

Helena Norberg-Hodge & Andrew Harvey on Spiritual/Economic Revolution



# TURNING WHEEL

*Journal of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship*

Winter 1995 \$4.00



Elly Simmons, *Mi Esperanza*

**HOPE—***Why We Keep On Trying*  
**PROGRESS—***Is It Killing Us?*

**Plus:** *Books to nourish our activism and our spirits*

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## FROM THE EDITOR

You might get this issue around the winter solstice, when things start lightening up a bit. And we can use some lightening up; we can use some hope. The elections got me down, I have to admit.

Buddhism doesn't say much about hope, it turns out. Alan Senauke checked in the *Dhammapada* for me, but he couldn't find anything. The Zen teacher Joko Beck encourages us *not* to have hope (see quote, p. 31) because hope is about wanting things to be a certain way in the future, not about accepting the life we have right now. But somehow I can still take heart from this idea, because it gives me a place to begin: my life. Andrew Harvey (p. 20) says, "What we need as much as analysis is the energy that comes from hope, because otherwise quite frankly we're going to be defeated by despair." Anne Herbert (p. 31) says that it's scary to live in a world where we think people are "jerks," and she suggests that "we could maybe go outside and meet and act like we're not jerks, like we're imaginative and creative and generous." Tenshin Reb Anderson says (p. 25) "We're just fine. We're complete right now, and at the same time, we can evolve, we can transcend ourselves. Our completeness includes the possibility of improvement." And to go beyond the pages of *Turning Wheel* for a moment for some further words of wisdom, I quote Emily Dickinson:

"Hope" is the thing with feathers –  
That perches in the soul –  
And sings the tune without the words –  
And never stops – at all –

And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –  
And sore must be the storm –  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm –

I've heard it in the chilliest land –  
And on the strangest Sea –  
Yet, never, in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb – of Me.

I like the way she puts hope in quotation marks, kind of like she's talking to Joko Beck, saying let's just give this feeling a label, and notice that it's there singing to us, and we can just accept it without doing anything about it.

But isn't it just plain stupid to hope, since the world is in such a desperate situation, and things never turn out the way we want them to anyway? The Italian Marxist Gramsci suggested that we need "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will." We can analyze the problems, and then throw ourselves into the struggle.

So I think it's okay to hope, as long as disappointed hope doesn't turn to resignation. As long as you share your sadness with friends, and keep on trucking.

Wishing is something else. Wishing can be passive and whiney, waiting for things to change without doing anything about it, forgetting that you are a part of it. But what about when you blow out the candles on your birthday cake? Can't you make a wish then? Sure, just make your wishing active, hopeful, whether it's for world peace, or to be happy. It's sending your good vibes out over the air waves, it's visualization, it's affirmation, like the lovingkindness meditation.

So if we have some hope, let's share it. What a coincidence, that we all happen to be here together in human form—blowing out birthday candles and wanting to be happy, and wanting each other to be happy, too. And now I'm going to go vote in a run-off election for mayor. I haven't given up. ♦ —Susan Moon

Themes for coming issues of *Turning Wheel*: **Spring '95**: What *is* suffering, anyway? Deadline—Jan. 9. **Summer '95**: Consumerism—simple living, eating, buying, sharing, wanting (theme postponed from this issue). Deadline—March 6.



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Keith Abbott  
*Japanese God of Good Fortune*

# LETTERS

[*Turning Wheel* encourages readers to send letters to the editor. All letters are subject to editing.]

## *The Mutant Message Controversy*

I question the wisdom of publishing reviews of "New Age" fantasy books such as *Mutant Message Down Under*, in a Buddhist magazine.

— Bob Alderisio, El Prado, New Mexico

I was particularly moved by the recent "Mississippi Revisited" article, but was troubled by the review of Marlo Morgan's book, *Mutant Message Down Under*.

I have spent some time in Australia researching a film with Koori (Aboriginal) activists. They have denounced the book as "outrageous lies," and I can strongly endorse *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Jon Carroll's conclusion that it "is another example of white people using brown people as mantel ornaments. . . it's cultural imperialism masquerading as harmless New Age spiritualism. . . it's also a disgrace." The book is part of a phenomenon that is unfortunately well rewarded (the author received \$1.7 million plus a film deal and she continues to charge \$15-\$25 a ticket for her public talks!) and is becoming more and more common in the U.S.

Her success is dangerous for all of us. It does harm, it is false, it is enriching some at the expense of others, and it seems that it will go unchallenged for fear of offending the large following she has attracted. I'm afraid we're entering the era of the decline of the discriminating mind.

— Gaetano Kazuo Maida, Berkeley, California

[Editor's Note: *Turning Wheel* did not have the above information when the Fall '94 issue went to press. We apologize for any harm that may have been caused by the review of *Mutant Message Down Under*. We note that Harper/Collins, publisher of the new edition of *Mutant Message Down Under*, is marketing the book as fiction. For a more detailed treatment of this controversy, see the November/December 1994 issue of *Yoga Journal*, and the columns by Jon Carroll in the September 7 & 8, 1994 issues of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.]

## *Precepts and Awareness*

Like Rhoda Gilman in "No Precepts, Please!" I too disliked the precepts. After my first vipassana retreat, I realized I had violated every precept for the retreat. I felt glum and defiant, but now I see the gift of the precepts operating even back then: it was the first time I'd killed a mosquito with real awareness.

When I started to work earnestly with the precepts, I realized that I'm constantly violating them. As Thich Nhat Hanh points out, we cause harm to many organisms when we boil water for tea. For me the challenge is how to live with awareness of such interconnections and to become more mindful in my thoughts and actions. To this end, the precepts have indeed proved to be "wonderful."

I do not experience the precepts as commandments, standards, or prohibitions. Thich Nhat Hanh uses the metaphor of the North Star to say that the precepts are a guide and cannot be "attained." Living by the precepts" has meant living with greater awareness of where I am, both when I am moving towards and away from the "North Star."

— Lucy Leu, Bainbridge Island, Washington

## *Family Practice*

I was delighted to see your new Family Practice column in the Fall issue. Not long ago, a friend who has a small son and practices Buddhism asked me for some ideas about how to raise him to follow a Buddhist way as he grows up.

I said I would look through some of the leading American journals put out by Buddhists to see what was being suggested. Your column promises to be the first sustained attempt to provide what is needed.

Your new feature is a sign that American Buddhism is growing up, accepting responsibility for the future, becoming adult.

A fine start. Keep it up!

— Willis Stoesz, Dayton, Ohio

## *But Is It Engaged Buddhism?*

I enjoyed reading the "Mississippi Freedom Summer Revisited" piece, but was Susan Moon's participation in this reunion an example of engaged Buddhism? I ask this because a large number of the articles in the recent issue seem to have little or nothing to do with engaged Buddhism; in addition to the Mississippi article, there were two long book reviews, one on poetry anthologies and one on books about walking, and there was another piece about solitary walking. I realize that it may be appropriate to include articles of a more general nature in *Turning Wheel* from time to time, but I think the most recent issue has gone too far.

— Gordon Tyndall, Oakland California

### *Editor's response:*

I appreciate Gordon Tyndall's concern. At *Turning Wheel* we constantly struggle to find the balance between being so narrowly Buddhist that we become sectarian and being so broad in our interests that we lose our identity. Of the many urgent struggles for social justice, which do we cover? Which spiritual books

do we review? Which solitary walks in the mountains do we narrate?

As it says on *TW*'s masthead, BPF was founded "to bring a Buddhist perspective to the peace movement, and to bring the peace movement to the Buddhist community." (This sounds almost arrogant, it's such a tall order. But it's a small thing compared to saving all sentient beings.)

When I went to the reunion of the Mississippi "Freedom Summer" in Jackson last June, I went as a Buddhist, with a perspective I hadn't had 30 years before: that we are connected to everyone, even our "enemies;" that sometimes we need to act on faith without measuring results. And when I came back and wrote my piece for *TW*, it was as an activist, wanting to tell the BPF community what I had learned about the ongoing struggle for racial justice. A number of activists who aren't ordinarily *TW* readers were interested in my piece ("I didn't know Buddhists did this kind of thing!") and a number of regular *TW* readers were reminded of their own activist energy and their own sense of being part of a "beloved community."

Forgive me for quoting myself:

"A black movement vet from Mississippi said, 'Talk to your children now. You make the future now. You can't wait until the future comes to create the future you want.' I thought of Thich Nhat Hanh: 'The best way to take care of the future is to take care of the present.'"

Whenever a concern for social justice and a spiritual perspective come together, it seems to me we're in the realm of *Turning Wheel*.

So, Gordon, and other readers, keep challenging us. Keep us paying attention to what we're doing in these pages. Keep us honest.

— Susan Moon

### *Another Perspective on Vietnam*

Although I always enjoy the *Turning Wheel*'s "Readings" section as a source of important topics to monitor and opportunities for activism, I must comment on the recent suggestion that readers of *Turning Wheel* write the World Bank to oppose the building of highway 1A in Vietnam. Activists throughout the world face a constant struggle of doing what's right not just according to their own value systems, but according to what is right for the intended beneficiaries of their efforts. This struggle is particularly delicate for those of us coming from the industrialized world and working in the developing world.

Industrialization has brought many hardships, as everyone will attest—both for people and the environment. However, industrialization remains the goal of most governments throughout the world, as a means to social and economic development, and profit pure

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and simple. The health and infrastructure needs of developing countries demand serious attention if people are to be able to maintain their dignity in meeting their own needs in this changing world. Industrialization and capitalism are often seen as a means to address these needs.

It is for these reasons that I wish to comment on the suggestion that we oppose the building of highway IA. In fairness, I must divulge that I am a supporting consultant on the managerial side of this project. I have gone through much deliberation myself in terms of clarifying my own "right livelihood," and my reflections always lead me to the same conclusions:

First, it is not morally right for us to impose on others a simplicity we ourselves have failed to embrace in our own cultures. We should not cease our struggles to protect the environment globally, but we do need to recognize that we ourselves are the beneficiaries of industrialization and a consumption-based economy.

Second, the idea of replacing road projects with high-speed rail systems is shortsighted at best. As a proponent of democracy, I have serious concerns about limiting the building of transportation infrastructure to predetermined routes for railways. Railways do not afford the same flexibility in routing and freight as do roads, a flexibility essential to small business people.

I applaud the editors of the "Readings" section, and those who may write in to the World Bank to protest

this road on which I'm working. These voices encourage reflection and responsibility in institutions that influence the lives of so many. However, I ask that you, too, reflect on the priorities and morality of your activism.

In the hopes that these words will stimulate rewarding debate. . .

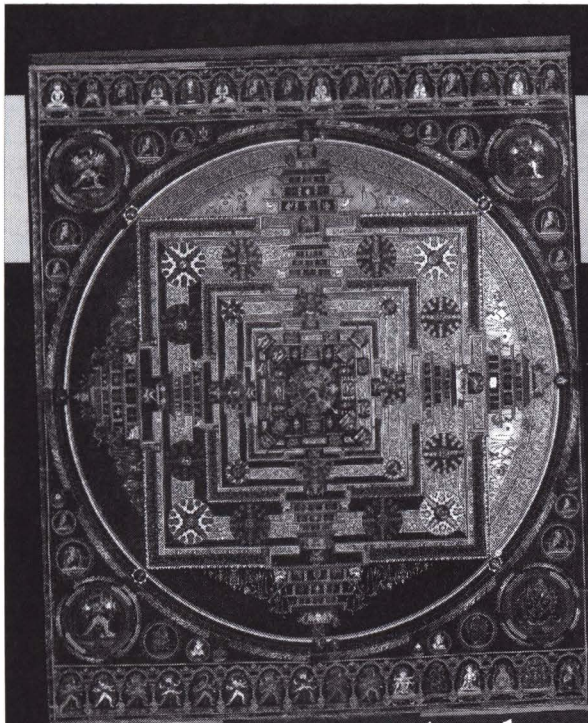
— Jennifer M. Coston, Issaquah, Washington

### **Buddhist Volunteers**

I endorse BPF's new volunteer corps [BASE—Buddhist Alliance for Social Engagement]. Great!

Let's consider having volunteers participate in pump-priming projects, along with hospices and soup kitchens and other care-giving programs. How about the revolution?! If we limit ourselves to care-giving, we are just patching up the status quo—and look at it! What a mess! Let's get in there with small land trusts, cooperative farms, cooperative stores, home building programs, and savings and loan societies. Let's seek out the programs that empower people in their neighborhoods. Let's "build the new society within the shell of the old!" I don't know that any such programs now in existence are Buddhist, but after all the Jesuit Volunteers are not placed exclusively with Catholics.

— Robert Aitken Roshi, Honolulu, Hawai'i



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# READINGS

## *Campaign To Ban Landmines*

The landscape of Cambodia is still riddled with landmines from the yet unresolved civil war that has already claimed so many lives. These weapons of mass destruction in slow motion constitute a threat particularly to the children, but also to other civilians, both now and in the indefinite future.

In an important first step, the Royal Government of Cambodia has come out in support of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and has pledged to outlaw the use of antipersonnel mines in Cambodia. At an international conference in August, the Royal Government called on its neighbors to refrain from serving as conduits for the supply of landmines and other arms to the Khmer Rouge and other factions. It further called on the international community to pressure the various factions in Cambodia to stop laying mines and to destroy their existing stockpiles.

In keeping with the international campaign the Royal Government has also requested that landmine-producing countries cease to export antipersonnel mines to Cambodia, and has also pledged to share its expertise in mine clearance with other mined nations.

Some one hundred million uncleared landmines lie in the fields and alongside the roads and footpaths of one third of the countries in the developing world. They claim over 200 victims every week. While it only costs \$3-\$30 to produce a landmine, it costs \$300-\$1000 to clear one. Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Iraq, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Somalia, and the former Yugoslavia are the regions most affected by mines.

The campaign is calling for an international ban on the use, production, stockpiling, and sale, transfer, or export of antipersonnel mines; and the establishment of an international fund, administered by the U.N., to promote and finance landmine awareness, clearance, and eradication programs worldwide.

✉ For a copy of the petition to support the International Campaign To Ban Landmines, contact Jody Williams, Coordinator, The International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Vietnam Veterans of America foundation, 1347 Upper Dummerston Rd., Brattleboro, VT 05301. Fax: 802/254-8808.

## *Burma and Thailand*

In September a group of Mon refugees from Burma were forced to leave a border camp in Thailand, to which they had escaped only weeks before, and return to Burma. They had been violently driven from their village by the Burmese military after months of harassment that included the burning down of approximately 120 house-

holds, the theft of property, the destruction of food supplies, and the taking of prisoners.

The Thai 9th Infantry Division was responsible for carrying out the repatriation. On August 10, in cooperation with the Thai Border Patrol Police (BPP), they closed the route to the refugee camp, thus severing access to further supplies of food. Later, on September 2, they seized rice that had been given to the refugees by foreign relief organizations. The BPP said the rice would be distributed to those who returned to Halockhani, in Burma, but not to those who remained in the camp.

The refugees finally gave in and returned to Burma in early September. Their return coincided with a scathing report by Amnesty International on Thailand's treatment of asylum-seekers from Burma. Amnesty International claimed that the Halockhani case was the latest event in a Thai crackdown on refugees. Their report noted that the forced return of refugees to countries where their human rights are seriously threatened violates the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees.

Meanwhile, in the face of human rights and environmental concerns, Thailand and SLORC (the ruling Burmese military junta) have reached an agreement to build a natural gas pipeline from Burma to Thailand. The pipeline will pass through virgin rain forests and areas currently controlled by ethnic and pro-democracy resistance groups. In the past, SLORC has been known to construct pipelines and other infrastructure with forced labor (see the Fall '94 issue of *Turning Wheel*).

The building of the pipeline also puts new pressure on the Mon and Karen peoples to capitulate to SLORC's political demands now that Thailand has so much invested in seeing that the natural gas deal goes through. The Thai army has already threatened military action against the Mon if they sabotage gas pipelines which pass through their territory, and Burmese groups residing in Thailand have come under heavy pressure not to voice opposition to large-scale development projects like the pipeline.

Thailand is justifying the deal by calling it an example of "constructive engagement." Thailand and other nations claim that doing business with SLORC will have the useful effect of opening up the military-dominated country to the outside world and bringing about positive domestic changes. Opponents of the policy argue that, in Thailand's case, this cynical rhetoric masks the fact that the demand for resources to fuel Thailand's exploding industrial development simply outweighs concern for the welfare of the peoples of Burma or the long-term survival of the greater Irrawaddy River watershed.

✉ Burma Information Group, P.O. Box 14154, Silver Spring, MD 20911; and Burma Issues, P.O. Box 1076, Silom Post Office, Bangkok 10504, Thailand.

## Nuclear Power in Thailand?

Political support for nuclear energy in Thailand is gaining momentum, and, at the same time, generating opposition. Wielding the financial muscle gained from highly profitable energy development projects, the Electric Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) has initiated a propaganda campaign aimed at people from all walks of life in Thailand to convince them that nuclear power is safe, economical, and environmentally sound compared to other sources of energy. Moreover, the president of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, citing the increasing demand for energy in Thailand, voiced his strong support for the construction of a major nuclear power plant by 2001. He also disclosed that Atomic Energy of Canada, in cooperation with the Office of Atomic Energy for Peace, the sole Thai official body in charge of atomic energy, has been assisting Chulalongkorn University in opening a Department of Nuclear Engineering. The department is scheduled to be ready for enrollment in 1995 with the aim of educating personnel for Thailand's future nuclear energy program.

To increase awareness in Thai society of the dangers of nuclear energy, Phra Phaisarn Visalo, a leading Buddhist monk, activist, and one of the founding members of INEB, announced the formation of a "Nuclear Study Group." The group, which consists of people from concerned NGO's, governmental organizations,

and others, has published *The Nuclear Monitor*, the first Thai newsletter dedicated to educating the public about the threats of nuclear energy.

✉ For further information or to give financial support, contact the Nuclear Study Group, c/o Thai Interreligious Commission for Development, 124 Soi Wat Thong Nophakun, Somdej Chaophya Rd., Bangkok 10600 Thailand, Tel/Fax 662-4379450.

## There goes the neighborhood?

As was mentioned in "Open Letter to Engaged Buddhists," in *TW*, Fall '94, the Thai government's Office of Atomic Energy for Peace is currently moving its one research nuclear reactor from its location near the Don Muang airport to a new site in Ongkharak, Nakhorn Nayok (very near the INEB office and the Wongsanit Ashram!). The new nuclear facility will cover about 216 acres of land that is surrounded by several housing projects as well as private and government offices.

In response to the above development, the information service of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists requests help from anti-nuclear activists around the world. While activists in many countries have waged campaigns against nuclear power for many years, Thailand's anti-nuclear movement is still young and would benefit from resources and campaign tactics developed elsewhere. Please consider sending or donating helpful information and resources from your own anti-nuclear campaigns to them. They will compile the information and make it available to activists in Thailand.

✉ Contact: INEB Information Service, P.O. Box 1, Ongkharak, Nakhorn Nayok, 26120 Thailand; Tel/Fax: 66-37-391-494.

## Chinese Encouraged To Migrate To Tibet

China, shaken by worldwide attention to human rights abuses in Tibet, plans to invest heavily in Tibet's economy in a bid for Tibetan loyalty. China reportedly plans to spend about \$1.2 billion over the next five years to strengthen the economy and counter what Beijing refers to as the region's "separatist" movement.

Reports from Lhasa say the number of political prisoners has increased. Tibetans complain that recent U.S. concessions to China have encouraged Beijing to crack down even harder. Human rights groups report that large numbers of armed Chinese police appear to be moving into Tibet to quell any possible uprisings, and that China is flooding the area with ethnic Chinese.

