

FOR LIVING BUDDHISM AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

DHARMA WORLD

JAN./FEB. 2002 Vol. 29

**World Religious Leaders
Meet at N.Y. Islamic Center
During WCRP-hosted
International Symposium**



Buddhist Basics Explained for All

ESSENTIALS OF BUDDHISM

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The author of these readable, enlightening guides is KOGEN MIZUNO, Litt.D., a renowned authority on early Buddhism and Pali texts. Now retired, he was president of Komazawa University, where he also taught Buddhology.

KOSEI PUBLISHING CO.

2-7-1 Wada, Sugunami-ku, Tokyo 166-8535, Japan

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DHARMA WORLD presents Buddhism as a practical living religion and promotes inter-religious dialogue for world peace. It espouses views that emphasize the dignity of life, seeks to rediscover our inner nature and bring our lives more in accord with it, and investigates causes of human suffering. It tries to show how religious principles help solve problems in daily life and how the least application of such principles has wholesome effects on the world around us. It seeks to demonstrate truths that are fundamental to all religions, truths on which all people can act.

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A Role for Buddhism to Play

When terrorists struck New York and Washington, D.C. last September 11, U.S. President George W. Bush described the horrifying incidents as “a new kind of war.” Then, from the beginning of October, the United States and Great Britain began dropping bombs and firing missiles at the strongholds of Afghanistan’s Taliban regime, which was accused of sheltering alleged terrorism mastermind Osama bin Laden.

The following comments describe conditions at the time of writing, although the situation may have changed in the intervening period. It was heart-rending to see on television ordinary Afghan citizens trying to escape with all their household belongings loaded on a donkey’s back. The U.S. military was dropping emergency food packages from low-flying aircraft at the same time it was conducting bombing raids, in a reported effort to emphasize that no harm was intended to ordinary Afghan citizens. Some observers called this merely a public relations attempt to justify the bombing, but I take the noncynical view that the food drops were a good thing. The bombing raids were aimed against terrorists, not against the Afghan people.

When the revolution in Iran brought the government of Ayatollah Khomeini to power in 1979, Iranian students occupied the American Embassy in Teheran and held embassy staff members hostage for more than 400 days. At that time I accompanied Rev. Nikkyo Niwano, the late founder of Rissho Kosei-kai, who was then president of the Japanese Committee of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP/Japan), on a visit to Iran. We met with Ayatollah Khomeini and the Iranian foreign minister and asked them, “Please let us, as Buddhists, take the place of the American hostages, and set them free.”

We did not succeed in our proposal, but I mention it at this time because I think there is a danger that, had the military action in Afghanistan become prolonged, the world’s 1.2 billion Muslims might have become opposed to the Christian faith. We can suppose this may even have been bin Laden’s intention. I think there is a role that dedicated Buddhists can play to prevent this from ever happening.

Despite the end of the worst violence in Afghanistan, we cannot rule out the possibility that acts of terrorism making use of biological weapons could occur around the world. Such weapons, sometimes called “the nuclear arms of the poor,” are simple to manufacture and easy to transport. The Japanese have experienced the fearsome power

of both nuclear weapons and sarin gas, the latter used on the Tokyo subway system in 1995 by the Aum Shinrikyo cult. That in particular should lead Japanese Buddhists to search sincerely even further for ways in which we can help to prevent the war from escalating.

There are those who criticize globalization as a kind of “pax Americana.” But putting that issue aside for the moment, we must acknowledge that terrorism is now exacer-

Rev. Nikkyo Niwano was invited by the Islamic Republic of Iran to the International Conference on U.S. intervention in Iran, held in Teheran in June 1980. During his stay he met with Iranian religious and political leaders. Here, he is greeted by an influential former government minister.

bating the discord that has existed over many centuries between Islam and Christianity, two monotheistic religions that both have their roots in the Old Testament of the Bible.

The faithful of the world’s religions must now carefully reexamine whether they are truly contributing to the welfare of other people because there cannot be peace in the world without peace among the religions. In that regard, I look forward to a significant future outcome from the International Symposium of Leaders of the World’s Religions, hosted by the WCRP in New York in October 2001. □



Kinzo Takemura

Magazine Helps Priest Teach World Religions

I have been receiving a gift subscription to your magazine DHARMA WORLD for some time now, presumably because I once attended an interreligious dialogue sponsored by Rissho Kosei-kai and held at a Buddhist retreat center many miles north of Tokyo. What I especially like about DHARMA WORLD is the diversity of articles. Being a university professor myself, I definitely appreciate the more scholarly pieces by outstanding academics like Hajime Nakamura and Marjorie Suchocki, but in all honesty the articles that I like the best and remember the longest are the simpler ones about how various people learn to confront issues in their daily lives. One of the finest in this regard was entitled "What the Buddha Taught Me," appearing in the Jan./Feb. 2001 issue, in which a woman who had been having difficulty getting along with her mother-in-law was so much helped by the head of her Rissho Kosei-kai branch that she actually started visiting that branch with the older woman, hand-in-hand. I can readily use this kind of story to illustrate points I am making to my students in my course on world religions. I am accordingly very grateful to be receiving your excellent publication. Keep up the good work!

Fr. James A. Wiseman, O.S.B.
St. Anselm's Abbey
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

DHARMA WORLD is published in cooperation with the lay Buddhist association Rissho Kosei-kai. Rissho Kosei-kai has renewed its English-language Web site and welcomes responses from people all over the world. One of the main features of the new Web site is providing up-to-date information about current events and activities of Rissho Kosei-kai's overseas chapters, as well as of its Tokyo headquarters, in the home page section. Anyone interested can browse Rissho Kosei-kai's English-language Web site for a better understanding of Buddhism in daily life and of the organization's efforts for world peace by accessing the following URL:

<http://www.rk-world.org/>

We would like to share in readers' thoughts and experiences of the faith and would welcome your comments on the contents of this magazine. We would also appreciate your reports on recent events of interreligious collaboration in

Plater College in Oxford Plans Summer Interfaith Conference

Plater College in Oxford, England, has announced a special international conference on the theme "An Inter-faith Perspective on Environment, Free Trade and Globalisation: Common Goals, Common Crises, Common Call and Common Hope" to be held from July 27 through August 3. A Roman Catholic institution founded in 1921, the college's stated purpose is to give young men and women the opportunity to gain insights into the problems of society through the study of the social sciences.

The international conference will deal with the inequality, injustice, poverty, marginalization, exclusion, and environmental degradation that critics believe are the result of the rapid globalization of the world economy.

Those interested in obtaining specific details about the conference are asked to contact:

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which you took part. All letters are subject to editing. Letters can be forwarded to us by regular mail, fax, or e-mail. Our mailing address, fax number, and e-mail address are:

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We are pleased to welcome more readers to Kosei Publishing Company's Web site on the Internet inaugurated in March 1997. It allows us to inform readers about the company's publications and compact discs, as well as the contents of new and back issues of DHARMA WORLD magazine, on our own site. Please access us through the following URL and browse our site:

<http://www.kosei-shuppan.co.jp/english/>

Lessons Learned from What May Seem Dirty

by Nikkyo Niwano

This essay is part of a continuing series of translations from a recent volume of inspirational writings by the late founder of Rissho Kosei-kai. DHARMA WORLD will continue to publish these essays because of their lasting value as guidance for the practice of one's faith in daily life.

When I was sixteen years old, I left my hometown in Niigata Prefecture to look for employment in Tokyo. In 1925 I began to work for Mr. Yoshitaro Ishihara, a charcoal dealer who was reputed to be an energetic worker. I did not take a passive attitude toward my job, doing only what I was told to do by my employer and nothing more. Instead, I often would suggest doing some of my tasks in a better way, and I would suggest to Mr. Ishihara that certain tasks should be assigned to me. As a result, he came to trust me and to rely on me in many ways. In turn, I developed a sense of responsibility and threw myself into my work.

In *Records of Master Lin-chi*, the teachings of the founder of the Lin-chi sect of Ch'an [Zen] in China, we can find the words: "If you are the master of yourself wherever you are, the truth will predominate at whatever place you occupy." If we are asked to undertake ten tasks, it is no good just to agree and then do only the ten and no more. If we are asked to do ten, then we should do eleven or twelve as if we would become master of the situation. We should not display the passive attitude of someone who performs certain tasks simply because of being ordered to, but should voluntarily do more. If we react in such a way, our duties will seem pleasant and we will be filled with the joy of life.

When you fulfill your daily responsibilities in this manner, you are practicing the Buddha's Way.

To realize the existence of the precious buddha-nature within oneself is to recognize that two persons dwell inside us. One is the self that continues to live with passions and delusions. The other is the self that has awakened to the presence of the buddha-nature. It is the latter that we realize is the master of the self. To tackle what-

ever task may confront us with an independent will means that we would go about our work making this latter self our master.

It is because we allow the self that is still mired in the delusions to be the master that our problems arise. Jui-yen Shih-yen, the seventh-century Chinese Buddhist priest, is said to daily have called out to himself "Master!", and then to respond "Yes!" to his own call. In that way he confirmed his independence to himself each day. Renewing the resolve to act during the course of the day with the self as master is to encourage the continued endeavor at revealing one's buddha-nature.

Lessons of Farm Life

Since I was born to and raised by a farming family, I learned at an early age the essential role of manure and became accustomed to handling it. Therefore, during my service in the Japanese Navy I was never unwilling when I was assigned latrine-cleaning duty. Our unit cleaned the facility until it shone, and the final result of our efforts was that our unit officer excused us from further latrine-cleaning duty as a reward.

Let me make one more mention of toilets. In the very early days of Rissho Kosei-kai, soon after its founding in 1938, we used the room on the second floor of my milk shop in Tokyo's Nakano ward for hoza counseling sessions. Since many people came one after the other to this room, the toilet facilities were stretched to their limit. This was long before flush toilets became common in Japan. I tried putting down old newspapers on the floor, but when I checked the condition of the cubicle after the hoza session had finished, usually around midnight, it frankly was a mess. The toilet had nearly overflowed. Most nights I would dip up night soil from the tank and carry it in a bucket to a nearby vegetable field.

I would always clean the toilet after the members had left for home. Especially on hot summer nights, I would be drenched in perspiration which rolled down my face as I crawled on my hands and knees to wipe the floor with a

Nikkyo Niwano, the late founder of the Buddhist association Rissho Kosei-kai, was an honorary president of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) and was honorary chairman of Shinshuren (Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan) at the time of his death in October 1999.

wet dust cloth. At first I was reluctant to wipe the sweat from my face, since my hands were dirty from the toilet-cleaning, but as I became absorbed in the work I did not think twice about passing a dirty hand across my brow. My sense of what was clean and what was not simply no longer existed. Without realizing it, I seemed to transcend the whole question of pure and impure. As a result

inadequate as a means of understanding transcendence, but you will pardon me for saying that in Zen, for example, cleaning comes first and meditation takes second place in religious practice. If we consider the term transcendence in a very abstract way, we could say it is the state of the disappearance of attachment to the distinction between cleanliness and dirtiness. Understanding this correctly is known in Buddhism as “nondiscriminating wisdom.” This is the state of being able to see things beyond the logical differentiations determining that we like something which is clean but hesitate to touch something which is dirty.

In the case of *zazen* meditation, one might not attain enlightenment while actually meditating, but it is possible that enlightenment would suddenly occur by accident in a situation where the necessary causes and conditions exist as a result of constant efforts in our everyday lives. As we continually mull over what transcendence is or wonder how we can avoid becoming attached to things, we may reach a realization from the most mundane of activities that can serve as the needed cause—such as cleaning the toilet.

No matter how much we talk about transcendence, ultimately it is something we cannot explain in words. What we have to do is experience it and apprehend it through our bodies. This is not cerebral understanding, but physical realization.

The Lotus in the Muddy Pond

Several years ago, at Rissho Kosei-kai's annual December 8 ceremony for Shakyamuni's attainment of buddhahood, my son Nichiko, who had recently become president of the organization, spoke about the Middle Way. I remember that he said something like this: “When we look at the lotus flower in the muddy pond, we tend to think of flower and pond as two distinctly different things, the former pure and beautiful and the latter dirty. Since the lotus plant is able to produce its beautiful blossom because of the nourishment it absorbs from the muddy pond,

from the viewpoint of the ultimate reality of Buddhism, the truth [the lotus flower] goes beyond the distinction between pure and impure.

“I hope that all of us will be able to see everything from the perspective of the Middle Way, which teaches us the importance to human life of both the beautiful lotus blossom and the muddy pond.”

The words are different, but the basic meaning is the same as in the toilet-cleaning episode that I related above. □

The late Rev. Nikkyo Niwano treasured his encounters with others, with whom he joyfully shared the Buddha's teaching in a readily understandable way.

of crawling on my hands and knees to clean what most people considered a dirty place, any thoughts of impurity vanished, to be replaced by a feeling of fulfillment.

Thanks to this experience at toilet-cleaning, I was able to move mentally to a position well beyond the concepts of what is dirty with which I formerly had been imbued. I felt that at last I could really understand what “transcend” truly means. I look back on this time with deep gratitude.

My experience at cleaning toilets might somehow seem

WCRP New York Symposium Tackles Religious Response to Terrorism

by Paul H. Sherbow

In a world still reeling from the aftershocks of the September 11 terrorist destruction of the World Trade Center twin towers in New York City, governments and their citizens continue to struggle to comprehend and adjust to a vastly altered international situation. As political leaders met to consider the appropriate steps to be implemented, religious leaders of every faith also were consulted to contribute their counsel. The World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), serving for over 30 years as a vital forum for the different faith traditions, activated its unique global network of religious leaders to convene an international multireligious symposium to consider the role of religion in counter-acting terrorism, address its root causes, and intensify ongoing efforts at promoting dialogue among civilizations.

Thus, last October 23–24, the WCRP Executive Committee hosted an in-

ternational symposium on “Rejecting Terror, Promoting Peace with Justice: Religions Respond” at the Millennium Hotel United Nations Plaza in New York, assembling more than 150 eminent religious delegates from 30 countries. Religions represented included Christianity (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant), Islam (Sunni, Shi’a, and Ismaili), Hinduism, Buddhism (Theravada, Tendai, Soto, Won, and Rissho Kosei-kai), Shintoism, Judaism, and Baha’i. The 24-member Japanese delegation included Peter Cardinal Seiichi Shirayanagi, Roman Catholic president of WCRP/Japan; President Nichiko Niwano of Rissho Kosei-kai; Rev. Gijun Sugitani of the Tendai Buddhist sect and secretary-general of WCRP/Japan; Rev. Munemichi Kurozumi of Kurozumikyō; and Rev. Yoshinobu Miyake of the Konkōkyō Church of Izuo.

The symposium opened on the

morning of October 23 with a panel moderated by Ambassador Mokhtar Lamani, permanent observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, who read a message of greeting from Prince El-Hassan bin Talal of Jordan. Messages also were received from Francis Cardinal Arinze, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and Chiara Lubich, founder of the international Focolare Movement based in Italy.

Following opening remarks from the Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, director of ecumenical affairs of the Orthodox Church in America, the symposium subject was introduced by WCRP Secretary General Dr. William F. Vendley. The permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, Ambassador Shamshad Ahmad, began his presentation by regretting that the new century appears to be unfolding like the previ-

More than 150 eminent religious delegates from 30 countries assemble at the Millennium Hotel United Nations Plaza in New York in October for an international symposium on “Rejecting Terror, Promoting Peace with Justice: Religions Respond.”

ous one, with conflict and violence. He emphasized the peaceful nature of the Islamic faith, the word "Islam" meaning peace. Regarding terrorism and its root causes, he urged leaders of society to "find the disease and treat it . . . not paper over the cracks, but enter the embers and see why the fire is burning."

The next panel focused on "religious reflections on political challenges." Grand Rabbi René-Samuel Sirat, vice president of the Conference of European Rabbis, said that it is not enough that the world mourn the many deaths resulting from the recent terrorist attacks and condemn those acts, it also must proclaim the moral values that are the opposite of those held by the terrorists. These values are the basis of humanity's hope for the future and will be transmitted to coming generations.

The new permanent representative of the United States to the UN, Ambassador John D. Negroponte, quoted the late philosopher Isaiah Berlin that "few things have done more harm than the belief on the part of individuals or groups (or tribes or states or nations or churches) that he or she or they are in sole possession of the truth," in reference to fundamentalist followers of any religion who claim that the killing of innocent people is the will of God, and emphasized that "it is not against Islam" that the U.S. and its allies are proceeding in the "war against terrorism," but only against those who are illegitimately using the name of religion for criminal purposes. Mr. Negroponte affirmed that "there is no division between the U.S. and Islam. The division that exists is between the civilized world and terror."

UN Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs Sir Kieran Prendergast urged that "the UN be made the vehicle for international response to terrorism" and noted that, as the forum for international solidarity, the world body had already adopted twelve conventions against terrorism. An obvious function for the UN now, he said, is to create stricter controls for nuclear and biological weapons and other possible instruments of terrorism. One role for religion in the current crisis is "to pro-

vide both legal and moral clarity" to nation-states as they seek to confront terror."

The permanent representative of Norway to the UN, Ambassador Wegger Christian Strommen, spoke of the need for involvement by the UN Security Council in combating terrorism. He also emphasized the "very important role" religion can play, with its "unique networks."

Dr. Mustafa Ceric, Reisul-Ulema of Bosnia and Herzegovina, offered a moving depiction of the disastrous results of religious conflict in the Balkans and the part that interfaith cooperation could play in bringing it to an end. Rev. Gunnar Stålsett, presiding bishop of the Church of Norway, said in his remarks that "the world does not need more words, but conviction and action. . . . We must reject terrorism, but on the other hand, promote peace with justice. Society must deal with the world's poverty and injustice."

The afternoon panel, moderated by Bishop Stålsett, featured Rev. Alimamy Koroma, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Sierra Leone; Chief Rabbi David Rosen of the American Jewish Committee; Rev. Chung Ok Lee, UN representative from South Korea of Won Buddhism International; Dr. Mustafa Ceric; and Rev. Olivia Holmes, director of international affairs of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

In the evening, delegates took special buses to the Islamic Center of New York on East 96th Street to offer prayers and exchange religious greetings. Imam Omar Abu-Namous greeted the guests and spoke on the ethics of Islam. He was followed by remarks by Sheikh Hashim Muhammad Kabbani, chairman of the Islamic Supreme Council of America, and statements from Samdech Maha Ghosananda, Theravada Buddhist patriarch in Cambodia; Metropolitan Vladimir of the Russian Orthodox Church; and the Most Rev. Tod D. Brown, bishop of Orange County, Calif., and member of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

The following morning's first session, on "Dialogue Among Religions

and Civilizations and the Need for an Interdependent Political Order," was moderated by Dr. Gordon Conway, president of the Rockefeller Foundation. An overview was given by Ambassador Lamani of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the UN, followed by presentations from political theorist Dr. Benjamin Barber, author of *Jihad versus McWorld* and professor of civil society at the University of Maryland, and Dr. Diana Eck, professor of comparative religion at Harvard Divinity School and director of the Pluralism Project, which catalogues the new religious diversity in the U.S. Dr. Eck described the new religious geography whereby it is no longer possible to isolate a certain faith in a particular region—all faiths now extend beyond national borders and the formerly Judeo-Christian West is increasingly multireligious. Dr. Eck also emphasized the evolving nature of religions, comparing them to rivers that gradually alter according to time and place. Today's pluralistic society requires religious dialogue, but that dialogue can occur not between religions themselves but only between the people who practice them. We are progressing from exclusivism to inclusivism, and finally to pluralism, in which genuine dialogue and religious cooperation can exist, she said.

