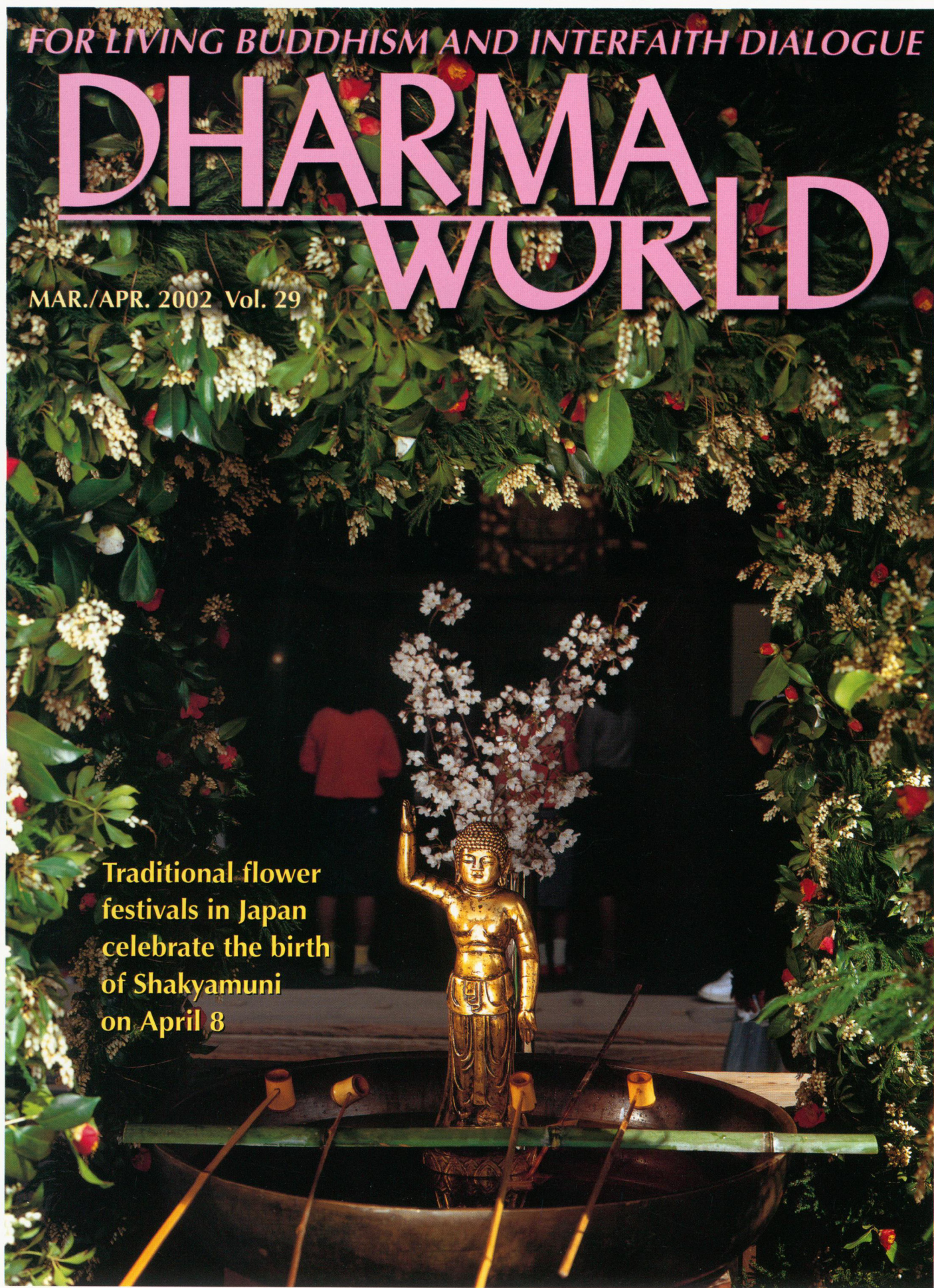


FOR LIVING BUDDHISM AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

DHARMA WORLD

MAR./APR. 2002 Vol. 29

Traditional flower
festivals in Japan
celebrate the birth
of Shakyamuni
on April 8



Buddhist Basics Explained for All

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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.

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Nara National Museum

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.