The International Campaign for Tibet reports that the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party said that Chinese are "encouraged and supported" to move to Tibet, and that they will offer "preferential conditions" to attract more Chinese to the "remote" plateau area. Until recently, the Chinese government has

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denied any policy of moving Chinese into Tibet, and the U.S. State department has largely backed Beijing's stand. But in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, about 50 percent of the population of 150,000 is now Chinese.

✉ Contact: Committee of 100 for Tibet, P.O. Box 60612, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

✉ The Tibetan Youth Congress has just published a report on the effects of Beijing's population transfer policies called "Strangers in their Own Country: Chinese Population Transfer in Tibet and Its Impacts." TYC, Office of the Central Executive Committee, McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala 176 219, H.P. India. ❖  
[Source: The INEB Reader, September/October 1994]

### Keeping Going Together

In these bleak times, as we all look for ways to keep on keeping on, and as BPF puts together its first volunteer corps (see below), we can find encouragement in the following suggestions from our friend Joanna Macy:

"What can we do to nourish the bodhisattva in ourselves? Two ways that I know are community and practice.

The liberation struggles in Latin America and the Philippines have demonstrated the efficacy of spiritually-based communities for nonviolent action. These tough networks of trust arise on the neighborhood level, as people strive together to understand what they need to live without fear and injustice. These groups need be neither residential nor elite, just ordinary people meeting regularly in a discipline of honest searching and mutual commitment.

In our own society, too, such communities have been arising in the form of local support and action groups. Here neighbors or co-workers, parents or professionals organize and meet regularly to support each other in action—be it responding to the poisons leaching from a nearby dump or to the need for a peace curriculum in the local school. Those of us who participate in such "base communities" know that they enhance both personal integrity and our belief in what is possible.

In addition to such external support, we need, in this time of great challenge and change, the internal support of personal practice. I mean practice in the venerable spiritual sense of fortifying the mind and schooling its attitudes. Because for generations we have been conditioned by the mechanistic, anthropocentric assumptions of our mainstream culture, intellectual assent to an ecological vision of life is not enough to change our perceptions and behaviors. To help us experience our interexistence with all beings in the web of life, we turn to regular personal practices that range from meditation to the recycling of our trash.

Spiritual exercises for cultivating reverence for life arise now out of many traditions. I have found adaptations from Buddhist practices particularly helpful

because they are grounded in the recognition of the dependent co-arising or deep ecology of all things. Similarly, Native American prayers and ritual forms evoke our innate capacity to know and live our Earth.

This is a prayer from the Laguna Pueblo people:

*I add my breath to your breath  
that our days may be long on the Earth,  
that the days of our people may be long,  
that we shall be as one person,  
that we may finish our road together."*

—Joanna Macy, in *World as Lover, World as Self*  
(Parallax Press)

## B ❖ A ❖ S ❖ E

### BUDDHIST ALLIANCE FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Our BASE program for fulltime volunteer social action and Buddhist practice is set to begin in the early spring of 1995. The six-month pilot project is presently being set up in the San Francisco Bay Area. We ask your help in four key areas:

1) We need dedicated volunteers for this Spring and beyond.

2) Social action and service placements—positions with organizations and agencies (not necessarily Buddhist), with an emphasis on people-to-people contact.

3) Housing for volunteers from outside the Bay Area for a six-month duration. We'll make every effort to find a good match for your household, and give you an opportunity to meet the person.

4) Money! We need to provide a modest stipend for administration and coordination, meet our office expenses, and offer minimal support for volunteers who have no independent means.

If you can help in any of these areas—or know people who might like to help—please write or call Alan Senauke or BASE coordinator Diana Winston at BPF, P.O. Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704 • 510/525-8596.

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# STINK OF THE DHARMA

by Patrick McMahon

We are talking about family life and Buddhist practice, while the children play in the next room. It's our second meeting of the Family Council, and we're discussing how our meditation center can be more friendly to families. At one point the door flies open and Clea, seven years old, runs to her mother, sits on her lap, and listens as we continue talking. One parent is saying, "I'd like us to do more than child care. I want us to teach Dharma to the kids." At the word "Dharma" Clea blurts out, "Pee-yuu!" waving her hand under her nose as though someone had farted. The speaker looks startled. No one comments. A few minutes later "Dharma" pops up again. Again, "Pee-yuuuu!" Personally, I'd like to wring the little brat's neck. Clea is crashing our meeting, which is after all for her own good. We've gone to considerable trouble to open up the temple doors to her, and she's poking fun. "Pee-yuu" indeed! Yet I can't seem to get that smell out of my nose: could it be the legendary stink of piety against which our own tradition warns us? Is Clea the Bodhisattva of Fun, poking holes in Big Dharma?

Stephen Mitchell is reading "Jerome," a poem from his book, *Parables and Portraits*. Saint Jerome is in his study, absorbed in translating God's word into human

text. The rumble of a cart from the Bethlehem street just outside his open window, the bray of a mule, the cry of an infant, do not intrude on his work. Stephen's soft voice carries us into this vision of mature spirituality, as we sit in these pews of St. John's Presbyterian Church, listening to a benefit reading for the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Not a head moves, there's not a fidget, not a tangential conversation. We might as well be in the meditation hall. Then I hear a child's fussing, and a parent's whispered "Shushsh." A few moments later parent and child leave the hall. The voice of the poet drones smoothly on. But something has left with the child. Where's the lattice-windowed mind of Jerome?

Betsy Rose, a Buddhist/activist songwriter, is leading a singing circle with children and adults at a Buddhist center. Two girls in the front row make a show of putting their hands over their ears, looking at each other with mischievous glee. As the applause following the first song dies away, one shouts, "Is it over yet?" I want to say, "Take those girls out of the room!" The nerve! Disrupting a concert especially for them!

The monastic mode certainly has its appeal at times. The legend of Prince Siddhartha walking out on family and palace for the forests of solitude feeds my fantasy of a separate peace. But I wonder . . . I can see that for him it was a daring move, his version of "leaving home" in a society which relegated the meditative life to the last third of the life cycle, post-family. But 2,500 years later, we Buddhist converts come from a society which has long distanced home from nearly everything else we consider meaningful. For generations we've been fleeing family and ancestral roots. When we distance home from the meditation hall we simply extend that flight. For us, leaving home, leaving behind what has become comfortable or at least habitual, might just mean *going* home, plunging ourselves back into diapers and tantrums, miring ourselves in the domestic goo.

Yet I treasure the silence into which Stephen Mitchell's soft voice drops words distilled from a life of spiritual practice and art. I love hearing Betsy Rose sing the dharma. No way do I wish the Family Council to forgo its precious dialogue, advancing the sangha beyond the narrow cult of the adult to the broad path of the family. How protect that concentration while keeping open the door to the kids in the next room? How hear the song of the dharma *and* listen to the children's voices—who may not wish to sing?


The 8th-Century Zen master Chao-Chou, like Jerome, clears a path for us through these seeming contradictions. Leaving the temple where he'd practiced for 40 years, he declared: "If I meet a seven-year-old child who can teach me, I will become an ardent disciple of that child." We have met this child. May we ardently study her great "Pyuuu!" ❖

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# CAN TELEVISION BRING YOU CLOSER TO NATURE?

by Stephanie Kaza

Every so often I get into a conversation about television that goes something like this—"Did you see that nature special on 'X' the other night?" "No, I don't have a television." "You don't? [in a tone of utter disbelief and paternalistic cultural concern] There are some really good programs on, even amidst the junk." Inevitably the justification is the educational value of such "good" programming, especially the nature documentaries. While it is true that not everyone has the opportunity to see lions and wolves firsthand, I have some serious questions about seeing them secondhand on an electronic screen. My doubts are about both the form itself and the very condensed content.

Thich Nhat Hanh has suggested in his recent book *For a Future to be Possible* that television can be a source of toxins polluting one's consciousness. He and many others are concerned about the impacts of violence and overstimulation on television viewers. It is well documented that the speedy pace of camera events on TV contributes to decreased attention span. Thay recommends a proper diet as "crucial for self-transformation and for the transformation of society." He might just as well have spoken of television under the precept, "No lying." Advertisements, nature shows, and news programs are each limited views of reality purporting to be The Truth.

But could nature documentaries be toxic or untruthful? Here are some things to look for: 1. Does the film compress every facet of an animal's life—mating, nursing, fighting, eating—into a half hour or less? This can leave a mental misimpression of a species removed from any real experience of time. 2. Is the music soupy and romantic, with dramatic tension at moments of danger or predation? Remember that there are no orchestras playing in the background in the natural world. 3. Does the narration carry an anthropocentric view, transmitting a bias for "useful" plants and animals? 4. Does the film use loaded words which promote stereotypes, like "jungle," "primitive people," or "vicious predator?" 5. Is the photography consistently beautiful, awesome, and perfect? Well, look at the real world where leaves are full of holes and lizards have broken tails.

The point of this little litmus test is that television is not nature. If you want to know something about the natural world, you have to experience it in your body. In the United States these days, children spend more time watching television than doing anything else except sleeping. What if they spent that time engaged in the natural world instead, exposing themselves directly to the random delights of flying leaves and

chattering squirrels? One does not have to live in the country to taste the air and see grass growing. In most places one can still go for a walk and engage in the vitality of the outdoor world.

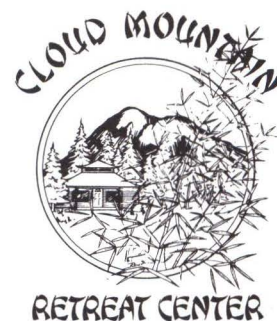
But speaking of children, I might mention the environmental toxins of morning cartoons. Some of the new programs tout an earth-saving theme. What could be more timely? Yet what do these programs really say? On "Captain Planet and the Planetees," the captain and his ethnically diverse crew battle against environmental "baddies" such as Sky Sludge and Looten Plunder, promoting another version of fight and conquer, as if environmental problems could be so simplistic. In many cartoons non-human animals take on human qualities, extending the "bambi" syndrome of cuteness to other species. In low-budget programs, a uniform screen of jagged trees or waving grass serves as an unchanging, inanimate backdrop for the action plot, suggesting a lifeless environment. It is next to impossible for a cartoon to evoke any sensory response in a child's body akin to being in the natural world, except perhaps the adrenaline rush of fleeing from danger.

Television is not nature. In contrast, I suspect it mostly perpetuates mistaken ideas and mental conditioning about the environment. Nature lovers, beware! The environment you want to save may not be the one you see on the tube. This is an unadulterated plea for the real thing. The next time you tune in to a nature show, consider going for a walk instead.

For more on this subject, see Jerry Mander's classic, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (1987) and Bill McKibben's, *The Age of Missing Information* (1992). ♦

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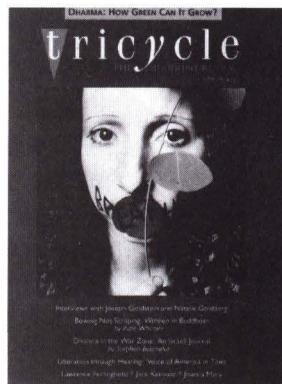
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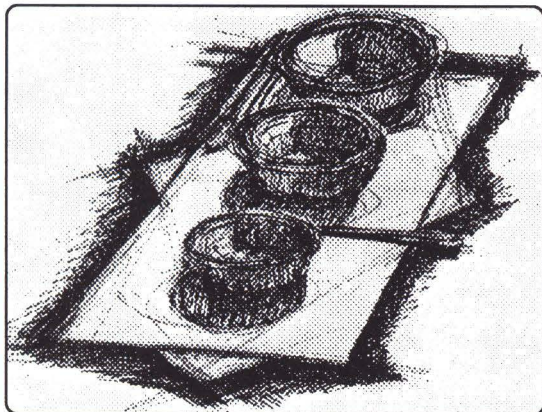
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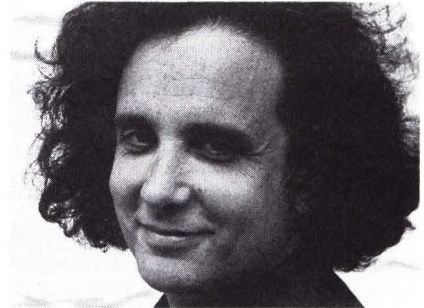
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# BARN OF LIGHT



*Andrew Harvey and  
Helena Norberg-Hodge  
Talk about Spiritual and  
Economic Revolution*



*Helena Norberg-Hodge is an environmentalist, originally from Sweden, who has worked for many years to help preserve traditional culture and sustainable agriculture in Ladakh, a part of India high on the Tibetan plateau. She is the author of Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh. She is also the founder and director of the International Society for Ecology and Culture, an organization dedicated to finding sustainable ways of living in the West. Andrew Harvey is a mystic, originally British, who has traveled all over the world and studied, written about, and taught various mystical traditions. His first book was Journey to Ladakh, and his most recent book is Dialogues with a Modern Mystic.*

*In the spring of 1994 Helena and Andrew engaged in a public dialogue together in San Francisco, on the subject of inner and outer change. What follows are edited portions of that dialogue.*

**Andrew:** Both of our lives were deeply changed by what happened to us when we went to Ladakh. What did that landscape and the vision of Buddhism that permeated that landscape give to you?

**Helena:** Above all, it gave me faith and hope in the human spirit. It changed what was an unconscious assumption that we are greedy and nasty by nature into a conviction that if children are born into the world surrounded by loving relationships, they flourish.

**A:** One day I was in my bath and I had a vision of Ladakh as this great barn of light in which people were gathering sheaves of light and pounding the light into corn and eating the light and growing strong with that light. In Ladakh I saw that it was possible to live a wholly ordinary life. Holy, H-O-L-Y, ordinary life. People are living in a natural rhythm. Everything is naturally quite chubby and dirty and hilarious and broken down and normal. Shangri-la isn't a fancy place at all; Shangri-la is a deeply normal place full of relaxed whole people.

**H:** In Ladakh I saw a deep security that made people incredibly tolerant and accepting of things that came their way. But it wasn't fatalism. It was simply an

acceptance of the constant change and movement that is life. And above all I saw that people in Ladakh accepted themselves.

**A:** Where do you think this acceptance of self came from?

**H:** It had to do with the spiritual teachings, the explicit teachings of Buddhism. But it also had to do with an entire way of life that embodied those teachings, a life that was closer to nature, that was closer to community. Each child growing up felt connected to a whole group of people, and each child felt part of a web of life that included the human element and the natural world.

**A:** In Ladakh on magical days, everything that happened unfolded in the same space of emptiness and peace and love. And whether it was the child being washed in the stream or the old woman making tea or the young monk unfolding the scriptures as he was reading them by the side of the river or the sounds of the monks chanting drifting across the fields to the river, they seemed each to melt into each other, to reveal the other, to be part of the other. Everybody in Ladakh seemed to be praying for most of the day, even in their careless or casual way. Prayer and chanting were integrated into working in the fields or going for a walk. Ladakh was a kind of *imitatio mundi*, a real imitation of the perfect world.

**H:** Yes. Although there were physical constraints: it was cold in the winter and it wasn't perhaps as clean as you'd like, but as for joy and peace of mind, it was really as perfect as I think anything can be.

**A:** We both tried to celebrate that perfection in different ways: I wrote a book [*Journey to Ladakh*] in an effort to give its richness to people, and you actually lived there and worked there. Can you describe what you were trying to do with your work?

**H:** Ladakh is so remote and so inhospitable in terms of geography. When I first arrived there, the society was still independent of the western world. I was one of the first foreigners allowed in there, and I learned to speak

the language, and I discovered the remarkable joy and self-respect of the people. But almost immediately, change started coming in the form of tourists. And very quickly, the influence of tourism and development started undermining people's sense of self-esteem, started undermining a whole way of life. So I got involved working with the local people to try to bring information about the long-term consequences of development.

**A:** You were trying, weren't you, to help the culture make a real choice about what it wanted to do, not just be seduced by the glamour of western technology—

**H:** Yes! And also to give them information about what had happened to other cultures that had succumbed to this. I saw asbestos coming in, and DDT, things they had absolutely no experience of. When some nice kind person came along saying, "Here, use this wonderful white powder—it will improve the crops," they had no reason to be suspicious. In the beginning, when the government was saying, "DDT is wonderful," and I was saying, "Oh no, it's terrible," it led to confusion. I had to actually start a whole campaign of what I'd call counter-development, bringing in counter experts, people from other parts of the world who knew what the long-term effects of DDT were.

It's complicated, because of course many of the people coming in with new things were convinced that cer-

tain changes and practices would be an improvement.

**A:** Do you find Ladakh very changed from what you first saw?

**H:** Oh, dramatically changed!

**A:** Can you describe those changes?

**H:** Tourists started coming in and spending \$100 in one day. This was like a Martian coming to America and spending \$100,000 on trinkets in one day. Because in their world money was not necessary for any basic needs. Food, clothing, shelter, clean water—basically everything you needed you had without money. People only used small amounts of money for luxuries. So \$100 was roughly what a whole family might have in a year.

Ladakhis started thinking that their own culture was backward, stupid. It affected particularly the young men. It's interesting—I think this is a global phenomenon. Everywhere it's the young men who become fascinated by the modern western world. And it isn't just the extreme wealth—it's the technology. The cultural breakdown we're witnessing is through the children.

**A:** What is it about this virus that makes it so powerful?

**H:** I think what attracts children, and particularly teenage boys and little boys, to our culture is that it's a teenage-boy culture. It has grown ever more immature. It stimulates precisely little-boy energies, and it's

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In a healthy culture, those young male energies of exploration and adventure and looking on the other side of the mountain were balanced by the fact that the direction of the culture was not determined by little boys but by wise elders, both men and women.

It also has to do with concepts of work. I don't think people realize what our culture looks like from the outside. It looks to people who've only experienced physical work as though we've figured out how to let the machines do everything for us. One day in Ladakh, I had been writing reports all day and I was really exhausted and had a headache. I said to the Ladakhi family where I was living, "I'm so tired! I've worked so hard!" And they just roared with laughter. They assumed I was joking. I'd been sitting inside doing nothing, as far as they could see.

There's an assumption that what we call progress is continuously improving the way of life for all of us. But I've come to see that what we call progress is actually a systemic and systematic way of distancing ourselves from the earth. It's almost as if we're covering the world with an oil slick and the technologies that go with it. And we simply can't see through that layer to the ground.

**A:** I think this crazy progress is half conscious of its own lunacy, and tries to obscure the truth as much as possible. That's why it's always stamping down nature, covering things with concrete, putting in a wall of computers or televisions. Any contact with a humbling reality is reduced to a minimum.

**H:** And in the process, progress is destroying us. I don't know how many statistics we need. For example, did you know that in America since 1980 the prison population has tripled?

I feel that one of the main lessons from Ladakh has to do with mental health; it has to do with the faith that, yes, by nature we're quite nice; we're not perfect, we're human. People growing up in Ladakh learned to keep a close and intimate connection with nature, and this intimacy allowed for the uniqueness and the diversity of everything that lives. Now, an ever more specialized, ever more fragmented knowledge is removing us from that intimate connection to the Earth.

As the scale of things grows, the individual feels smaller and smaller, more and more diminished. In Ladakh I found what I would call real individualism, because children felt so supported in who they were that they were able to unfold in a unique and individual manner. Most people had very similar clothing, the houses were quite similar, people ate more or less the same food. But you never had the standardization that you have with prepackaged McDonald's food around the world. You never had even the standardization in terms of identity that we're now pushing on children in

this mass culture.