The next session provided an opportunity to hear Jewish, Muslim, and Christian speakers discuss religious roles in bringing peace to the Middle East. The first, Sheikh Muhammad Kabbani, affirmed that "religion must be involved for any solution, especially [of] the Palestinian problem." He was followed by Rabbi Menachem Froman of Israel, interreligious envoy of Sephardi Chief Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi-Doron, and Gabriel Habib, director of the National Council of Churches of Christ in Lebanon. Rabbi Froman expressed hope that both Jewish and Muslim clerics, working together with their Christian counterparts, can negotiate an end to violence through declaration of a *hudna*, or armistice as defined in Islamic law, and then declare Jerusalem an extraterritorial "city of God" to be shared in peace by members of

all faiths. *The Jerusalem Post* focused on this lively discussion in a report on the symposium.

The afternoon session began with a panel to consider ways to heal the past, moderated by Rev. Kishkovsky. Speakers included Dr. Vinu Aram, director of Shanti Ashram in India; Imam Feisal Rauf, president of the American Sufi Muslim Association; Margaret Steinfeld, editor of the U.S. Catholic magazine *Commonweal*; Rabbi Arthur Schneier of New York's Park East Synagogue and president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation; and Ven. Dr. Mettanando Bhikkhu of the Theravada Buddhist Sangha in Thailand.

The next panel considered steps necessary for building a new future, moderated by WCRP Secretary General Vendley. Speakers included Rev. Sugitani of the Tendai Buddhist sect in Japan; Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, secretary-general of the Interreligious Council of Russia; Antonios Kireopoulos, executive director of the United States Conference of Religions for Peace (USCRP); Andrew Clark, general secretary of the International Association for Religious Freedom; and Dr. Azza Karam, director of the WCRP Women's Program. A group discussion was followed by a summary from Dr. Vendley, who stressed that "no religion should be hijacked by terror. . . . We have to communicate, we have to educate, and we must bring religion's moral assets to the Middle East situation to heal the past and move into the future."

Surrounded by members of the WCRP Executive Committee, Rissho Kosei-kai President Nichiko Niwano then presented, on the Executive Committee's behalf, a pledged gift of US\$1 million and a check for the first installment to First Deputy Secretary-General of the UN Louise Fréchette to aid the vast number of Afghan refugees arising from the current situation in their country. The entire pledged amount was to be presented to the UN by the end of 2001. In accepting the pledge, Ms. Fréchette expressed gratitude on behalf of the UN and her conviction that the world body would do all in its power to assist the Afghan

During "An Evening of Commemoration and Commitment" at Saint Peter's Roman Catholic Church in New York, only blocks from the disaster area, participants offer candles to the altar to pray for the repose of the spirits of the victims.

people. Subsequently, a personal letter of thanks was received from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Delegates then boarded buses for a police-escorted visit to "Ground Zero," site of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Saint Peter's Roman Catholic Church, only blocks from the disaster area, was the site of "An Evening of Commemoration and Commitment," a program hosted by the USCRP on behalf of the WCRP. After a procession of candle bearers, including religious leaders from around the world, a welcome was extended by Archbishop Demetrios, primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and an introduction to the evening's program by Rev. Kishkovsky, delegates heard Edward Cardinal Egan of New York, who had just returned from the Vatican, offer his thoughts on the religious response to the tragedy.

Remarks were also made by Rev. Kevin Madigan, rector of Saint Peter's Church, and Rabbi Alvin Kass, senior chaplain of the New York Police Department. The Most Rev. Frank Griswold, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church of America, related incidents from his own meetings with Muslim faithful and the common aspects to be

found in all the Abrahamic religions on which mutual respect and cooperation can be built. Boxes containing more than 4,000 letters from Japanese students to their American counterparts, expressing sadness over the terrorist attacks and their hopes for future peace, were then presented by Rev. Niwano, Cardinal Shirayanagi, and Rissho Kosei-kai youth group members to Meg Gardinier, director for non-governmental organizations of the U.S. Fund for UNICEF. In accepting the letters, she said that she would make certain that these heartfelt thoughts of Japanese children would be sent to communities affected by the tragedy and would surely help traumatized young Americans have hope for the future.

Mr. Kireopoulos of the USCRP, who organized the ceremony, expressed the religious solidarity among all faiths at this time of global crisis and, symbolic of this solidarity, announced that prayers of religious leaders worldwide would be collected over the next year and presented to the City of New York as a memorial for the victims of the September attacks. He further announced, on behalf of the religious communities, a pledge of US\$100,000 for disaster relief.

The ceremony included a meditation by Rev. William Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and presentations by Judith Hertz, chairperson for interreligious affairs of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; Dr. Joanne Boye, president of Seton Hill College in Greensburg, Pennsylvania; Jeffery V. Huffines, UN representative of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States; and prayers by Imam Adamou N'Dam N'Joya of the Islamic community of Cameroon. A closing benediction was offered by Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.,

with musical selections performed by the New York Choral Society.

By the symposium's final session, members of the WCRP Executive Committee had drafted a statement to reflect the views expressed by the delegates. Although the religions represented hold differing positions on many issues, they were "all united in the view that military action is an inadequate instrument to fully address the challenges" confronting the world. Rejecting notions that a "clash of civilizations" lay behind the terrorist attacks in the U.S. as "dangerous misperceptions," the statement said that the WCRP commits itself to "deepening

the dialogue among religions and cultures," trusting that "shared values. . . would provide the basis for active collaboration" to address world problems."

In addition, with a strong belief that the UN and its agencies "are the natural forum for global cooperation," the delegates called on the world body to convene a Special Session of the General Assembly on Terrorism and to develop a comprehensive international convention to counteract it. □

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"Rejecting Terrorism, Promoting Peace with Justice: Religions Respond"

*A Statement by the Executive Committee of the World Conference on Religion and Peace,
24 October 2001, New York, NY, U.S.A.*

We, the members of the Executive Committee of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, have gathered in New York City with religious leaders from around the world to find common cause in working against terror and violence and for peace with justice.

The terrorist attacks that took place on 11 September 2001 cannot be justified by the teachings or principles of our respective religions. Nothing in any of our traditions permits the killing of innocent persons. Such actions, when committed in the name of religion, profane true religion. Furthermore, we cannot allow the responsibility of mistaken individuals to be assigned to entire groups of people or religious communities.

Those who perpetrate such crimes must be brought to justice in accord with relevant laws; however, the process of bringing terrorists to justice must not result in the loss of more innocent life. Some of our religious traditions have strong principles of non-violence, while others hold restricted notions of the legitimate use of force

for self-defense. Despite these differences, we are all united in the view that military action is an inadequate instrument to fully address the challenges we confront.

As the international community seeks to counter these acts of terrorism, we

are gravely concerned that the actions taken—however intended—may fuel a perception that somehow these events are part of a clash between civilizations or religions. We reject such notions on two grounds. First, terror and violence infect all human societies and are not

Religious leaders visit the Islamic Center of New York in October to offer prayers and exchange religious greetings.

the burden of only one culture, people, or religion. Second, in our over thirty years of experience in multireligious cooperation, we have discovered that our various religions and cultures share much in common—certainly more than what divides us.

We are committed to countering these dangerous misperceptions by deepening the dialogue among religions and cultures. Such dialogue can provide the mechanisms to increase our understanding of one another and enable us to discern shared values, such as tolerance, justice, human dignity, and peace. Genuine and honest engagement with one another allows us to discern deeply shared values, and these provide the basis for active collaboration across the boundaries of religion, culture, and nations to address the broad problems affecting humankind.

As we enter more deeply into dialogue, however, we must acknowledge the burden of history. We are painfully aware that too often religion has been used to injure, to divide, and to oppress. Religious communities have allowed narrow, intolerant, and extreme interpretations of our religious teachings to create divisions and hostilities among peoples. Such attitudes have helped to foster a climate in which violence grows. True dialogue offers the opportunity to bring healing of past wounds, and can lead to a strengthening of solidarity and resolve to build human societies that both respect difference and seek the well-being of all.

Such a truly global community must promote and defend the essential value and dignity of every person—a principle disregarded by the terrorists who perpetrated the crimes of 11 September. We must resist the view that by accident of time and place and birth, one person is somehow more deserving than another. We celebrate and reaffirm that each of our religious traditions, in its own way, proclaims that the intrinsic dignity and value of every person is rooted in our respective traditions' understandings of the sacred character of reality. Together we must seek that which assures the preciousness of life and respect for life, and

work to build societies that respond to fundamental human needs.

To this end, we acknowledge that many people have genuine experiences of oppression and that whole societies suffer from poverty, violence, and injustice in the context of the current world order. High levels of global disparity are fundamentally unjust and incompatible with true global security. We need to work collectively to strengthen institutions—political, economic, and social—that can redress such grievances, and begin to eliminate the root

and our responses to these tragedies must strengthen, not erode, our commitment to the aims and principles embodied in the United Nations Charter. We call on the United Nations to convene a Special Session of the General Assembly on Terrorism, and to develop a comprehensive international convention to counteract terrorism building on existing international law. Finally, we renew our call for the full implementation of the International Criminal Court.

The World Conference on Religion

Representatives of the world's religions offer a prayer at Saint Peter's Church.

causes of injustice that can contribute to the false path of terrorism.

We assert that addressing these grievances in no way condones terrorist actions. Rather, addressing grievances can serve as one of the most effective ways to reduce and gradually eliminate the elements that motivate individuals to commit such terrible acts. This effort will require all states and peoples to strengthen their commitments to mutual cooperation, and our religious communities are both prepared and well positioned to support such cooperation.

We believe that the United Nations and its family of agencies is the natural forum for renewed global cooperation

and Peace has over thirty years of commitment to building collaboration among the world's religious communities in pursuit of genuine and lasting peace. Today, we renew this call to dialogue and cooperation among religions in the areas of conflict transformation, human rights, disarmament and security, peace education, and child welfare. Through our programs in these areas, we are committed to working with the United Nations, other international organizations, governments, and people of good will everywhere to seek justice and reject terror, and to build a global society that strives to ensure true human security, dignity, and the well-being of every person. □

Interreligious Dialogue Is a Powerful Weapon against Extremism

by Eva Ruth Palmieri

A number of interreligious initiatives took place in Italy following the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. All were aimed at dissipating feelings of unease among the adherents of different faiths.

There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions, and there will be no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions." These well-known words of the theologian Hans Küng were quoted at the annual meeting of the Italian chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) in the town of Grottaferrata on the outskirts of Rome from October 19 through 21. The speaker was Professor Johannes Lähnemann, chairman of the Peace Education Standing Commission of the WCRP, in his opening speech "Peace Education from Faith Traditions."

"Religion can be very easily abused for fanatic ideas," he said, "especially if there are misconceptions about other beliefs and world views. A distinction should be made between religions as authentic faiths providing meaning to life and leading to morality and the misuse of religion as a vehicle of intolerance and hatred." Lähnemann pointed out that trust will grow in dialogue "only when the dialogue partners learn about the various faiths from the other's perspective." He noted that many educators have a secular point of view and that religion often seems to carry negative connotations for them. He reaffirmed the need for more research in the field of interrelationships between different faiths and religious convictions and conflict on the one hand, and reconciliation on the other.

Three workshops held during the meeting explored the possibilities of implementing fruitful initiatives involving "education for peace," which will be the main project of WCRP/Italy over the next three years.

The first, on "Religious Pluralism and Education for Peace in Schools," re-

solved to set up a series of conferences and debates to introduce the younger generation to this field in education.

The second workshop, on "Religious Pluralism and Education for Peace in the Media," focused on promoting a greater awareness of the impact of the language of peace and religious pluralism in different sectors of the mass media.

The third, on "Religious Pluralism and Education for Peace: Integration and Hospitality," examined the human rights situation in different countries and took a close look at the rights of religious minorities in predominantly Roman Catholic Italy. It was decided to open a center to offer interreligious hospitality and encourage multireligious tolerance.

This same spirit of tolerance, combined with a yearning to overcome past and present misunderstandings, characterized the Muslim-Christian summit meeting, organized by the Community of Saint Egidio in Rome and held at its premises on October 3-4. The focus was on promoting dialogue and cooperation among religious leaders in order to dissipate any temptation to confrontation and violence that might jeopardize global stability. The 22 Muslim and Christian leaders attending issued a joint statement vowing an end to the use of religion as an instrument to foment violence and hatred as a means of resolving conflicts.

"May nobody use the name of God to take away the lives of innocent people," the statement says. "Those who use the name of God to foment hatred and promote violence have abandoned true religion. To speak of a war of religions is absurd. We must not build walls that divide us from all who seek justice."

Mohammed S. El-Awa, the representative of the Ulema (religious and legal scholars in Islam) to the president of Italy, said at the summit meeting that for Christians and Muslims the path to overcoming the cancellation of humanity and contemporary civilization is to work together for true justice. He also appealed to political leaders to cease defaming some religions because this has "had an influence on hundreds of millions of Muslims and we are working in the different areas where we live to transform these feelings from violence and anger to feelings of pride in our civilization."

Roger Cardinal Etchegaray, president of the Pontifical Justice and Peace Council, said, "We must ask ourselves why extremists exist. We are not born as extremists, we become so, and it is important to know the causes." Extremism today, he said, finds its most fertile soil in flagrant inequalities and exasperations of frustrated nationalism that pervert the vision of the unity of the human family and lead to "the demented gestures of terrorism . . . terrorism born of an oppressed society which becomes the oppressor." He concluded by saying that Muslim-Christian dialogue should not take place at the expense of the dialogue with the Jews.

All the participants, among whom were Sheikh Nasser Farid Wasel, the Mufti of Egypt; Ahmed Taleb Ibrahim, son of the founder of the Ulemas of Algeria; Absallah Nasseef, former secretary-general of the World Muslim League; Cardinal Martini, the Archbishop of Milan; and Bishop Michael Fitzgerald, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, unanimously condemned the September 11 terrorist attacks and expressed sympathy for the victims and

their families. They also condemned all forms of terrorism and the atmosphere of hatred "which must be wiped out in order to establish a true culture of peace."

It was announced that a permanent committee to promote Christian-Muslim contacts would be established as a result of the summit meeting, with cooperation from the Vatican.

The Catholic church itself was the promoter on October 11, exactly one month after the attacks in the United States, of an interreligious prayer in Italian, Hebrew, Arabian, Greek, and English. Thousands of adherents of all faith traditions gathered at Rome's Saint John Cathedral, near the prem-

ises of the Bishops Conference headquarters. The prayer, introduced by Camillo Cardinal Runi, vicar of Rome, was joined by Chief Rabbi of Rome Elio Toaff, by Imam Mahmoud Shweita of Rome's Mosque, by Archimandrite of the Greek Orthodox Church Matteo Psomas, and by the pastor of the American Baptist Church in Rome, Rev. David Hogdon.

The fact that the necessary condition for peace is the dialogue between civilizations was emphasized by Pope John Paul II on October 29, in a welcoming address to Ambassador Mitsuhiro Nakamura, the new Japanese envoy to the Vatican. "In order that the conflicts and tensions affect-

ing the Asian continent be calmed and resolved, this dialogue must be carried out in a special way through exchanges between different peoples, different cultures, and different philosophical traditions," the pope said.

"This dialogue is all the more important between the believers of different faiths," he concluded, "so that religion will never be a pretext for acts that are contrary to the respect owed to every human being and every human community." □

Eva Ruth Palmieri worked for the Embassy of Israel to the Vatican for several years and has a deep personal interest in interreligious dialogue.

Rissho Kosei-kai Expands Action Plan for Peace

In the wake of the terrorist attacks against the United States and the subsequent military action by American and British forces against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Rissho Kosei-kai is continuing its program to support the victims of terrorism and the Afghan people suffering under the military campaign, and to promote knowledge and collaboration for creating peace.

Soon after the terrorist attacks on September 11, Rissho Kosei-kai began a program to mourn the deaths of so many innocent civilians and to facilitate its members taking concrete action to help the people affected by the assaults. During the daily sutra recitations at branch halls and at their homes, members offered prayers for the people who perished in the attacks and early confirmation of the fate of those who were still missing. They also prayed that such acts of terrorism would never be repeated, to prevent many more lives from being sacrificed. Rissho Kosei-kai started a fund-raising campaign in Japan for the victims of the terrorism by opening a bank account to accept donations from members nationwide. By October 19, an amount equivalent to US\$450,000 had been raised, which was later entrusted

to the World Conference on Religion and Peace International (WCRP/International) in New York. Senior and junior high school student members and elementary school pupil members wrote letters of sympathy and encouragement for children in America whose family members, friends, or neighbors lost their lives in the attacks. Some 4,000 letters originally written in English, or translated into English by volunteers at local branches, were brought to the headquarters in Tokyo by October 15, and later were transferred to WCRP/International to be handed directly to the children. Many members throughout Japan also participated in the Week of Prayer for World Peace which took place between October 21 and 28, in which 35 religious and interreligious organizations worldwide joined. During that week, members recited a prepared message of commitment to world peace before their daily morning devotional services that included words for the repose of the spirits of the victims, and demonstrated their solidarity with members of other participating religious groups in earnest prayer for the early termination of the fighting.

The military attacks against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan began on

October 8, causing thousands of Afghan civilians to flee their homes for safety. According to a survey by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of January 2001 some 3.7 million Afghan refugees were living in crowded camps, mainly in Pakistan and Iran, as a result of 22 years of civil strife that began with the invasion by Soviet troops in 1979, and the turmoil that followed the Soviet withdrawal ten years later. An additional 1 million Afghans were displaced persons within their own country. The continuing severe drought of the last few years has only made matters worse.

Following the start of the military campaign against the Taliban regime, the number of internal displaced persons soared to an estimated 5 million, many of whom were too poor to flee the country. In the face of the increase in these numbers, Rissho Kosei-kai reviewed its action plan at the beginning of November to extend the scope of its activities and promote even further collaboration with international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and religious organizations in Japan and abroad. The new action plan comprises three aspects: 1) prayer, 2) dialogue and cooperation among religions, and 3) humanitarian assistance.

On October 24, during the WCRP-hosted symposium of leaders of the world's religions in New York, Rev. Niwano presents some of the 4,000 letters of sympathy and encouragement from Japanese students to their American counterparts to Meg Gardinier, director for non-governmental organizations of the U.S. Fund for UNICEF.

In the course of the threefold program, Rissho Kosei-kai continued its fund-raising campaign to help refugees and displaced Afghans, as well as people affected by the terrorist attacks in the U.S. Many members took part in the fund-raising drive in busy public places, appealing to passersby for contributions. The action plan also includes sending relief goods for Afghan refugees, organizing a group of volunteers from young members of Japan's different religious faiths, and sending a group of representatives of various religions to conduct a survey on the current situation of refugees and displaced Afghans.

It is being considered for Rissho Kosei-kai to accept Afghan refugees at its facilities and to provide young Afghans with opportunities for education to promote the rebuilding of their war-torn country. While many young members wrote letters of encouragement to American children who had lost loved ones in the acts of terrorism, members throughout Japan took part in the ceremonies at their respective local branches that were observed simultaneously with "An Evening of Commemoration and Commitment" that took place during the WCRP International Symposium of Leaders of the World's Religions in New York on the evening of October 24. Various study programs also were planned for

members and nonmembers to promote increased knowledge about the teachings of Islam and the Japanese government's participation in the international campaign against terrorism. The plan also clarified Rissho Kosei-kai's intention to participate in a WCRP regional conference for the promotion of dialogue with Islamic fundamentalists.

Members of local branches throughout Japan developed various activities, including multireligious prayers, fund-raising campaigns, study meetings on

peace, and signature-collecting campaigns. Members of the youth and women's groups of the Sasebo Branch in Kyushu promoted a signature campaign to protest military reprisals against terrorism. The Takayama Branch in Gifu Prefecture in central Japan cooperated with other private organizations in the city to conduct an antiwar signature campaign.

On October 5, at the headquarters in Tokyo, some 900 people, including members from the Tokyo area and Rissho Kosei-kai staff members, had the opportunity to gain further knowledge about the teachings and history of Islam at a lecture by Dr. Yoshiaki Sanada, professor of law at Chuo University in Tokyo.

