death, is a ritual we observe for ourselves. From the seed of wholesome activities, our karma flowers in the form of this mysterious life. We offer this life and our practice back to all beings, in faith that they may be free.

For two months—mid-February to mid-April—I was on a refreshing leave of absence from BPF. I am grateful to the BPF board for allowing me this opportunity. Thanks, also, to Tova Green, Diana Winston, and the rest of the staff, who did an excellent job of covering my responsibilities while I was away. Actually, most of the time I was not very far away, hanging out at home. It was a creative period. Feels like I was just getting started. Among my activities on leave were: lots of family time, musical play, rehearsal, and recording; several *sesshins*, including a wonderful week-long with Shodo Harada Roshi; time for study, practice, writing, and taking photographs. It was interesting to see that once my BPF job was more or less taken off the board, I was still quite busy. I discovered what should come as no surprise, that I make myself busy. In a famous Zen dialogue, Master Joshu responded to a question from one of his students with these words: "You are used by the twenty-four hours; I use the twenty-four hours." My admission: not there yet! But having said that, I appreciate the opportunities I had just to sit and talk with people, and to do things on the spur of the moment.

We welcome a new staff member at the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Heidi Strupp has been hired to assist Diana Lion at BPF's Prison Project. Heidi comes with an impressive background of prison work, and we are glad to have her energy and intelligence in our close staff community.

My column in the last issue of TW reported on a trip to the Burmese border with friends Hal Nathan and Henry Kaiser. We visited Mae La Po Hta camp, just over the Moie River in Burma, home to 4,000 displaced people, mostly Karen. We visited the camp clinic and schools. We sang with the children. That camp is no more. On April 1, it was attacked, overrun, and razed by Burmese troops. The population fled into the forest on both sides of the river. Those on the Thai side are safe, but now they have an even greater need for food, medicine, and clothing. I feel this loss in my belly. BPF is doing what we can to send extra support. If you can spare even a small donation to help these people in their distress, please send a check to BPF marked Mae La Po Hta, and we will see that it goes directly there. Thank you.

Coincidentally with the unfolding drama, or melodrama, of Elián Gonzalez, BPF is organizing a witness delegation to Cuba in September, at the invitation of Pastors For Peace, who have been organizing visits for religious groups for some years now. The trip, which will hopefully include two day-long sittings with Cubans, is scheduled for September 8–20, 2000. We are particularly inviting Buddhist practitioners of Hispanic or Latin American background to join us, but this is not a requirement. If you are interested, please call or write the BPF office. ❖ —*Alan Senauke*

BPF Activist News

BASE Briefs:

• The local BASE groups, HomeBASE and Educator's BASE, have met through the spring and continue to be a wonderful source of inspiration for the members.

• BASE Community members had a daylong retreat with Joanna Macy in February.

• The next issue of *Touching BASE*, the BASE community newsletter, will be out in June.

• In September we'll be starting a **Bay Area BASE group for young people** (18–25) with a focus on integrating practice with activism in urban life. There may be some stipends available. Applications will be available this summer. For information contact Aran Watson at 510/547-5569 or <bristlecones@yahoo.com>.

Fuller reports on BASE will follow in the next issue of *TW*. —*Diana Winston*

(Activist News continued next page)

Chapter News

Welcome to Frederick Ulrich, Sensei, new contact person in **Winnipeg, Manitoba**, and to Sue Roy, contact person for **Columbus, Ohio**.

Chapter activity varies, as always, a good illustration of impermanence. A BPF group is forming in **Idaho Falls,** which will, according to contact person Jim Mills, provide a place for people to voice issues that are being ignored by local organizations. There is new energy in the **Seattle Chapter,** due to Diana Winston's visit during the WTO rallies, and in **New York** in response to the Amadou Diallo trial. There are chapters that meet steadily month after month in **Honolulu, the Texas Hill Country, and Twin Cities**. The **Prairie Buddha Chapter in Illinois** celebrated its tenth anniversary. And one chapter says we are "pretty moribund—just slugs."