I think people now in the "New Age" are looking for a different direction. But as we think about a more spiritual and ecological way of living, a dimension that is very often ignored—and it's becoming an outrage to me that it's ignored—is the economic dimension. We can't allow spiritual movements to speak of peace and love and deep ecology without taking into account the economic—and that means also the political—system of which we're a part.

**A:** Yes, we are supposedly being swept up in this great mystical transformation that the new age represents. But a spiritual revolution that isn't also a political revolution and an economic revolution and an establishment of justice and a feeding of the poor and an ending of the appalling industrial systems and the appalling political systems that menace the lives of billions of people on the planet is not a spiritual revolution at all. It is simply masturbation of the soul. It has nothing to do with the kind of transformation that has to happen.

Both the materialist vision of the world and the so-called spiritual vision of the world have been partial—the materialist has denied the spirit and the spiritualist has denied matter. We've had on the one hand the

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*The model for the transformation is not  
going to be in multi-million-dollar ashrams;  
it's going to be in small tribes of friends.*

---

desire to control everything in materialist terms, including the little-boy fantasy of total domination of nature, which has led to dreadful destructiveness, and on the other hand we've had a binge of mystical escapism that has divorced body from spirit, heaven from Earth, sexuality from love, nature from light.

In order to see who we really are, we have to overcome the two major conceptual systems we've inherited. Not only from the West, but also from the East. Because let's face it, there are aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism which are life-denying, which stress "illusion" and "emptiness" in ways that can easily lead people to imagine that it's not important if a poor person doesn't have food on the table, that what is important is simply to be in some ineffable state of all-accepting calm and bliss.

So as a human race, we have to go through this very painful deconstruction of everything that we've taken to be true, if we're going to survive. We are all going to have to become political in a way that we've never been before. We are going to have to bring into the political arena all the skills, the calm, the love from our spiritual training, so that the political arena is absolutely lit up by all of them.

**H:** Unfortunately, people sometimes misinterpret what you're saying to mean that we need a globalized transformed culture, and then diversity gets lost.

**A:** Saying no to the destruction of the environment doesn't actually mean that we put in place a global economy. What it means is that we learn how to listen. Listen to the different voices, listen to the diversity, respect the different patterns, and let them alone.

**H:** Yes, it's complicated, and seemingly paradoxical, because we need to be unified all over the world in our opposition to a globalized monoculture. Right now we have a centralization of economic and political forces that is completely unprecedented.

**A:** This is where I think the sacred feminine offers us a way to think about the problem, without falling into the trap of constellating around a unified solution, which would just repeat the madness in another way.

**H:** Yes, but we do need to be unified in our opposition to a globalized economy. And this globalized economy is taking concrete shape right now in the form of trade agreements—NAFTA, GATT—and it's based on the assumption that ever larger economic units are going to solve our present economic problems. We need to oppose these trade agreements on a global scale.

On the other hand, the solutions that will allow us to live in a harmonious relationship with the Earth will require decentralization. The West has started to understand that the Communist world fell because of centralized planning. But what people don't understand is that

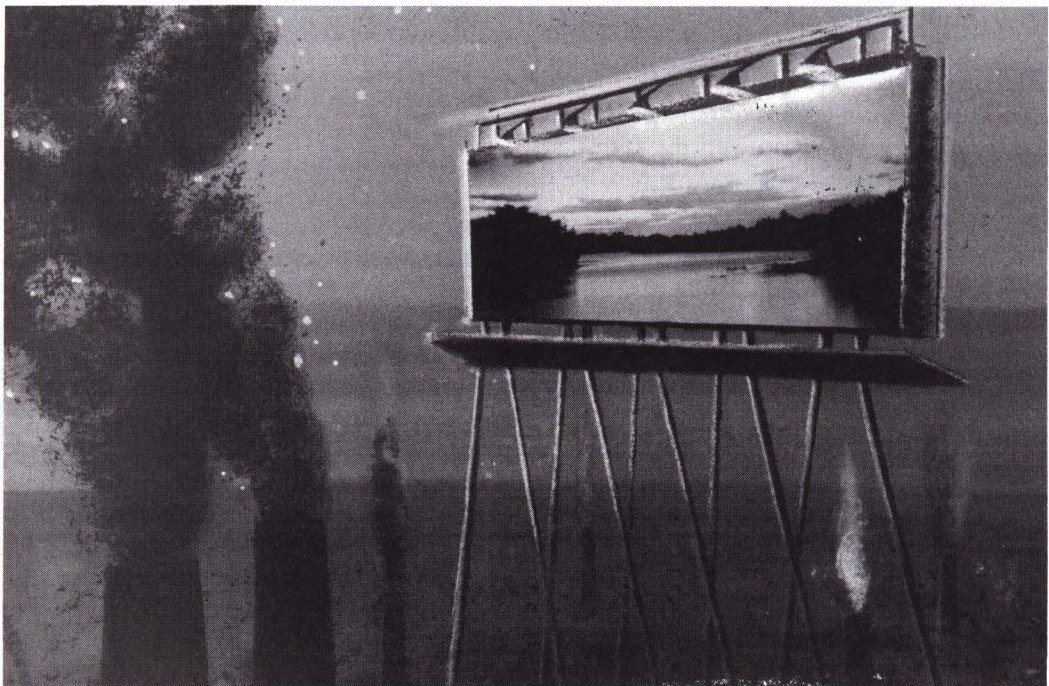
right now in the form of corporate capitalism we have a centralization such as the world has never known before.

**A:** It's more insidious.

**H:** Much more insidious, because the scale of huge corporations is not recognized, partly because the media are controlled by those very corporations. All over the world, indigenous people who have no voice are being wiped out. The people inside the corporations are not any more evil than you or I. We're all imperfect, we all have our problems. The problem is a structural problem. But people say, "There's nothing wrong with the corporations—those are nice people too, we're all people."

**A:** Nice people have been doing quite a bit of dirty work recently.

**H:** Yes, that's true too. But I think centralized planning in and of itself brings with it a deadening of the spirit, a collapse of community. Ladakh showed me how a diversified economy, where people are producing everything they need, is wiped out by economic centralization. When, through so-called liberalization of trade, you allow corporations that are producing things on a much larger scale to enter the local market, you destroy the local economy. In Ladakh, for instance, people have been growing wheat for thousands of years, and now you have wheat coming in from the Punjab in lorries and destroying the local farmers. That wheat has been subsidized in the form of an entire infrastructure which governments everywhere



Janet Culbertson, from "Billboard Series"



are paying for. As taxpayers pay for that infrastructure, they're actually helping to subsidize their own unemployment, the destruction of the small shop, the small farm, the local company.

In Europe, for example, potatoes travel from northern Scandinavia all the way down to Italy to be washed, and then they are sent back in plastic bags. The entire structure is leading to massive unemployment. Trade liberalization is allowing corporations to go off to find the cheapest labor. We still need food, we need shoes, we need clothing, so production is still going to go on, but all we are doing is shifting it to invisible far-away areas, putting the most polluting industries in Africa and other countries in the South. The end result is massive unemployment in the industrialized world, and, in the South, a pull of people away from rural communities, and devastation of the land.

**A:** Do you think we're going to see the whole enterprise fail in some dramatic way by its own exaggeration, that there will be economic collapse, that there will be misery, and that that in itself will serve as a wake-up call?

**H:** No! I don't think so. It's a dangerous idea that this huge monster, this centralized monster, enlarged by the forces of GATT and NAFTA, will just collapse of its own accord. We can't afford to wait for that.

**A:** Because what that collapse will take with it is the world. All that concrete falling on top of our heads will crush us.

**H:** Yes. What I see right now are two different paths into the future. On the one hand you have a shift towards ever larger economic units and the spread of a monoculture by government and industry. At the same time, local communities from the Himalayas to New York are starting to take things into their own hands; we're seeing community-supported agriculture, and local exchange trading systems—a whole flowering of activity. And I'm inspired by these examples because they are working against the tide without the slightest bit of support from above.

Right now there is a possibility that an entire nation state—Norway—may choose to go in a different direction. Norway is being pressured by government and industry and their own Prime Minister to join the European Union, to emulate Japan's and America's centralized and very destructive model of economic development. But the people of Norway are saying, "No, we don't want to do it." They want to keep their jobs and their communities. There's a very important referendum in December. [As of this writing, Norwegians just voted not to join the European Union. —*Ed.*]

Unfortunately many of the teachings of the wisdom traditions can actually lead to a misinterpretation of what's going on in economic and political terms. For

example, I see people in the West taking the Buddhist concept of interdependence as a justification for a globalized interdependent economy, not realizing that the unified economy is actually based on separating people ever further from the natural world around them.

I find it useful to make the distinction between the world of our own creation, what you might call the technosphere, and the biosphere, the living world. What people are doing in many of the spiritual traditions is confusing the two.

Another Buddhist teaching which is often misunderstood is the teaching of impermanence. People learn that they should accept constant flux and change, and they turn around and say, "Ah, there's a new nuclear power plant. Well, I've been taught to accept change. There's a new superhighway coming through our town. I have to accept change." Unfortunately even the Buddhists in Ladakh are doing that.

**A:** Yes, many Buddhists have lost this burning, naked, sacred connection with things as they are, and they've lost the sense of guardianship of nature. You can see that sense of guardianship more clearly in the aborigines and the Kogis [natives of the South American rain forest] than in the Mahayana teachings. A lot of the teachings that Westerners are getting excited about are teachings about the illusory nature of reality, the empty nature of reality, and about signing off, in subtle ways, from action. But this is the very moment when we need an active spirituality more than oxygen; we need passionate enlightenment, not empty enlightenment.

**H:** What is necessary now is the experience of returning to our bodies and to the soil. But I also think we have created an economic and political system that is born of mind separate from heart, that is based on a fragmented, disembodied intellect. So I think that along with this embodied feminine spirituality we need a deeper and broader analysis that comprehends these political and economic forces.

**A:** But Helena, don't separate them, because an embodied feminine spirituality will provide exactly the focus, the sense of living connection, which will make those analyses really accurate. Unless those analyses

## PROGRESS

a trail of gutted planets  
stretching  
to infinity?

—Jim Hartz

have the body, the mind, the heart and the soul dancing in concert together, they won't help us. They'll create yet another empty realm.

**H:** Yes—the only point I'm making is that the spirit alone won't do it. We have to put on an intellectual cap, all the time gaining strength from our spiritual connectedness. I am constantly trying to reach out to women, who tend to shy away from economics and from an analysis of the impact of technology, to encourage them to think through certain basic assumptions. This kind of thinking can be a joyous and empowering experience.

**A:** What I see happening now is that all the concepts we're used to are being trampled. Kali is trampling and destroying them. In the '90s, for instance, the whole absorption with the guru system is going to go. That form of divine transmission is just not working. We have a lot of so-called gurus floating about, and they have supposedly initiated hundreds of thousands of people, but that sacred energy isn't flowing into politics, it isn't flowing into economic change; it's flowing into the bank accounts of the various gurus. The scandals and the exposés that are coming will shatter people's faith, but in a good way, because this particular system is not working. What *could* work is direct transmission from the divine to the human being, in a relationship which each person works out in terms of their own life, based on meditation, prayer, and service—three things which break down the ego.

We need now, very very urgently, to come into our bodies, come into our active commitments to the world. It's so simple, it's so breathtakingly simple, and we have so little time.

## RESPECT: A Story I Heard

A woman went to Tibet. She went by train and by bus. It was a long journey. When she arrived, she was sick and exhausted and in a daze. She hardly noticed she was in Tibet.

Abruptly, a scene forced her into focus. There was a small building, a public toilet, by the road, with a ring of shit around it.

The Tibetans were coming and squatting on the ground, outside the Chinese-built rest room.

She heard the Chinese soldiers saying: *These Tibetans are animals, barbarians. They do not use the toilet. They are stupid. They have no respect.*

The woman found a Tibetan youngster who spoke some Chinese. The youngster was saying: *These Chinese are animals, barbarians. Inside spaces are sacred. They defile the sacred with their shit. They have no respect.* ❖ —Joan Starr Ward

**H:** I think people are beginning to realize this. That other flowering and awakening is going on—and it's a race for time.

**A:** It's important that the flowering of energy isn't channeled into the old grim systems. The beady-eyed gurus are waiting for all those little fledglings to come into their camps so they can use that energy for their own ends. So it's important that the sacred urge doesn't go into any old pattern, that it's allowed the complete radical freedom that I think the divine wants us to have now.

It's time to work together in local, humble, democratic ways to alter the situation, to take deep responsibility, in small tribal groups, for where we live and how we live. The model for the transformation is not going to be in multi-million-dollar ashrams; it's going to be in small tribes of friends.

**H:** Yes. In recent years, people who are concerned with these issues, a small and sort of leading edge of thinkers, are beginning to voice the need for returning to the local, to community, to place. But many of these thinkers have slipped into an ideology of the local that doesn't allow for this highly interdependent structure. We need to experience the profound significance of living in place and in community, and not let that become a confined, intolerant space. In the modern world we have a tendency to fear interdependence, to fear being dependent, to fear being deeply known. We've grown used to being seen in our party clothes, with a protective veil around us.

**A:** We live in an image culture. And it has its comforts—

**H:** Well, I think it's actually deeply alienating. I think that's what's driving us into despair; it's the fear of not being loved the way we really are on the inside. And it springs precisely out of this anonymous fast-paced culture, where no one has the sense that they are fully known. I do think people long for that real connection; they long to be accepted for who they really are.

**A:** But we have to recognize that to have that quality of life we have to be prepared to sacrifice a great deal, all sorts of getting ahead and success, all kinds of worldly glory—

**H:** That's why it's so important to think about policy changes that would really support community-based economies.

**A:** So that the integrity of each community would be respected.

**H:** Yes. There would be a closer connection between producers and consumers. The base of the economy would be rooted in the community. But we have been locked into a view of the world in which we see ourselves as separate from the rest.

We're all the time looking at our situation as if there's a huge monster and I personally am supposed to overcome it. We tell ourselves: *I shouldn't be using the car!* But we live in a society where not using the car is like cutting our legs off, so people give up, and go to the other extreme; they decide to just wholeheartedly accept the car instead of making policy changes collectively, to reduce our dependence on the car. Or we resolve not to buy any food that isn't coming from next door. But there *isn't* any food coming from next door—we can't make those changes by ourselves. Or people recycle their aluminum tins, and then they get discouraged because they feel that it isn't making any difference. *What's the point!* We need an analysis that takes into account the forces that are undermining us.

I don't think the solution lies simply with a group of 50 people saying "We're going to go off and do it differently." We are enmeshed now on a larger scale than that. There are communities who go off and live off the land, and that's well and good, but we have to start working for change on a larger scale.

**A:** Of course. One of the problems I see with the local model is that of tribalism, what's happening in Rwanda and in Bosnia, of appalling hatred between different local groups. We struggle for a world which is rooted in local communities, and then those local communities slaughter each other with machetes. How are we going to stop that from happening?

**H:** I'm so glad you brought that up, because what I've witnessed in Ladakh and Bhutan and Kashmir, and even in Sweden, is that the increase in violent friction between groups is *not* a consequence of having different tribal groups. It is a consequence again of mono-

lithic systems weighing down on them, creating a highly competitive economy in which the only people who succeed are the ones who leave the land and come into the cities. The problem is not diversity; it is that ethnic groups are not allowed to retain their differences. The monolithic monoculture both denies people the right to their identity and at the same time pits them against each other in a competitive economy.

In the West people say that the terrible rise of violence in the Communist world is a result of the fact that the heavy weight of the Communist regime has been removed, so that all these old hatreds are springing up and coming to the surface. It's a terrible misinterpretation! The heavy weight of that centralized structure is what created those tensions in the first place.

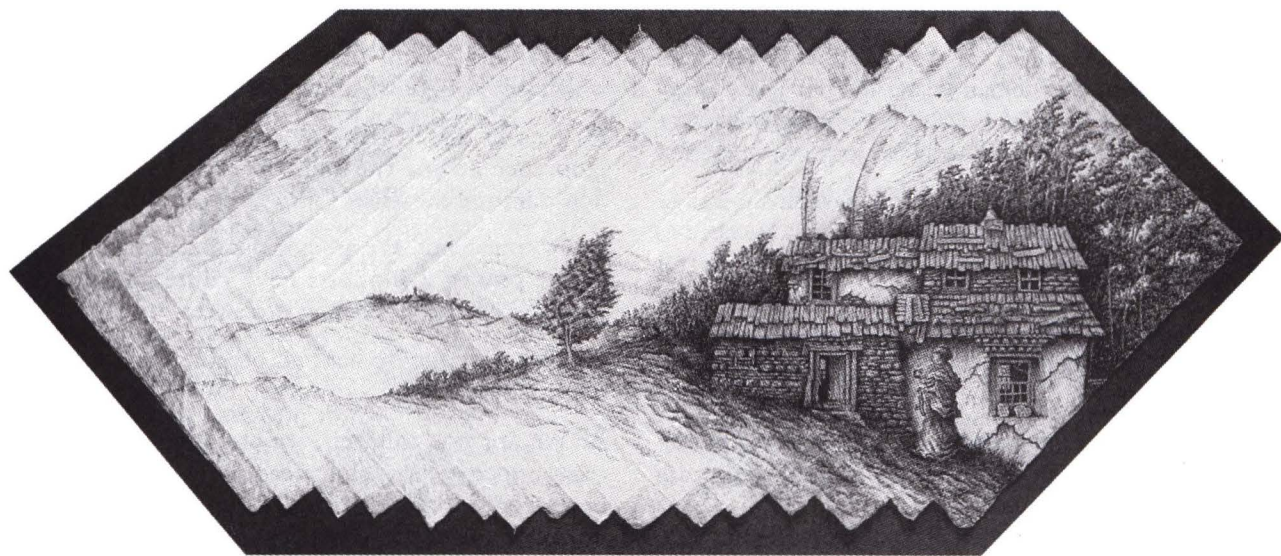
**A:** Because divide and conquer is the rule of every empire.

**H:** And even more tragically, we don't understand the top-heavy weight of the Western monoculture, which is everywhere robbing people of their identity, pulling everybody off the land, and creating intense competition for scarce jobs, so that racism, ethnic friction, and violence are everywhere increasing.

But I must say it's amazing to me that although we have gotten further and further from nature, further and further from ourselves, people are finding their way back.

**A:** How do you, personally, survive? How do you keep going in the face of these immense odds? Do you have a personal discipline? Do you pray?

**H:** I have a spiritual connection to nature which has been my strength ever since I was about 13. Ladakh reinforced that. I became very influenced by Buddhism,



AP

P Sugden

Philip Sugden, *Farewell to the Ancient*

so philosophically I am Buddhist, but I never took up a Buddhist practice as such because for me nature has always been the great teacher and the great joy.

**A:** To find a way into what you call great joy is, I'm certain, the way through. It's never been more important to align yourself with the light. The divine is drenching the entire world and every sentient being in the world with light. A rain of grace is falling on the earth, and it's essential at a time like this for each of us to know that it *is* there, to open to it in humble and simple ways, so as to bring down its energy directly into our daily lives.

The most positive thing we can do is to construct for ourselves a simple spiritual discipline that really works. For you, it's going out into nature. We've all got different ways in which we make that connection. Each of us has to become a kind of pharmacist of our own bliss. You have to know when you need to listen to medieval music, when you need to take a walk, when you need to visit somebody in hospital so that you can really practice compassion instead of talking about it.

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*In the modern world we have a tendency to fear interdependence, to fear being dependent, to fear being deeply known. We've grown used to being seen in our party clothes.*

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**H:** I would add to what you've said that there are reasons why people are losing their jobs, why crime is increasing all around us, why you may be frightened that the food you eat is radiated or treated with growth hormones. There are reasons for this, and these reasons do not lie simply in the human heart. It's not just a question of purifying my own heart, and reaching out to the people immediately around me. That won't be enough.