Kozo Ogawa

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The Pervasive Threat of Terrorism

Well over half a year has now passed since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. These were events beyond all imagining. They struck severe blows not only against symbols of American power and achievement like the World Trade Center towers, which were totally destroyed, and the Pentagon, but also against the nation's financial sector and business world. Airline operators are suffering heavy losses and many other companies have been affected in various ways by the subsequent business slowdown. Though the Taliban regime has been ousted from Afghanistan, potential terrorist attacks through letters containing anthrax bacteria—or sometimes harmless powder as a cruel hoax—continue to unsettle Americans. If a man wielding a knife came toward me, I would be terrified but at least I would have two options. I could either put as great a distance between the man and myself as possible, or alternatively, lock myself up in a safe place. In the case of terrorist attacks, however, public anxiety stems from the fact that the person or persons posing the threat cannot be easily detected. Since they cannot be detected, it is difficult to devise a strategy to oppose them. Anxiety then breeds further anxiety, and that is very difficult to deal with.

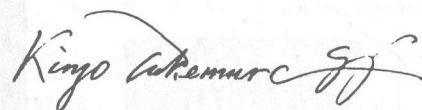
It has been calculated that if fifty kilograms of anthrax were scattered from an airplane twenty kilometers windward from a city of 500,000 residents, depending on weather conditions it could soon be carried the distance of twenty kilometers and spread over the entire city area, affecting 220,000 people. Among them, 95,000 would die. While this is not a final calculation by any means, it still cannot fail to increase public concern.

Though former Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed the treaty banning biological weapons in 1992, it was recently officially revealed that the former Soviet Union had undertaken large-scale biological weapon research

and several thousand specialists who were connected with that research are now scattered around the world, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The technology for the production of biological weapons has greatly advanced and it can safely be said that nearly every country now possesses it in some form.

Following the Persian Gulf War, teams from the United Nations investigating the development of chemical and biological weapons in Iraq reported that 2.5 tons of anthrax powder were missing. It is quite possible that this has already passed into the hands of terrorists. Despite the possibility of biological terrorism, it must be said that Japan is seriously underprepared to cope with such an emergency. There also are many things Japan should be doing internationally, such as exchanging information, preparing vaccines, and putting together global manuals so medical personnel will know how to deal with possible outbreaks of terrorist-caused disease.

Since I do not want to write about subjects that only serve to heighten public concern, I will turn briefly to another topic. It is often said that the twentieth century was the century of war. This makes it all the more important for people to be able to escape the confines of narrow nationalism and regard world affairs from a global viewpoint. Roman mythology tells us of the god Janus who had two faces, one looking forward and the other behind him. He was the guardian of gates and the patron of beginnings and endings. I only hope that human beings can develop a seeing ability like Janus had so that we can make correct judgments about our future without forgetting the lessons we have learned from the past. □



Kinzo Takemura

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 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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Cover photo:

(Continued from page 1)

Celebrations of the anniversary of the Buddha's birth, which are held at Buddhist temples all over Japan, originated early in the seventh century. The ritual is popularly called *hana matsuri* (flower festival) from its association with the flower-filled Lumbini Garden near the present-day border between Nepal and India, where Shakyamuni was born 2,500 years ago. The idea of anointing the infant Shakyamuni with sweet tea (*amacha*) derives from a legend that when he was born, Brahma, Indra, the Dragon King, and other deities appeared at the site and poured holy water over his head.

The standing image of the newborn Buddha, with his right arm raised to point to heaven and his left hand pointing down to the earth, depicts another legend, this one that the Buddha, soon after Queen Maya gave birth to him, stood and walked seven steps, then cried out with a roar, "I alone am honored, in heaven and on earth." The statue on the front cover is a replica of a gilt-bronze Tempyo period sculpture at Todai-ji, which dates back to the eighth century and has been declared a National Treasure.

On April 8, the date on which the Buddha is traditionally considered to have been born, Japanese worship at local temples and ladle sweet tea over statues of the infant Buddha belonging to the temples. Rissho Kosei-kai also celebrates the flower festival annually at its Tokyo headquarters and local branches, installing shrines housing small images of the newborn Buddha. On the day, members deepen their appreciation of the significance of the Buddha's birth and renew their vow to dedicate themselves to the practice of his teachings to help others attain true salvation. □

Letters



In the July/August issue of DHARMA WORLD I read with joy about the honor bestowed on Father Elias Chacour through the awarding to him of the Niwano Peace Prize.