Some chapters are focusing on study, others on intersangha celebrations, prison work, and other activism. **The Texas Hill Country Chapter** has begun a six-month process of readings and dharma discussions based on articles by Sulak Sivaraksa, Ken Kraft, and other engaged Buddhists. The **Milwaukee Chapter** participated in a Buddha's birthday celebration involving all the local Buddhist organizations. Donations were solicited to support the Milwaukee Campaign to Ban Landmines, which is raising funds to clear mines from a 30,000-square-foot site in Boeung Krosal, Cambodia. The **Arcata Zen Group** co-sponsored a *Times-Standard* ad regarding the Mothers' Day manifesto issued by the U.N. and 23 Nobel Peace Laureates for a "Decade of the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence." The ad appeared on the day of the Million Moms' March for an end to gun violence, in Washington D.C.

In **Boston**, BASE graduate Josh Krieger has called a meeting to create a Buddhist-inspired co-housing community. And in Worcester, MA, at the **Turtle Path Mindfulness Practice Center**, BPF member Chris Phillips is organizing a monthly Lovingkindness Evening "using the news of people, land, and wildlife from trouble spots around the Earth to open our hearts."

If you live on the East Coast, plan to join BPF members in **Washington, D.C.** on August 9, Nagasaki Day, for a vigil at the Pentagon. This day is the fortieth and final day of the Fellowship of Reconciliation's "People's Campaign for Nonviolence." ❖ *—Tova Green*

Helping Turn The Wheel

BPF gratefully acknowledges contributions above membership received between January 1, 2000 and March 31, 2000:

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ANNOUNCEMENTS & CLASSIFIEDS

SAFE HARBOR, BPF's publication on guidelines, process, and resources for ethics and Right Conduct in Buddhist communities, is available for a $5 donation. To receive a copy, please contact the BPF office: P.O. Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704, Tel: 510/655-6169, email: <bpf@bpf.org>.

BPF VOLUNTEERS NEEDED, WANTED, LOVED. In particular, we need help organizing our library of books and tapes—Come have a biblio-blast! Also, *Turning Wheel* can use your help. Call the office: 510/655-6169.

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

SANGHA FOR BUDDHISTS OF COLOR meets monthly in the San Francisco Bay Area, for meditation, dharma talks, and mutual support. For information, or to be placed on their email list, contact Lauren Leslie: 415/642-7202 or email: <bebuddha@hotmail.com>.

DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE SANGHA for those interested in blending mindfulness practice in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh with social change work meets weekly in Oakland. Contact Rosa at 510/534-6302.

HEALING RACISM IN OUR SANGHAS. How can we make our Western sanghas truly welcoming to people of all ethnic and racial groups? This question is the focus of monthly gatherings for Buddhist practitioners of color and of European American origin, at Empty Gate Zen Center, 2200 Parker St. in Berkeley, on the first Friday evening of each month from 7:00–9:30 PM. Info: 510/464-3012.

PRISON SANGHA. Zen group in Ohio needs books, tapes, robes, incense, candles, malas. Please send to: Lotus Prison Sangha, c/o Ven. Shih Ying-Fa, Cloudwater Zendo, 21562 Lorain Rd., Fairview Park, OH 44126.

GAY BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP. Sittings, speakers, and discussions every Thursday evening and every other Sunday morning in San Francisco. Classes, workshops, retreats, monthly potluck dinners, and work in Buddhist AIDS projects. Newsletter, with information and articles on topics of concern to gay Buddhists, available on request. (See inside back cover for address.)

HOMELESS AND HOUSED people meet weekly in Berkeley, CA, for meditation and discussion. Volunteers from Berkeley Zen Center and East Bay Insight Meditation facilitate sessions oriented toward stress reduction. Tea and cookies. Mondays, 7:30–9 PM, off the courtyard on the west side of Dana between Durant and Channing. For more info, call 510/548-0551.