**A:** No, of course not. You have to have analysis, and your analysis is a very helpful one. But what we need as much as analysis is hope. What we need as much as this piercing, shrewd analysis is the energy that comes from hope, because otherwise quite frankly we're going to be defeated by despair. Otherwise, we're just not going to get through.

**H:** I think we're coming from the same place, but you are emphasizing the spiritual dimension, and I am emphasizing the economic.

The solution, both spiritually and economically, lies with rediscovering real community. We are talking about re-inventing community. The path is actually not a very long path. It's just a few short steps. But many of

the progressive movements have been looking at the world in a fragmented way, treating symptoms, and in many cases actually perpetuating the problems; whereas now if we do this deeper analysis inspired by a heart-felt connection to the living world, we will find the path.

**A:** And this path will be the marriage of the masculine and the feminine, the mind and the heart, the marriage of politics and mysticism, the marriage of technology and love; and this marriage will birth the new human being, the new human race. It will be a revolution, and a very shocking one, both for traditional materialists and for those who cling to traditional forms of spirituality. And this revolution has got to happen.

It's interesting that I am taking the traditional yin position and you are taking the traditional yang position. I should wear your clothes and you should wear mine. The succinct and devastating analysis of international politics that you have, and a direct contact with the living light are both essential now for spiritual warriorhood.

**H:** Yes, and that's the Mahayana Buddhist idea of wisdom and compassion.

**A:** Compassion without wisdom is lame, and wisdom without compassion is empty.

**H:** The Ladakhis have one word for wisdom and compassion: *simbha*. They actually see it as an inseparable whole.

**A:** The Kogi people have a wonderful poem—just four lines: "We always make offerings to the sun and to the mountains and to the stars. That is why we live here." That's the whole thing.

The light is trying to help us, but we have to embrace the light for it to be able to help us.

**H:** We have to take responsibility for our ignorance.

**A:** Yes, and facing that ignorance in every field in which we thought we knew something is devastating.

**H:** I don't think there's a power that will control our ignorance at just the right level and insure that we don't destroy ourselves.

**A:** Of course not. We are not the special darlings of the divine power. Dinosaurs have come and gone. We shape up or get out. Gaia is not sweet.

**H:** Not if we ignore her and beat her about and chop her to pieces.

**A:** We are not children, we are adults. We're given adult responsibility, adult freedom to destroy ourselves or to work in harmony with the divine. But the divine doesn't need us to be here. We have been brought by our mistakes to the time when we will have to choose truth at every moment and with our full being, if we are to have any chance at all of survival. ❖



Elly Simmons, *Street Hunger* #3

(untitled)

You want to climb the steps  
 some night and see the city  
 from the roof; it's quite a sight,  
 he said. And it's a smoking area.  
 So I did that and he was right,  
 the lights of downtown were something  
 to write home about, except I WAS  
 home if home is wherever  
 you hang your hat; except I don't  
 wear a hat, I wear a watchcap  
 to cover this shaved pate of mine.  
 The city. Ah, the city. Twenty years  
 exactly since I lived here; and coming  
 straight from the mountain  
 monastery, a long time gone, it's  
 quite a shock. So I have a smoke and  
 watch the lights, the tall-building  
 lights and the lights of moving  
 traffic and the lights of planes  
 coming and leaving in patterns  
 above the glow and glitter of the

spread-out metropolis; and  
 in my ears the din  
 of traffic, of sirens, the shouting  
 down below in the streets where  
 the whores and pimps and dealers  
 ply their trades. City Center.  
 Well, I wanted to come here  
 and here I am. Okay. I knew  
 I'd have to come to terms  
 with it one day, have to test  
 myself, see if I have really learned  
 anything at all these years away  
 sitting on that round black cushion  
 watching, breathing, being still.  
 Face the world. Find out if mine  
 are gift-bestowing hands. Go to  
 the mat with it. You know, the acid  
 test. Here in town with all of them.  
 All of you out there.  
 In Edge City.

—Daigan Lueck

# Speech of the Accidental Time Traveler

by Ellery Akers

Yes, I was alive at the beginning of the Years of the Vanishing, as you call them. We did not call them that. You must understand, we were confused. We did see it, what was beginning to happen: the trees dying, the lakes full of acid. Sometimes one of us looked up and noticed a species was vanishing, and the world seemed a little duller: a thrush no longer sang outside a window where it had always sung before. But there were other things that took our attention: we went to work like you do, we had to eat. You know all that.

I still cannot believe I was on my way back from class, going home, when I ran into one of your transects by mistake. It seems very ironic, to be yanked out of my own time, after a year lecturing at the university, and to come here and end up lecturing to you.

And I am not sure I can explain the past. I was an ordinary woman of the twentieth century, a professor: on weekends I went for hikes, because you could hike then. I read the papers; I knew.

It was all so overwhelming: the ozone layer, the rain forest burning. A forest is not three trees, you know,



Prudence See, *The Old Holly Tree*

*“Wind was air that moved. It was like someone touching you, and it made a rushing sound.”*

though it is very well done, your exhibit. A forest smelled—it smelled cool, of leaf mold and bark, and there were birds knocking against the bark; they were called woodpeckers.

It is hard to explain a bird if you have never seen one. They were small and hot, and they whirred as they flew; they called out in the air—some thought from joy, some thought from a desire to stake out territory. I know it is hard for you to believe, but I used to watch blackbirds chatter and veer in a flock in a field near the university.

It was a *casual* thing to see another Organic Life Form. You could see them everywhere. Mosquitoes, insects, would brush against your face, and sometimes you’d swat them—you’re shocked, I see, but there were many of them left then. The grass, it was green under your feet. The box in the Museum does not do it justice, it was the *size* that mattered, it covered the earth, it was everywhere, you didn’t have to take a trip to see it.

During the day, the sky was blue: there was no Grey Dome arching its lid over to protect you from the atmosphere. At night it was black, and there were stars; imagine lights pricked out in the Dome, and you have some idea.

I want to say I’m grateful for the way you have all tried to make me feel at home. I am especially grateful to the members of the Historical Society. But I must be honest—even though I have been here only six months, it feels like six years. To me, it is bland, so bland, so dull—the Converters, the sterile tubes, the Tunnel; never to hear a shiver of rain against the roof, never to see the sun, except as a grey smudge, never to feel any weather, any wind.

Wind was air that moved. It was like someone touching you, and it made a rushing sound. Sometimes it made a rushing sound through the leaves of a tree; a tree had many more leaves, hundreds more, than in all the drawers at the Organic Museum.

I’m afraid I’m not explaining very well how all those other lives around you, all the animals—the Organic Life Forms—somehow they made you feel more alive.

I was someone who saw the stars at night. Finches called in the oaks outside my window. I lived near the university at Santa Cruz, near my job; the sea was just a few blocks from my house. I often stepped into the forest. I often stepped into the sea. Now the sea has not been adequately leached, and of course no one would touch it. But we used to swim in it; it didn’t sting, then. It wasn’t like it is now, when you go through the Tunnel to see it; it wasn’t yellow water slopping over stale rock. It was blue, and it smelled of salt, and there were gulls, and crabs, and seals with whiskers.

"Back then, everything smelled: a tree smelled, a wet branch smelled, a geranium, a clump of muck in a marsh."



Fish: were they swimming all around? No, fish were below the surface, mostly. Your exhibit with the tin blades is very beautiful, but wrong. One never saw fish much. You saw the flash of a fin now and then. They didn't float on top of the ocean.

I would like to end with a plea to the General Assembly. I do appreciate your efforts. I understand, you have explained it many times, I know the coordinates must be aligned: it is not so simple to return me to my own time. I even understand a little of the transect theory.

But I would give anything to go home. I didn't know the grass and rain were luxuries; none of us did.

You have asked me today to explain the richness and diversity of our world: What was it like to live at the end of the twentieth century? What was the main difference between *then* and *now*?

It smelled. Nothing smells here: nothing stinks, nothing smells sweet, or salty, or fragrant, or lush, or sopping. The Barrens is a place without smell, and so is the Tunnel, and so is the city under the dome. Back then, everything smelled: a tree smelled, a wet branch smelled, ashes, a geranium, a clump of muck in a marsh, and even in San Francisco, the rain would smell. It would patter onto the cement—of course there was no Dome—and when it hit, the pavement smelled.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen of the Assembly, I've told you everything I can. I ask you once again: send me back. ♦

*Ellery Akers is a poet, painter, and naturalist who lives and teaches as far from the city as she can get. Her book of poetry, Knocking on the Earth, was published by Wesleyan University Press.*

# THE PATH OF PEACE HAS NO SIGN

by Tenshin Reb Anderson

[Editor's Note: The following piece is adapted from a Dharma talk given by Reb Anderson in Las Vegas, Nevada, during the weekend of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship Witness at the Nevada Test Site, in April 1994. (See Selfridge, "The Price of Gasoline in Las Vegas" in *Turning Wheel*, Summer '94.) The talk was given the day after the BPF group went on a Department of Energy bus tour of the test site and the day before we returned to the test site for a nonviolent Buddha's Birthday ceremony, witness, and civil disobedience. —SM]

Sometimes people ask me why in Zen meditation we keep our eyes open. In some forms of meditation the eyes are shut, and a lot of people find it easier to become calm that way. That's fine. But in Zen practice, we recommend that you meditate with your eyes open. If you look at a Buddha statue, I think you'll find that it will probably have its eyes open. Even when Buddha is reclining, his eyes are open.

Buddhas have their eyes open because they're observing living beings. They're observing living beings with eyes of compassion and eyes of wisdom. They never close their eyes of wisdom. They never close their eyes of compassion. They're always watching living beings.

When we make a Buddha statue and put it on an altar, we do what's called an eye-opening ceremony. We recite a verse from the Lotus Sutra describing Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Infinite Compassion. "Eyes of compassion observing sentient beings assemble an ocean of blessing and peace and happiness beyond measure." We say this verse seven times, each time a little bit more enthusiastically. This helps open the eyes of the statue. Our vow as disciples of Buddha is to help all beings become free—to find peace and blessing and happiness. This includes a vow to enter all realms of misery with our eyes open, and to observe. Our willingness to join hands with beings in the realms of misery and to walk with them through birth and death in itself assembles peace.

It's not so easy to join hands with all suffering beings and walk with them forever. In order to be successful at this vow we must practice meditation. With such a great intention, we must harmonize our body and mind, we must harmonize heaven and earth. We don't just meditate in order to calm our own mind, although that's part of it. We meditate to become free

of the draining sense that we are separate from others. We sit still in the middle of all living beings; we sit with all the Buddhas. We develop a soft, pliable body and mind. We develop the willingness to drop off body and mind, to let go of the separation between ourselves and all other living beings. We drop the mind which criticizes others. We can't join hands with all beings if we hold to the mind that criticizes. We can't even do it if we hold to the mind that praises. We have to let go of everything.

This doesn't mean we lose our critical capacity. You will still be able to see faults in others. It does not mean that you will lose your ability to praise. If you drop the mind which criticizes, which thinks in terms of self and other, which thinks in terms of right and wrong, your whole life will become nothing but praise. But that doesn't mean you lose your ability to see problems, like anybody else can.

I remember a story about Samuel Johnson, the great English writer. One night when he was fairly old he was doing his midnight meditations, as was his habit, and something terrible started to happen to his body and mind, something very painful and disorienting. He thought his brain was being attacked. He was probably having a stroke. So he immediately kneeled by his bed and prayed to God, saying, "Do whatever you want to my body, but

please don't destroy my mind." Being an educated man of the times, he prayed to God in Latin verse. Then he lay down in bed to rest, and he realized that his verses hadn't been very well composed. So he got out of bed and kneeled again and said, in Latin, "Dear gracious and bountiful Lord, thank you very much for preserving my critical capacities." And went back to bed.

It's not that you lose your abilities, it's that you let go of them. Anything you hold on to causes disharmony.

In my little discussion group last night, one person talked about how she wants to be helpful in this world, and yet she just bought a car. And she thought, "Now I'm going to drive this car, and I'm totally part of the whole process which is causing so much suffering." And while she was talking I thought, "Maybe I should sell my car, and ride a bicycle to San Francisco." But somebody else will just drive my car, and I'll still have to go over the Golden Gate Bridge, I'll still be in the pollution. I'll still have to go to the store eventually and buy a new tire. In other words, no matter what

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*If you realize with your wisdom eye  
that nothing matters, then you can  
realize that everything matters, that  
every inch of ground on this planet is  
sacred . . . There's no place in the  
whole world where you can spit.*

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you do, you're part of it. But there's some part of you that thinks, "Gee I don't want to be part of it. I want to be pure. I don't want to be part of this huge destructive machine."

There are two tendencies of our minds. We want to do something, and we want to be free of doing something. There's a Zen story about this. A teacher named Wind Cave, Fengxue, said to his monks, "If you raise a speck of dust the nation flourishes, but the elders furrow their brows. If you don't raise a speck of dust, the nation perishes, but the elders relax their brows." Raising a speck of dust means many things. One thing it means is literal: building a house, establishing a Zen center, establishing a Buddhist Peace Fellowship, establishing a Nevada Desert Experience. If you set something up like that the nation flourishes. You have a nice temple, you have a nice organization. But the elders look at that and say, "What are those guys doing? What are they doing setting up a Zen center?" The nation flourishes, but you also get what's called skillful generals and crafty ministers. And people build test sites for big bombs to protect the people in the flourishing country. Other people want to be pure and free from craftiness and defensiveness. They say "I'm not part of that." In ancient China, people who wanted to avoid the defiled world of politics were willing to go off to the mountains and eat mushrooms and roots and even die of starvation out of their desire to be pure.

Both those tendencies are errors. Anything we do is an error. If you do something you suffer and if you don't do something you suffer; either way you get in trouble. There's a way that's not doing either one of those things, which is just to be with people, yourself included. Be with the sufferings caused by human action. That path is the path of blessing.

How do we harmonize these tendencies? We can admit—constantly admit—our errors. Constantly admit, "I want to be part of this. Hey, I don't want to be part of this." We can watch our mind veer off towards these two extremes. And we can balance meditation and action. And harmonize wisdom and compassion.

A lot of what goes on in a nuclear test site is "boy play," a symbolic acting out of a certain kind of male energy, or male imagery. It may be necessary for men to imagine this process of digging into the ground and going BOOM. We should understand that this imaginative process may be useful. It may be what men sometimes have to do as part of their individual development, because there's something in their psyche that has to be dealt with, but it doesn't need to be acted out. That causes problems. It can be dealt with at the

level of imagination. If that opportunity is not offered, then people will search, consciously or unconsciously, for a more gross or concrete expression of it.

In order to divert energy away from destructive tendencies, we must be sympathetic to them, because otherwise we won't know where to direct the energy in a wholesome way. If it's just bad and you just try to eliminate it, it won't work. If you can sympathize with these tendencies and realize that they're in you, too, then you can help.

Another thing we need to learn is that we're just fine. We're complete right now, and at the same time, we can evolve, we can transcend ourselves. Our completeness includes the possibility of improvement.

We need to realize that nothing matters. The desert doesn't matter, Las Vegas doesn't matter, I don't matter and you don't matter. We need to realize this. Realizing this is the basis upon which we can realize that everything matters. If you don't understand that nothing matters then you're just going to think *some* things matter.

You're going to think that some things are more important than other things. And the things we think matter will vary from person to person. Some of us will think, "We matter, but the people at the test site don't." Or they'll think they matter but we don't. But if you realize with your wisdom eye that *nothing* matters then you can realize that

*everything* matters, that every inch of ground on this planet is sacred. We say in Soto Zen, "There's no place in the whole world where you can spit." I'm speaking of spitting as an act of contempt, a way of saying: *This is a low quality place, I can spit here.* Everything matters, everything is important.

One of my favorite stories in Zen literature is where one of our ancestors—it was Seigen Gyoshi—was asked, "What is the essential meaning of the Buddha's teaching?" And he replied, "What is the price of rice in Luling?"

I translate that in modern terms into, "What is the price of gas in Las Vegas?" You might say, "That's different, because rice is necessary and gas isn't." But these days, people think that gas *is* necessary. So from a Buddhist perspective we can ask what it costs for this gas to be here, the gas we are putting in our cars here in Las Vegas. What does it take to get that gas there? How many nuclear tests? How many wars? What does it take for us to get that gas at that price? Meditate on that. Look at Las Vegas, look at Los Angeles, look at San Francisco, and try to figure out: How much does it cost for you to have that gas? For anybody to have that gas? Study that. Observe that. That's the meaning of Buddhism. There's no end to the cost of that gas. There's no end to the cost of our rice and our cloth-

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*The path of peace has no sign. We can't say beforehand what peace will look like, or what we need to do to bring it about. Peace is not some fixed thing. We have to bring it alive.*

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ing. That's the meaning of our practice. Sit in the middle of Las Vegas and study the cost of gas.

We're coming here to witness one of the most horrible costs of gas. We're quietly, alertly observing our pain as we observe the cost of the gas. We're supporting each other in this meditation, because it's hard for one of us to go out to the test site alone and observe it.

Somebody asked me how she could just sit when she saw the oceans dying and the fish dying and she felt so passionate about taking action for the environment. It's fine to be passionate about these matters. I'm suggesting that you sit in the middle of your passion. If you do, your passion will not be limited. If you just run to take care of what you already see, without first settling down in the middle of your passion, then you'll still have a limited view of what you need to do.

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*Since this path of peace has no sign, we  
don't have to have any special equipment.*

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You'll become self-righteous, because you'll say, "I'm doing what's most important here. How can those other people be concerned with these other minor things?" But no matter what we do, we are also overlooking many other things that need attention. If we realize the vastness of our responsibility, we don't think that the tiny bit we do is the whole thing. In the great ocean of beneficial action, we all have to specialize, but we can remember that our work is just a circle of water, not the whole ocean. As human beings, we always have a limited view, and we should acknowledge that. So in order to really be helpful, I'm afraid we must sit.

Just sitting is something you can do while you're walking around on the nuclear test site. Just sitting is something you can do while you're in the slums, while you're riding in a car, while you're meditating on the cost of gas. Just sitting means you're at the center of all suffering, and you're not being biased in your positioning of yourself in this world. That's what just sitting means. And it's not easy. What's easy is to go off to some extreme.

The story about Seigen and the price of rice is celebrated by a poem, which goes like this:

*Accomplishing the work of great peace has no sign.  
The family style of peasants is most pristine.  
Only concerned with village songs and festal drinking,  
How would they know of the virtues of Shun or the  
benevolence of Yao?*

We must remember that the path of peace has no sign. We can't say beforehand what peace will look like, or what we need to do to bring it about. Peace is not some fixed thing. Peace is welcoming us but we

must find it. We have to bring it alive. Right now. We don't know what it is beforehand. We must give up our preconceptions about what brings peace; otherwise, it's an error.

This weekend together is our festal drinking and village songs. Our being together, our sitting together, our discussions, our eating and drinking together, our going out in the desert together and witnessing the damage; this is what the ancestor meant by "only concerned with village songs and festal drinking." When we go back to San Francisco and other places, when we return to our home villages, we can continue to observe all living beings with eyes of compassion. This observation, although it may be painful, should be festive, too—it should be joyful.

Since this path of peace has no sign, we don't have to have any special equipment. Because it has no sign, it can be accomplished in any situation, moment by moment. It only needs the circumstances that meet us in each situation, and it can only use those circumstances. We have to find our way with all the people, all the living beings who are there with us at that moment. We have to discover how to sing our village song.