Rissho Kosei-kai members in the United States also quickly took action to extend assistance to the victims of the terrorist attacks there by beginning a fund-raising campaign on September 16. By the end of the month, \$20,518.12 had been collected. On October 2, Mr. Masayoshi Iimura, general affairs director of Rissho Kosei-kai of New York, visited the American Red Cross in New York and presented the money to Mr. Mark Silverstein, director of Corporate and Foundation Relations. The contribution will be used to assist the most vulnerable victims of the tragic events and their families. □

Rissho Kosei-kai members appeal to passersby for contributions for helping refugees and displaced Afghans, as well as people affected by the terrorist attacks in the U.S.

Week of Prayer for World Peace Marked

Tokyo's Setagaya Interreligious Association representatives lead a prayer during the group's tenth "Gathering to Pray for World Peace" in October.

A multireligious "Week of Prayer" promoted by the Week of Prayer for World Peace (founded in the United Kingdom more than 20 years ago and currently continued by Rev. Jonathan Blake) began on October 21. People of all faiths all over the world are encouraged to offer prayers together during the week wherever they are for the eternal peace of all humankind. This year, however, the ceremonies and gatherings were held in a situation of unease caused by the violent acts of terrorism against the United States on September 11 and the tension resulting from the military action by the U.S. and the U.K. in Afghanistan, which have created worldwide concern. Under these circumstances, members of Rissho Kosei-kai, devout supporters of the peace movement since its early stage, mourned the victims of the tragic events, and also offered a prayer that the belligerency in Afghanistan would end as soon as possible. They did this by reading the message of President Nichiko Niwano for a realization of eternal peace specially prepared for the Week of Prayer, before taking part in morning devotional services at the Great Sacred Hall in Tokyo, at their respective branches, or at their homes. Moreover, some branches took the ini-

tiative to hold "interreligious prayer gatherings" in their communities, in cooperation with local members of different faiths. In the Tokyo area, for example, the Setagaya Interreligious Association, consisting of 21 organizations of people of the Islamic, Christian, Shinto, and Buddhist faiths, including members of the Setagaya Branch of Rissho Kosei-kai, on October 21 held an assembly of the tenth "Gathering to Pray for World Peace"

at Hitomi Memorial Hall, Showa Women's University, with more than 1,000 participants. After dedicating the ceremonies of a Prayer for Peace based on the rituals of each religion, Mr. Khalid Kiba, member of the board of directors of the Islamic Center, Japan read to the assembly a "manifesto of peace" representing the hope of people of all faiths who aspire to world peace. The Week of Prayer ended on October 28. □

Shinshuren Marks 50th Anniversary

On October 17, Shinshuren (Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan) celebrated its 50th anniversary at a hotel in Tokyo. Some 450 people took part, including representatives of its member organizations and guests from various circles. From Rissho Kosei-kai, President Nichiko Niwano as Shinshuren vice-chairman, Chairman Norio Sakai, and other principal members of the organization attended. Rev. Mitsuhiro Fukata, chairman of Shinshuren and patriarch of the member organization Enno-kyo, delivered an address looking back on the 50-year history of Shinshuren's development and expressing a prayer to realize the welfare of all of humanity

Rissho Kosei-kai members from the Toyoda Branch join in a silent prayer for world peace with Buddhist clerics at the temple Takahata Fudo Kongo-ji in western Tokyo following a joint sutra recitation.

and world peace together with its member organizations. After congratulatory addresses by Peter Cardinal Seiichi Shirayanagi, chairman of the Japan Religions League, and Mr. Fujio Ikado, professor emeritus of the University of Tsukuba, Rev. Michio Arai, vice-chairman of Shinshuren and president of the member organization Kyusei-shinkyo, announced the future plans of Shinshuren, which are based on five guiding principles. At a reception following the ceremony Rev. Niwano tendered his thanks to the participants, saying that all present should keep in mind the messages delivered by the speakers and move forward to achieve the organization's goal in the same spirit that guided the earlier officers and members of Shinshuren. □

Overseas Members Participate in Global Gathering

On October 5, some 400 members of Rissho Kosei-kai overseas branches gathered in the Great Sacred Hall at headquarters in Tokyo to take part in the Ichijo [One Vehicle] Global Gathering. They came from the United States, Taiwan, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, and Switzerland. Members of Korean Rissho Kosei-kai also participated.

The gathering opened with a silent meditation for the repose of the spirits of the victims of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11. Sixteen members representing respective branches made ritual offerings on the platform before the image of the Eternal Shakyamuni Buddha and a large photograph of the late Founder Nikkyo Niwano. Seven branch representatives then recited "Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures" in their respective languages—Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Thai, Bengali, and Sinhalese. Ms. Mae Takamoto, English-speaking group leader of Rissho Kosei-kai of Hawaii, and Ms. Pak Seon Ha of Korean Rissho Kosei-kai represented all the participants in delivering their religious testimony, describing how they

put into everyday practice the teaching learned through Rissho Kosei-kai.

President Nichiko Niwano warmly welcomed the overseas members and spoke to them about the joys of practice. "Founder Niwano taught us it is important to do what is good and to repeat it wholeheartedly," he said to them. "Doing good means to transmit the Buddha's teaching and compassion to the people around you. The founder demonstrated for us how joyful it is to practice the teaching. Let us be kind-hearted and prayerful for the happiness of others by emulating the founder's dedication to the teaching."

Members of the Suginami Branch in Tokyo welcomed the participants with a vigorous performance on Japanese *taiko* drums, the stirring sounds reverberating throughout the large hall. The performance was followed by a lecture on basic Buddhist teachings by Rev. Kinzo Takemura, advisor to Kosei Publishing Company. Mr. Franklin Anderson, from Rissho Kosei-kai of San Francisco, expressed the hope that after returning to San Francisco he could help devise opportunities with members of other faiths to promote interreligious dialogue and cooperation.

During their stay in Tokyo the overseas members participated in the Memorial Ceremony for the Founder's Entrance into Nirvana, also held in the Great Sacred Hall, and worshiped at

the Precious Stupa of the One Vehicle. They also took part in a guided tour of the Horin-kaku Guest Hall, heard special lectures, and took part in hoza meetings. □

Oeshiki-Ichijo Festival Celebrated

The Oeshiki-Ichijo Festival was held on October 7 at the Rissho Kosei-kai headquarters complex in Tokyo. This was the second occasion since its name was changed to Oeshiki-Ichijo Festival. A parade of *mando* (portable lighted pagodas) by specially appointed members was followed by processions of members from 34 branches in the Tokyo area, and also of members from seven branches (Sapporo, Sendai, Mito, Kawaguchi, Matsudo, Ofuna, and Kurashiki) throughout Japan, together with some 360 members from overseas. In rejoicing in the colorful procession, more than 7,000 members in total demonstrated their respect, affection, and deep admiration for the late founder of Rissho Kosei-kai, Rev. Nikkyo Niwano, and honored the memory of Nichiren, the thirteenth-century eminent advocate of the Lotus Sutra, identifying themselves as torchbearers to spread the message of the sutra. □

Global Gathering participants pose for a group photo outside the Great Sacred Hall.

A Global Ethic in an Age of Global Terror

by Günther Gebhardt

A German Christian theologian points out the dangers of blaming an entire religion for the criminal acts of a small minority of fanatics. In doing so, he also describes the progress of the multinational, multireligious Global Ethic Project.

After the terrorist attacks in the United States on last September 11, many voices, including those of eminent religious and political leaders, rightly warned against accusing "Islam" of the criminal acts of a tiny minority of political fanatics, who may indeed have found some motivation in a distorted way of interpreting and living their religion. While Muslims around the world immediately condemned any kind of attack against innocent people as totally un-Islamic, in the broader public of "Western" societies reactions of hostility against Muslims have occurred and tendencies to erect "Islam" as a powerful enemy image have grown.

In this tense situation the need for a sustained, open, and truthful dialogue among religions has become more obvious than ever before. In particular, the search for and

the promotion of a global ethic among religions is frequently highlighted as a common basis for such a dialogue. It can also be a way to counteract fanaticism within each religion by focusing on a set of peace-fostering ethical principles shared by all religions and by those of nonreligious humanist convictions alike. The Global Ethic Project described below has indeed gained cruel topicality.

The conviction that religious believers and institutions can and should cooperate to tackle the burning issues of our planet, and that they can do so based on shared ethical convictions while differing in beliefs, has become a major feature of the interfaith movement ever since the First Parliament of the World's Religions at Chicago in 1893. Among the interfaith organizations which were born during the twentieth century, the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) perhaps most clearly expresses this approach. At its first Assembly in Kyoto in 1970, the WCRP had already formulated a set of inter-religiously shared ethical convictions which can be considered as an early predecessor of the Global Ethic.

What Is the Global Ethic Project?

"No peace among the nations without peace among the religions."

"No peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions."

"No dialogue among the religions without a consensus on shared ethical values, a Global Ethic."

"No new world order without a Global Ethic."

These four affirmations form the starting point of what has become known as the Global Ethic Project. By formulating them first from the mid-1980s onward, the Swiss Catholic theologian Hans Küng expressed the following convictions:

—societies will lose cohesion and finally our divided and endangered planet will not survive without a general consensus on a set of common human values, ethical standards, and guidelines for behavior;

Günther Gebhardt is a German-born Christian theologian. He received his doctorate from Fribourg University in Switzerland with a thesis on peace education in religious peace movements. From 1984 to 1997, he was European secretary-general of the WCRP at Geneva; and from 1997 to 1998, executive secretary of the Swiss Institute for Development at Biel. Since 1998 he has been academic program coordinator of the Global Ethic Foundation at Tübingen, Germany.

—the world's religions possess already, in their ethical traditions, such a treasure of a "global ethic";
 —the religions, far too often actors in or contributors to violence, have a common responsibility to contribute to world peace by reassessing their common ethical basis and putting it into practice, in coalition with all people of good will, both religious and nonreligious;
 —by following this path to the future, a "clash of civilizations" can be avoided and world peace can be strengthened.

This program for a Global Ethic was first presented by Küng to a broad public in 1990 in his book *Projekt Weltethos*, translated into English as *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* in 1991 (London: SCM). A focal point of the project was the Second Parliament of the World's Religions at Chicago in 1993, which adopted the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic commissioned by the organizers, the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, and elaborated in a long process of interreligious consultation under the authorship of Küng.

The Global Ethic as presented in the Chicago Declaration is based on two principles without which no human community or society can survive: first, what is common to all human beings is their humanity, and therefore "Every human being should be treated humanely," according to his or her inalienable human dignity, which is also the foundation of universal human rights. This principle remains very formal and therefore the declaration recalls a second principle, "which is found and has persisted in many religious and ethical traditions of humankind. . . ." This is known as the Golden Rule of reciprocity: "What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others." In positive terms: "What you wish done to yourself, do to others." It is striking to discover that this basic rule of human behavior appears already in the "Analects" of the Chinese philosopher and teacher Confucius (c. 551–c. 479 B.C.E.), and indeed can be found, in slightly differing formulations, in the teachings of all religions. In the scriptures of Buddhism it reads: "A state that is not pleasant or delightful to me must be so for him also; and a state which is not pleasant or delightful for me, how could I inflict that on another?" (Samyutta-nikaya). It was also adopted by nonreligious philosophers such as Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment in Europe.

The Chicago Declaration goes on by applying these two principles to four central aspects of human life and puts forward four "irrevocable directives" which should guide and sustain a truly humane culture:

(1) Commitment to a culture of nonviolence and respect for life, recalling the ancient directive "You shall not kill!—Have respect for life!"

(2) Commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order: "You shall not steal!—Deal honestly and fairly!"

(3) Commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness: "You shall not lie!—Speak and act truthfully!"

(4) Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women: "You shall not commit sexual immorality!—Respect and love one another!"

These guidelines for humane behavior exist in all religions, and also in nonreligious ethics, and can therefore form the basis for a humanist ethic, in the sense that it should be acceptable to all human beings. A Buddhist leader at the Chicago Parliament said that through the four directives he could hear the voice of the Buddha. He certainly thought of the five precepts formulated in the Dhammapada (183): "I vow to abstain from killing living beings. I vow to abstain from taking what is not given. I vow to abstain from sexual misconduct. I vow to abstain from lying. I vow to abstain from taking intoxicants." Others may hear the voices of their own religious or philosophical traditions. Herein lies the unique value of the Chicago Parliament and of its declaration: For the first time in the history of religions, a representative group of leaders from all religions worldwide agreed on a set of common ethical guidelines.

To avoid frequent misunderstandings about the character and the role of the Global Ethic, the following should be kept in mind: "A global ethic means neither a global ideology, nor a single unified global religion transcending all existing religions, nor a mixture of all religions. . . . Nor does a global ethic seek to replace the high ethics of the individual religions with an ethical minimalism. . . . A global ethic does not reduce the religions to an ethical minimalism but represents the minimum of what the religions of the world already have in common now in the ethical sphere." (Hans Küng and Helmut Schmidt, eds., *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities: Two Declarations*, London: SCM, 1998, pp. 41–42)

This clarification offered by Küng responds to a line of criticism sometimes addressed to the idea of a Global Ethic: Although we have to admit that our world is globalizing more and more in many fields, can ethics really be globalized too? Are not the cultural contexts in which ethics develops too different from each other? It is precisely out of respect for the differences that the Chicago Declaration refuses to elaborate on details of special ethics and to address issues where there is no consensus among and within religions. It proposes an "ethic," not "ethics" or "morals": a consensus on some very fundamental values, standards, and attitudes, not prescriptions for how to act morally in all kinds of particular situations. These, of course, could not be globalized, but some fundamentals can.

An Ongoing Process

The Chicago Parliament in 1993 was a focal point of a programmatic line of thought which had started well before. The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic cast the

The Second Parliament of the World's Religions at Chicago in 1993 adopted the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic.

program into an interreligious, international appeal. It was clear, however, that this event was to be considered as just one main step within the ongoing process toward a Global Ethic and called for further debate and concretization. The follow-up process of spreading the Global Ethic has unfolded on various levels. Two moments on the international level are of special significance:

- (a) "The Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities" (1997) by the InterAction Council (IAC), and
- (b) The Third Parliament of the World's Religions at Cape Town in December 1999.

As the basis for translating the Global Ethic Project into practice, the establishment of the Global Ethic Foundation (Stiftung Weltethos) at Tübingen, Germany in 1995 and its ongoing activities are of utmost importance.

The IAC and Its Declaration

A significant international development in this ongoing process is the linking of the InterAction Council of former heads of state or government with the Global Ethic Project. The IAC was founded in 1983 by former Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda, who died in 1995, and its secretariat is still in Tokyo. The IAC members, at present about thirty, develop analyses of global political, economic, and social problems and recommend solutions. They encourage international collaboration on such is-

suues and communicate their findings directly to heads of government and other decision-makers.

The synergy between IAC and the Global Ethic Project was mainly due to its then chairman, Helmut Schmidt, former chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, and his general concern for ethical issues and his specific search for universal human values on behalf of the IAC. As the 1993 Chicago Declaration Toward a Global Ethic had already proposed a set of such values, Küng was approached by the IAC to assist in drafting a "Declaration of Human Responsibilities." Such a declaration was considered by the council as an appropriate expression of the relationship between human rights and responsibilities.

The declaration was adopted by the council in 1997. The text follows closely the structure of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic and turns its principles and irrevocable directives into responsibilities of individuals and the community. The IAC suggests it should be understood as support for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from the angle of ethics.

This declaration can also be considered as an attempt to reconcile two approaches: the "Western" emphasis on the individual person and his or her rights and the so-called "Asian" tradition of considering the community first, focusing on the duties of the individual toward the community. Hence, the IAC Declaration can serve as a useful element in the debate on the intercultural validity

of universal human rights. At this point, however, it is good to recall that both declarations—that from Chicago and that of the IAC—are first of all moral appeals and not juridical documents.

Third Parliament of the World's Religions

During the first week of December 1999, the Third Parliament of the World's Religions convened at Cape Town, following those held in Chicago in 1893 and again in 1993. One of the main tasks of the 1999 parliament consisted in building on the process of the past six years and in further concretizing the Global Ethic Project. This was done on the basis of a "Call to Our Guiding Institutions," those institutions which play a decisive and influential role in society: religion and spirituality; government; agriculture, labor, industry, and commerce; education; arts and communications media; science and medicine; international intergovernmental organizations; and organizations of civil society. They are invited to adopt the principles and directives of the Global Ethic and to apply them to concrete issues. The rationale focuses on the notion of "creative engagement":

"When reflecting on the future of the human community, one must consider the world's most powerful institutions—institutions whose policies, for better and for worse, influence every aspect of life on the planet. Clearly, the critical issues facing the world today present an acute ethical challenge to these institutions. What is urgently needed is a new opening to creative engagement among the guiding institutions—an active, attentive, and inventive collaboration, rooted in shared moral principles and expressed in mutually sustained programs on behalf of the peoples of the twenty-first century." ("Call to Our Guiding Institutions")

The "call" document is directly based on the Chicago Declaration of 1993, the related quotations of which are printed at the margin of each single call. The team of the Global Ethic Foundation at Tübingen was strongly involved in the drafting process of the "call" and Küng participated actively in the Cape Town parliament.

Activities of the Global Ethic Foundation

The Global Ethic Foundation was established and funded by a retired German businessman, Count Karl Konrad von der Groeben, and officially inaugurated on October 23, 1995, with Küng as its president. The foundation's goals are intercultural and interreligious research, training, and encounter, specifically on the basis of the Global Ethic.

The research area includes, of course, the ongoing prolific speaking, writing, and publishing activity of Küng around the world, in academic and religious institutions, as well as at major conferences of economists and politicians. All other team colleagues are also constantly invited to speak and to write on the Global Ethic and related subjects. The application of the project to specific areas

of society has found its expression in the publication of two major volumes so far: *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics* (London: SCM, 1997) and *Wissenschaft und Weltethos* (Sciences and the Global Ethic, Munich: Piper, 1998), the latter so far available in German only. In this book, eminent scholars in the humanities, science, economics, education, ethics, and political science respond to the challenge of the Global Ethic from the specific viewpoint of their field.

At a symposium at Baden-Baden, Germany in 2001, thirty top leaders of transnational corporations based in Germany and Switzerland discussed the relationship between "Global Corporations and the Global Ethic." It can be observed that the Global Ethic sometimes encounters more serious interest from the various areas of secular society, such as politics, economics, and education, than from within the churches and other religious bodies. Politicians such as British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, European Commission President Romano Prodi, and German President Johannes Rau count among Küng's recent dialogue partners on the Global Ethic.

Blair even accepted an invitation from the Global Ethic Foundation to deliver the First Global Ethic Lecture at Tübingen University on June 30, 2000. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, agreed to deliver the Second Global Ethic Lecture at Tübingen on January 21, 2002. To further the intercultural discussion on the Global Ethic, two academic conferences were held in China and one in India. They tested the Global Ethic against the background of traditional Chinese and Indian ethics and identified many areas of convergence.

The educational activities aim at promoting the Global Ethic at the grass-roots level. Many lectures in regional and local institutions of adult training, both religious and secular, serve this purpose. Specific attention is paid to the field of school education. A group of teachers in Germany and Switzerland, working closely with the foundation, have prepared classroom material on the Global Ethic which is being used in their educational systems. Teacher contests on various aspects of the Global Ethic were organized by the foundation in those two countries. Teacher-training seminars are being held all over Germany.

In 2000 the foundation created a new pedagogical tool: a twelve-panel exhibition in German and English versions on "World Religions—Universal Peace—Global Ethic" which is circulating in many cities in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and the United Kingdom, but can also be acquired in an inexpensive German poster version by schools, religious congregations, and training centers. This development seems to confirm a view of Marcus Braybrooke, joint president of the World Congress of Faiths, Oxford, that "It may well be that it is through its

educational applications that the [Chicago] Declaration will have its greatest impact.” (*Faith and Interfaith in a Global Age*, Ada, MI: CoNexus Press and Oxford: Braybrooke Press, 1998, p. 87)

Finally, the foundation assists in interreligious encounters focused on the Global Ethic, as for example an interreligious summer camp for young Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Austria in 1997. Küng or staff members of the foundation occasionally take part in major events of other interreligious organizations such as the WCRP or the Parliament of the World’s Religions.