I do not know of any other person who earned this prestigious award more than Father Chacour. He is a Palestinian and an Israeli citizen, and he has accomplished magnificent work for peace, under the most difficult circumstances. Father Chacour, a Melkite Catholic priest, is known around the world as a man of deep faith and integrity. He has impeccable credentials, and is truly living the values of genuine Christianity.

The person who wrote in the November/December issue of DHARMA WORLD about Father Chacour, Mr. Yitzhak Lior, is ambassador of Israel to Japan. He is representing the government which for 34 years—in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, as well as the Geneva Conventions—has with great brutality and violence occupied Palestinian land and the Palestinian people.

By honoring Father Chacour with the Niwano Peace Prize, the Niwano Peace Foundation has also honored itself. It recognizes Father Elias Chacour as a great religious leader who overcame a heavy personal tragedy, who has shown forgiveness to those who caused great pain and loss to him and his people, and who has worked for peace and justice all of his adult life.

Ingeborg Jack
Swarthmore, PA
U.S.A.

Congratulations to the Niwano Peace Foundation on awarding Rev. Elias Chacour the Niwano Peace Prize. Having heard him speak and having read his books, I am always astonished at how patient, persevering, and nonviolent he has remained in all his struggles with Israeli injustice and bureaucracy. Together with this, he has shown tremendous energy, courage, and initiative in pushing to build his school and to seek better living conditions for Palestinians in Israel.

Please do not be swayed by the arguments of Ambassador Yitzhak Lior. Firstly, Jews did not make repeated efforts to return to their homeland for nearly two thousand years. After the Romans, Palestine was under the control of the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Crusaders, and finally, since 1500 or so, the Ottomans. Religious Jews could come to Palestine and live there, and a few of them did. It was really not until the start of the twentieth century that a small group of Jews thought up the idea of a *political state* for the Jews in Palestine. This would involve displacing the Arab inhabitants, who had lived there for centuries. The early Zionists were well aware of this problem and wrote about it.

At the end of World War I some of the British leaders, notably Arthur Balfour (prime minister between 1902–05), were Christian Zionists and helped the Jews start their "homeland" in Palestine by allowing them to immigrate in increasing numbers. From the beginning, the Arabs naturally were suspicious and protested. Palestine was a small country with very limited natural resources and had worked out an ecological balance over millennia. There was only so much room for people to live in reasonable conditions.

The German Holocaust of millions of Jews before and during World War II of course exacerbated the influx of Jews to Palestine, again at the expense of the Palestinians, not

at the expense of the Germans, who were guilty, or the Americans and British who were so sympathetic to the Jewish plight. America could have easily absorbed Jewish refugees.

Even by 1948, Arab Palestinians still owned most of the land although Jews now constituted more than a third of the population. The partition plan proposed giving a lot of the better land to the Jews for their state despite Arab ownership. Many Palestinians would have still lived in the Jewish state. The whole notion of a Jewish state implies that non-Jews will not get the same rights and, of course, Father Chacour's experiences have shown this to be too true.

The 750,000 Palestinian refugees that fled the fighting in 1948 should have been allowed to return, as UN resolutions have repeatedly said. They were civilians and just as in Kosovo and Bosnia, civilian refugees were encouraged to return to their homes, the Palestinians also should have been able to return. Instead, over four hundred Palestinian villages, including many mosques, were destroyed by Israel.

It is well documented that the 1967 war was started by Israel. Calling their airstrike on Egypt preemptive does not hide that fact. Once again, the Israelis seized Arab land very quickly in Egypt, Syria, and of course the West Bank and Gaza. The speed of their victory shows how unprepared for war the Arabs were.

In 1993, with the Oslo Accord, Yasser Arafat, speaking for the vast majority of Palestinians, recognized Israel and a peace process began at the end of which Palestine was supposed to get back all the West Bank and the Gaza strip, according to UN resolution 242. Recognizing Israel meant that Palestinians were acknowledging the pre-1967 borders of Israel. They were giving up 78 percent of historic Palestine for Israel to exist. This was a huge compromise.