When we're discussing very serious topics like nuclear disarmament, I often remember what Suzuki Roshi said: "What we're doing is far too important to be taken seriously." So maybe it would be good to end by singing a happy song. This is one of my favorite Zen songs. I think it's about how to walk the signless path of peace. Would you please sing it with me? It's called "The Red Red Robin." Do you know that song?

*When the red red robin  
Comes bob bob bobbin'  
Along, along,  
There'll be no more sobbin'  
When he starts throbbin'  
His old sweet song.  
Wake up! Wake up, you sleepyhead.  
Get up! Get up, get out of bed.  
Cheer up! Cheer up, the sun is red.  
Live, love, laugh and be happy.  
Though I've been blue  
Now I'm walking through  
Fields of flowers.  
Rain may glisten  
But still I listen  
For hours and hours.  
I'm just a kid again  
Doing what I did again,  
Singing a song,  
When the red red robin  
Comes bob bob bobbin' along. ❖*

*Tenshin Anderson is co-Abbot of San Francisco Zen Center, and lives with his wife and daughter at Green Gulch Farm in Muir Beach, California.*

## Things That Grow at Green Gulch



### Oak

My arms cannot encircle your trunk,  
not even half way 'round.  
Perhaps I could if I had five great arms,  
like your strong uplifting limbs.  
You stand supreme, queen of the meadow,  
but you don't rule over anyone.  
Your green halo of leaves casts shade;  
the dead brown ones blanket the ground.  
I find comfort in your rough scarred bark;  
I too am scarred—and yet whole.

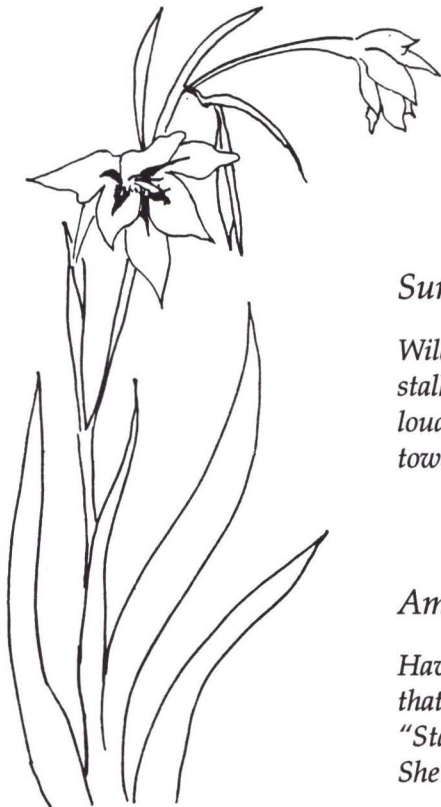
### Cabbage

When I come close to a cabbage in a field,  
its green, open outer leaves reveal  
a shiny round mound within,  
full and vibrant, lips open,  
waiting for a kiss.



### Sunflower

Wild yellow manes of frayed petals  
stalk the field proudly,  
loudly shout their power,  
tower over every other flower.



### Amaryllis

Have you ever tried to draw a flower  
that is waving in the wind?  
"Stay still," I implore.  
She shakes her head.

—Tova Green

# WHY AM I GOING? A Two-Part Inscape

*"Why don't you just send them the money, and stay home and soak in your hot tub?"*

by Naomi Newman

[Editor's Note: In the summer of 1994, Naomi Newman went to the former Yugoslavia with the Doves, a group of ten women, eight from California and two from Malaysia. They called their tour "Honoring Loss: Celebrating Life." The group was made up of four performers, two visual artists, one theater/video technician, and three social change workers. The Doves gave workshops and performances in refugee camps and to peace groups, and they brought art supplies and embroidery thread to people in the camps. Previous issues of *Turning Wheel* have printed poetry, writing and art about the Doves' trips, by Tova Green, Fran Peavey, and Franceska Schiffrin.

Naomi created the following internal dialogue originally as a performance piece for the stage. It is a dialogue she had with herself *before* she went to the former Yugoslavia, as part of the process of deciding whether or not to go. It is adapted here to the printed page and offered as a conversation that raises questions many of us ask ourselves as we think about our activism.]

(singing)

*Dobar vecer dobri ljudi  
Da bi nam svi sdravi bili  
u ovoj novoj godini  
Da bili bi u radosti  
Da bi nam svi sdravi bili*

We're learning a song for when we go to the former Yugoslavia. I have to keep saying the words over and over. It's hard to get my mind around the unfamiliar Slavic sounds. But I'm determined that we know at least one song to sing in the language of the country we're going to. Of course now you can't know what that language is. It's crazy how the nationalists—not satisfied with just ripping the country apart—are tearing Yugoslavia's common language, Serbo-Croatian, in two. They change a few words here and there, and then the Serbs say it's Serbian and the Croats say it's Croatian. I'm not sure which language they'd consider this old song to be in. All I know is that it's a winter ritual song thanking people for their hospitality and blessing their homes.

*Homes?! Homes?! You're going to sing that to people in refugee camps?!*

Well, yes, it's thanking people for their hospitality. I'm sure it will be appreciated . . . oh, I don't know.

*Right. There's a lot you don't know. Like, why you're going. Why, in this time of your life, at 63, you decide to go to a country which has never even interested you. What do you*

*want to find there? Why do you choose to go somewhere where you are going to be so uncomfortable? The food is terrible, the water is terrible, you'll be sleeping on floors, you'll be shlepping heavy suitcases, you're going with nine other egos the size of your own, you could maybe even get killed.*

I'm not going to get killed. I'm more likely to get killed on the freeway.

*Nonetheless, who needs it, who wants it? I know why you're going. You think it's going to open your heart. You want to open your heart? Walk down the streets of San Francisco—it will open. Or read the newspaper.*

No, I can't read the newspaper. I canceled the *New York Times* because it upset me. It made me nervous because I couldn't do anything. I couldn't do anything at all. It made me terribly nervous, turning page after page.

*Instead you listen to the radio.*

Right, I listen to the radio and I hear that in Rwanda 40,000 people they hacked to death and dumped in a river, and now the bodies are rotting in a lake in Uganda.

*And you can't do anything about it.*

Right, but I *can* in Yugoslavia, because my friends Fran and Tova go there, and they come back and say, "How about coming with us? We're going again. We'll perform for the peace workers and the women in the camps. We'll sing, do workshops. We'll talk, we'll listen." "OK," I say without missing a beat because it's been driving me nuts, this ethnic cleansing. Cleansing, that's a new word for genocide. It's as bad as the "final solution." Solution? . . . it's a . . . it's a liquid, it dissolves something, something in the brain, and then you can salute, and once you salute, you're on your way, and Heil Hitler, and hail Molosovic, Tudjman, Arkan. Yes, I'm going. I can do something.

I picture the women. The raped women: old peasant grandmothers, young girls, every kind, every shape, rich, poor, probably more poor. I see them walking, walking for weeks. Walking away from towns and villages, their kitchens and beds, their picture albums, from objects they've handled for years. Walking into camps and abandoned hotels. Walking to where they can't recognize themselves. Jasminka, Raditsa, Aleksa, Nedeljka are gone. What's left is a refugee, a non-person, just a member of an ethnic group.

*Why don't you just send them the money—it will do a lot more good. Why don't you just send them the money, and*

*stay home and be comfortable, and sleep in your great bed, and eat your great food, and soak in your hot tub? Why don't you just do that?*

Because there's a humming inside that wants more from me. That takes me down . . . down to an emptiness that says . . . I don't have to be the me I know myself to be. It says: *Follow me.*

I see my mother in Lithuania, walking through the fields, away from her *shtetl*, to a distant hut, the hut of an old peasant healer. She's leading strangers who are sick, whose language she barely speaks, to the old woman. In spite of the wishes of her parents and the orders of the authorities, the little Jewish girl is pulled like a magnet to the healer. To the dark hut and the thick smells, to the jars filled with herbs and mushrooms and strangely colored liquids. She watches in awe as the healer reaches for this pot, that jar, as she prepares a potion and then rubs her hands in it and then places them over the swollen foot, the infected eye.

My mother wanted to be a doctor. She came to America, sold dresses, met my father, married, opened a furniture store, had children. It was a good life. When my father got sick at the age of 30, somehow she kept him alive for 36 more years. "Yankel, it's time for your nap, go lie down. Yankeleh, how about a cup of tea for your indigestion? Oh my, you look so handsome!" What's that old Jewish saying: "To save one life is to save the world."

*Very lovely, very touching, but it's got nothing to do with the part of you that when you see suffering all you want to do is turn and run away. All you want to say is, "Thank God that's not me." You can go over there like a patronizing do-gooder because you can leave.*

Wait a minute. There's some truth in that, of course. But there's also a part of me that feels what they feel.

*But you are not prepared. You can't imagine what happened to those people. You have no idea what you will find there. The hollow eyes, the blank faces staring at you. You can't even TALK to them. You don't speak the language. What do they need you for?!*

But I could sing. I could sing a song my mother sang me. "Yai dai dai yai dai dai dai yai dai dai dai."

*Great! You want to sing there. You want to "yai dai dai" over there? The Balkans? The whole lot of them hate the Jews. Croatia? They couldn't wait to get on the Nazi bandwagon. What are you doing? Out of the group of ten, six of you are Jewish. How does that happen to happen? Ten women and six of you are Jews. How does it happen to happen that every time there is some suffering . . .*

Stop it. Stop counting Jews. We're people. Mixed: Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish. I don't want to be thinking along those lines.

*Oh, you don't want to be thinking along those lines? You don't want to be thinking that maybe we were the test case, the guinea pigs. That you're walking into our past.*

OK, OK, so that's partly why I'm going. Because I'm Jewish and . . .

*And you've got survivor's guilt. And you think you can fix the past.*

No, no, I'm trying to understand the present. Why Haiti, why Rwanda, why Bosnia?

*Because there's an endless supply of hungry hopeless men with excess testosterone who are stupid enough to be manipulated by greedy maniacs.*

Maybe I'm going to see if it's possible for me to learn how to help someone without hating someone else. I don't know. My thoughts are chasing around in circles.

*So stop thinking. What does it feel like?*

It feels simple. Like an apple. Like a green apple on a window sill. Standing alone, waiting for someone to come along and eat it or see it. It's an offering. Very unambitious, just present, just there.

*Well then just go. It won't change the world. But maybe, for a minute, it will make a very tired person feel better.*

Yes. I don't have to be frightened. I don't even have to be comfortable. I'll just follow my mother. She didn't know the language either, but she knew the way to the healer. ♦

*Naomi Newman is a founding member of A Traveling Jewish Theater, with which she works as a performer, writer, and director. She lives in Mill Valley, California. Vipassana meditation has been her practice for 15 years.*



Franceska Schifrin, *Refugee Woman*

# FAILURE TO DISPERSE

by Anne Herbert

Carol said, "My band is called 'Failure to Disperse.'" Which is the very activity we are called to right now. Some of the most important work to do now is to fail to disperse and to remind others to fail to disperse.

People with microphones who may be more interested in their own interests than ours are strongly recommending that we disperse. They are suggesting that we be scared of lots of groups—gays like me, immigrants like my ancestors, people in other countries we haven't met, poor people, people who aren't pale or aren't suit-bound or both, people who aren't sleeping inside.

Be scared of them, miss any connection you might have with them. Disperse.

Also suggested to you by those who want to control you:

Watch lots of TV. Inside, in your own place. So what you mainly know about other groups is what people who plan to profit from your fear tell you to make you scared.

Stay in your car. See other people as good or bad drivers, in your way or not. Don't see their faces and possibly, in their faces, their story. Keep your face behind a windshield so they won't see your face and your story.

Stare at screens. Don't have very many times and places to look at people. Disperse. Be alone with whatever manipulative information is coming at you through the screens. Spend less and less time being in your own physical situation with your own body and impressions. To disperse is to break up the connection with your own physical life.

Watch TV and say how stupid it is. That's fine. Just as long as you watch it. Using your intelligence to say that TV is stupid is not really having a very strong connection with your own intelligence. In fact, it's dispersing from what great new stuff you'd come up with if you applied your intelligence to the situation you yourself are actually in. If you came up with great new stuff, you might not follow leaders, so please do watch TV and get off on knowing it's stupid.

One thing that bums me is that when there are so many "Disperse! Hate! Be scared!" instructions in the air, they tend to work, one way or another. For example, right now much money has been going to tell me that illegal immigrants are an awful bunch and a big problem. I really don't think so. All the noise about it hasn't directly changed my mind. It hasn't changed my

mind about immigrants.

However, all the noise about hating immigrants has apparently convinced many other people that hating immigrants is where it's at. So I have a very low regard for them, for the people who have allegedly fallen for the hating immigrants idea.

For the long-term campaign to get us all to disperse and sit in different corners thinking ill of each other, it's fine that I end up disdaining people who disdain immigrants, rather than immigrants themselves. The campaign to disperse us has lost me on the specific content of this issue, but they've got me going in the direction they have in mind—distrusting another group of people, isolating, dispersing.

The hate things leaders are selling us now are kind of pseudo stories. But we don't have to get sucked up in the pseudo stories because we've all got real stories. And we can get together and make more real stories. The pseudo story seems large, but it's very flat and boring.

We have the real stories of our first memory, what happened when we were kids that we'll never forget, or can barely stand to remember, who we taught, who taught us, that time we had with water, endless stories for the telling, for the hearing. The big scary story flattens all these incredible people filled with wisdom and bravery and unique happenings

into "These people are yucky." Always available to us is telling our stories, listening to our stories, making new stories. We have our bodies, our hearts, our imaginations and many beings to be with for new stories to start happening now.

Are we all assholes? Who knows? I think there are ways in which we could go either way. It depends partly on what kind of story we invite each other to join. It's not that we are or we aren't but that we have some slack and can bring out different possibilities in each other, if we meet as ourselves, if we talk as ourselves directly to each other, if we don't disperse.

These are scary times.

I think of the teacher portrayed in the movie "Stand and Deliver," whose students had been told forever that they were stupid and destined to flip hamburgers, at best.

And he insisted they could do calculus and go to college and have a decent life. Calculus was his entry way to teaching them they were smart and worth something. And his passion and dedication cut through and helped some of his students break out of the "not-worth-nothing" idea about themselves they had been taught. They got great at calculus and changed their

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*I'd hate to see the human story  
end with people believing a  
flickering screen that tells them  
everyone else is a jerk.*

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ideas of who they were and what their lives could be.

I was thinking that now we are called to all be like that teacher to each other. To say in different ways: "You aren't dumb, you're great and let's go and make it so we can be great together." To say: "Don't believe the negative hype you've been fed about you and about other people."

The breakthrough class in "Stand and Deliver" was calculus. Our breakthrough class is showing each other, demanding that we show each other, that we are all interesting, valuable, complicated, human; we basically mean well, we can act dumb when scared, and we all want a great life for as many beings as possible.

Our labeled leaders, many of them, are teaching a "people are dumb, vicious jerks" class which is working. One way or another the campaign leads to us thinking people are jerks. Living in a world where we think others are worthless and dumb and scary is not fun.

The other class starts now. The "People Can Be Great" class. People can meet and find each other interesting. People can meet and find out about each

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*We could maybe go outside and meet and act  
like we're not jerks, like we're imaginative  
and creative and generous.*

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other's lives and want to work together to make each other's lives better. People can meet and be smart and wise and entertaining and better than TV.

I think at least once in your life you've seen people be great. Whatever they were doing then, they could do it a little more if encouraged, if recognized, if you just went out on the street and did whatever great thing you liked seeing someone else do.

The human story is a very mixed bag. Sometimes humans have acted like dumb vicious assholes. I'd hate to see the human story end with people believing a flickering screen that tells them everyone else is a jerk.

We could maybe go outside and meet and act like we're not jerks, like we're imaginative and creative and generous. Even a faint imitation of imaginative, creative generosity and power seems like a better way to go than cowering inside listening to nasty rumors generated by people who don't know us and don't want to.

Cornel West talking in Oakland in 1994 said when black and white students from Princeton went together to tutor poor kids, on the ride there they talked about all the hot button issues between blacks and whites and on the way back they talked about the kids they'd tutored and how to help them more.

Now for sure we have to deal with the real problems and differences and unknowingness under the hot button issues. But we also can start doing actual things to

make the world better for actual people now, and deal with the issues out of our common experience doing that. We can hang out working together in a way that we'll hear each other's stories naturally as we make new stories together about what the world can be.

What is an activity that would make you think better of humans if you heard of humans doing it? Can you and a buddy do any bit of that activity now? ❖

*Anne Herbert is a writer, nonviolent anarchist, and publisher of broadsides. She can be contacted at: 2425B Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94704; e-mail: wmulti@well.com.*

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## No Hope

"I want to talk about having no hope. Sounds terrible, doesn't it? Actually, it's not terrible at all. A life lived with no hope is a peaceful, joyous, compassionate life. As long as we identify with this mind and body—and we all do—we hope for things that we think will take care of them. We hope for success. We hope for health. We hope for enlightenment . . . All hope, of course, is about sizing up the past and projecting it into the future.

Anyone who sits for any length of time sees that there is no past and no future except in our mind . . . In totally owning the pain, the joy, the responsibility of my life—if I see this point clearly—then I'm free. I have no hope, I have no need for anything else . . .

Now none of us wants to abandon our hope. And to be honest, none of us is going to abandon it all at once. But we can have periods when for a few minutes or a few hours, there is just what is, just this flow. And we are more in touch with the only thing we'll ever have, which is our life.

. . . If we really practice like this, it takes everything we have. What will we get out of it? The answer, of course, is nothing. So let's not have hope. We won't get anything. We'll get our life, of course, but we've got that already."

—Charlotte Joko Beck, in *Everyday Zen* (Harper & Row)

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## Zen Story

The Buddhist monk went to the town square every day to speak out for peace and justice. When his cries went on for years without halting his country's warmaking, his fellow monks said to him: "Stop. You're having no effect. No one is paying attention to your pleas. Everyone in the nation has gone insane with war. Why go on?"

The monk answered: "I cry out for peace so that I won't go insane."

# UNMASKING THE FACE OF DEATH

by Michael Ross #127404

[Editor's Note: The following piece gains resonance from the fact that it comes to us from a prisoner on Connecticut's Death Row.]

Opposition to capital punishment is not necessarily motivated by sympathy towards the murderer. Indeed, most of us feel a great deal of anger and revulsion towards all murderers and their actions. But I believe that capital punishment is a complete renunciation of all that is embodied in our concept of humanity. Simply put, executions degrade us all.

In today's society, the execution process is far removed from most individual citizens. We may or may not be aware of the criminal acts that put an individual on death row—and usually only through sensationalized press accounts—but very few of us know someone whom society has condemned to death. And even fewer of us have ever witnessed, or will ever witness, an actual execution. This deliberate dehumanization of the whole process makes it much easier for us to distance ourselves from capital punishment and to accept it as “something the government does,” allowing us to disavow any personal responsibility in the matter.

We need to be aware of the human side of executions. To this end, I'd like to share with you an excerpt from an affidavit by David Bruck, an attorney who stayed with a condemned man, Terry Roach, during the last hours before his execution.