The Global Ethic Foundation is in fact the “executive body” of the Global Ethic Project, which initiates proj-

ethical basis and that the Global Ethic Project offered a particularly valuable approach. Küng was therefore called by Annan to be a member of a “Group of (Twenty) Eminent Persons” whose task was to prepare a report on the dialogue among civilizations. Thanks to substantive input from Küng and the Global Ethic Foundation, this report includes a strong emphasis on the need for a global ethic for a new paradigm of international relations. In addition, the foundation was privileged to be invited to present its exhibition “World Religions—Universal Peace—Global Ethic” at UN Headquarters in New York from December 2001 to January 2002, coinciding at the beginning with the presentation of the report by the “Group of

Inside pages from a pamphlet published in 2000 in conjunction with the exhibition “World Religions—Universal Peace—Global Ethic.”

ects and responds to requests and invitations from others. Its primary aim is to reach out to groups of multipliers and to cooperate with others to promote a bottom-up approach to the Global Ethic. While most of the educational activities are still focused on Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, branches of the foundation are now also established in the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, and the network of contacts has, of course, a worldwide outreach. This is impressively highlighted by the following recent achievement.

Global Ethic Project at the UN

The year 2001 was proclaimed by the UN as the International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. The UN leadership, Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his special representative for the International Year, Giandomenico Picco, were convinced that such a dialogue required an

Eminent Persons” to the UN secretary-general and the General Assembly. This extraordinary honor shows that the process toward a global ethic has become operational from the grass-roots up to the UN level.

At the base of all this activity, however, lies the individual person. The Chicago Declaration calls every human being to a “conversion of the heart.” In our world shocked and shaken by global terror, combating only the symptoms by violent military means will not lead to a better future. Much more important is to address the social and political root causes, but this requires an underlying common ethical basis. To paraphrase the UNESCO preamble, terrorism originates in the minds of human beings and therefore the defenses against it also should be built in the minds of people. This is where the seeds of a culture of nonviolence, justice, tolerance, truthfulness, and partnership have to be sown. □

The Equality of All That Lives

by Jion Abe

A recently deceased Japanese Zen priest and scholar of Indian philosophy here explores the roots of the Buddhist concept of peace, which respects all forms of life and advocates their shared existence.

Buddhism advocates harmony among all living things, which is made possible through the dedicated observance of the precept prohibiting the indiscriminate killing of any sentient being, let alone taking the life of a fellow human being. The Buddha lived during the fifth century B.C.E., a violent time even in the annals of ancient India. Politically, the land was divided into rival tribal states and monarchic kingdoms, and conflict was never-ending. Large numbers of people undoubtedly were killed and the life of the individual person was sometimes regarded as of very little value.

The religious rites of the time, widely performed by Brahmin priests, centered on the slaughtering of animals such as cattle and goats as sacrifices to the gods. Living in such an environment, the Buddha confirmed through his enlightenment the understanding that fundamentally all beings that have life are equal. In various contexts he expounded against the use of violence toward fellow human beings and for abstaining from the taking of the lives of animals. In today's terms, we could say he was an advocate of universal peace and harmony.

"All tremble in the face of danger, all fear death. Putting ourselves in the place of another, we should not kill or cause to kill," the Dhammapada tells us. There can be no doubt that the Buddha experienced suffering personally and witnessed the suffering of others caused by the prevailing dangers of his time. He looked sadly on the "stupidity" of those who would kill each other. The greatest violence is the slaughter of other human beings. There is no one who does not fear death. That being so, the Buddha taught that we must liken ourselves to others in order neither to kill nor cause to kill. This admonition must be the Buddha's compassionate plea to us all to empathize with others and share in their hopes for happiness.

Among the world's religions there have been those which, to ensure their continued existence, refused acceptance to people whose ideas and beliefs differed from theirs. Sometimes they approved of the killing of other human beings in the name of a "holy war," and after the conflict had ended declared that their victory proved

their righteousness. In recent times, however, it has become increasingly obvious that such ideas ultimately lead nowhere.

Twice in the twentieth century confrontation and conflict between peoples led to world wars. Even today, despite the dismantling of the apparatus of the cold war, local conflicts and civil wars continue to occur in many places. No matter to what extent people brandish their supposed "just" causes, however, the war that results still presents the greatest violence against precious lives.

Two thousand five hundred years ago, the Buddha already had rejected all violence, teaching renunciation of

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the power of retaliation. "Hatred in this world can never be appeased by hatred. Only through nonhatred can it be appeased. This is a law eternal," the Dhammapada tells us. This is not a method of confrontation that seeks an eye for an eye, an act of violence for an act of violence, but rather points toward the renunciation of hatred and the embracing of nonviolence. The Buddha understood the truth that confrontations of power are never-ending and can never bring about a peaceful resolution.

Buddhism rejects all forms of violence and killing, making a powerful appeal to respect the importance and dignity of the lives of all sentient beings through its teaching of nonviolence and its precept forbidding the taking of life.

The twenty-first century may be called the "age of shared existence," a time when people will not be motivated by rivalry and aggrandizement but by the value of giving and sharing, so that they may live peacefully together. This idea of shared existence derives from the Buddha's teaching of the law of dependent origination. According to this law, no person living in the world can ever be completely independent of others. We live supported by countless encounters, and at the same time we support others and allow them to lead their lives through our relationships with them. In other words, everything in this world exists to support and help everything else.

In recent years, protecting the natural environment and preserving the ecology of plants and animals have become issues of worldwide concern. Here Buddhism says, "Let all living beings be able to live comfortably, tranquilly, and happily." Human beings and other animals breathe in the oxygen that plants produce and exhale carbon dioxide. Plants take in the carbon dioxide that human beings and animals exhale and discharge oxygen. This is an example of the mutual benefits of shared existence based on the law of dependent origination. Human beings and other forms of life essentially are able to live through a process of mutual giving.

Too often we are apt to forget this important fundamental law, however, being loath to perform such give-and-take with others, always demanding a larger share than others have. Normal human relationships may not be possible for such people, let alone showing any interest in activities like protecting nature. In fact, common expressions like "environmental preservation" may be little more than examples of human conceit.

Another social issue engaging our attention today is continuing poverty. The developed countries of the North—Japan, the United States, and European nations—purchase the natural and human resources of the developing nations of the South cheaply, so the mechanism of economic colonization serves only to increase poverty. Such maldistribution of wealth can be called a form of organized social violence. Endeavors continue to divide the world's wealth more fairly and to correct the economic differen-

tials between North and South. Working to ensure the happiness of all the members of the "family" living on the same planet, helping each other in times of natural disaster or catastrophe, surely that is the very principle of shared existence.

Buddhism has been called the religion of wisdom and compassion. Wisdom is the power of tenacious recognition that discerns the law of transience in our world. Compassion is benevolence toward all living things and the feeling of sadness and pity we experience in the face of the suffering and anguish of others. By being able to see the world as it really is (demonstrating wisdom), we convert our own spiritual liberation to the benefit of others. Wisdom becomes compassion, which extends without limits as sympathetic action. This is the true meaning of the idea that benefiting oneself also benefits others.

After the Buddha attained enlightenment, he spoke of the truth he had realized to the five ascetics with whom he had formerly trained. He continued to teach until his death for the sake of the instruction and liberation of all the people of the world. He was the very embodiment of wisdom and compassion. It is said that in the same way that thousands of people can obtain fire from a single torch while the torch itself remains unchanged, happiness can be shared infinitely without it ever diminishing. Compassion, too, can be shared by any number of people without it decreasing.

It is important that we walk the Buddha's Way step by step. As the group increases to two, three, and more, the way taken will become the way of peace. Through unceasing and tireless effort, small oases of peace will develop in various places around the world, grow, and expand. I believe that Buddhism, as the advocate of the value of all life and of the idea of shared existence, can become a lantern to guide the hearts of people throughout the world in the twenty-first century. □

Copper-alloy bowl with stupa-shaped cover. Height: 9.3 cm. Eighth century. Important Cultural Property. Formerly in the possession of the temple Horyu-ji, Nara. Tokyo National Museum.

A Reawakened Awareness of Family Love

A wife and mother who was having difficulties with her second daughter was also confronted by her husband's increased drinking—only to then be told that she herself had developed final-stage cancer.

Let's believe in our children. Don't forget that the Buddha will always be looking out for them." Kiyoko Mikuriya speaks with confidence to members of the Yokkaichi Branch of Rissho Kosei-kai in Mie Prefecture who are having problems with their children as they reach the age of puberty. This is the fourth year she has served as district group leader at her branch. "Believe in your family": those are the words which fellow members spoke to encourage her in the past.

That was some ten years ago. The encouragement she received at the time concerned her second daughter, Yoshie, now twenty-six but then a first-year high school student, who had stopped spending her nights at home. To avoid her mother's criticism about her frequent absences from school, she had started spending the night at the homes of various friends, showing up at her own home only briefly once or twice a week.

"She used to be an obedient and agreeable child," Mrs. Mikuriya thought. "It is all her father's fault, since he no longer goes out to work but just sits around drinking every day!"

Her husband, Motohiro, was a professional house painter who formerly had been thoughtful and loving to his family. But somewhere along the way he gave up working regularly and started drinking during the day, until he had become an alcoholic. Conversation between husband and wife gradually ceased, and the household atmosphere turned decidedly cool.

Guidance from Her Daughter

"Hi! Is anybody home?" One day Yoshie suddenly appeared at her home and called out from the entranceway.

Kiyoko Mikuriya is a member of the Yokkaichi Branch of Rissho Kosei-kai in Mie Prefecture.

Her usual gloomy expression had been replaced by a brighter one. From about that time she seemed to look happier every time she came home. Puzzled by this development, Mrs. Mikuriya asked Yoshie how she explained the change in her expression.

"You seem to be much more relaxed recently," she said. "Where have you been staying?" "At a friend's house," Yoshie replied. "It is so peaceful there, and I can tell them anything at all. It's really great. . . ."

When she learned that the mother of Yoshie's friend was even preparing a lunch for Yoshie to take to school every day, Mrs. Mikuriya decided to visit and express her gratitude.

The friend's mother, Takako Sano, greeted her at the door and invited her inside. Five or six young people were gathered there. Mrs. Sano explained that they were young people who found no welcome in their own homes. Mrs. Sano was a member of the Tsu Branch and had decided she could not sit idly by and do nothing about these youths who were becoming increasingly troubled mentally. She opened her home to them so they would have a place to get together and talk. Seeing these young people baring their hearts and chatting excitedly, Mrs. Mikuriya felt she could begin to understand why her daughter might not want to come home.

"If we develop our faith, could our home become lively like this?" she wondered. Together Mrs. Mikuriya and Yoshie joined Rissho Kosei-kai.

Not long after this Mrs. Sano told Mrs. Mikuriya, "Things are going to be all right for you. Your daughter has performed the service of bringing you together with the Buddha. Instead of trying to change her, maybe you should think about changing how you as a mother see your own family."

Mrs. Mikuriya began to do her best to listen to everything

Yoshie had to say, no matter how trivial it might seem. Yoshie's expression gradually softened and little by little mother and daughter discovered they had a good deal to talk about with each other. Yoshie soon began going to school directly from home. However, when her mother saw the unhappy look on her daughter's face as she headed for school, leaving her father already drunk so early in the morning, Mrs. Mikuriya decided that no matter how much she tried to change, she could not forgive Motohiro for becoming so dependent on alcohol.

Cancer Is Diagnosed

It was in July 1994, just after the rainy season had ended and the foliage had begun to take on the deeper green of summer.

"I seem to have developed a lump in my breast and I am a little concerned about it," Mrs. Mikuriya's eighty-year-old mother, Kimie Nakazono, said to her one day. "Would you come to the hospital with me?" Mrs. Nakazono lived in a detached house on the same plot of land as the Mikuriyas. In fact, Mrs. Mikuriya had noticed a similar lump in her own right breast, so they went together to a nearby hospital.

The results of their tests were a cruel blow to Mrs. Mikuriya. Her mother's lump was benign, but Mrs. Mikuriya's was found to indicate final-stage cancer. If she failed to do something about it immediately, she would not have much longer to live.

"Why did this happen to me?" she asked herself, cursing her fate. Despite her despair, her husband's drinking seemed to become even more uncontrollable after she was hospitalized. He even came to visit her once when he was barely able to walk.

"How can he do this to me when I am so worried about my condition?" she wondered. She felt inundated with indescribable sensations of loneliness. Perhaps sensing her mother's sadness when she visited her in the hospital, Mrs. Mikuriya's eldest daughter, Sawako, spoke up. "Why don't you and Father separate after you are released from the hospital?" she asked. "You don't have to worry. I will look after him."

Since she had been a small girl, Sawako had always been supportive and understanding of her parents and encouraged them to make compromises to get along. It may have been Sawako's presence that enabled Mrs. Mikuriya to put up with her husband's drinking without considering a divorce until then. She began to think about the possibility, however, after what her daughter had said.

Her Husband's Feelings

After a month and a half in the hospital, Mrs. Mikuriya underwent a mastectomy on her right breast. After the operation, she demonstrated powers of recuperation that surprised even her doctor. Mrs. Mikuriya had hoped her experience in the hospital would lead her husband to

change his ways, but on the contrary his drinking problem only grew worse.

"I am not going to put up with this any longer," she decided. "I have been confined to the hospital suffering from an illness that could have proved fatal!" Those were her feelings when she received a visit from Setsuko Yamashita of the Yokkaichi Branch, who was then living in her neighborhood.

"You may be surprised to hear that your husband came to the chapter training hall every single morning without fail while you were in the hospital and prayed at the main altar," she said to Mrs. Mikuriya.

"What are you saying?" Mrs. Mikuriya asked in disbelief. "I didn't think he knew anything about Rissho Kosei-kai!"

Unable to immediately absorb the new information, Mrs. Mikuriya asked Mrs. Yamashita to accompany her to the Yokkaichi Branch after she left the hospital. There she met the chapter leader, Akiko Ikeda, who was the person most familiar with the details concerning Mrs. Mikuriya's husband.

"It seems that your husband had come to our Branch before," she said, "guided by a member of the youth group. He seemed to sense that Rissho Kosei-kai could somehow help him. Reeking of alcohol and weeping, he wanted to know if his wife was going to be all right. Hoping to ease his mind a bit, I placed a set of Buddhist prayer beads in his hands as he prostrated himself before the altar. He seemed very worried about you."

Mrs. Mikuriya opened her heart and described her situation at home to Mrs. Ikeda in detail. Mrs. Mikuriya was born in Kagoshima Prefecture, but because of circumstances related to her parents' business they moved to Mie Prefecture while she was still a child. Her parents had intended to return to Kagoshima when their daughter married, but Motohiro felt it would be sad for his aging parents-in-law to live so far away from their daughter, so he built a house for them on the same lot as their own.

With the passage of time, however, Mrs. Mikuriya came to take it for granted that she was able to live right next-door to her parents and her sense of gratitude waned. During the Bon Festival midsummer holidays and at New Year's, Mrs. Mikuriya would join her visiting relatives at her parents' house. Motohiro was not included, but was left on his own to drink in the main house, outside the family circle looking in.

"How do you think your husband felt at such times?" Mrs. Ikeda asked Mrs. Mikuriya. It had never occurred to Mrs. Mikuriya that Motohiro, who never complained, might be feeling lonely all by himself.

Returning home one day and glancing into the living room, she saw him sprawled on the floor with his eyes open and his bottle close at hand. She thought she detected a forlorn expression on his face. The realization of his sadness struck her like a body blow.

"I'm the one who helped drive this man to alcohol,"

The newly happy Mikuriya family—Motohiro, Kiyoko, Sawako, Yoshie, and Kiyoko's mother, Kimie, enjoy a moment of relaxation.

she thought. "Without meaning to, I have robbed him of his trusting and sincere nature. . . ." At that moment she reflected on herself for the first time, and words born out of a true concern for her husband came to her lips: "I am so sorry that I never gave any thought at all to how unhappy and lonely you might be."

Motohiro, who was easily embarrassed, said nothing at the time. Not long after, however, he joined a self-help group for those wanting to recover from alcohol abuse, and soon was able to give up drinking. The husband she had thought would never change had responded to her own change of heart and had altered his behavior by 180 degrees. Mrs. Mikuriya was genuinely astonished.

She changed her Rissho Kosei-kai registration from the Tsu Branch to the Yokkaichi Branch, and in 1997 she was appointed district group leader. While busy with activities related to the branch's Lotus Sutra seminars and helping to lead others to a religious life, she made an intensive study of the core of the Buddha's teaching, the law of transience. Now Motohiro has become perhaps the most talkative member of the family, and his daughters listen to him with enjoyment.

Strong Family Ties

A new trial was awaiting Mrs. Mikuriya, however. In the spring of 1999, it was found that her cancer had advanced to her liver. With thoughts of her happy home life in mind, she was in a state of shock that the Buddha had seen fit to put her to the test again.

Seeing how downcast she was one day, Mrs. Ikeda, her chapter leader, grasped both of Mrs. Mikuriya's hands firmly in her own and said, "It is a difficult time for you.

But there can be no doubt that the Buddha will teach you something valuable through this experience. You must face your disease with courage. Pray to the Buddha that you want to become someone who can help others." With tears in her eyes, she offered Mrs. Mikuriya strong encouragement.

"I have a happy family now," Mrs. Mikuriya told herself. "I will give myself up to the will of the Buddha." All the members of the family gathered at the hospital to wish her well when the day for her operation arrived, their hearts united as one.

The surgery was a success and after a further year of chemotherapy, the cancerous growth had entirely disappeared. While in the hospital, Mrs. Mikuriya did her best to carry out bodhisattva practice, for example, by helping the other patients who shared her room. She did this with the hope of making herself useful, in keeping with the Buddha's wish.

Since her release from the hospital, she has put her experience to good use, dedicating herself to being helpful to other members, such as young mothers having difficulties in raising their children or those with troubled families. Her hope from now on is to lead a positive life, even when faced with problems and suffering. She feels this way because she has been able to discover herself through her own personal experiences and to recognize that she has been given life through the love of her family and the support of many others.

Only half-jokingly Motohiro says to his wife, "Without you, I would not still be alive." Deep in her heart, Mrs. Mikuriya is grateful to the Buddha for the changes that have brought her happiness at last. □

We Can Change Ourselves

by Nichiko Niwano

Human beings are capable of both good and evil. No one can claim that he or she alone is absolutely right. By the same token, everyone has an essential role in life.

Watching what other people do, we tell ourselves we would never behave that way, viewing ourselves as totally consistent. In truth, however, we shift this way and that in response to the conditions that happen to impinge on us. Even when we wish to follow the Buddha's Way steadfastly, the causes and conditions we meet with stir up the three poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance. Paradoxical though it may seem, we are not so narrow as to do only good. We have the breadth to do evil, too. In short, we have boundless potential for both good and evil. To see oneself this way is to know oneself.

We may judge ourselves by our own narrow yardstick—concluding, for example, that we are worthless—but that is not all there is to us. Some people, after all, highly approve of those who are always diffident. Thus, we can know ourselves as we truly are only by looking at ourselves

holistically, including the way we appear to those around us. By interacting with many people we discover to our surprise that we can do more than we had thought. And with each such discovery we enrich and expand our self-awareness.

We tend to deprecate ourselves, unaware of the value of our own lives, or conversely to think cockily that we can do anything, that no one can outdo us. But human beings are capable of both good and evil. No one in the world can claim that he or she alone is absolutely right; by the same token, everyone has an essential role in life. That is why it is so important to scrutinize ourselves constantly in the light of the Buddha's teachings.