Over the next eight years all the Palestinians got to control were the populated towns. Meanwhile, Israel

controlled, with checkpoints and a military occupation, the rest of the territory. They confiscated Arab land and built Jewish settlements and roads for Israelis only. Their blatant takeover of the land was ignored by America, Israel's patron. What kind of peace process was this?

The last offer by Israel in 2000 did not include all the West Bank and Gaza. Instead, Israel wanted to keep most of her settlements and a large area of land around Jerusalem and land along the Jordan River. The Palestinians would have been left with three separated areas. They would not be given back East Jerusalem which is Arab-populated, and would not have control of their borders, water, or electricity.

The Palestinians have been so patient for over fifty years. That Israel



has allowed a million Jews to immigrate during this fraudulent peace process since 1993 from the vast country of Russia while mistreating and oppressing the original inhabitants of Palestine is a disgrace.

The casualty figures for the present Intifada indicate which side is committing more violence. Four times as many Palestinians as Israelis have been killed and many thousands more wounded. Damage to Palestinian property and agriculture by Israeli F-16 planes, Apache helicopters, and Caterpillar bulldozers amounts to millions of dollars and inflicts so much misery on poor Palestinians, whose average income even before was only one-tenth that of Israelis.

How dare Mr. Lior impugn Father Chacour's honesty and truthfulness when the facts are clear for all to see! Israel was founded on an already inhabited land. It displaced the people

living there and continues to seize more land on which to settle Jews. Father Chacour's life demonstrates how difficult it has been for Israel to treat its non-Jewish citizens fairly. The rest of the world needs to know that.

Joan Hazbun
Media, PA
U.S.A.

We also received comments from another reader in the United States in the form of footnotes to paragraphs of the letter from Ambassador Yitzhak Lior that appeared in the November/December 2001 issue. The author of the comments, Ms. Ruth Matson, is a longtime scholar of Middle East history, languages, and cultures—both ancient and modern—who lived in the Middle East in the 1960s and has continued to be active in scholarly research and writing about the region since that time. We are not able to publish her comments because of space limitations, but below we quote from part of her letter.

I was very pleased to hear of the award of the Niwano Peace Prize to Father Elias Chacour. It is well deserved. While there are a number of people—Palestinians and Israelis alike—who are working very hard at the grassroots level to bring people together peacefully in Israel-Palestine, for Father Chacour this has been truly a lifetime commitment. I congratulate the Niwano Peace Prize committee for their excellent choice.

I have read the letter from the Israeli ambassador to Tokyo in response to Father Chacour's award. In the article/letter by HE Yitzhak Lior, I numbered the paragraphs in sequence and then gave my rebuttals. My primary critique is that the author selects his facts with a view to presenting a polemical argument, an all too common failing in political discourse.

Ridding Ourselves of the Defilements

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 we refer to “the Buddha,” we are thinking of Shakyamuni, who became enlightened under the Bodhi tree in ancient India some 2,500 years ago. In Japan, people venerate their ancestors and call them “buddhas.” In the case of Shakyamuni, “buddha” (Enlightened One) was a title that he, as Prince Siddhartha of the Shakyas clan, received after he attained enlightenment. Why is it that our deceased ancestors are also called buddhas?

What Prince Siddhartha realized when he attained enlightenment was that people experience unhappiness because they are in the grip of basic ignorance and the defilements. He became a buddha exactly for the reason that his mind had penetrated to the reality of the world and all those who live in it.

Why do the defilements arise? They do so because we occupy physical bodies. Therefore, when religious practitioners want to escape from the defilements, some go and seclude themselves in the mountains, while others undertake ascetic practices, attempting to get rid of their defilements by mortification of the body. For as long as people are alive, however, they can never totally escape their bodies. As a result, they have no assured way of getting rid of their defilements.

When people die, their physical bodies eventually dis-

integrate. Once the body, which is an amalgam of defilements, is gone, a person's defilements can no longer arise. Shakyamuni, however, extinguished all his defilements during his lifetime, and having done so became a buddha. In the case of ourselves, we will only become free of our defilements after we die, in other words, following the loss of our physical bodies. By that line of reasoning, someone whose physical body no longer exists, along with his or her defilements, can be said to have become a buddha. Therefore the Japanese people from ancient times became accustomed to calling their deceased ancestors buddhas, based on their wish to accomplish the buddhahood of the deceased.