*I assisted with Terry Roach's defense during the last month before his execution, and I spent the last four hours*

*with Terry Roach in his cell when he was electrocuted on January 10, 1986.*

*Although I had known Terry slightly for several years, meeting him in the course of visits to see other inmates on South Carolina's death row, my first long conversation with Terry occurred less than a month before his death. An execution date had already been set, and he seemed frightened and very nervous. I was struck at that time by how obviously mentally retarded Terry was. . . I had known from following his case through the courts that he had been diagnosed mildly mentally retarded, but I was still surprised at his slack-jawed and slow way of speaking, and at the evident lack of understanding of much of what we were telling him about the efforts that were underway to persuade Governor Riley to grant clemency.*

*The next time that I would see Terry was on the night of his execution. The lawyers who had worked on his case for the past eight years were at the Supreme Court in Washington, so I had decided to look in on Terry that night after his family had had to leave for the last time, to see if I could help him with anything or just keep him company. When I arrived, he asked me to stay with him through the night and to accompany him when he was taken to the chair. So along with Marie Deans, a paralegal and counselor who works with condemned prisoners, I stayed.*

*Although Terry was 25 years old by the time of his death, he seemed very childlike. The finding at his last psychological evaluation was that his IQ was 70—a score that placed his intellectual functioning at about the level of a 12-year-old child. When his family minister showed him some prayers from the Bible that they could read together, Terry asked him which ones he thought would be especially likely*





to help him into heaven: his questions about this seemed based on the childish assumption that one prayer was likely to "work" better than another. Later in the night, he asked me to read him a long letter about reincarnation that a man from California had sent to him just that day; he listened to the letter with wonder, like a small child at bedtime, trusting and uncritical. Both Marie and I were struck by how calmed Terry seemed by the sound of a voice reading to him in the resonant cell, and we spent much of the remaining time reading to him while he listened, gazing at the reader with rapt attention.

He had a final statement which his girlfriend had helped him write. When I arrived that night, the statement was on three small scraps of paper, in his girlfriend's handwriting. I copied it out for him, and got him to read it out loud a few times. No matter how many times he tried, the word "enemies" came out "emenies." Still, he seemed to like the rehearsal; like everything we did that night, it filled the time and acknowledged that he was doing something very difficult.

Terry was a very passive young man, and that showed all through the night. Although he was obviously frightened, he was as cooperative as possible with the guards, and he tried to pretend that all of the ritual preparation—the shaving of his head and right leg, the prolonged rubbing in of electrical conducting gel—was all a normal sort of thing to have happen. He wanted the approval of those around him, and he seemed well aware that this night he could gain everyone's approval by being brave and keeping his fear at bay.

Still, when the warden appeared in the cell door at 5:00 A.M. and read the death warrant, while Terry stood, each wrist immobilized in a manacle known as the "claw," his left leg began to shake in large, involuntary movements. After that, everything happened quickly.

I walked to the chair with him and talked to him as much as I could. He wanted me to read his statement, but I told him that he ought to try and I'd read it if he couldn't. His voice was only a little shaky, and he managed quite well, except for "emenies." After he had repeated the name of a friend of mine who had recently died and whom he had offered to look up for me when he got to heaven, I left him and walked to the witness area where I gave him a thumbs-up sign. He signaled back with his fingers, as much as the straps permitted. We signaled to each other once more just before the mask was pulled down over his face.

A few seconds later the current hit. Terry's body snapped back and held frozen for the whole time that the current ran through it. After a few seconds, steam began to rise from his body, and the skin on his thighs just above the electrode began to distend and blister. His fists were clenched and very white. His body slumped when the power was turned off and jerked erect again when it resumed. When he was declared dead, several guards wrestled his body out of the chair and onto a stretcher,

while taking care to conceal his face (no longer covered by the mask) from the view of the witnesses and me by covering it with a sheet. I left the death house at about this time in the company of the warden. As we stepped out of the building, I heard the whoops of a crowd of about 150 or 200 demonstrators, who had apparently come to celebrate the execution, and who were yelling and cheering outside the prison gates.

Executions degrade us all. They are held in the middle of the night, in the dark, away from us all, to hide what they really are. The men who are condemned to death are dehumanized by the state and by the press, to make it easier to carry out their executions. And the public is kept as far away as possible from the whole process to prevent them from seeing that human beings, real flesh and blood, real people, are being put to death. That is the only way that any state or government can continue executions without the public demanding their eradication.

It is time for us to acknowledge capital punishment for what it really is, and to abolish it nationwide. There are suitable alternatives. For example, in my state those

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*He tried to pretend that the ritual preparation—the shaving of his head and right leg, the rubbing in of electrical conducting gel—was all a normal sort of thing to have happen.*

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convicted of capital crimes, who are not sentenced to death, are sentenced to life imprisonment, *without the possibility of release*. This is clearly a suitable alternative to executions, and satisfies society's need to be protected from dangerous individuals. It is not necessary to kill criminals, not even the most reprehensible ones, and to continue to do so truly lowers us to the levels of the very ones we wish to punish. And undoubtedly degrades us all.

What can you do to help? Several organizations are working hard to rid our country of capital punishment. Contact one or more of the following:

National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (1325 "G" Street, NW; Lower Level—B; Washington DC 20005. Tel. 202/347-2510)

Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation (2093 Willow Creek Road; Portage, IN 46368. Tel. 219/763-2170)

Amnesty International USA (Campaign to Abolish the Death Penalty; 322 Eighth Avenue; New York, NY 10001. Tel. 212/807-8400)

American Civil Liberties Union (Capital Punishment Project; 122 Maryland Avenue, NE; Washington, DC 20002. Tel. 202/675-2319) ♦

Michael Ross #127404, Death Row—Somers Prison, P.O. Box #100, Somers, CT 06071

*By Life's Grace:  
Musings on the Essence of Social Change*  
by Fran Peavey

New Society Publishers, 1994, \$14.95.

**Reviewed by Lenore Friedman**

When Fran Peavey was in third grade she wanted to be a tree. This was not an idle daydream or romantic fantasy. It was a decision. On her birthday she wished for it before blowing out the candles on her cake. As she lay on the grass, during the long Idaho summer, she dreamed of becoming a tree. But also, being Fran, she hatched a plan. Intuitively, she understood that she herself was made up of "little pieces of me and space which was not-me." Trees were made up of little pieces of tree and little pieces of "not-tree." If she could align herself properly with a tree, then there might be room enough for them to merge. When winter came, she acted. At the bottom of a ski slope stood a quaking aspen tree, "one of the most beautiful trees I had yet met . . . The trunk was white with speckles of black throughout the loose bark. . . I felt I would truly be happy as an aspen."

She took the ski lift to the top of the slope, turned around and skied down as fast as she could. "I thought if I hit the tree at a fast speed, the me would fit into the not-tree, and the tree would fit into the not-me." She did hit the tree hard, very hard, and she had the wind knocked out of her. There were also little pieces of her nose, chin, and forehead left on the surface of the tree. She couldn't explain her distress to anyone, that it had nothing to do with getting hurt. Recently though, a young boy explained to her that the reason she hadn't merged with the tree was because she'd kept her clothes on. "It's something to think about," she says now, in *By Life's Grace*, a collection of her essays on different aspects of her life and work.

I've told this story because it's so vivid a distillation of what makes Fran unique. Her mind is at once immensely creative and immensely strategic. She doesn't merely come up with original responses to situations both planetary and personal. She births them into the world. She seems to be a genius at communicating with other people, however different or "other" they might be. More accurately, she stretches herself to such a degree of openness that "otherness" no longer exists. And she listens, listens with her heart.

These qualities have carried her to many of the gravest problem spots in the world. She has been to the former Yugoslavia several times. She has talked to Israelis and Palestinians. For 15 years she has joined with others in the formidable task of un-polluting the sacred Ganges River in India. In railroad stations and on street corners all over Europe and Asia, Africa and South America, she has waited with a sign: "American

Willing to Listen." And she has trained countless people in this country, Australia, New Zealand, Eastern Europe, and India in social change work and "strategic questioning," topics that form the beating heart of her book, *By Life's Grace*.

"Questioning is a basic tool for rebellion," she writes. "It breaks open the stagnant, hardened shells of the present, opening options to be explored. Questioning reveals the profound uncertainty embedded deep in all reality . . . It takes this uncertainty towards growth and new possibilities. Questioning can change your entire life. It can change institutions and entire cultures. It can empower people to create strategies for change."

From the nitty-gritty of her personal experience she outlines different levels and different styles of questioning according to the circumstances of the persons involved. In a dysfunctional organization, for example, the question, "What's wrong with the way we are working?" would be far less effective in moving towards new approaches than the question, "What will it take for us to function as a team?" Or an environmental protester going to a mill owner asking, "What would it take for you to stop cutting down old-growth trees?" might invite him into a dialogue about the real concerns of both parties. The ensuing plan might not precisely resemble what each party initially had in mind, but it could result in saving both business and trees.

Just as important is what Fran calls "dynamic listening," in which you listen "deep into the moving heart of the person opposite you . . . You are not merely passively listening. You are creating an action path with your attention. Your ears wander in between their words, their sighs, and their questions, searching out meaning, resolve, motion, and need . . . We need to listen as if someone's life depends on it—because it does."

There's no space here to tell it adequately, but read the book for the full story of Fran and the Ganges, of her enormous love for it, and her enormous struggle to build coalitions and processes to restore its waters, against anciently entrenched obstacles—political, social, and economic. Everyone told her it was impossible to clean the river. But she only began to think that "it was going to take quite a long time."

Fran is not immune to moments of despair or vulnerability, but mostly she takes a very long view. "A powerful question has a life of its own as it chisels away at the problem," she writes. "Don't be disappointed if a great question doesn't have an answer right away. . . It will rattle in the mind for days or weeks. . . If the seed is planted, the answer will grow. Questions are alive!" ❖

*Lenore Friedman is a writer and psychotherapist living in Berkeley, California. She is the author of Meetings with Remarkable Women: Buddhist Teachers in America.*

**Thinking Green!**  
**Essays on Environmentalism,**  
**Feminism, and Nonviolence**

by Petra K. Kelly

Parallax Press, 1994. Hard cover, \$18.



**Reviewed by Leslie Boies**

As a Zen Buddhist practitioner, I have come to see my cushion as one of my greatest teachers and sitting as central to my practice. No doubt I am not alone in this belief. In my case, my commitment to zazen stems largely from appreciation for the way in which it enables me to be more open, clear, and engaged in the world. Without being fully conscious of it, however, I'd come to hold a somewhat dogmatic view of the indispensability of zazen for *anyone* who wishes to be effective in meeting her own and others' suffering.

I was therefore intrigued to learn in Petra Kelly's inspiring book of essays, *Thinking Green!* that the Dalai Lama encouraged her relentless activism by telling her he would meditate *for* her. Whatever skepticism I may have about one person (even the Dalai Lama!) meditating for another, I was impressed by his faith in Kelly's abilities and style, a style which some have characterized as passionate, committed, charismatic, and others as driven, neurotic, and volatile. Having become more intimately acquainted with her remarkable vision through this collection of essays, I am not surprised that the Dalai Lama would support her work. It is abundantly clear that, for Kelly, politics and spirituality were not separate and that her activism was rooted in a profound sense of the sanctity and interconnectedness of all life.

As a co-founder of the German Green Party in 1979, Kelly (who died in October 1992) put forth the idea of an "anti-party party," a party greatly influenced by Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence and *satyagraha* or "truth force." The term anti-party party, like nonvi-

olence itself, was frequently misunderstood, but for Kelly the term denoted "a party capable of choosing between morality and power, that uses creative civil disobedience to combat every form of repression, that combines audacious imagination with efficient working methods, and that recognizes the link between world peace and peace within every individual."

Whether describing the Third World debt crisis, the extinction of species and habitats, arms exports, racism, the consumerism of the North (or so-called First World), nuclear testing, or the Chinese invasion and destruction of Tibet, Kelly manages to lay bare the pattern of exploitation, privilege, and violence which underlies and connects all these injustices without overwhelming the reader. Indeed, her faith in our ability to transform our thinking, to be both "tender and subversive," and thus awaken our own and others' conscience, is quite compelling. And she continually reminds us that power derives first and foremost from the consent of the governed: we need not collaborate with the systems of hierarchical domination.

For example, in decrying the Persian Gulf War as "not just a war among nation-states, but also a war against nature," she makes it clear that we, as lavish consumers of oil and other raw materials, furnish the motive for the violent appropriation of such materials from other countries, and that, by pursuing ecologically sound practices and policies at home, we provide the preconditions for a reduction in tensions in the world. In order to pursue such policies and encourage others to do so as well, however, we must "cultivate a rich inner life and experience our connection with all of life, (and thus) realize how little of what society tells us we need is actually important for our well-being."

Although Kelly had a vision that embraced all life, not everyone embraced her vision in return, including some of her colleagues in the Green Party. When the German Green Party first entered Parliament in 1983, having passed the five percent hurdle, there was much celebration. Initially, there were many successes as well, in the areas of human rights, sustainable development, disarmament, and grassroots organizing, especially within the former Soviet bloc. However, as the Party's successes grew, so did the infighting among the various factions. Kelly believed that it wasn't the radicalism of the Greens' agenda that failed to get the party re-elected in 1990, but "the way we practiced our political lifestyle with each other. . . . In weekly intervals, we fought our battles in the most aggressive and inhumane ways, often denouncing each other, quarreling and pointing fingers at whatever faction was unwelcome at that particular moment. We could not succeed if the ways we treated each other made more headlines than the substance and aims of our policies."

Petra Kelly was 45 when she died. The manner of her death raised questions and sparked controversy, just as

she had in her life. Her body, along with that of Gert Bastian, her companion and fellow Green, was found in the Bonn townhouse they shared. The official version of events is that Bastian shot Kelly while she was sleeping and then shot himself. Others, recalling Bastian's devotion to her, believe she and Bastian were victims of politically motivated assassins. Whatever the actual cause of her death, I feel certain Kelly would rather we pay attention to the alliances that exist all around us and build upon them. Think with the heart! Think Green! ❖

*Leslie Boies practices Zen, teaches English as a second language, and is active in the Interracial Buddhist Council and San Francisco Zen Center's Dismantling Racism Task Force. She lives in Berkeley, California.*

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***Insight and Action:  
How to Discover and Support a Life of  
Integrity and Commitment to Change***  
by Tova Green and Peter Woodrow,  
with Fran Peavey  
New Society Publishers, 1994, \$12.95.

**Reviewed by Joan Starr Ward**

From the Foreword:

*Facts about Geese (based on a talk by Angeles Arrien)*

*Fact One: As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the birds following it. By flying in a V-formation, the whole flock adds 71 percent greater flying range than if the bird flew alone . . .*

*Fact Two: Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation . . .*

*Fact Three: When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position . . .*

*Fact Four: The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those in front to keep up their speed . . .*

*Fact Five: When a goose gets sick, or wounded, or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own with another formation or catch up with the flock . . .*

If you already know how to change the world, then pick up this book to add to your bag of tricks. If you want to change the world but do not know how, then pick up this book to help you go about figuring it out. Authors Green, Woodrow, and Peavey are three experienced geese you definitely want to fly along with.

In the introduction they remind us, "You are not alone. You do not have to make the most important decisions in your life by yourself. Together, we have resources around us to sustain us in our difficult work to make the world more just, safe, and sustainable for all." They follow their reminder with three specific processes as resources: support groups, clearness meetings, and strategic questioning. Each process, or any combination of them, elegantly lives up to the book's subtitle: How to discover and support a life of integrity and commitment to change. Based on years of experience, the ideas the authors bring forward to us are clear, logical, instructive, well-defined, and amply illustrated.

Tova Green defines an activist support group as "a small group of people who meet regularly to give and receive reflections on each other's lives and work." It is not an affinity group, a consciousness-raising group, nor a therapy group. This is followed by guidelines on how to start one, how to make it work, how to sustain it, and when to let it dissolve. This section not only deepened my understanding of why so many BPF chapters rise and fall quickly, but also gave me a number of ideas to incorporate into the groups I am currently a part of.

Peter Woodrow expands on his pamphlet on clearness meetings, a tool of support that originated in the Quaker community. "Clearness stands at the intersection of individuals and communities . . . and is a practical reflection of the idea that 'we are all part of one another.'" Imagine the joy of bringing a few people together to help you in a time of confusion and indecision about something important. Through deep listening, the people you have gathered help you find your own innate creative clarity while you give them the opportunity to witness the deep connection that is inherent in our lives.

Fran Peavey, in her straightforward style, provides us with a way of questioning that "is a basic tool for rebellion . . . [and opens] up options to be explored." Uncertainty is revealed and with it comes the opportunity for growth and new possibilities. "Strategic questioning is the skill of asking the questions that will make a difference." Peavey lays out the definitions and framework for developing questions that can be significant catalysts for social change. This is one section I want to reread a number of times and practice until it comes as naturally as geese flying in V-formation.

Here is a handbook with something for everyone who is interested in genuine social change. It brings heart to heart-breaking work, and provides a practical application of interconnectedness. Although *Insight and Action* is written specifically for activists, it is a precious resource for anyone who is interested in rebuilding our communities and living a life of integrity. ❖

*Joan Starr Ward is a member of the Marin County Chapter of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.*

*Dharma Family Treasures*  
*Sharing Mindfulness with Children*  
*An Anthology of Buddhist Writings*  
Edited by Sandy Eastoak

North Atlantic Books, 1994, \$14.95.

Reviewed by Kathie Fischer

*Dharma Family Treasures: Sharing Mindfulness with Children* reveals to us what wonderful, innovative and loving parenting is going on in different Buddhist communities and families, and how many Buddhist parents and teachers are committed to offering a meaningful and helpful path to children. I often feel that the most important work of my life is to send the children I encounter, whether my own, those in my class, or wherever, into their productive years in the twenty-first century with tools of beauty, strength, and integrity. These are the tools of survival our children will need, offered through Buddhist practice and the Buddha Dharma. Sandy Eastoak has taken a first step in documenting this transmission of Buddhist practice and thinking to the next generation. Her book will be helpful to practitioners of different religious traditions who wish for many of the same things these Buddhist parents and teachers

do. Sandy has invited people from different Buddhist groups to write for the collection, and her light editor's hand preserves the uniqueness of each of the many contributions. Also preserved is a sense of the diversity of experience among these people who have been practicing a spiritual path new to them, while teaching and raising children in a rapidly changing culture.

The collection of writings in this book ranges from the lullaby-like, celebrating the awesome arrival of children and the powerful transformation of single people into parents, to the well-seasoned teachings of grandmothers and Buddhist teachers. It is a dialogue of practitioners, some complaining about the double-bind most people find themselves in these days, that of balancing conflicting priorities, energies, voices, paces—what have you; some answering those complaints with advice, like the realization that some of what puts us in a double-bind can be discarded, that harmony is more likely to occur in the person than in the situation.

On a new frontier, like our everyday lives, it is a good idea to build on others' work and experience, always to honor others' work and experience as we honor the Buddhas and ancestors. I hope we can do this as a Buddhist community of parents and children. I hope we don't have to look for what's wrong with someone else's (often a women's) child rearing prac-



Meredith Stout, *Story hour at the public library*

tices, or one Buddhist center's customs, in order to discover what is right for ourselves. Not only because what is right for ourselves and our children will change as the children grow, but also because, whether we realize it or not, each of our discoveries as parents comes to us as a result of the hard work of our Dharma sisters (mostly) before us. I say this in response to a tone of judgment I sensed in some of the writings. I am not suggesting that such observations should be disregarded, but that an imagination born of gratitude could be applied to some of these negative observations, so that we don't get stuck in "us and them," "good and bad." We are on this long lonesome road together and we can help each other out in untold ways.

A truly delightful and interesting section of the book is "Simple Teachings." Here we learn some great pointers for talking to children about basic Buddhist teachings. I giggled when I read Ken Tanaka's "Think BIG—Life is a BUMPY road." What simple, clear and contemporary language he uses with young people, just where many of us lapse into the incomprehensible philosophical language of the sutras. I would urge anyone who wishes to convey Buddhist ideas to older children to read Tanaka's contribution. This is just one of many excellent suggestions in this section of *Dharma Family Treasures*.