Realizing Our Inadequacies

When someone harshly points out one of our personal flaws, most of us tend to react emotionally. But if we can accept such criticism as having allowed us to become aware of another of our inadequacies, this can lead to unexpected joy. If we can reflect that our swift anger at being criticized shows the strength of our ego, criticism becomes the voice of the Buddha and we can gratefully revere the critic as the agent of self-improvement.

If we can accept the things that happen around us and our encounters with other people with this kind of flexibility, everything and everyone becomes precious. At the same time, we come to understand our own immaturity and foolishness. Honen (1133–1212), the founder of the Jodo (Pure Land) sect of Buddhism, was deemed the wisest man of his time, and yet he referred to himself as “the foolish priest Honen.” And Shinran (1173–1263), the disciple of Honen and founder of the Jodo Shin sect, called himself Gutoku, or “ignorant bald-headed man.” Prince Shotoku (574–622), too, characterized himself as “foolish and inadequate.” All were saying, in effect, that no matter how society evaluated them, they saw themselves as the most foolish of men. In short, they denied themselves. I imagine that they referred to themselves in such self-deprecating terms because the more they studied the

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Buddha's teachings, the more deeply they felt the inadequacy of their understanding.

We human beings are full of self-centered delusions, but when we take refuge in the Dharma we can efface ourselves. We cease to pride ourselves on our power and stop behaving arrogantly. With gratitude for the life we have been given here and now, we approach each encounter, every day, with humility. And when we come to know our inadequacies, we understand that we are sustained by a great life force that far transcends our petty selves. We realize that we live in the very midst of the realm of the Truth and the Dharma. Realizing the preciousness of this life bestowed upon us, we find the resources to live with serenity and ease. Thus is the realm of self-affirmation revealed.

Putting Oneself in Order

Shortly before his death Shakyamuni admonished his disciples, "Make the self your light, make the Dharma your light." In other words, rely on yourself and on the Dharma, not on others. And in the Dhammapada he says, "You are the master of yourself, you are your own refuge. You should therefore control yourself even as the wise horse seller controls a good steed." When we seek to control or regulate ourselves, we often receive guidance from our seniors and other mentors, but ultimately we have to do the job ourselves.

Every morning I put my body and mind in order through special exercises. I imagine everyone has his or her own method of self-regulation.

Since ancient times it has been taught that ordering one's posture, breathing, and mind is the basis for physical and mental control. For example, when we chant sutra passages morning and night, straightening the spine and breathing deeply, the mind falls naturally into order, and we are infused with gratitude for the life we have been given. And when we observe what is going on around us with a firmly grounded body and a calm mind, we can clearly see the law of transience in action.

To put ourselves in order, it is important to control body, speech, and mind. Control of speech is especially important, since that leads to control of our thoughts and actions. For example, the habit of greeting others with the salutation used among Rissho Kosei-kai members, "Thank you for every day," cultivates a sense of gratitude. Even if we do not really feel thankful at first, controlling our words and actions will eventually bring our state of mind into line. The first step is to regulate our physical and mental posture and speak accordingly. It means taking the step of unaffectedly saying "Thank you for every day." Saying this while bowing the head and placing the palms together in a prayerful attitude not only makes the words truly part of us but also leads in the most natural way to venerating the buddha-nature that we all share. ▣

Jack Kerouac's "Dharma Bums"— and America as a Pure Land

by Miriam Levering

A revival of interest in the work of the American writers who constituted the "Beat Generation" of the '50s and '60s is focusing renewed attention on the serious Buddhist elements in Jack Kerouac's writings.

Recently there has been a revival of interest in the early work of the leading writers of the Beat Generation of the 1950s and 1960s, most particularly that of Jack Kerouac (1922–69). More attention is being paid than ever before to the ways in which Buddhism was important to "East Coast Beats" Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg (1926–97), and to the members of the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance like Gary Snyder, Philip Whelan, and Lew Welch. This latter group as "West Coast Beats" joined the "East Coast Beats" to make the Beat movement a national movement.

The initial critical response in the United States to two of the most revolutionary initial works of the movement, Kerouac's novel *On the Road* and Ginsberg's long poem

Howl, was overwhelmingly negative. Critics and the popular press saw these works and their authors as repudiating all civilized values and urging America's youth to abandon all moral restraint in favor of free and continual booze, drugs, and the unrestrained sexuality and loose morals of jazz. America was not prepared to see these authors and their friends as engaged in a serious spiritual quest and their works as religious texts. But that was how Ginsberg and Kerouac saw themselves and their works.

It was hard to ignore the religious nature of Kerouac's and Snyder's quests as described in *The Dharma Bums*, in which Kerouac used himself as a model for the narrator Ray Smith, Snyder as the model for the hero of the novel, Japhy Ryder, and Ginsberg as the model for Ray's poet friend Alvah Goldbook. But that novel, the first book Kerouac published after *On the Road*, was largely dismissed by literary critics as superficial, a kind of playing with Buddhism on the part of an author who was irresponsible, immoral, and undisciplined. It had a more conventional narration, did not speak as clearly from the writer's immediate consciousness, and was not as consistently written in the marvelous "spontaneous prose" which distinguished *On the Road*. Though many have since acknowledged the importance of Beat writing to American literature, *The Dharma Bums*, perhaps in part because of its very explicit religiousness, has been ignored in most literary studies of Kerouac's work.

There is a significant divide in the studies of Kerouac's work in general and *The Dharma Bums* in particular. Those who write within fields like American Literature, American Studies, and even American Religion, see the Beats and Kerouac as freshly appropriating traditions already present in American literature: Romanticism, transcendentalism, the poetry of Walt Whitman, and so on. There are many intriguing parallels between the transcendentalists and the Beats: "Their romantic longing for lives led apart from the unnatural rhythms of city life, their certainty of correspondence between the natural and the supernatural, their sense of the prophetic role of the

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poet." (Stephen Prothero, "Introduction," in Carole Tomkinson, ed., *Big Sky Mind: Buddhism and the Beat Generation*, New York: Riverhead Books, 1995) Like the transcendentalists, the Beats were highly critical of the deformations of real religious insight and motivation in the established religions in the America of their time. And like the Transcendentalists, the Beats were drawn by the wisdom traditions of the East. But to speak only of American influences on the vision of Kerouac and Snyder is willfully to ignore the extent to which Buddhism, Chinese culture, and Japanese culture were real sources for the insights and values of the Beats.

In general, scholars within American literature have not felt a need to arrive for themselves at an understanding of Buddhism and East Asian cultures in order to interpret and judge the work of Kerouac and others. But Kerouac in fact spent several years, beginning in 1953, in concentrated Buddhist reading, study, and practice. It is fair to say that Buddhism became central to his life and writing for the next few years. Kerouac obtained and carried with him for constant rereading Dwight Goddard's *A Buddhist Bible*. Goddard's anthology contained the Heart and Diamond Sutras, the *Surangama Sutra*, the *Lankavatara Sutra*, and the Awakening of Faith in Mahayana (*Ch'i-hsin-lun*, *Kishinron*) as well as the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* of Ch'an, Hui-neng. The anthology did not contain the Pure Land sutras or the Lotus Sutra. But Kerouac also during this period sought out every sutra and book on Buddhism he could find at the New York Public Library and elsewhere, and clearly knew both the Lotus Sutra and the Pure Land sutras by 1956. Evidence of his wide reading, including the Lotus Sutra, can be found in his only recently published work *Some of the Dharma*. This was begun in 1953 as reading notes, but it evolved into an all-encompassing 400-page work of nonfiction "chronicling his thinking, incorporating reading notes, prayers, poems, blues poems, haiku, meditations, letters, conversations, journal entries, stories, and more. Kerouac felt he had discovered a powerful new form, and the Buddhism he explored with it became an important element of his worldview." (David Stanford, editor, in the introductory material) In January 1955 Kerouac wrote to his literary agent, "From now on all my writing is going to have a basis of Buddhist Teaching free of all worldly and literary motives." Kerouac completed *Some of the Dharma* in 1956, and began fruitless efforts to get it published. He wrote *The Dharma Bums* in 1957.

Ginsberg rightly complained about this failure on the part of scholars of American literature and culture to appreciate that Kerouac was a sincere Buddhist, and to learn anything about Buddhism themselves in order to understand Kerouac. Defending *The Dharma Bums* in the *Village Voice* newspaper in 1958, he pointed out that his friend had had a genuine religious experience. Later, at a conference of Kerouac scholars and enthusiasts, he offered

some instruction in basic Buddhism that would open up Kerouac's work of poetry called *Mexico City Blues* to a deeper, more accurate interpretation.

On the other side of this divide is a sprinkling of scholarly essays on Kerouac and Buddhism, particularly on Kerouac's novel *The Dharma Bums*, by those whose chief interest is in Buddhism. While very perceptive concerning aspects of Buddhism that can be seen in Kerouac's work, the authors have a limited knowledge of the American context of the Beats. This essay inevitably will also fall into that category. But the ideal study, toward which this author would like one day to aspire, would be one that could combine and give proper weight to both sources of influence.

In reading *The Dharma Bums* as a reflection of Kerouac's Buddhism, we must understand from the outset the dilemma posed by the apparent autobiographical nature of Kerouac's novels. Kerouac was called "the Great Rememberer" by Ginsberg in 1972, and surely it is true that the thoughts and actions of Ray Smith and Japhy Ryder in large part correspond to what we know of the real lives of Kerouac and Snyder. Yet Kerouac makes his memories of real persons into fictional characters within the context of a story that has to have a plot such as few real lives have. In *The Dharma Bums* Kerouac is also trying to make a religious point, and for that purpose no doubt edited his memories to make his fictional double more saintly than he himself had been. It can be misleading when biographers of Kerouac rely heavily on his novels as source material, as most do. For these reasons we will refer throughout to the fictional characters by their fictional names, while giving some of what we know about the real persons from other sources that jibes with their fictional representations.

The Dharma Bums chronicles Ray/Jack's trip from New York to San Francisco in 1955, his meeting of Japhy/Snyder while he was living with Alvah/Ginsberg in Berkeley that fall, his return to his sister's home in North Carolina for the winter of 1956, and his return from North Carolina to San Francisco to live with Snyder in Mill Valley in the spring of 1956. In those broad outlines the novel certainly follows Kerouac's life.

Japhy and Ray as Buddhist Practitioners

Much of the novel draws a contrast between Ray Smith's attempts to practice Buddhism and those of Japhy Ryder, ways that correspond to what we know of the real ways of practicing Buddhism of Kerouac and Snyder. But as the narrative time of the novel moves forward, Kerouac makes clear that he the author and Ray Smith the character also tremendously admire Japhy's way of practicing Buddhism, and as the novel progresses Ray clearly becomes influenced by it.

Ray, the narrator, makes clear his self-identity as a Buddhist right away, during the first important episode in

the book, his meeting with a hobo on a train during his own trip on the rails from southern California to San Francisco. This hobo shares with him a prayer by Saint Theresa in which she says that after her death she will return to earth by showering it with roses from heaven, forever, for all living creatures. Ray says that this "Saint Theresa bum" is the first genuine Dharma bum he had met.

Of himself he says:

I was very devout in those days [fall of 1955] and was practicing my religious devotions almost to perfection. Since then I've become a little hypocritical about my lip-service and a little tired and cynical. Because now [1957] I am grown so old and neutral. . . . But then I really believed in the reality of charity and kindness and humility and zeal and neutral tranquility and wisdom and ecstasy, and I believed that I was an oldtime bhikk[h]u in modern clothes wandering the world (usually the immense triangular arc of New York to Mexico City to San Francisco) in order to turn the wheel of the True Meaning, or Dharma, and gain merit for myself as a future Buddha (Awakener), and as a future Hero in Paradise. I had not met Japhy Ryder yet, I was about to the next week, or heard anything about "Dharma Bums" although at this time I was a perfect Dharma Bum myself and considered myself a religious wanderer.

Within the context of Kerouac's life and the original sources of the Beat movement, the "Saint Theresa bum" and Ray's sense of himself as "an oldtime bhikk[h]u in modern clothes wandering the world . . . in order to turn the wheel of the True Meaning, or Dharma, and gain merit for myself as a future Buddha (Awakener)" connect to the strong interest he and other East Coast Beats also had in the down-and-outer, Oswald Spengler's "fellaheen," as the bearer of a new consciousness. In his *Decline of the West* (1939) Spengler said of the fellaheen that they are characterized by a "deep piety that fills the waking consciousness . . . the naive belief . . . that there is some sort of mystic constitution of actuality."

But both here at the beginning and as the book unfolds it is very clear that Ray is interested in something more specific than this general notion of the beat. He is quite serious about his intention to practice the poor, simple, homeless life of meditation and prayer, not only as a hobo or fellaheen, but specifically as a Buddhist monk.

In fact, one of the central structural devices of the book is the contrast it draws between Ray's idea of bhikkhuhood and Japhy's model of Buddhist monastic life. Ray, who before the novel opens has spent months at a time living as a self-described "bhikkhu" devoting full time to meditation in the woods near his sister's house in North Carolina, is committed to homelessness, to wandering. At

one point he says that American culture, which he compares to a madhouse, leaves him no alternative: "The only alternative to sleeping out, hopping freights, and doing what I wanted I saw in a vision would be to just sit with a hundred other patients in front of a nice television set in a madhouse where we could be 'supervised.'"

Ray has also been practicing the Buddhist bhikkhu's restraint of body, speech, and mind. One author notes that in this novel Ray is practicing almost all of the Buddhist precepts with remarkable faithfulness. (The exception, not surprisingly—and in my view fatally in his creator Kerouac's case—is the precept against intoxicating liquors. More on that below.) He has put in an entire year of celibacy. He says that he did so "based on my feeling that lust was the direct cause of birth which was the direct cause of suffering and death and I had really no lie come to a point where I regarded lust as offensive and even cruel." He continues during the course of the novel to practice celibacy, apart from a few lapses. Of these, his initiation into "yab-yum" with Japhy's girlfriend Princess is the most notable.

Japhy, according to Ray, has learned Chinese and Japanese and become an Oriental scholar and discovered the greatest Dharma bums of them all, the Zen lunatics of China and Japan. He too is practicing a kind of monastic simplicity. In Berkeley Ray visits Japhy's small house, a shack "about twelve by twelve, with nothing in it but simple Japhy appurtenances that showed his belief in the simple monastic life." In this house Japhy studies, meditates, and works on translating the poems of Han Shan. He is cultivating a Japanese-style garden such as one might find in a temple: "He had a few odd boulders and rocks and funny little trees to establish his Japanese tea garden." Later, Ray stays for a while with Japhy in Japhy's cottage on the hill above Sean Monahan's house. On the door of the cottage there is "a board with Chinese inscriptions on it. . . . Inside I saw the beautiful simplicity of Japhy's way of living, neat, sensible, strangely rich without a cent having been spent on the decoration." Such "beautiful simplicity" is something that Japhy connects with his East Asian Buddhist practice. But the celibacy that Ray has adopted is not a part of Japhy's Buddhist practice. Japhy says that he distrusts any Buddhism that "puts down" sex. Japhy experiences remarkable success with women, and even in his retreat cottage above Monahan's house he organizes parties every weekend. Abstinence from alcohol and other intoxicants is also not an essential practice on Japhy's Buddhist path.

Both men imagine that they desire a solitary withdrawal from society as the optimum condition for meditation and for writing. The Chinese poet Han Shan, Ray learns, is one of Japhy's great heroes and the chief model for his Buddhist practice. According to Ray, Han Shan was "a Chinese scholar who got sick of the big city and the world and took off to hide in the mountains." Ray writes that

when he wondered why Han Shan was Japhy's hero, Japhy answered: "Because he was a poet, a mountain man, a Buddhist dedicated to the principle of meditation on the essence of all things, a vegetarian too by the way though I haven't gone on that kick. . . . And he was a man of solitude who could take off by himself and live purely and true to himself." Japhy has in fact experienced almost totally solitary summers as a fire lookout in the High

Ray too hopes for a solitary life of prayer and meditation, completely withdrawn from social institutions. He writes:

I wanted to go off somewhere and find perfect solitude, and look into the perfect emptiness of my mind and be completely neutral from any and all ideas. I intended to pray, too, . . . for all living creatures; I saw it was the only decent activity left in the world. . . . rest and be kind, and do nothing else, practice what the Chinese call do-nothing.

But there are important differences. Ray emphasizes the wisdom that sees the emptiness of things, that all is a dream already ended. Japhy emphasizes the wisdom that sees the realness of the empty; rather than abandoning all activity except for meditation and prayer, he thinks it is better to be alert to the empty reality and act within it as if it were real. In an extended night of talk the day after their hike up the Matterhorn in the High Sierra mountains, Japhy suggests that in fact the world is the mind, and the mind is the world, and everything is real. He accuses Ray and Alvah Goldbook of carrying on like they were in a dream, "s..t, like they were themselves dreams or dots. Pain or love or danger makes you real again, ain't that right Ray like when you were scared on that ledge?" Frontiersmen are Japhy's heroes, "because they are constantly on the alert in the realness which might as well be real as unreal, what difference does it make, Diamond Sutra says 'Make no formed conceptions about the realness of existence nor about the unrealness of existence,' or words like that."

Japhy values actions as a way of practicing Buddhism. He makes notes on natural phenomena on their two-day hike on Mount Tamalpais, studies and translates while in Berkeley, and works cutting wood while in Marin. When Ray comes back to California to stay with Japhy in Marin, he has spent a summer of meditating and doing nothing. He is looking forward to seeing Japhy, for he thinks that during the summer away he has become enlightened to the central insights of Buddhism. Japhy, disappointingly, doesn't want to hear about his experiences. He tells Ray:

"I don't wanta hear all your word descriptions of words words words you made up all winter, man, I wanta be enlightened by actions."

And during their two months or so together in the cabin in Marin, Japhy asks Ray more than once why Ray is doing nothing all day, why he doesn't work. One such dialogue runs as follows: Japhy said: "Why do you sit on your ass all day?" Ray says: "I practice do nothing." Japhy: "What's the difference? Burn it, my Buddhism is activity."

Mountains as Pure Lands

This brings us to two themes that I see as related to the Buddhist imagination of Buddha-fields and the Pure Land. The first theme is the association of purity, mountains,

The late Jack Kerouac, author of The Dharma Bums. Photo: UPI/Corbis-Bettmann/PPS

Cascades. During these summers he only communicated with other human beings by radio. Japhy's vision for his immediate future is a solitary search for temples and solitary Buddhist meditators in Japan. He says:

"I'm going to Japan and walk all over that hilly country finding ancient little temples hidden and forgotten in the mountains and old sages a hundred and nine years old praying to Kwannon in huts and meditating so much that when they come out of meditating they laugh at everything that moves."

and Buddhist realization. Japhy teaches Ray that mountains are the place where Buddhas and “true emptiness-marvelous being” are most directly experienced. Mountains, in Japhy’s view, are the place where progress on the path toward buddhahood can be made. Japhy’s sense that profound religious transformation is associated with nature and with mountains shows not only that he is heir to Western transcendentalists and literary Romantics, as well as American explorers and naturalists like John Muir. It also shows that Japhy’s Buddhism, and through him Ray’s Buddhism at the time of the novel, has come to them through Chinese and Japanese Buddhist wisdom and imagination.

From the start Ray sees Japhy as free, pure, and devoted to finding the deep springs of life because he is not from a city. Japhy, he says, is “a kid from eastern Oregon brought up in a log cabin deep in the woods with his father and mother and sister, from the beginning a woods boy.” Later he says:

Colleges [are] nothing but grooming schools for middle-class non-identity which usually finds its perfect expression on the outskirts of the campus in rows of well-to-do houses with lawns and television sets in each living room with everybody looking at the same thing and thinking the same thing at the same time while the Japhies of the world go prowling in the wilderness to hear the voice crying in the wilderness, to find the ecstasy of the stars, to find the dark mysterious secret of the origin of faceless wonderless crapulous civilization.