It is said that a buddha is one within whom all tangled strands have been unknotted. This means that a person who has rid himself or herself of the bonds of the defilements is a buddha, and that seems to me a simple yet effective way of describing the nature of buddhahood.

As I have said, the defilements will no longer arise once the body disintegrates after death, but the influence of the negative actions that the deceased person accumulated by thought, word, and deed during his or her lifetime will remain. It is doubtful whether we should call someone a buddha who has died with no signs of repentance or religious practice. In such a case, the descendants of the person may perform good deeds instead of the deceased through the services of veneration for the transfer of merit to the deceased, which can also be described as services of enlightenment. Thus even after someone has died, the descendants can hope for his or her buddhahood as they perform the services of merit. Further, they will make

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.

sure the deceased family member is given a posthumous Buddhist name as an indication that they have not been neglected.

Accumulating Our Merit

The most important aspect of the services for the transfer of merit to the deceased is that we, their descendants, should perform veneration through our own efforts and thus accumulate merit. Our bodies are filled with defilements, and without doubt among our forebears are those who died after unintentionally trifling with their accumulation of defilements, or whose lives ended with defiled thoughts. However, we descendants can easily imagine, as we remember them with longing, how the spirits released upon death from the amalgam of defilements that is the physical body might be impelled by compunction to feel that during their lives they should have been kinder to others and devoted themselves to earning their gratitude.

Buddhists originally thought that spirits in the intermediate stage of existence between death and rebirth wore a "cloak of shame." Our forebears cannot themselves accumulate merit, however, since they lack physical bodies. So it is up to us to take over for them and accumulate merit in their stead, with sympathy for them and feeling their compunction, and transfer it to them by working for the good of people all over the world. It cannot be doubted that this will cause them great joy and gratitude when they see their descendants accumulating the merit that they themselves are unable to do. Their joy will in turn be transferred to us. Undertaking religious practice in this way is an example of the true essence of our faith and the practice of veneration.

Some people say that we are conjoined with our bodies only temporarily in this life, and shortly after it turns into dust so that nothing of consequence from it remains later. We are not philosophers, however, but people of faith. What is the most valuable thing is the mental attitude that we will serve our ancestors as if they still exist. It is because they once did exist that we exist today. It is only natural that we should show our gratitude and respect for this solemn fact. Some scholars say that the Buddhist ancestor veneration ritual can only be seen in Asian countries. The prominent Buddhist scholar Hajime Nakamura [1912–99], pointed out that nowhere in the early Buddhist scriptures does there appear any negative view of ancestor veneration in the words of Shakyamuni.

Veneration in Other Cultures

Rissho Kosei-kai members from Taiwan and South Korea already are aware of the importance of ancestor veneration, since it is a part of their traditional culture. Members from Europe, the United States, and Australia, who do not have a similar background, find the idea harder to accept. Recently, however, an increased awareness has developed in these areas about the importance of one's

actual identity, about ascertaining exactly who the self is. Because of the desire to discover one's roots, Americans and Australians in particular express great interest in knowing where their ancestors came from. Perhaps as a result of this, many people from those regions now have no resistance to the practice of ancestor veneration when they become members of Rissho Kosei-kai, or at least are gradually able to accept it as natural.

Our ancestors are our roots, and we, their descendants, are the branches and leaves of our family tree. We exist because of those roots that are our ancestors, so it is only natural that we should be grateful to them. The total length of all the roots of a 180-cm tree will be many times greater than its height above ground. The length may even exceed one hundred meters. Many members in the United States and Europe have noted that it is easy to overlook venerating one's ancestors because the family's roots lie hidden underground.

In 1985 a handbook for Roman Catholics noted that the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan had approved ancestor veneration by saying, "There is no objection to a Catholic believer accepting certain conditions that apply concerning the funeral service and the issuing of a posthumous Buddhist name when the deceased is interred in a family tomb administered by a Buddhist temple."

European and American members appear to have many questions regarding posthumous Buddhist names for their ancestors. Using a Japanese name directly is generally difficult, so translations of them have been applied. It turns out that many of these are not appropriate as posthumous Buddhist names because of the long explanations required. I feel that foreign members should be free to accept a Japanese type of name if they agree, or if such a name is too difficult to understand or too foreign-sounding, then it is perfectly all right to use a lay name.