With this ground-breaking book, we can look forward to a broad-scale dialogue, including people with even more diverse experience, enriching this conversation and the lives of our children. ❖

*Kathie Fischer is a schoolteacher, a Zen priest, and the mother of two teenagers, who lives at Green Gulch Farm in Marin County, California.*

## *In the Lap of the Buddha*

by Gavin Harrison

Shambhala, 1994, \$14.

### Reviewed by Tova Green

*In the Lap of the Buddha* illustrates how meditation practice can support us in dealing with the very difficult situations life offers, including life-threatening illness and memories of childhood abuse. Other people, even those who love us best, may not understand or be able to assist us. Gavin concludes, "Being present and aware is the greatest protection we have."

Through stories drawn from the life of the Buddha and his disciples, Gavin illustrates how we may become present and aware in the face of pain, fear, anger, and suffering. He describes how meditation can help us develop faith, forgiveness, self-love, and compassion. Gavin also draws from his own experience with his HIV+ diagnosis, physical pain, and early sexual abuse.

Each chapter stands alone, as a Dharma talk would,

yet together the chapters flow in a sequence. Someone who has never meditated can learn the essence of vipassana practice from Gavin's instructions. Those who have spent many hours in sitting practice may find a fresh approach, particularly in the interpretations of the five precepts and Gavin's views on karma.

I have often struggled to understand the concept of karma: what is predestined and what we can influence. Gavin says, "With a deeper understanding of karma we see that our personalities are not fixed irrevocably. Any moment carries the most profound opportunity for change. Just as fear can condition more fear, so, too, can one moment of fearlessness condition further fearlessness in our lives. We take full responsibility for our lives and for how we live. This is the great spiritual imperative."

The lap of the Buddha is a beautiful metaphor. How often, when I am in pain, do I long for a lap I can curl up in. Gavin teaches us that such a lap is always available—inside each of us.

*In the Lap of the Buddha* covers some of the same ground as Jack Kornfield's recent book *A Path With Heart* and Stephen Levine's *Healing into Life and Death*. All three books offer lovingkindness and forgiveness meditations as well as meditations for healing the heart and dealing with physical or emotional pain. Jack says, "In difficulties, we can learn the true strength of our practice. At these times, the wisdom we have cultivated and the depth of our love and forgiveness is our chief resource." Gavin's experience is a good illustration of this.

These books differ from earlier vipassana meditation instruction books in that they place greater attention on the heart and on the body. Jack writes, "We are human beings, and the human gate to the sacred is our own body, heart and mind, the history from which we've come, and the closest relationships and circumstances of our life. If not here, where else could we bring alive compassion, justice, and liberation?" In the introduction to his book, Gavin says, "I fully believe that the themes of suffering, mortality, transformation and love are universal to every path of suffering. We each have our personal dramas, but we all hurt in similar ways."

Gavin begins his book with three quotations. One is a haiku by Basho:

*The temple bell stops  
but the sound keeps coming  
out of the flowers.*

After reading this book, the sound keeps coming and the flowers are brighter. ❖

*Tova Green leads workshops for peace activists in the U.S., Australia, and the former Yugoslavia. Her new book Insight and Action is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. She lives in Oakland, California.*

## *The Practice of Perfection: The Paramitas from a Zen Buddhist Perspective*

by Robert Aitken

Pantheon, 1994, \$22.

### Reviewed by Sojun Mel Weitsman

Giving (*Dana*)

Morality (*Shila*)

Forbearance (*Kshanti*)

Zeal (*Virya*)

Settled, Focused Meditation (*Dhyana*)

Wisdom (*Prajna*)

Compassionate Means (*Upaya*)

Aspiration (*Pranidhana*)

Spiritual Power (*Bala*)

Knowledge (*Jnana*)

These are the ten paramitas, which are the subject of Robert Aitken Roshi's new book *The Practice of Perfection*. The paramitas are the practices of a bodhisattva, one who seeks to alleviate the suffering of all beings. The first six paramitas were formulated before the third century A.D., and these are the ones we usually refer to. The four remaining ones were added later, probably when the decimal system became popular.

Aitken Roshi touches equally on all ten, considering them from the point of view of contemporary Zen practice, and devoting a chapter to each one. The book is based on a series of lectures, and thus each chapter includes a question and response section between Aitken and his students. Here we see how the students respond to the paramitas with questions from their everyday lives, and we see the kind-hearted intimacy and humor in the relationship between Aitken and his students.

The paramitas are considered a basic touchstone for practice in all the Mahayana schools. The term paramita comes from the Sanskrit *parama*, and means "highest condition, highest point, best state, perfection." Aitken describes them as inspirations, not fixed rules. "We honor them with our conduct, speech and thought." In his introduction he says, "Perfection is a process. . . Nobody, least of all Buddha, can say, 'I have accomplished it.'" With this in mind I can accept the title of the book, which otherwise might make me feel uneasy, as "the practice of perfection" can sound like a self-righteous or elitist effort.

It is helpful to remember that the paramitas all have *prajna*, or the wisdom of non-duality, as their basis. Each one is observed without self-centeredness. This is the common thread that runs through them and distinguishes them from good deeds done with an egotistical attitude.

For example, Aitken says of *dana*, the first paramita (giving or generosity), "*Dana* keeps moving the endless circulation of divine charity. Circulating the gift is

what kept primal society healthy." Pure giving looks for no reward. The attitude of saving all beings is no other than the attitude of *dana*.

The author balances his well researched knowledge with his ability to find a compassionate expression of enlightenment in the most mundane circumstances. For instance, in exemplifying the fourth paramita, zeal, he says, "The human being by nature is inadequate, practices zen inadequately, realizes true nature inadequately. . . On and on we persevere, like a small child determined to learn how to walk, while continually falling down, or like a very old person getting up in the middle of the night, lurching from wall to wall to reach the bathroom."

Drawing on his own practice as a Zen teacher, Aitken gives examples from the koan literature in each chapter. Of the second paramita, morality (*shila*), which includes the precepts, he says, "The Zen literature does not include much about them [the precepts] specifically, but over and over we find sharp reminders that we are living in this world with other beings:

A monk asked T'ou-tzu, 'All sounds are the sound of Buddha—right or wrong?'

T'ou-tzu said, 'Right.'

The monk said, 'Your reverence, doesn't your asshole make farting sounds?'

T'ou-tzu then hit him.

Again the monk said, 'Coarse words or subtle talk, all return to the primal meaning—right or wrong?'

T'ou-tzu said, 'Right.'

The monk said, 'Then can I call Your Reverence a donkey?'

T'ou-tzu then hit him."

In the chapter on the ninth paramita, spiritual power (*bala*), Aitken speaks of the ten powers of the Buddha. Although I have heard about them for years, and they were included in a chant we used to do at San Francisco Zen Center for informal meals and the end of afternoon tea, nobody seemed to know exactly what they were. I had seen several lists but they were all different, and they always seemed to be out of the reach of mere mortals. The author says, "They really aren't. I will devote the rest of this essay to bringing them down to earth." Which he proceeds to do.

Although *dana* (giving) is listed as the first paramita and is considered the gateway to practice because it means relinquishment, any one of the paramitas can be the entry way and each one includes all the others. They can also be studied and practiced as five complementary couplets. Starting at the center, 5 and 6 are a pair: settled focused meditation (*dhyana*, *samadhi*) is the vehicle for wisdom (*prajna*). The Sixth Ancestor Hui Neng says, "A disciple should not think that there is a distinction between 'samadhi begets *prajna* and *prajna* begets *samadhi*.'" Similarly, patience (*kshanti*) is the complement of zeal (*virya*); giving (*dana*) is a letting go and morality (*shila*) sets up boundaries and

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**Thank You and OK!**

by David Chadwick

Penguin/Arkana, 1994, \$13.95.

**Reviewed by Tofu Roshi**

I'm not a big reader. After a lifetime of practice in immersing myself deeply in the present moment, my attention span has been focused to a narrow beam that illuminates This Very Moment. For this reason I almost never read anything longer than a fortune cookie.

But when my students at the No Way Zen Center were all abuzz about what they said was an important new Zen book, *Thank You and OK!*, I knew I had to find out what was in it. So I had my secretary read it aloud to me on four and nine days, while I was shaving my head.\* The chapters of the book are longer than a fortune cookie, but they are still very short, about five pages, just long enough for head-shaving. But Mr. Chadwick kept making me laugh with his chung-in-teak way of talking; for example, when a Japanese monk at the monastery where Mr. Chadwick had come to practice asked him why he had come, and he replied, "I came here merely to study Japanese for free. In zazen I review vocabulary," I started laughing and cut my head with the razor. Also, there are about 85 chapters, and with 6 (at the most) four and nine days in each month, it would have taken us over a year to finish the book, and I was starting to get excited about Mr. Chadwick's experiences in Japan, and whether he would get his visa extended or not, and whether his girlfriend would come to Japan and marry him, and whether the head monk would let him wash the dirty dish towels, and whether he would find a post office from which to mail his mother a Mother's Day card on a rainy holiday, and whether his dear teacher, Katagiri Roshi, who was sick with cancer, would get better. I couldn't wait five days for the next chapter. So I had my secretary just keep reading, with occasional 10-minute breaks for walking meditation, until we finished the book. I *loved* it.

But maybe you want to know about the book, not about me. In the author's own words, from the preface, "This book has two main threads. One is the story of my stay at a . . . remote mountain temple, the monks who were there, and Katagiri—how he affected me and how I felt about him. The other story is my life with Elin [his wife] in Maruyama and our explorations of modern Japan, an imperfect, humorous place full of wonders, delusion, pretense and the dance of life—just like the States, only completely different."

Chadwick-san is a very kind man. And he could be a poet, if only he was thin. Describing a sesshin with Katagiri Roshi at which the students sat all through the night, he says, "On the fourth night, it seemed to me as if all fifty of us had lifted anchor together and were effortlessly moving in eternity, our luminous sails full of

silver wind." But no stink of piety. Even *I* feel comfy with him. He recalls his first teacher, Suzuki Roshi, telling him "that I should just keep sitting and wait for something wonderful to happen. . . . Not only would it happen to me, it would happen to everyone. I liked that even though it definitely reduced my sense of being special, because it increased my odds dramatically."

I think this book can help you, too, even if the author is, as he says, "too fat," and "too loud." It's sad, at the end of the book, when Katagiri dies, but Chadwick says with wisdom, "I learned from them [Suzuki and Katagiri] to have confidence in zazen while sitting, standing and walking, as it is traditionally said . . . but in my life today, I am just as encouraged by family members and my mutually irritating fellow students . . . as by the memory of the Japanese teachers whom I have known and loved."

I'd say more, but the editor didn't give me room. ❖

\* Zen priests traditionally shave their heads on the days of the month that end in 4 or 9: the 4th, 9th, 14th, 19th, etc.

*Tofu Roshi is Abbot of the No Way Zen Center, and manager of the Next to Godliness Laundromat. His book, The Life and Letters of Tofu Roshi, is available from the BPF office for \$8.*

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structures for containment. Skillful means (*upaya*) is employed in helping others, and aspiration (*pranidhana*) is how we direct ourselves. Spiritual power (*bala*) flows through us and knowledge (*jnana*) gives that power direction. In this way, the paramitas become a system of checks and balances on our powerful life energies, allowing us to maintain a harmonious field for ourselves and others.

Aitken seems to be saying that rather than study the paramitas as Buddhist literature we should approach each one as a living koan in the same way we study the precepts. And this practice is not only for the advanced student. It seems clear that the author wants to make sure that American Zen students are grounded in the fundamentals of Buddhism, so that they are not ignorant of the roots of their own Zen practice, and above all, so that they understand the value of ethical conduct; just as a doctor should study medicine before operating on people, or a bus driver should have proper training before hitting the street.

The book has an easily flowing style, and some credit must be given to the editors whose job it was to shape this spoken material into such a good presentation. In *The Practice of Perfection* Aitken does for the paramitas what he did for the precepts in *The Mind of Clover*. This insightful and inspiring book is a welcome contribution to the field of practice, and to all of us who are sincerely studying the Buddha way. ❖

*Sojun Mel Weitsman Roshi is the founder and Abbot of Berkeley Zen Center, and co-Abbot of San Francisco Zen Center. He began his study of Zen in 1964, with Shunryu Suzuki Roshi.*





***A Woman's  
Guide to  
Spiritual  
Renewal***

*by Nelly Kaufer and  
Carol Osmer-  
Newhouse*

Harper/San Francisco,  
1994, \$14.

**Reviewed by Julie Wester**

Among the most important parts of my training as a vipassana practitioner and teacher have been times spent with other women in Buddhist practice. In meditation retreats, conferences, and local sangha gatherings we have explored together the confusions of having received our spiritual educations in a male-dominated religious world, and we have delighted in the emergence among us of a more harmonious language and more familiar forms for our practice.

That such conversations have happened at all has been a departure from the conditions in which I first began Buddhist practice 20 years ago. At that time, discussions about one's spiritual practice were primarily reserved for private interviews with the teacher. In recent years, the open sharings in women's gatherings have created safe places for exploring the range and variety of our spiritual experience.

Two long-time Buddhist practitioners have drawn on their understanding of the issues surrounding women's spirituality to create a powerful guidebook for spiritual healing. Their work highlights the link between Buddhism and feminism with its practical invitations to investigate one's own experience.

Born into a society which does not value the resources traditionally associated with our spiritual practices, we women often feel bereft. The book's voice is that of a wise friend who has walked the path, perhaps the female spiritual mentor many women seek, who points to sources of spiritual connection we may have overlooked.

Women's descriptions of their own experiences inspire and invite us to identify our own intuition, insight, and history. Guided meditations and creative exercises take us by the hand on a journey into our own awakening. Here is a guidebook for returning to one's spiritual roots, and inquiring into the joys and wounds of childhood religious training. Women's expressions of pain at being excluded from traditional religious roles, language, and ceremonies, as well as the

pain we have felt as we have experienced the abuse of spiritual power, make clear our need for spiritual re-education and renewal.

As women share descriptions of the spiritual gifts of their lives, often in unexpected places, we are reminded of our own gifts. Memories of childhood lullabies, often our first spiritual songs, evoke a time of trust and deep connection. We are invited to consider our own experience of the particularly female realms of music, dance, nature, creativity, sensuality, childbirth, and loving relationships.

*A Woman's Guide to Spiritual Renewal* provides strong and gentle guidance for the process of rediscovering an authentic spirituality based on trusting our own direct experience. The beauty of this book is that it embodies the values which characterize both Buddhism and feminism—qualities like respect for direct individual experience of truth—without in any way requiring the reader to be either feminist or Buddhist. A product of the wisdom sharings of a generation of women, this book will be a valuable resource for generations of women to come. ❖

*Julie Wester is a member of the Teachers' Council of Spirit Rock Center. Her teaching reflects her training with Ruth Denison, whose pioneering approach to vipassana incorporates guided movement and sensory exploration within the silent retreat setting. She has recently embarked upon the path of mothering.*



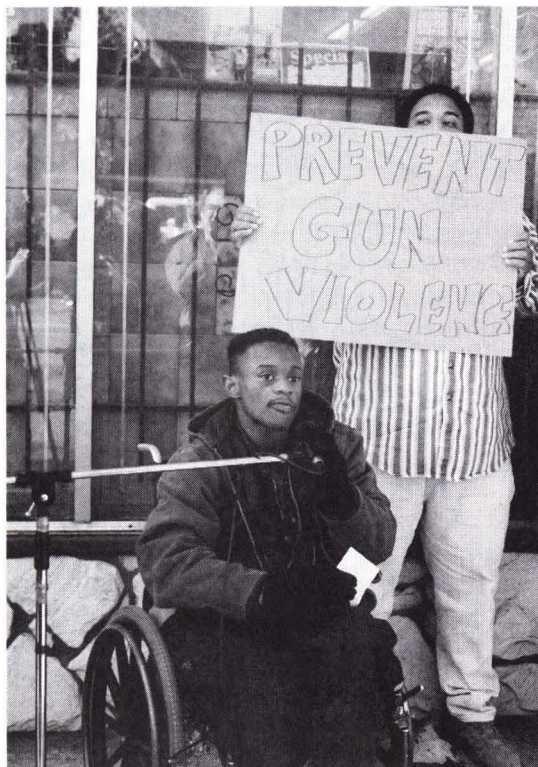
*Rebecca Sutherland*

## COORDINATOR'S REPORT

I won't linger over a downhearted analysis of the recent elections. It's taken me some weeks to climb from the slough of despond, and I'm not out of it yet. I fear that the real suffering will take months and years to become clear. But I also keep in mind that in the light of Dharma, even negative outcomes can have positive effects we can't foresee. So even in despair, my eyes are open for unexpected joy and transformation.

There's also much that is encouraging to report since the last *Turning Wheel* came out. On Veterans Day, BPF members in several cities organized vigils linking the handgun violence on our streets with the huge U.S. arms trade and the wars around the globe. I've heard that these were small but moving and empowering events, breaking some of the silence and fear around these issues. I attended a vigil at Trader's Sporting Goods, a large gun shop in San Leandro, California, where Buddhists joined with church leaders, community activists, and high school students to mark the loss of so many young lives. The students' brief testimony was powerful and disturbing, but talking with the salesmen across long counters filled with handguns designed just to kill people was even more troubling.

Soon after the Veterans Day vigil, we organized an evening with Jesuit monk Bob Maat, who has spent fifteen years with Khmer people in Thailand and



*Sherman Spears, Coordinator for Oakland Teens on Target, at Trader's Sporting Goods on Veterans Day*

Cambodia, helping with medical relief, and working with Maha Ghosananda on the three Dhammayietra peace walks in Cambodia. His focus in recent years has been on the de-mining of Cambodia. There are millions of unexploded mines in Cambodia, and each explosion can mean death or a life of great physical pain. Please see the "Readings" section for how you can help.

Our friend Santikaro Bhikkhu, activist monk, disciple of the late Buddhadasa, led a one-day training on "The Four Noble Truths as a Tool for Social Transformation." More than 30 of us struggled to understand the links between our personal suffering and socially conditioned suffering, between individual action and structural change. It's hard ground to cover in just a day. I hope that some of us will continue to explore Dhammic social analysis at this summer's planned BPF Institute.

Our Buddhist Alliance for Social Engagement volunteer program is taking shape, largely thanks to the work of Diana Winston who has been gathering all the loose ends in her two hands. The BASE brochure is available, as are applications for the first program, beginning (we hope) in March or April. We are in urgent need of funding for this program, to underwrite the administrative costs and provide minimal stipends for our volunteers. Please let us know if you have leads or suggestions for this fundraising effort.

We also had a wonderful benefit performance in Berkeley—indeed a "Harvest of Words and Music"—hosted by Scoop Nisker, with Stephen Mitchell, Nina Wise, David Chadwick, Susan Moon, Ngoc Lam and myself. It was a real family event for our large local community, and a great financial success. I think this might become an annual event, and would encourage some of you to try this in your own town. Artists, writers, and musicians have always been a core of support for BPF. They often appreciate an opportunity to share their work for causes that are close to their hearts.

Finally, we are deeply grateful to the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation for a \$5000 grant to BPF, to fund the work of Dr. Cynthia Maung, whose clinic and mobile medical teams for displaced Burmese on the Thailand/Burma border provide health services where none are otherwise available. We are proud to help with this work. 108 bows to Dr. Cynthia Maung and the Kaiser Foundation.