But it is the description that Ray provides of the landscape and scenery and of his own internal experiences on

Japhy’s and Ray’s hike up the Matterhorn in the Sierras that best demonstrates both men’s conviction that it is in the mountains that one is in a Pure Land and buddhahood can be attained.

The account of this, the first of their hikes and climbs together, takes up a rather large section of the book. Ray says before their sleep on the plateau: “What a night of true sweet sleep this will be, what meditations I can get into in this intense silence of Nowhere.” Ray as narrator uses the term “pure” over and over again, as well as “diamond,” to describe the landscape of the hike. Ray says it is “a pure sweet night” as they enter the foothills of the Matterhorn. He continues:

the deer was in the road, looking at our headlamps, petrified, before leaping into the shrubbery by the side of the road and disappearing into the sudden, vast, diamond silence of the forest.

The next morning he awakens to a “beautiful morning—red pristine shafts of sunlight. . . .” “The first thing I knew Aurora was paling the eastern hems of Amida. . . .”

He notes that the road to the beginning of the trail “was dusty, a dirt road, but the lake was cerulean pure.” As they start on the trail he notes that “it’s pure morning in the high dry Sierras.” “Here we are by the fresh pure lake walking along in this good air,” and he draws a contrast with the bar in San Francisco, The Place, in which they might have spent the morning. As they climb higher, he exclaims, “Oh, this is like an early morning in China and I’m five years old in beginningless time!” He realizes that all around him are jewel-like colors, like those of the Pure Land; yellow aspens, the blue lake, and so on. Kerouac throughout *The Dharma Bums* deploys a prose

that borrows images and tone from Buddhist sutras. The use of vivid descriptions of jewel-like colors in the landscape characterizes the narration of this whole section of the book, as it does the Pure Land sutras and the descriptions of Buddha-fields and Pure Lands in the Lotus Sutra.

There is a sense of eternity in time to the landscape, along with a strong sense of the presence of Buddhas. Ray notes that the "trail had a kind of immortal look to it." He speaks of "golden eternities," and "ecstasy." Japhy says that the mountain itself is a Buddha, and as they near the top, Japhy says that to him the large rocks at the top looming above them are Buddhas. When they reach the plateau on which they intend to camp, the same kinds of description continue. Ray says: "Here now the earth was a splendorous thing . . . pearl pure lucid water." The stream "was cold and pure like snow and the crystal-lidded eyes of heaven."

Japhy says to Ray:

"Ray when you're up here you're not sittin in a Berkeley tea room. This is the beginning and the end of the world right here. Look at all those patient Buddhas lookin at us saying nothing."

In a scene that is one of the climaxes of the hike, the two men sit on the edge of the plateau and pray and meditate. The plateau high on the mountain is a place that inspires and sustains prayer. Ray writes:

The stars began to flash. I fell into deep meditation, felt that the mountains were indeed Buddhas and our friends. . . . It was beautiful. The pinkness vanished and then it was all purple dusk and the roar of the silence was like a wash of diamond waves going

through the liquid porches of our ears, enough to soothe a man a thousand years. I prayed for Japhy, for his future safety and happiness and eventual Buddhahood. It was all completely serious, all completely hallucinated, all completely happy.

Like the Land of Bliss, the Pure Land.

The night they spend on the plateau is a happy one for Ray. He reports that, as with the advanced bodhisattva: "my dreams were pure cold dreams like ice water, happy dreams, no nightmares." Japhy too feels that he is in a land of bliss, and tells Ray that mountains will continue to provide a land of bliss for Ray as they have done for him:

Japhy began to shriek and hoot and whistle and sing, full of pure gladness. Nobody was around to hear him. "This is the way you'll be on top of Mount Desolation, this summer, Ray."

Ray replies:

"I'll sing at the top of my voice for the first time in my life."

For Japhy the Pure Land is not a dream or a hallucination, but is found by becoming close to matter, to the empty which is also the real, provided it is not obscured by a head full of notions:

"The closer you get to real matter, rock air fire and wood, boy, the more spiritual the world is. All these people thinking they're hardheaded materialistic practical types, they don't know s.t about matter, their heads are full of dreamy ideas and notions."

Japhy says en route up the mountain that the only thing wrong with Ray is that he doesn't know to get out in the mountains, where he can be surrounded by the real material/spiritual world.

Ray for his part embraces the idea that there is something wrong with him when he is in the city. He realizes the hiking will do him good, get him away from drinking, perhaps make him appreciate a whole new way of living. When they reach the plateau, true to Japhy's prediction, Ray finds that he has "absolutely not a jot of appetite for alcohol." Part of the appeal of mountains to Ray is his growing belief that in this Pure Land he can break the grip of drinking.

Purifying a Buddha-field

The book's second theme that relates to the Buddhist imagining of Buddha-fields and Pure Lands is the commitment that both men make to become Buddhas and purify a Buddha-field.

Ray and Japhy, as well as the Kerouac and Snyder of this period on whom they are modeled, share a sense of mission to make America their own Buddha-field. In this American Buddha-field they will purify society of false values and teach and awaken sentient beings. But their ideas about how to do this differ. It is Ray who most naturally thinks in terms of Buddha-fields, but it is Japhy who lays out the most compelling vision for what America as a purified Buddha-field would be like and how he expects to work toward that end.

Both agree that America as they speak, this *saha*-world, is far from being a Pure Land. Both Ray and Japhy are critical of what America has become in the postwar period, the cold-war period of prosperity, the rush to experience the isolated conformist life of the suburbs, "the organization man," the threat of the bomb, and the newly available wealth of electric appliances and television. Early on Ray mentions Japhy's anarchistic ideas about how Americans don't know how to live. In Japhy's view, cold-war Americans with their culture of conformity and repression, of working to consume, have given away all their freedom. Japhy says:

"You know, when I was a little kid in Oregon I didn't feel that I was an American at all, with all that suburban ideal and sex repression and general dreary newspaper gray censorship of all human values. . . . [M]y karma was to be born in America where nobody has any fun or believes in anything, especially freedom. That's why I was always sympathetic to freedom movements, too, like anarchism in the Northwest, the oldtime heroes of Everett Massacre, and all."

For Japhy, Buddhism is a freedom movement.

Japhy makes this point in the section that I call "Japhy's

manifesto." He's been reading Whitman, who reinforces his notion about the "Zen lunacy bard of old desert paths." He says:

"See, the whole thing is a world full of rucksack wanderers, Dharma Bums refusing to subscribe to the general demand that they consume production and therefore have to work for the privilege of consuming, all that crap they didn't really want anyway such as refrigerators, TV sets, cars, at least new fancy cars, certain hair oils and deodorants and general junk you finally always see a week later in the garbage anyway, all of them imprisoned in a system of work, produce, consume, work, produce, consume. . . ."

On the positive side, Japhy expresses the hope that the work he and his friends will carry out toward the creation of a Buddha-field in America will make an enormous difference. The passage above continues:

"I see a vision of a great rucksack revolution thousands or even millions of young Americans wandering around with rucksacks, going up to mountains to pray, making children laugh and old men glad, making young girls happy and old girls happier, all of 'em Zen Lunatics who go about writing poems that happen to appear in their heads for no reason and also by being kind and also by strange unexpected acts keep giving visions of eternal freedom to everybody and to all living creatures, that's what I like about you Goldbook and Smith, you two guys from the East Coast which I thought was dead."

Ray later says about Japhy: "What hope, what human energy, what truly American optimism was packed in that neat little frame of his!" Japhy also expresses some of the hope and optimism that Ray finds characteristic of him. Japhy says: "Just think how truly great and wise America will be, with all this energy and exuberance and space focused into the Dharma."

Japhy again expresses his sense of his role in history: He says:

"Think what a great world revolution will take place when East meets West finally, and it'll be guys like us that can start the thing. Think of millions of guys all over the world with rucksacks on their backs tramping around the back country and hitchhiking and bringing the word down to everybody."

The strongest statement of Japhy's sense of the possibility that he and Ray may create a Buddha-field as the ultimate outcome of their dedication and vow is found in what he says to Ray on their last two-day hike on Mount Tamalpais:

Japhy was feeling very good. "Goddammit, Ray, you'll never know how happy I am we decided to have these last two days hiking. I feel good all over again. I *know* somethin good's gonna come out of all this!"

"All what?"

"I dunno—out of the way we feel about life. You and I ain't out to bust anybody's skull, or cut someone's throat in an economic way, we've dedicated ourselves to prayer for all sentient beings and when we're strong enough we'll really be able to do it, too, like the old saints. Who knows, the world might wake up and burst out into a beautiful flower of Dharma everywhere."

Japhy in fact has concrete plans that he thinks will help to bring this transformation to pass. On the Mount Tamalpais hike he tells Ray something about his plans:

Japhy was in high spirits. "Goddammit it feels good to get away from dissipation and go in the woods. When I get back from Japan, Ray, when the weather gets really cold we'll put on our long underwear and hitchhike through the land. Think if you can of ocean to mountain Alaska to Klamath a solid forest of fir to bhikk[h]u in, a lake of a million wild geese. Woo! You know what woo means in Chinese?"

"What"

"Fog. These woods are great here in Marin, I'll show you Muir Woods today, but up north is all that real old Pacific Coast mountain and ocean land, the future home of the Dharma-body. Know what I'm gonna do? I'll do a new long poem called 'Rivers and Mountains without End' and just write it on and on on a scroll and unfold on and on with new surprises and always what went before forgotten, see, like a river, or like one of them real long Chinese silk paintings that show two little men hiking in an endless landscape of gnarled old trees and mountains so high they merge with the fog in the upper silk void. I'll spend three thousand years writing it, it'll be packed full of information on soil conservation, the Tennessee Valley Authority, astronomy, geology, Hsuan Tsang's travels, Chinese painting theory, reforestation, Oceanic ecology and food chains."

Japhy also draws on Native American tribal models. On the same hike he tells Ray:

"Ray, by God, later on in our future life we can have a fine free-wheeling tribe in these California hills, get girls and have dozens of radiant enlightened brats, live like Indians in hogans and eat berries and buds."

[Ray replies:] "No beans?"

[Japhy:] "We'll write poems, we'll get a printing

press and print our own poems, the Dharma Press, we'll poetize the lot and make a fat book of icy bombs for the booby public."

Ray for his part sees himself as making a contribution to humankind. When earlier, carrying his backpack, he is mistaken for a prospector for gold or uranium, he reflects:

What I was going to hunt for was infinitely more valuable for mankind in the long run than ore.

But his ideas are different from Japhy's. Close to the end of his first stay in California, he reflects:

But I had my own bangtail ideas and they had nothing to do with the "lunatic" part of all this. I wanted to get me a full pack complete with everything necessary to sleep, shelter, eat, cook, in fact a regular kitchen and bedroom right on my back, and go off somewhere and find perfect solitude and look into the perfect emptiness of my mind and be completely neutral from any and all ideas. I intended to pray, too, as my only activity, pray for all living creatures; I saw it was the only decent activity left in the world. . . . I didn't want to have anything to do, really, either with Japhy's ideas about society (I figured it would be better just to avoid it altogether, walk around it) or with any of Alvah's ideas about grasping after life as much as you can because of its sweet sadness and because you would be dead some day."

But in addition to praying, he also mentions teaching as a bodhisattva, an awakened being. At the end of his first stay in California, he reflects on his own destiny:

The following week I packed up and decided to hit the road and get out of that city of ignorance which is the modern city. . . . Suddenly it became clear to me that there was a lot of teaching for me to do in my lifetime.

He gets together with Japhy in the city for the last time this trip, and the two come across a black woman preaching out of doors in the park. She urges her listeners to recognize and embrace "a new field" that they are being given. Ray is charmed by the woman's message, but Japhy does not like her Christian language and themes. Ray says, among other things:

"Don't you hear that big old gal calling you and telling you you've got a *new field*, a new Buddha-field boy?" Japhy was so pleased he wrinkled his eyes and smiled. [Ray continued:] "Whole Buddha-fields in every direction for each one of us. . . ."

He leaves the Bay area and hitchhikes to his sister's home in North Carolina, trying out life as a backpacker, sleeping out. In some towns it is forbidden, and the police are aggressive in rounding up hobos and bums. During his stay in North Carolina he has mystical experiences, including what seems like enlightenment. He has a vision of Dipankara Buddha and the Pure Awakened Land, and imaginatively experiences the bliss of the Buddha-fields.

In January, his meditations begin to bear fruit; he feels that "Everything is all right forever and forever." He realizes that "everything is empty but awake," and concludes that "it means I've become a Buddha." He wants to write Warren Coughlin, "Yes Coughlin it's a shining nowness and we've done it, carried America like a shining blanket into that brighter nowhere Already." His sense clearly is that his work of becoming a Buddha and purifying the Buddha-field of America is already done.

"Everything's all right," I thought. "Form is emptiness and emptiness is form and we're here forever in one form or another which is empty. What the dead have accomplished, this rich silent hush of the Pure Awakened Land." . . . "I have nothing to do but do what I want and be kind and remain nevertheless uninfluenced by imaginary judgments and pray for the light." Sitting in my Buddha-arbor, therefore, in that "colyalcolor" wall of flowers pink and red and ivory white, among aviaries of magic transcendent birds recognizing my awakening mind with sweet weird cries (the pathless lark), in the ethereal perfume, mysteriously ancient, the bliss of the Buddha-fields, I saw that my life was a vast glowing empty page and I could do anything I wanted. . . . I knew now that I was a bliss heir.

From this point in the novel, Ray sees his search for buddhahood as already accomplished. He thinks that his experience has been described by the famous Chinese Ch'an Ox-herding Pictures, and that his current state is that depicted in the final picture, in which the seeker and finder of the ox has returned to the world and is drinking with the butcher in the market. Japhy, though, is not so convinced that Ray's attainment is really so unshakable.

Ray's approach to purifying his Buddha-field is to see himself as one who prays for all sentient beings and as a teacher and a messenger. At the end of the book, Ray spends sixty days living the life of the Chinese Buddhist poet Han Shan on Desolation Peak, where he has a meditation vision of Avalokitesvara:

Avalokitesvara the Hearer and Answerer of Prayer said to me "You are empowered to remind people that they are utterly free" so I laid my hand on myself to remind myself first and then felt gay, yelled "Ta," opened my eyes, and a shooting star shot.

Freedom through a realization of emptiness and a realization that everything is mind and can therefore be changed, poverty as freedom and a way to freedom, the bliss of awakening, kindness, and compassion—these are the messages that Ray wants to bring to America as a way of purifying his Buddha-land.

Japhy and others keep bringing up the subject of Ray's heavy drinking. Japhy says: "How do you expect to become a good bhikku or even a Bodhisattva Mahasattva always getting drunk like that?" Ray replies: "Have you forgotten the last of the Bulls (i.e., the Ox-herding Pictures), where he gets drunk with the butchers?" Japhy: "Ah, so what, how can you understand your own mind essence with your head all muddled and your teeth all stained and your belly all sick?" Ray: "I'm not sick, I'm fine. I could just float up into that gray fog and fly around San Francisco like a seagull. D'I ever tell you about Skid Row here, I used to live here—" "I lived on Skid Road in Seattle myself, I know all about that." Ray as narrator thinks that at the end of the long episode in which this dialogue occurs he has won the point—drinking is not a problem for an awakened Buddhist. But if Ray stands in some measure for Kerouac himself, later events showed that drinking was a problem for this particular Buddhist, and may have contributed to his eventual failure to persist on the bodhisattva path.

As Kerouac was writing this book, his most famous novel, *On the Road*, was on the best-seller list. The Beat Generation was suddenly a colossal media event, attracting a great deal of unfair criticism. Kerouac had an opportunity to make a difference in America. He seized this opportunity to try to lead a spiritual revival as the best way of giving American culture hope for the future. Leftists criticized this attempt as not being based on any economic and social analysis, and as we know, in the 60's the leftists eventually won out. Kerouac wrote many more novels, generally regarded by literary critics as more serious and more accomplished than *The Dharma Bums*. But *The Dharma Bums* introduced the public to a romanticized and simplified version of the ideals, teachings, and practices of Buddhism in general. It also introduced readers to the wisdom of Chuang-tzu, Han Shan, and the Japanese haiku poets and Buddhist masters. It also introduced readers to the long tradition in China and Japan of celebrating wandering outside the settled world and particularly in mountains as a purifying and revivifying route to the deepest kinds of human understanding of the world, the void, and the self. It also introduced readers to the notion that life's deepest meaning could be found in purifying the self and benefiting others, empowered by the Dharma.

Increasing problems with alcohol led to Kerouac's death at age 47. One troubling aspect of reading *The Dharma Bums* is that we as readers can never be sure when Ray's visions and insight are coming from a profound transfor-

mation of consciousness, and when they are coming from alcohol. And in the Buddhism of Ray and Japhy in *The Dharma Bums* it seems easy to attain realizations of emptiness, ecstasy, and freedom, realizations that Ray at least interprets as attainment of the goal. The degree to which for most the East Asian Buddhist paths are ones that require constant attention, discipline, and hard-won self-knowledge is not so apparent here.

Pages from the original edition of Kerouac's The Dharma Bums, published by Viking Press in New York in 1958.

At the end of his time with Japhy, Ray dreams of a "little seamed brown unimaginable Chinese hobo" coming from the mountains into a crowded, dirty marketplace:

"This one was a Chinese twice-as-poor, twice-as-tough and infinitely mysterious tramp and it was Japhy for sure. . . . I woke up at dawn, thinking, 'Wow, is that what will happen to Japhy? Maybe he'll leave that monastery [in Japan] and just disappear and we'll never see him again, and he'll be the Han Shan ghost of the Orient mountains and even the Chinese'll be afraid of him he'll be so raggedy and beat.'"

If Japhy is modeled on Gary Snyder, we have the advantage of knowing what in fact has happened since the fictional Ray said these words and Kerouac wrote the book. Snyder once said after Kerouac's death that Kerouac had used Buddhism to accomplish what he wanted to accomplish in the twentieth century, and he, Snyder, had also used Buddhism to accomplish what he wanted to accomplish in the twentieth century. Kerouac was inspired by his Buddhist faith and practice to write this book. He hoped to spark a new birth of real freedom,

a purification and expansion of America's heart, in a cramped, conformist, materialist period.

As he has striven to purify his own Buddha-land, Snyder for his part has fulfilled many of the dreams that Japhy Ryder enunciates in this book. He has lived simply and independently in the mountains. He has gathered a tribe around him and has founded a meditation hall. As a naturalist and a poet, he has written *Mountains and Rivers Without End* and other closely observed studies of nature. He has turned his reader's attention to the concrete material world as both empty and extremely important. He has urged those who wish to see a renewal of sustaining values in America to study the economics and ecology of their own watersheds, and has advocated global sustainability. The forms and the subjects of his written transmissions of liberating wisdom correspond well to what the fictional Japhy declared would be the contents of his "endless scroll."

Kerouac in *The Dharma Bums* wrote sentences and paragraphs of depth and beauty, conveying his strong sense that the *saha*-world is already pure. More than that, he held out to his readers with passion and heartfelt simplicity a belief in an America transformed into a Pure Land by ordinary people awakened to wisdom and compassion. These ordinary people were to be, like Kerouac, liberated by Asian Buddhist scriptures and practices, freely appropriated and changed by an independent, egalitarian, overly self-confident and youthful American spirit. The result was a book that touched many hearts and transformed many lives.