PRISON DHARMA NETWORK (PDN) needs your donations of dollars and used Dharma books to continue making the Dharma available to prisoners. If you are interested in forming local or regional chapters to facilitate contemplative prison ministry, contact: PDN, P.O. Box 4623, Boulder, CO 80306-4623, 303/544-5952, <pdn@indra.com>.

HELP HOMELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN by donating needed personal care items—toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, hairbrushes, combs, and hand lotion—to the Women's Daytime Drop-in Center in Berkeley. Volunteers are also needed to work with the women and children. For more information call 510/548-6933.

NEW DALAI LAMA CD, recorded during His Holiness' 1994 visit to Hawai'i, features excerpts from his talks and traditional Tibetan and Hawai'ian chants and music. Proceeds to benefit Sakyadhita. To order: 808/944-6294, fax: 808/533-2513, <tsomo@hawaii.edu>.

THE CONCH-US TIMES, the Journal of the Dead Buddhists of America, for those appreciating both Grateful Dead and Buddhist cultures: $8/yr. Payable to: Ken Sun-Downer, Box 769, Idyllwild, CA 92549.

TIBETAN NUNS at the Geden Choeling nunnery in Dharamsala, India have been suffering health consequences from poor nutrition. Financial support is needed to continue a project that has improved their diet. A gift of $30 will provide a month's worth of food for three nuns. Checks may be made payable to the Tibetan Nuns Project and mailed to Tibetan Nuns Project, 2288 Fulton St. #312, Berkeley, CA 94704. For more information, call 510/647-3423.

BUDDHIST ARTIST/WRITER, currently incarcerated, seeks others who pursue creative work as part of their spiritual path to form a circle of correspondence for mutual support and exploration. Please write to Oline Elliott, AHCC, P.O. Box 2139 TA-47, Airway Heights, WA 99001.

LITTLE TIBET. Summer farm stays organized by established NGO. Stay in a village and learn the skills to help threatened communities overcome the consumer monoculture and restore a sustainable way of life. Contact ISEC, 510/548-4915, or <isecca@igc.apc.org>.

People's Campaign for Nonviolence

Add your voice to those demanding disarmament and racial, social, and economic justice this summer!

July 1 – August 9, 2000
Washington, DC

Opening Event: Saturday, July 1
Speakers include Helen Caldicott, Daniel Berrigan, Arun Gandhi, and Jonathan Schell

Closing Event: August 9
BPF-sponsored demonstration at the Pentagon.

Sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation
For more information, call 914/358-4601
www.forusa.org

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Burma People's Relief
c/o Hal Nathan
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Inverness, CA 94937
415/669-1954

Karuna Center
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49 Richardson Rd.
Leverett, MA 01054
413/367-9520

Buddhist AIDS Project
555 John Muir Drive #803
San Francisco, CA 94132
415/522-7473

Gay Buddhist Fellowship
2236 Market St. #9
San Francisco, CA 94114
415/974-9878

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510/222-7787

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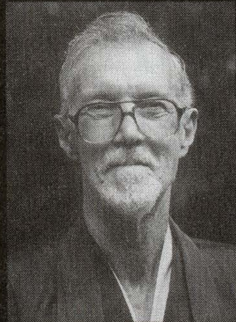

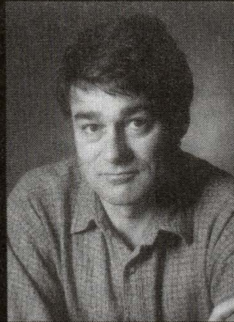

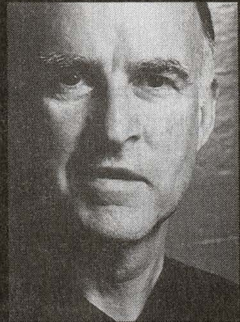

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on the final day of Fellowship of Reconciliation's

People's Campaign for Nonviolence

For information, email <tova@bpf.org> or call Tova Green at 510/655-6169

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