With the turn of a new year we welcome a new BPF board, and acknowledge the efforts of the outgoing board members. This year is a little special, and a little sadder for me as we say good-bye to outgoing President Margaret Howe and Treasurer Gordon Tyndall. I've depended steadily on Margaret and Gordon as friends and partners from the time I took on the Coordinator's position in 1991. They helped teach me how to do the job, to understand our history, and to roll with the tides of BPF's work and fortunes.

Many grateful words could be spoken here, and they would never be enough. I'll miss our regular telephonic give and take, even the rare moments of disagreement. But I know that they are always close by. Thanks. ❖ — *Alan Senauke*

### ***A Word of Thanks***

Each year at this time the BPF board loses a few members. We are always grateful for the many hours of time contributed by all those who serve BPF in this way. This year I want to thank Piyasilo, Ken Tanaka, Gordon Tyndall, and Margaret Howe. Piya brought to us a thoughtful international perspective on our work as liberation Buddhism. Ken shared generously from his position as Tamai Chair of Jodo Shinshu Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, and as an active member in the Buddhist Churches of America. A grateful bow to Piya and Ken for the strength and companionship they brought to the board.

Gordon Tyndall has served BPF faithfully, not only through the East Bay Chapter, but also as treasurer of the national organization for six years. He has kept us on financial track and brought our accounting system up to date. He has been one of BPF's major supporters, notably through his Tibetan Revolving Fund project. We are most grateful for Elder Gordon Tyndall's steady, unwavering support and efforts over all these years.

Margaret Howe has given innumerable hours of her time to BPF, first as National Coordinator and then as Board President. Her consistent devotion to the principles of nonviolence and social action has been inspiring, and she has been instrumental in the development of the new BASE program. Heartfelt thanks for her leadership in both capacities; the organization will carry her efforts forward. ❖ — *Stephanie Kaza*

### ***Board President's Goodbye***

My involvement with BPF has been an incredibly rich experience, and it is with mixed emotions that I end my term as board president. I am proud of our accomplishments and growth over the past years as we struggle to bring the spiritual insights of Buddhism into the realm of social action. I hope that as we move into the coming years our voice for peace and nonviolence will stay as clear as ever, and that we will remain unwavering in our work on behalf of all beings.

In continuation of my involvement with socially engaged Buddhism, my partner Gary and I are working towards the creation of a Buddhist Worker House: a residential community of people working for social justice.

It has been a pleasure serving the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. My greatest joy and source of inspiration has come from meeting so many interesting, committed folks living in every corner of the country, working for justice, and trying to bring a dose of Buddhist wisdom into each act. *A gassho* to us all. ❖ — *Margaret Howe*

## CHAPTER & BUDDHIST ACTIVIST NEWS

### **Yellow Springs OH BPF:**

This past year the Yellow Springs BPF has put most of its energy into the Yellow Springs Dharma Center, a non-sectarian Buddhist center which has sponsored Zen, Vipassana, and Tibetan retreats, performances by Tibetan monks, an aikido workshop and much more. They have just started to support a group of prisoners in the Indiana Reformatory who contacted them through the BPF national office. The chapter plans to sponsor discussions of ethics and racism.

### **East Bay BPF**

For the past few months members of the East Bay Chapter of BPF focused on the November 8 election: registering voters and working to defeat the now infamous California Proposition 187, which would restrict services to undocumented people and would require reporting "suspected illegal aliens;" and working in support of California Proposition 186, the Single Payer Initiative, which would provide universal health care coverage for everyone in California. Regrettably, we lost on both both counts! In December the chapter will sponsor a holiday sale of crafts and clothing from Guatemala to benefit the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant.

### **San Diego BPF**

The new San Diego BPF held a weekend Mindfulness and Metta retreat with Sylvia Boorstein on October 15 & 16 with about 50 people. The retreat was a tremendous success and raised far more funds than expected—a donation was sent to the national office. One of the chapter's goals is to facilitate a mindfulness weekend on a quarterly basis with Sylvia and various other teachers. Some members are planning to work with an already existing prison meditation program that was organized by a member of the local Zen center. On November 13, thirty people attended a meditation and healing ceremony that took place at the site of a handgun murder. The chapter was joined in sponsoring the event by Metta Karuna, the Peace Resource Center, the San Diego Buddhist Association, the Green Store, the local chapter of FOR and Windrock Springs Retreat Center.

### **Portland BPF**

The Portland BPF is helping put together a bi-weekly show that will air on the local community radio station. The show will cover events in local and national Buddhist communities, and will feature stories of interest to engaged Buddhists.

### Seattle BPF

Ross Weiner of the Seattle BPF chapter, working with Trane Levington and Ron Schuman of the Dharma Friendship Foundation, organized the first meeting of the Inter-Cultural Buddhist Council—a group of over 50, including recent immigrants from Asia, Asian Americans, and other American Buddhists. They met on Sunday, October 30, at the Seattle Buddhist Church, for small group discussions on various topics including: the different ways Buddhism is practiced in the various communities and the very meaning of Buddhism itself in each respective community. At least 15 temples and groups were represented, and half of the people were from the Asian American or immigrant communities.

The discussions were quite lively, as the desire to learn from one another blossomed and bore fruit. The council will foster visits between the various temples in the Seattle area.

### Santa Cruz BPF

The Santa Cruz chapter is continuing to meet twice a month, and to manifest non-egocentric, leaderless, multi-traditional friendship and support for one another.

The jewel-like quality of this spirit is especially evident at this time, when the chapter is mourning the death of a long-time participant, Cheryl Martin.

Tom Misciagna writes of Cheryl: "She was a great person, open minded, and with what I would call a great 'bullshit detector.' She never settled for a pat answer. She sat for many years with the local vipassana group, occasionally driving up to Spirit Rock for teachings. She loved hiking, watching sunsets, and going to

the movies. She was intensely curious, reading and studying continuously. Several times I was surprised by the vastness of her circle of friends. She passed away surrounded by family and loved ones.

*Laws of the stars and powers of this earth  
swallowed by your eyes and transformed  
into sincerity that will be missed."*

### Good-Bye to Long-time BPFer

Sam Rose of Denver, Colorado, died in late September. Sam was very active with BPF in the '80s and founded the Denver chapter. He was instrumental in bringing Thich Nhat Hanh there to speak and organized the first retreat for psychotherapists led by Thây. May his efforts and his memory be a blessing for us all.

### Prison Dharma Ministry in New York State

Zen Mountain Monastery in upstate New York has been responding to the call from Buddhist inmates in maximum security facilities for over 8 years, after inmates from the Green Haven correctional facility won a legal battle to allow Buddhist clergy into the prison. Since then the Green Haven group, known as the Lotus Flower Sangha, has grown to the point where inmates have the opportunity to pursue a training program as similar as possible to the one followed by residents at the monastery, including all-day zazen intensives, *tangaryo* (one of the "gates" monastery students must pass through), a precepts ceremony (*jukai*) and an annual two-day Rohatsu Sesshin. Senior students from ZMM have since become involved either directly or in an advisory role with six prison groups in New York state, and correspond with prisoners around the country. ♦

# ANNOUNCEMENTS & CLASSIFIEDS

## Announcements

**BODHI**, the Benevolent Organization for Development, Health, and Insight, is a non-profit organization dedicated to developing sustainable improvements in health care, education, and the environment in the so-called Third World. Our first work has been with the Tibetan refugee communities in India, and we have recently expanded into other areas as well. Contact: Scott Trimmingham, BODHI USA, P.O. Box 7000-GRD, Redondo Beach, CA 90277. Tel: 310/378-0269; Fax: 310/378-6518.

**GATHERING OF WESTERN BUDDHIST TEACHERS:** May 13 to 16, 1995, at Mount Madonna Center near Santa Cruz, in Northern

California. This year's theme is "The Path of The Teacher as Bodhisattva." Topics will include: teacher/student relations, the training of teachers, empowerment and transmission, enlightened action, and other issues that arise along the path. Time will be set aside for members of each tradition to meet among themselves. And, of course, there will be plenty of opportunity for informal conversation. Dharma teachers with at least three years of experience as fully recognized teachers in their respective traditions are invited. Contact John Tarrant at P.O. Box 2972, Santa Rosa, CA 95405.

**INTERNATIONAL** Conference on Buddhist Social Welfare—June 29-July 2, 1995—in Sendai, Japan. The conference will feature field reports on

Buddhist social welfare from all over the world. The organizers plan to compile an "International Directory of Buddhist Social Welfare" as part of the work of the conference. For further information or to submit a report, contact: John Stevens, Professor, Tohoku Fukushi University, Aoba-ku, Kunimi 1-8-1, Sendai 981, Japan. Tel 022-233-3111; Fax: 022-233-3113.

**THE BALKAN PEACE TEAM** hopes to establish a long-term presence of international volunteers, in crisis areas of former Yugoslavia. Members of the team will identify possibilities for dialogue between the different groups, serve as a channel of independent and non-partisan information from the region, contribute skills in such areas as mediation and nonviolent conflict reso-

lution, and serve as third party observers at the scene of incidents or potential flashpoints. Six-month commitment. Information: Balkan Peace Team, c/o Christine Schweitzer, Luetzowstr. 22, D-50674 Koeln, Germany. Fax +49. 221. 240. 1819.

### NEEDS OF HOMELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN—

You can help people in need by donating personal care items, such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, and hand lotion, and also cereal/soup bowls, to the Women's Daytime Drop-in Center in Berkeley. Due to budgetary restrictions, the center cannot afford to purchase these necessary items. To make a donation or for more information, please call 510/548-2884, or Thelma Bryant at 510/524-2468 to arrange to have donations picked up.

### INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CHILDREN'S RELIEF

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

### GAY BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP

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

### VOLUNTEER M.D.'S AND NURSES

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

### SUPPORT INMATES WITH LITERARY MATERIALS:

Prison Library Project, 976 W. Foothills Blvd. #128, Claremont, CA 91711.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

in Guatemala. The Jaguar Project of the Seva Foundation (an international non-governmental, non-religious, progressive, development organization) is now recruiting volunteers to provide accompaniment and support for returned Guatemalan refugees. A commitment

of at least 3 months is necessary, as well as good health and proficiency in Spanish. Volunteers finance their own travel; Seva pays in-country expenses. Information: Seva Foundation, 38 Village Hill Rd., Williamsburg, MA 01096; 413/268-3003.

## Classifieds

**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.

**ATTENTION Dharma Centers:** Raise Funds while your members save 50% or more on AT&T, MCI, or Sprint rates. For information send SASE to: Ken Sun-Downer, Box 769, Idyllwild, CA 92549.

**THE HARBOR SANGHA** is a small Zen group located in San Francisco. Our teacher, Joseph Bobrow, received permission to teach from Robert Aitken-Roshi in 1989. We offer weekly zazen every Monday evening, as well as periodic retreats and other special events. Beginners are welcome to attend. The opportunity to practice more intensively and do koan study with Joe is also available. For more information, contact the Harbor Sangha at 415/241-8807.

**BUDDHIST/SOCIAL JUSTICE** community. We are interested in joining or beginning a Buddhist, spiritually based community devoted to social change work. Would like to talk with anyone with similar interests who is also ready. Willing to relocate. Call Margaret or Gary, 408/753-1874; or write us at 715 Jefferson St., Salinas, CA 93905.

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

## Gratitude

*The Buddhist Peace Fellowship gratefully acknowledges financial contributions above membership between August 15 and November 30, 1994.*

Kate Abbe ♦ Philip Aranow ♦ David M. Aus ♦ Billy A. Barrios ♦ Martha De Barros ♦ Greg Becker ♦ Yetta & Irene Benson ♦ Alfred & Dorothy Bloom ♦ Adele Bonovitz ♦ Patricia A. Borri ♦ Shirley Bowmaker ♦ Don Brokenshire ♦ Brookrod ♦ James Brylski ♦ Joanna Bull ♦ Greg Busch ♦ Theodore H. Bush ♦ Marilyn Christopher ♦ Terry Lyon & James Cook ♦ Andy Cooper ♦ Sybil M. Cooper ♦ Clelia Corona ♦ Jennifer Coston ♦ Ann Dasburg ♦ Charles Day ♦ John Dean ♦ Russell Delman ♦ Christina Desser ♦ Kathleen Dickey ♦ Joanne Doehler ♦ John M. Doyle ♦ George Draffan ♦ George Driver ♦ Barbara Druker ♦ Roger Duncan ♦ Janine Echabarne ♦ George D. Eldridge ♦ United Way/Bank of America Employees ♦ Nicholas Fedoruk ♦ Eileen Feigenberg ♦ Kathy Ferland ♦ Andrew Fort ♦ Bernard Glassman ♦ Thea Goldstine ♦ Brian Goller ♦ Drew & Myra Goodman ♦ Joan B. Granger ♦ Tova Green ♦ Ann Greenwater ♦ Thom Harrelson ♦ Dr. Frances Harwood ♦ Patrick Hawk ♦ J. Sam Hay ♦ D. Elizabeth Hearn-Pratt ♦ Steve Heck ♦ Ron Heglin ♦ Valerie Herres ♦ Mary Holte ♦ J.C. & Nancy Hotchkiss ♦ Allan Hunt-Badiner ♦ Pamela Jackson ♦ Robert & Pamela Jenne ♦ M. Anne Jennings ♦ Randal Johnson ♦ Meg Kaminski ♦ Susan Kaplow ♦ Elaine Keenan ♦ Marjorie Kellogg ♦ Jack Kennedy ♦ Meg Kiuchi ♦ Kenneth Kraft ♦ Jacqueline Kramer ♦ David Kukkola ♦ A.J. Kutchins ♦ Richard Lachasse ♦ Rev. James Lassen-Willems ♦ Charlotte Linde ♦ Alfred H. Lockwood ♦ Diana Lynch ♦ Robert Macer ♦ Joseph Maizlish ♦ Ben Marshall ♦ Sharon Masterson ♦ Scott Mayer ♦ Leslie G. McBride ♦ Catherine Merschel ♦ Suzanne Mihara ♦ Jan Mikus ♦ Richard Modiano ♦ Barbara Moffat ♦ Clark Natwick ♦ Barbara J. Newton ♦ Peter R. Norby ♦ Rollin Oden ♦ Sandra Oriol ♦ Sara Overton ♦ Linda Owen ♦ Jane Parnes ♦ Myfanwy Plank ♦ Suzanne Platoff ♦ B. Polland ♦ Patty Prendergast ♦ Maddy Prest ♦ Mark Pringle ♦ Douglass W. Pullin ♦ Jennifer Rader ♦ Michelle Raffin ♦ Thomas Ramsay ♦ Mark Redmond ♦ Chris Ritter ♦

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♦ Thank you! ♦

### Back Issues of *Turning Wheel*

Following is a catalogue of the last four years of *Turning Wheel*. Copies are \$5 each, postpaid from the BPF National office (\$4 each, postpaid for orders of 2 or more).

**Spring '90:** Earth Day Issue. Galen Rowell on The Agony of Tibet; Emptiness as an Environmental Ethic;

Interviews with Helena Norberg-Hodge on Ladakh and Dr. Chatsurnam Kabilsingh on Buddhism and Ecology in Thailand; and Feminist Perspectives on the Dharma.

**Summer '90:** Buddhists and Native Americans: An Interview with Peter Matthiessen; A Ritual for Aborted and Miscarried Children; Theater Work with Young Cambodian Refugees; Thai Buddhist Women; and Green Gulch Earth Day Ceremonies.

**Fall '90:** Special Feature: Disability and Buddhism; The Dying of Issan Dorsey; BPF Statement on the Persian Gulf Crisis; Compassionate Listening; and a report from Asia Watch and Review of the Situation in Burma.

**Winter '91:** Special Sections on: War and Peace; the Nuclear Guardianship Project; trees; and features on Burma and the Tibetan Refugee Project.

**Spring '91:** Special Focus: Buddhist Teachers and Sexual Misconduct. Personal Responses to the Gulf War; Children and Buddhist Practice; articles on the INEB conference; and dharma and draft counseling.

**Summer '91:** Thich Nhat Hanh on the Gulf War; Guidelines for Preventing Misconduct; the Kalachakra Mandala Incident; and Prostitution in Thailand. (Limited quantities available.)

**Fall '92:** First Meditation in Action Institute: excerpts from Robert Aitken, A.T. Ariyaratne, and others; Sanctuary Movement; and Thubten Chodron on Conflict Resolution.

**Winter '92:** *Prison Practice:* views from the inside and out; Robert Thurman on Tibet and the Mother of the Buddha; and Diana N. Rowan on "The Kalachakra for World Peace."

**Spring '92:** *Community—What Is It?* A look at this question from the point of view of the homeless, an untouchable in India, the Catholic Worker movement, and others; and a report from the international conference on Buddhist Women.

**Summer '92:** *Indigenous Peoples:* Native Americans speak out about the Columbus Quincentennial; a Buddhist pilgrimage to the Nevada nuclear test site; Buddhist peace work in Israeli-Occupied Palestine; and the uprising in L.A.

**Fall '92:** *Gays and Lesbians in Buddhist Practice:* interview with Bobby Rhodes, story of a gay wedding, the loneliness of gay teenagers; and Robert Aitken on the perfection of giving.

**Winter '93:** *Animal Rights:* Views on the first precept by Tenshin Reb Anderson and Thich Nhat Hanh; food and farming, vegetarianism and classism from a Jodo Shinshu perspective; and a special eyewitness report on the Burmese resistance movement.

**Spring '93:** *Racism and Buddhism/Racism in Buddhism:* voices of Asian American, African American, and Latino Buddhists; Carl Anthony on eco-justice; unlearning racism; Sokka-Gakkai International; the Buddhist Churches of America; and honoring the Asian roots of Buddhism.

**Summer '93:** *Money and the lack thereof:* Robert Aitken Roshi and Suzuki Roshi; Buddhism and Capitalism, money in prison; interview with Mayumi Oda; prostitution as livelihood; Gary Snyder on crawling; Maha Gosananda and the Cambodian Peace Walk.

**Fall '93:** *Profiles of Engaged Buddhists:* remembering Buddhadasa Bikkhu; after Malaysian monasticism; deep ecology; and women and HIV.

**Winter '94:** *Right Speech:* Robert Aitken Roshi, Norman Fischer and others on free speech, harsh speech, pornography, storytelling, and gossip; interview with Sister True Emptiness; Kaz Tanahashi and Plutonium Free Future; and the Nevada test site.

**Spring '94:** *Environmental Activism:* Gary Snyder, Norman Fischer, Peter Levitt, and Nina Wise; interview with Earth First!er Judi Bari; organic farming in Thailand; the Parliament of World Religions; and a retreat on the street.

**Summer '94:** *Violence & Nonviolence:* The Buddha's birthday at the Nevada Nuclear Test Site; interview with Sulak Sivaraksa; teaching meditation in a women's penitentiary; a Buddhist conversation about the nuclear threat; and reports from the former Yugoslavia.

**Fall '94:** Mississippi Freedom Summer Revisited; teenagers in a toxic world; sacred walking; Eco-Rap; and *Turning Wheel's* first Family Practice Column. ♦

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261210 Thailand  
Tel/Fax: 6637-391-494

### Interracial Buddhist Council

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Berkeley, CA 94705  
510/848-8113

### Karuna Center

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Leverett, MA 01054; 413/367-9520

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# BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

## MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FORM

BPF membership requires only a commitment to the general spirit of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Please see Statement of Purpose, at left. A year's membership & subscription to *Turning Wheel* (four issues) is \$35 for U.S. residents, \$40 elsewhere. Subscriptions help to support the work of BPF. (A low-income rate of \$20 is also available.) Please make checks payable to "Buddhist Peace Fellowship." Contributions are tax deductible.

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