We can see now that a great deal more knowledge of Asian Buddhist teachings and practices would have helped Ray, and presumably Kerouac. Yet Kerouac showed in his creation of Ray and Japhy that he was remarkably well informed about Buddhism. This is all the more impressive when one takes into account the limited and often unreadable translations available in the 1950s. There is no doubt that he succeeded in contributing to the purification of America as a Buddha-land. With *The Dharma Bums* Kerouac helped other bodhisattvas to set up centers for Buddhist practice in America. He called a generation to value wisdom and spirituality more than conformity, material goods, and success. Gary Snyder's different, more complex vision of how to purify the American Buddha-field, the energy with which he has communicated it, and the ways in which he has made it accessible and given it concrete forms, is inspiring Americans now. □

A Gentle, Elegant Jizo Bosatsu

by Takeshi Kuno, Photo by Kozo Ogawa

This graceful statue from the Kamakura period (1185–1333) of one of Japan's most beloved bodhisattvas was carved by the noted sculptor Kaikei (fl. late twelfth–early thirteenth century). Excellently preserved, it retains its original beauty.

The statue of Jizo Bosatsu (Skt., Kshitigarbha) pictured here is in the Kokeido at the temple Todai-ji in Nara. The figure, 89.8 cm high, stands on an elaborately carved heart-of-the-lotus pedestal that is surrounded by fluffy white clouds. The clouds, although contemporaneous in style, are a later addition. The statue is similar in concept to others of Jizo Bosatsu produced during the Kamakura period, which usually have a staff in the right hand and a sacred jewel in the left. This statue's staff and mandorla (the aureole around the body) have been lost, however.

Despite these losses, the statue is noted for its excellent state of preservation, with much of the original color still visible on the body and the garments. When the image was new, the body was painted with a white pigment and the priestly shaved head was suggested by shading in black ink. The skirt of the underrobe and the lower parts of the surplice-like garment were vermilion. The surplice was carved as if composed of several layers, featuring intricate patterns that appear woven into the fine net fabric. The dominant stripes on this overgarment were colored ultramarine over verdigris. The statue was then highlighted with cut gold leaf (*kirikane*), especially on the draped folds of the surplice.

Japanese cypress (*hinoki*) was the wood used for the statue. The torso was made using the split-and-joined method (*warihagi zukuri*), and the head probably was also. An inscription on the side of the tenon at the mortise and tenon joint of the right leg reads "Master Craftsman *Hokyo* Kaikei." This tells us that the statue was carved by Kaikei at a time when he held the prestigious religious rank of *hokyo*.

Kaikei, who with Unkei (d. 1223) was a representative sculptor of the Kamakura period, was first known by the titles Tamba Koshi and Echigo Hokyo. Out of great admiration for the priest Chogen (1121–1206), who had called himself Namu Amida Butsu, he took the religious name of An'Amida Butsu. That is why such handsome works as this Jizo Bosatsu are said to be in the An'ami style. Kaikei is believed to have been a disciple of Kokei (fl. 1152–97) or Unkei. He was active in Nara and its vicinity and demonstrated a skill that no one else of his time could equal. His name appears on a list of people who joined with Unkei to copy the Lotus Sutra in 1183 in order to establish closer relations with Buddhism. His earliest known work is a statue of Miroku Bosatsu (Bodhisattva Maitreya) dated the ninth month of Bunji 5 (1189), now in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Around 1191 he carved another statue of

Miroku Bosatsu for the Sambo-in at the temple Daigo-ji in Kyoto.

At that time he also produced a large Amida triad as the central image of the Pure Land Hall of the temple Jodo-ji, built by Chogen in Harima Province, present-day Hyogo Prefecture. This work is typical of Kaikei's early period. It is notable for its different hand gestures (*mudra*), reflecting the influence of Buddhist paintings of China's Sung Dynasty (960–1279). In recent times an inscription with the date Kenkyu 6 (1195) was discovered inside the statue, confirming when the triad was produced. From 1194 Kaikei was engaged in carving a statue of Tamonten, one of a pair standing at the South Central Gate of Todai-ji, and around the same time he, together with a large number of less well known sculptors, also created the statue of Nyoirin Kannon (Skt., Cintamanicakra) to flank the Great Buddha at Nara. These works later were destroyed in a fire. Today the most famous of his statues remaining at Todai-ji is that of Sogyo Hachiman as the tutelary deity of Buddhism, portrayed as a Buddhist priest, which was carved in 1201.

The following year Kaikei produced an image of a standing Amida for the Shunjodo of Todai-ji, and between the seventh and tenth months of 1203, together with Unkei, he created statues of the two benevolent kings for the Great Southern Gate of Todai-ji. He received the title and rank of *hokyo* on the occasion of the commemorative service held at Todai-ji in the eleventh month of 1203. He was further raised to the rank of *hogen* sometime between the fourth month of 1208 and the seventh month of 1210. Thus the statue of Jizo Bosatsu pictured must have been carved between 1203, when Kaikei received the title of *hokyo*, and the time when he received the title of *hogen*.

Kaikei later produced a great many statues and also was responsible for repairs on numerous others. Examples of his later work include the Amida triad at Kodai-in on Mount Koya in Wakayama Prefecture and the Amida Nyorai at Saiho-in in Nara. In contrast to Unkei's masculine style, Kaikei's sculptures have a peculiarly graceful beauty. They are characterized by a gentle handsomeness and elegant garments decorated with delicate, finely wrought patterns. This Jizo Bosatsu, officially designated by the Japanese government as an Important Cultural Property, is a characteristic example of his work. □

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The Rise and Fall of the City of Pāṭaliputra

by Hajime Nakamura

Buddhism developed because of Gotama's focus on lay people. It was the community of the ordained, however, that converted the "Last Journey" into a scripture, blurring the contents of the teaching given to lay people.

Let us now examine the discourse Gotama gave to lay followers at Pāṭaligāma concerning the precepts as it is described in the Pāli recension. "Then the Venerable Master addressed the lay followers of Pāṭaligāma, 'Householders, there are five misfortunes that await one who does evil, breaking the precepts. What are those five? Well, householders, those who do evil, breaking the precepts, through their neglect suffer much loss of their property. This is the first misfortune that awaits those who do evil, breaking the precepts. Next, householders, those who do evil, breaking the precepts, receive a bad reputation. This is the second misfortune that awaits those who do evil, breaking the precepts. Next, householders, those who do evil, breaking the precepts, are anxious and fearful wherever they go, whether it is an assembly of the royal house, Brahmins, householders, or *bhikkhus*. This is the third misfortune that awaits those who do evil, breaking the precepts. Next, householders, those who do evil, breaking the precepts, are unhinged upon death. This is the fourth misfortune that awaits those who do evil, breaking the precepts. Next, householders, those who do evil, breaking the precepts, will, after their body breaks up and they die, be reborn in an evil state, a painful state, a fallen state, in a hell. This is the fifth misfortune that awaits those who do evil, breaking the precepts.

"Householders, there are five advantages that await those who are of good character and observe the precepts. What are those five? Well, householders, those who observe the precepts and are of good character, because they neglect nothing gain much wealth. This is the first advantage that awaits those who are of good character and observe the precepts. Next, householders, those who ob-

serve the precepts and are of good character have a good reputation. This is the second advantage that awaits those who are of good character and observe the precepts. Next, householders, those who observe the precepts and are of good character are confident and fearless at whatever assembly they attend, whether of the royal house, Brahmins, householders, or *bhikkhus*. This is the third advantage that awaits those who are of good character and observe the precepts. Next, householders, those who observe the precepts and are of good character are not unhinged upon death. This is the fourth advantage that awaits those who are of good character and observe the precepts. Next, householders, those who observe the precepts and are of good character will be reborn in a good state in a heavenly realm after their bodies break up and they die. This is the fifth advantage that awaits those who are of good character and observe the precepts.

"Householders, these five are the advantages awaiting one who is of good character and observes the precepts.' Then the Venerable Master, having spoken far into the night to the lay followers of Pāṭaligāma, instructing, inspiring, and delighting them by the discourse concerning the Dhamma, dismissed them, saying: 'Householders, the night is advanced; it is time for you to do as you choose.' The lay followers of Pāṭaligāma replied, 'We understand,' and rose from their seats, saluted the Venerable Master reverently, and departed, passing by him with their right shoulders turned toward him. When the lay followers of Pāṭaligāma had left, the Venerable Master entered an empty room." (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, I, 23–25)

Whereas the Pāli text says those who gathered were "lay followers" (*upāsaka*), the Sanskrit text (Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra, IV, 3) has "Brahmins and householders" (*brāhmaṇa-grhapatayah*). The Pāli version presupposes lay followers in general, while the Sanskrit limits itself to the upper castes, indicative of the attitude of Sanskrit Buddhism toward caste. Nevertheless, most of those who gave their faith to Gotama were probably of the affluent castes after all. This would explain why in the above dis-

The late Hajime Nakamura, an authority on Indian philosophy, was president of the Eastern Institute in Tokyo and a professor emeritus of the University of Tokyo at the time of his death in October 1999. This ongoing series is a translation of Gōtama Buddha, vol. 2, Tokyo, Shunjūsha, 1992.

The outskirts of Patna, capital of Bihār State in northern India, site of the former Pāṭaliputra. Photo by Isamu Maruyama.

course the Buddha calls his listeners “householders” (*gahapatiyo*; a term applied to a person of private means). In addition, the Pāli version seems to imply that a person should not neglect his proper duties, whereas the Sanskrit (IV, 13) speaks of having enough food, and the Chinese text of wealth. These latter both are very specific and suggest that the average lay person was most concerned about these matters.

Although the various recensions differ in particular instances, the points in common can be summarized as follows:

(1) Gotama principally taught lay people. Since ordained members of the order at that time probably were few, there was virtually no need to give particular teaching to them. Buddhism developed because of Gotama’s focus on lay people.

(2) It was the community of the ordained, however,

that converted the “Last Journey” into a scripture. As a result, the contents of the teaching given to lay people became blurred and vague.

(3) Details are unclear, but the contents of the discourses given to these believers promoted cautious choice and decision in behavior.

The common element of discourses in these places was the teaching to lay people that they should not neglect their practice of the human Way and should keep the precepts. The question then arises regarding the nature of those precepts that should be observed. None of the recensions give a clear answer. Only the Yu-hsing-ching records that lay people “from this time vowed not to forget to keep the precepts—not to kill, not to steal, not to commit sexual misdeeds, not to cheat, not to drink intoxicants.” In later times these became fixed as the five lay precepts: (1) do not kill living beings, (2) do not steal, (3)

do not commit sexual misconduct, (4) do not lie, and (5) do not drink intoxicants. Numbers 1 to 4 are concerned with admonishing against actual evil conduct and number 5 warns of dangers that might lead to the committing of evil. It was considered that maintaining these five precepts was the first step in becoming a Buddhist. However, the five precepts cannot be found in the oldest texts and so it is unlikely that Gotama Buddha spoke principally of them at Pāṭaliputra.

The Fate of Pāṭaligāma

We find recorded in the Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta how construction on the great city that was to become the Mauryan capital began.

“At that time, Sunidha and Vassakāra, ministers of the kingdom of Magadha, were building [the fortress of] a city at Pāṭaligāma as a defense against [incursion by] the Vajjis.” (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, I, 26)

The brief expression “were building [the fortress of] a city at Pāṭaligāma” is very important. Building a city at that time did not mean constructing roads and buildings according to an urban plan. It meant rather building a fortress to provide a defense from attack by an outside enemy. Such [a fortress for] a “city” is called a *nagara*. We see from the above description that first a defensive citadel was built at Pāṭaligāma and it was from this the city later expanded. The citadel was integral to the city and preceded it.

Rājagaha, the capital of Magadha, occupied a site of strategic importance, surrounded by mountains, ideal for repelling enemy incursion. It was in fact virtually the only strategic point in the whole of Magadha, mostly all rolling plain. As Magadha expanded its territory, it began to change in character. Rājagaha was fast becoming inconvenient and unsuitable as a center to govern the vast territory falling under its domination. Pāṭaligāma, on the other hand, filled the requirements well, standing at a junction of important land routes and near the confluence of a number of rivers. It was not far from Rājagaha, but it was far more convenient. Thus the Magadhans, while using it as a forward offensive position against the Vajjis, planned it as the future capital. This plan was continued by successive rulers. Ajātasattu’s son Udayin (also called Udayibhadda) built a new city here, which was to become known as Pāṭaliputra. It flourished later as the capital of Chandragupta, Aśoka, and other Mauryan rulers, and was called the “city of flowers” (Kusumapura [Skt. and Pāli] or Pupphapura [Pāli]). It was situated in modern Patna. The ruins of the palace remain at Kumrahar, on the outskirts of Patna. They are preserved in a park along the road leading to Nālandā.

The sutra describes the building of the city in mythological terms.

“And at that time many thousands of deities occupied different areas of Pāṭaligāma. In the places the powerful

Gotama (depicted in the center as the tree of enlightenment) delivers a discourse to lay followers at Rājagaha. Relief on a pillar of the north gate to Stupa 1 at Sāñci, in the state of Madhya Pradesh, carved around the first century C.E. Photo by Isamu Maruyama.

deities choose to occupy, the powerful kings and ministers decide to build their dwellings. In the areas the middle-ranking deities choose to occupy, the middle-ranking kings and ministers decide to build their dwellings. In the areas the lower-ranking deities choose to occupy, the lower-ranking kings and ministers decide to build their dwellings.

“The Venerable Master then saw, with his clear and suprahuman power of sight, that many thousands of deities were occupying different areas of Pāṭaligāma. And getting up in the early morning, he asked the young Ānanda, ‘Ānanda, who is building a fortress at Pāṭaligāma?’ ‘Sunidha and Vassakāra, ministers of the kingdom of Magadha, are building a fortress at Pāṭaligāma as a defense against [incursion by] the Vajjis.’

“Ānanda, as if they had spoken to the deities in the heaven of the thirty-three gods, Sunidha and Vassakāra, ministers of the kingdom of Magadha, are building a fortress at Pāṭaligāma as a defense against incursion by the Vajjis. I have seen, Ānanda, with my clear and suprahuman power of sight, that many thousands of deities are occupying different areas of Pāṭaligāma. In the areas the powerful deities choose to occupy, the powerful kings and ministers decide to build their dwellings. In the areas the middle-ranking deities choose to occupy, the middle-ranking kings and ministers decide to build their dwell-

ings. In the areas the lower-ranking deities choose to occupy, the lower-ranking kings and ministers decide to build their dwellings.” (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, I, 26–28)

We should perhaps interpret this as indicating that there were tutelary deities protecting each piece of land, and that without their divine protection construction was thought unlikely to be successful.

Pāṭaliputra probably declined after the reign (268–32 B.C.E.) of Aśoka, the third king of the Mauryan dynasty or after the end of the Mauryan dynasty (317–187 B.C.E.). The circumstance is mentioned in the sutra in the form of a prophecy by Sakyamuni.

“As long as Pāṭaliputta [Skt., Pāṭaliputra] is a great city, a center for trade, it shall be the capital [*agganagara*], a center of collection and dispersal of goods. However, Pāṭaliputta will face three calamities: from fire, water, and internal dissension.” (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, I, 28)

Here historical fact is reflected in the Buddha’s prophecy. Buddhists of the time must have further deepened their faith in the Buddha upon hearing how he foresaw the things related. From the point of view of textual criticism, however, the decline of Pāṭaliputra as the Mauryan capital occurred following the reign of Aśoka, which means the prototype of the Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta must have been composed in the second century B.C.E. or thereafter. Archaeological evidence has revealed that Pāṭaliputra was inundated with floods at a later time. Details can be found in the excavation reports. The city disappeared in the mid-eighth century due to a flood. Pāṭaliputra was also subject to attack from without. Magadha was overcome at a later date by King Khāvela of Kalinga, and also by the Greeks. Again, these incidents seem reflected in the Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, additional reason for considering it to have been composed after the reign of King Aśoka or after the end of the Mauryan dynasty.

Gotama Buddha then received an invitation from the two ministers.

“Then Sunidha and Vassakāra, ministers of the kingdom of Magadha, went to where the Venerable Master was. Having arrived, they exchanged glad words with the Venerable Master. Having exchanged greetings, they stood to one side. Standing to one side, Sunidha and Vassakāra, ministers of the kingdom of Magadha, said to the Venerable Master: ‘May Master Gotama consent to eating a meal at our house together with his *bhikkhus* today.’ The Venerable Master gave his assent by silence. Then Sunidha and Vassakāra, ministers of the kingdom of Magadha, understanding the Venerable Master’s assent, went to their dwelling place and, arriving there, prepared a fine meal, and had their men announce: ‘Master Gotama, it is time. The meal has been prepared.’

“Then the Venerable Master early in the morning put on his inner robe, took up his outer robe and bowl, and went to the house of Sunidha and Vassakāra, ministers of

the kingdom of Magadha, with the band of *bhikkhus*. Arriving there, he sat in the seat prepared for him. Then Sunidha and Vassakāra, ministers of the kingdom of Magadha, served the Buddha and the band of *bhikkhus* with fine food until they were satisfied. When the Venerable Master had finished his meal and had washed his hands and bowl, Sunidha and Vassakāra, ministers of the kingdom of Magadha, brought forth low seats and sat down to one side.” (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, I, 29–30)

That Gotama should have received offerings from the ministers assigned to the construction of the fortress is an indication of his social standing. He spoke to them too of the importance of the aid and protection of local tutelary deities in the construction of a settlement.

“When Sunidha and Vassakāra, ministers of the kingdom of Magadha, had sat down to one side, the Venerable Master gladdened their hearts with the following verse:

“Those who are born wise,
Wherever they make their dwelling,
Should make offerings to those who follow the Pure
Practice, virtuous and self-controlled.
The minor deities who live in that place
Will transfer [the merit of] that donation.
They [the deities] will make offerings to those who
make offerings to them,
Will honor those who honor them.
They will love and protect them,
As a mother loves and protects her child,
And those who receive divine protection
are always happy.

“When the Venerable Master had gladdened the hearts of Sunidha and Vassakāra, ministers of the kingdom of Magadha, with this verse, he rose from his seat and left.” (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, I, 31)

It is of interest that the Pan-ni-yüan-ching says Sakyamuni taught here “universal love.” This is a doctrine propounded by the Chinese philosopher Mo-tzu (ca. 480 B.C.E.–ca. 390 B.C.E.), and the Chinese translators must have considered that Buddhist thought and Mo-tzu’s ideas were connected.

The various recensions all say that Vassakāra invited Sakyamuni and his *bhikkhus* to his home. This would seem to indicate that the accompanying band could not have been at all great in number. The Sanskrit recension describes how the minister Varṣakāra offered Śākyamuni a “golden pitcher” (VI, 9). This is clearly a later fabrication, for gold was not in general use in India until the Kushana dynasty (the latter half of the first century to the mid-third century). No golden pitchers have ever been found among remains from the Buddha’s time or from the Mauryan dynasty.

To be continued

The Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law

Chapter 4 Faith Discernment (3)

This is the sixty-second installment of a detailed commentary on the Threefold Lotus Sutra by the late founder of Rissho Kosei-kai, Rev. Nikkyo Niwano.

TEXT “World-honored One! Then the elder becomes ill and, knowing that he will shortly die, says to the poor son: ‘Now I possess abundant gold, silver, and precious things, and my granaries and treasuries are full to overflowing. The quantities of these things, and the [amounts] which should be received and given, [I want] you to understand in detail. Such is my mind. Do you agree to this my will. Wherefore? Because now I and you are of the same mind. Be increasingly mindful so that there be no waste.’

COMMENTARY What touching words these are! “The quantities of these things” refers to what is in the granaries and treasuries, and “the [amounts] which should be received and given” refers to how much of what item should be received from or given to what person. This must be understood “in detail.” In other words, this is the Buddha’s instruction to the shravakas, telling them that now is the time to fully understand the totality of the Buddha’s teaching and consider what type of person should be given a particular practice or a particular teaching. “Be increasingly mindful so that there be no waste” charges them with protecting the Buddha’s teachings, not allowing them to disappear or become distorted.

• *Now I and you are of the same mind.* The Buddha says, in effect, “We are no longer separate people.” Indeed, the Buddha and living beings are not separate beings. The only problem is that we living beings do not realize this. Even if we are told, we cannot comprehend it and cannot realize it in the depths of our minds. Yet though we can neither comprehend nor realize that fact, the line that divides us from the Buddha will gradually fade if we do not neglect our study and practice of the Buddha’s teaching or allow ourselves to fall away from it. The moment will come, without any doubt, when we will find ourselves embraced in the Buddha’s breast. Then all memories of the hardships of our practice will disappear as we experience the joy of that moment and consider the glorious life that lies ahead. We must continually encourage one another to continue religious practice wholeheartedly.

TEXT “Then the poor son accepts his instructions and commands, and becomes acquainted with all the goods, gold, silver, and precious things, as well as all the granaries and treasuries, but has no idea of expecting to receive [as much as] a meal, while his abode is still the original place and his sense of inferiority too he is still unable to abandon.

COMMENTARY There are certain parts of this passage that may be misinterpreted if read according to conventional wisdom. First, let us look at the statement that the son “has no idea of expecting to receive [as much as] a meal.” It is only to be expected that someone in a position of management would not take even the price of a meal. Such is the son’s integrity. But the elder has said firmly, “Such is my mind. Do you agree to this my will,” adding, “Now I and you are of the same mind.” He wants to give all his wealth to his son and have him use it freely.

Let us consider this in terms of the elder being the Buddha and the wealth his teachings. The Buddha says, “My teachings are all yours. Make whichever you like your own.” Living beings, however, fail to understand the Buddha’s heart and feel that they cannot possibly use the teachings in this way. After all, they belong to the master! However poor they are, they refuse to touch them. In terms of conventional ethics, the son’s behavior is exemplary; in terms of faith and religious teaching, however, his attitude springs from cowardice or diffidence. He still has no idea of his real worth: “His sense of inferiority too he is still unable to abandon.” Because he is unable to escape that sense of inferiority, he remains dwelling in his hovel at the gate (the inclination toward the two vehicles).

TEXT “After a short time has passed, again the father, knowing that his son’s ideas have gradually been enlarged and his will well developed, and that he despises his previous [state of] mind, on seeing that his own end is near, commands his son [to come] and at the same time gathers together his relatives, and the kings, ministers, Kshatriyas,

and citizens. When they are all assembled, he thereupon addresses them, saying: 'Know, gentlemen, this is my son begotten by me. It is over fifty years since, from a certain city, he left me and ran away to endure loneliness and misery. His former name was so and so and my name is so and so. At that time in that city I sought him sorrowfully. Suddenly in this place I met and regained him. This is really my son and I am really his father. Now all the wealth which I possess belongs entirely to my son, and all my previous disbursements and receipts are known by this son.'

COMMENTARY At last the son has come to understand his father's heart and gain the realization that he is his father's heir; his "ideas have gradually been enlarged." "Enlarged" translates a Chinese compound whose first character means "pervade" or "fully understand" and whose second means "calm and expansive of mind." For twenty years the son has been receiving the Buddha's teachings, has been hearing over and over again that he is the Buddha's son. He has been unable until now to realize what he has been taught, unable to believe that the Buddha, a being he considers to be far superior to himself, can possibly be calling him personally. Knowing what is in his mind, the Buddha has taken his time and led him slowly to the final realization.

Until now, the son (the shravakas) has thought that it is enough to gain peace of mind by eliminating the defilements. He has been satisfied with being a dependent and an employee within the Buddha's house, and though he has been entrusted with all the Buddha's wealth, he has still felt that his abode is in the hovel outside the gate (the teaching of the two vehicles), considering his present happiness sufficient. As he gradually comes to understand his father's (the Buddha's) heart, however, he realizes that true happiness cannot be found in such a place. He sees clearly that a meaningful life means employing the Buddha's wealth (teachings) freely to make many people happy and that the happiness of those around him is the measure of his own.

At last the will, or aspiration, to employ the Buddha's boundless wealth for the happiness of all springs up in the son's breast. He now feels shame for the narrowness of spirit that has allowed him to be satisfied with his own peace of mind, his sense that the great teachings of the Buddha belong to someone else ("he despises his previous [state of] mind"). Knowing this, the Buddha understands that the time has finally come and gathers a large group of people to teach them the essence of the Lotus Sutra, that all living beings are the children of the Buddha, that all can attain buddhahood, and that the attainment of the boundless wealth of the Buddha's enlightenment by all people is the true Buddha Way.

TEXT "World-honored One! When the poor son heard

these words of his father, great was his joy at such unexpected [news], and thus he thought: 'Without any mind for or effort on my part these treasures now come of themselves to me.'

COMMENTARY 'Without any mind for or effort on my part these treasures now come of themselves to me.' What fine words these are! The small-vehicle practice has not been wasted. In the course of striving to eliminate the defilements and continuing the practice to purify the mind, the shravakas come gradually to understand the Mahayana state of mind and at last can penetrate its depth. It is not easy to attain enlightenment quickly, simply by straining toward it. Enlightenment imperceptibly becomes part of oneself as one continues to study and practice the Buddha's teaching in one's daily activities in an unforced way, without impatience but with steady effort.

There are many stories about great Buddhist priests of the past gaining sudden enlightenment. People who read such accounts tend to gain a false, facile idea of enlightenment. This is not to say that sudden enlightenment is a fabrication. Rather, it denotes the final moment of enlightenment. We must never overlook or forget the accumulated study and practice that were necessary to reach that point. It is after we have wiped away the mud from the rough diamond, cleaned away the bits and pieces of rock that surround it, and polished away any smears that its brilliant light appears. It does no good to leave a diamond in its rough state, though we may spoil it through careless polishing.

It is useless straining and worrying after enlightenment. Rather we should constantly put the teachings into practice, little by little. Gradually our own personality will become polished and emit a radiance. We do not intend this to happen; it occurs of its own accord. It is the same with enlightenment and personal perfection; as the fine words of the passage say, "these treasures now come of themselves to me."

Here ends the parable of the poor son. Next the shravakas explain the meaning of the parable to the Buddha in a direct, confessional manner.

TEXT "World-honored One! The very rich elder is the Tathagata and we all are as the Buddha sons. The Tathagata has always declared that we are his sons.

COMMENTARY Here "Tathagata" refers not to a buddha in the broad sense but to Shakyamuni himself, who is facing the shravakas right now.

• *As the Buddha sons.* Note that the words are a little reserved: not "we all are the Buddha sons" but "we all are as the Buddha sons."

TEXT World-honored One! Because of the three sufferings, in the midst of births and deaths we have borne all

kinds of torments, being deluded and ignorant and enjoying [our] attachment to trifles. Today the World-honored One has caused us to ponder over and remove the dirt of all diverting discussions of [inferior] laws [or things]. In these we have been diligent to make progress and have got [but] a day's pay [for our effort] to reach nirvana.

COMMENTARY *The three sufferings.* Shariputra makes a threefold distinction among types of suffering: physical suffering caused by injury, heat, or cold (*dukkha-dukkhata*), mental suffering arising from destruction or loss (*viparinama-dukkhata*), and phenomenological suffering due to conditioned states (*samskara-dukkhata*). The first, physical suffering, is sensuous suffering, that which results from thirst, an aching stomach, a heavy burden, or running a long distance. These are instinctual; we may perceive them as torments, but in fact they are nature's warning that we should protect ourselves. When we suffer from thirst, nature is warning us that if we continue without drink the body will become functionally unbalanced. If we did not suffer from thirst, we would not be forced to replenish our body's fluids and so would die. The pain we suffer from a headache or stomachache is the same. We are being warned that the body is not working properly and that we need to rest or to take medicine or we may die. The type of pain we feel when carrying something heavy or running a long distance is essentially the same; it informs us that unless we alter the conditions our body will become dysfunctional. This last example, though, is slightly different from the others, in that the pain connected with active behavior is not quite the same as that of thirst or illness, which is passive.

Except for human beings, animals do not attempt to put up with this kind of pain. If a lion or a tiger gets out of breath when chasing prey, it stops and rests. Animals that prefer warm places migrate south in winter or hibernate. They do not try actively to overcome their pain. Only human beings put up with the pain involved with bearing heavy burdens and running long distances, seeking to extend their own physical powers. Similarly, they bear the suffering inherent in extreme heat or cold, and as a result they have become able to live everywhere, from the arctic, where temperatures fall far below zero, to the equatorial zone, where they rise above fifty degrees Celsius. There is no animal stronger in this way than human beings. Thus, the active effort to overcome pain and suffering has been an important factor in human advancement. We must fully understand this.

I have digressed considerably; what I want to emphasize is that the physical suffering caused by injury, heat, or cold is the most fundamental type of suffering, the type that causes the most instinctive fear. For the human being as an animal it is the most fearful, but for the human being as a spiritual entity it is not that serious a concern. While pain caused by the senses cannot be avoided,

it is diminished for one who has attained enlightenment.

The second, mental suffering arising from destruction or loss, covers the feeling of pleasure when something favorable exists and of pain when that desirable thing ceases to be. It is based entirely on emotions. People feel happy and content when they have lots of money, but find it tormenting when they have to do without. Similarly, they are in the highest heaven when in love but plunge into the depths of despair when they are rejected by the beloved. Our lives are filled with countless such events. If, though, we could do away with our self-centered attachment and have what is called the mind of detachment, then even if we should lose something we would feel no pain. This type of suffering, therefore, can be conquered by practicing the Buddha's teaching.

The third, phenomenological suffering due to conditioned states, is the type of pain caused by change, the pain we feel when we want to stay young but find our body becoming incapacitated, when we want to retain our beauty but cannot prevent our face from becoming wrinkled, or when we want to live forever but are confronted with the inevitability of death. Our suffering results from the law that all things are impermanent; because this suffering arises from attachment to the present state of things, it can be erased with the deep realization that change is natural. Old age has its own way of life, its own beauty, and its own joys. Such suffering will disappear if we do not oppose change but go with the flow of time and adapt to change. It is because we seek, unnaturally, to remain young, to live as if we were still young, that we cause suffering to arise where no pain should be. If we can realize that even death is an integral part of the natural course of things, death will no longer be a cause for anguish. Since death is life's greatest change, it is difficult for any but the most spiritually advanced to look on it without fear; all the same, it is not impossible even for us. Since ancient times many people have died peacefully, looking on death as a return home.

Shakyamuni teaches us mainly how to overcome the two types of suffering peculiar to human beings—mental suffering arising from destruction or loss and phenomenological suffering due to conditioned states. This, I think, can be easily understood from study of the text up to this point. People who do not know the Buddha's teaching, however, are at the mercy of these types of suffering, living with the endless change of all things ("births and deaths") and repeatedly experiencing anguish ("torments") as violent as if the body were being consumed by flames. No matter how hard they wish to flee from their pain, in their confused state of mind, knowing nothing about the truth and what to do ("being deluded and ignorant"), they cannot help clinging to an inferior teaching ("enjoying their attachment to trifles"), like a drowning man who will clutch at any straw.

Therefore, Shakyamuni teaches us "to ponder over and

remove the dirt of all diverting discussions of [inferior] laws [or things]." It is especially significant that Shakyamuni first teaches us to "ponder." He does not tell us to worship some object or to put our trust in someone. What he tells us is to think things over thoroughly, to consider carefully such fundamental questions as the nature of the world and human beings. Since everything in the world has come about through a combination of causes and conditions and when those causes and conditions become extinct the phenomena themselves are also extinguished, we come to understand that it is foolish to be attached to what is before our eyes, to be astonished and dismayed by phenomenal change. Realizing therefore that what we must do to escape from suffering is to extinguish in some way or another the mind that is attached to phenomena, we also come to comprehend the ephemerality of desiring the momentary happiness that stems from irrational practices like worshiping some object or asking favors of another person. Further, when we grasp the fundamental principle of the law of dependent origination, "the dirt of all diverting discussions of [inferior] laws [or things]" ought to be swept away.

• *In these we have been diligent to make progress and have got [but] a day's pay [for our effort] to reach nirvana.* "In these" means "in the Buddha's teaching." "To make progress" has the sense of adding to our effort day by day. In short, every day the shravakas have striven wholeheartedly to add a little to their study and practice of the Buddha's teaching. "To reach nirvana" is to attain peace of mind. This is a very worthwhile attainment, but it is diminutive compared with ultimate enlightenment. If we consider ultimate enlightenment to be boundless wealth, attainment of peace of mind is no more than "a day's pay."

TEXT Having got this, we greatly rejoiced and were contented, saying to ourselves: 'For our diligence and progress in the Buddha Law what we have received is ample.' But the World-honored One, knowing beforehand that our minds were attached to low desires and delighted in inferior things, lets us go our own way and does not discriminate against us, [saying]: 'You shall [yet] have control of the treasury of Tathagata knowledge.'

COMMENTARY *Having got this.* This means having got the "day's pay" of nirvana, that is, peace of mind. While we are undergoing religious practice, we are too intent to wonder about what stage we may have attained at any particular time. It is only when we reach a particular stage and look back that we realize how far we have come. This is what the shravakas are now doing.

They previously lived in a self-centered way seeking to satisfy their egos and demanding too much of their surroundings. After they accepted the Buddha's teaching such selfish desires decreased considerably, and, mysteriously, they gained spiritual satisfaction. They now dwell

perpetually in a spirit of peace and calm. Previously they thought of both their bodies and the material things around them as being real. They were fascinated by them, and, as these phenomena changed, they became in turn joyful and sad, and their minds wavered continually. Through the Buddha's teaching, however, they were able to realize clearly that all worldly things are temporary manifestations arising from a combination of causes and conditions, that those things have no fixed, ontological existence, and that attachment to them is therefore as foolish as trying to perceive reality in a dream. They then became able to discern that any change in their surroundings was only a transformation of a temporary manifestation, and thus became able to maintain peace of mind at all times.

This is the nirvana attained by the shravakas. It is indeed a considerable attainment, and a spiritual stage regarded with envy by ordinary people. Thus the shravakas were satisfied with it. Now that they have heard the teaching of the Lotus Sutra, however, they have come to understand deeply that the nirvana they had attained, though not an illusion, was still like a daily wage giving only day-to-day security and that true nirvana by contrast represents boundless wealth, wealth too great to be stored in any number of great treasuries. Therefore they now find it strange that they could have thought that "for our diligence and progress in the Buddha Law what we have received is ample" (we have attained many merits). Why then did the Buddha, saying, "You shall [yet] have control of the treasury of Tathagata knowledge," not teach them that they should not be satisfied with such a level of merit because they were to obtain a portion of the Tathagata's inexhaustible wisdom? Of course it is clear now that he refrained from doing so because they did not yet have sufficient capacity to benefit from such an offer. Thus the shravakas confess to the Buddha, telling him that they can now deeply understand the parental love of the World-honored One who, knowing beforehand that their minds were attached to low desires and delighted in inferior things (teachings), allowed them in his compassion to go their own way, realizing that it was useless to show them a lofty state of enlightenment suddenly. The four great shravakas' recollection and confession of their past state of mind continue:

TEXT The World-honored One by his tactful power tells of the Tathagata wisdom, [but] we, [though] following the Buddha and receiving [but] a day's wage of nirvana, have deemed it a great gain and never devoted ourselves to seeking after this Great Vehicle.

COMMENTARY Shakyamuni spoke about the Tathagata wisdom countless times before his discourse on the Lotus Sutra, but his disciples considered such wisdom to be the wisdom of the Buddha alone, and not for them. They had

lapsed into complacency because their great teacher was always with them. They relied excessively on him, thinking that they were safe if only they went on listening to his teaching, following the precepts, and undertaking religious practice. Their state of mind was like that of the majority of people working in a large company regarded as incapable of collapsing, who can feel secure about their future because if they only perform their duties as ordered they will have an income for the remainder of their life. Thus the shravakas received “a day’s wage of nirvana” and “deemed it a great gain,” and had no urge to confront the great, positive, and demanding work of Mahayana—to save and instruct others. In the domain of the Buddha Dharma, their nature was no different from that of the above-mentioned company employees.

TEXT We also have declared and expounded the Tathagata wisdom to bodhisattvas, but in regard to this [Great Vehicle] we have never had a longing for it. Wherefore? The Buddha, knowing that our minds delight in inferior things, by his tactful power teaches according to our [capacity], but still we do not perceive that we are really Buddha sons.

COMMENTARY *We also have declared and expounded.* “Declared” is made up of two Chinese characters. The first means “to open up,” that is, to help people open their eyes to the Buddha wisdom. Specifically, it means to cause people to turn their attention to the truth that all human beings are equally endowed with the buddha-nature. This is the first step in the Mahayana teaching. The second character means “to point out,” that is, to indicate the actual mode of development of the Buddha wisdom. In other words, it means to teach the real aspect of the world that is seen through the Buddha wisdom. This is the second step in the Mahayana teaching (see the March/April 1998 issue of DHARMA WORLD). The rudiments of Mahayana teaching were “declared and expounded” to lay believers by the shravakas, acting in place of Shakyamuni.

These great shravakas also confess that though they have taught Mahayana to others, they themselves have had no aspiration toward it. This may seem a little strange, but even in today’s world such things, unfortunately, are not uncommon in either academic or religious circles. There are teachers who lack a keen commitment to research and religious leaders who are not committed to religious practice. The fact that the shravakas are able to repent thus is a sign of their greatness. We have much to learn from their candid confession.

Repentance is testimony of faith, witness to both oneself and others of the degree of enlightenment attained. Since the residue of past mistakes that has remained in the mind is completely removed through repentance, one can feel truly refreshed. Such refreshment provides impe-

tus for a new start; the true turning of one’s mind toward the Buddha Way cannot occur until one’s past mistakes have been confessed, whatever the enlightenment attained. That is why Shakyamuni taught the merits and methods of repentance in the Sutra of Meditation on the Bodhisattva Universal Virtue, which he preached following the Lotus Sutra. We must learn from the honest confession of the great shravakas.

- *The Tathagata wisdom.* The shravakas still do not have the wisdom of the Buddha, but owing to the Tathagata wisdom they echo what they have been taught in order to teach others.

- *To bodhisattvas.* Here “bodhisattvas” refers not to the Law-body bodhisattvas, such as Manjushri, Universal Virtue (Samantabhadra), or Regarder of the Cries of the World (Avalokiteshvara), but to lay people seeking enlightenment. Shakyamuni’s disciples included not only ordained bhikshus and bhikshunis but also a large number of earnest lay seekers of the Way. It seems that the great disciples often preached to these people.

To be continued

Opening page of a copy of Sambo Ekotoba (Illustrated Stories on the Three Treasures) by Minamoto no Tamenori, a collection of tales advocating faith in Buddhism. Kamakura period. National Treasure, Tokyo National Museum.

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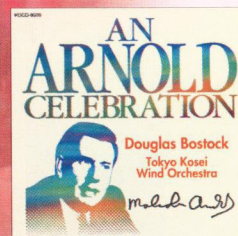
J. VAN DER ROOST: *Con moto e follemento from "Rikudim"*. P. I. TCHAIKOVSKY: *No. 21 Les Danses Espagnoles from "Le Lac des*
Cygnés". J. PRESS: *Wedding Dance*. U. WATANABE: *Dance from "Suite Yayin, for symphonic band"*. E. SUZUKI: *Songs and Dances, for*
wind ensemble. J. BARNES: *Torch Dance*. A. KHACHATURIAN: *Lezghinka from "Gayaneh Suite"*. A. REED: *Danse generale from "Third*
Suite for Band". I. F. STRAVINSKY: *Danse infernale du roi Kastschei from "The Firebird Suite (1919)"*. C. GOUNOD: *Finale from Ballet*
Music from "Faust". A. PONCHIELLI: *Dance of the Hours from "La Gioconda"*. J. VAN DER ROOST: *Part III from "Pusztá: Four Gipsy*
Dances". K. KOKAJI: *Polkas and Tangos for Brass Band*. P. A. GRAINGER: *Scotch Strathspey and Reel*. D. SHOSTAKOVICH: *Dance I*
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