When we recite dharanis, we believe in the power of the words rather than in their literal meaning, reciting them according to a certain rhythm. For example, when we recite the dharanis chapter of the Lotus Sutra, we use the transliterated Indian pronunciations—*ani mani mane*—rather than conscientiously translating the words as "wonderful, speculation, thought." Translating in such a case would destroy the rhythm.

Kumarajiva (344–413), who translated the Lotus Sutra into Chinese, said, "Because the dharanis contain diverse meanings, I prefer not to translate them." It is better that we should believe the words of the sutra, that through the power of the dharanis the four heavenly kings and the various heavenly deities will protect those who believe in the sutra, and so recite them on that basis. It is the same with posthumous Buddhist names for the dead. European and American members who believe in and can accept Rissho Kosei-kai posthumous names for the deceased may do so, while those who do not yet have that capacity may use lay names. That is an entirely reasonable course. □

Women in War and Peace: Victims but Not Negotiators?

by Azza Karam

Despite many years of suffering, the women of Afghanistan only became "visible" after world media focused on the plight of their nation as a whole. The common understanding is that war is a man's game.

Recent events in Afghanistan brought to the fore more strongly than ever the reality of women in situations of conflict. Despite many years of suffering under the Taliban regime, the women of Afghanistan only became "visible" to the outside world after the international media focused on the plight of the Afghan nation as a whole, and while they were being mercilessly bombed by the United States military in an attempt to eradicate al-Qaeda alleged terrorist groups. The common understanding traditionally has been that war is a man's game. But there has yet to be one conflict in which women have not played an integral part. In fact, women have been active fighters for both war and peace. Even when they have not been soldiers of some sort, women, as half if not more of the world's population, form an essential part of any society. Therefore, there seems to be a consensus—at

least verbally—that to take the specifics of women's contexts into account, whether before, during, or after a war, is not a matter of course but of necessity.

Women in War: Some Theories of the Practice

The scholarly approach to women in war has tended to vary. Many studies increasingly point to the gendered nature of war and often involve either the military, with its largely androcentric structure and male-dominated culture, or paramilitaries and guerrilla movements.

It is right to argue that the relatively few women in decision-making positions also means that women are not directly responsible for conflicts. However, research correctly highlights that despite their numerical weakness in top political posts globally, women are not only universally victims of wars, but also active participants in some of them. The process involves not only the "humanitarian dimension" of being nurses, mothers of "the disappeared," guardians of the home front in time of war, and so on, but also the committing of atrocities and other serious abuses.

In their article on gender and conflict in Africa, "South African Women Demand the Truth" (in Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya, eds., *What Women Do in Wartime: Gender and Conflict in Africa*, 1998), Beth Goldblatt and Sheila Meintjes point out that some native South African women supported apartheid racial discrimination while others organized prostitution, and still others were involved in inflicting torture (on other women, as well as on men). A similar Asian situation in Sri Lanka is highlighted by P. L. de Silva in a forthcoming book in which he describes how some women Tamil paramilitaries were perceived by male fighters to be more violent than their male colleagues. The point is made that some former male prisoners of the paramilitaries later recounted it was the women who frightened and hurt them most during torture sessions, allegedly because they were "more ruthless" and "did not know the rules of warfare [as men did]." This perspective is interesting because

Azza Karam joined the World Conference on Religion and Peace as director of its Women's Program in 2000. An Egyptian national, she obtained her Ph.D. cum laude from the University of Amsterdam. She has lectured widely in international forums on political Islam, democratization, and international gender issues. Her publications include *Women, Islamisms and the State: Contemporary Feminisms in Egypt* (1998) and *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* (Edited, 1998).

it relates to certain psychosocial theories that argue women's socialization processes in general do not prepare them to realize that violence has to have some kind of boundaries or limits.

Anyway, very often women's concerns tend to be at worst ignored by policymakers and at best relegated to second-rank priority. The explanation generally given (or presumed) for this is that during times of crisis "the interests of the nation as a whole" must be prioritized over all other "specific" concerns. Debates, within academic as

women differently, depending on the nature of the conflict, its causes, and the roles that women played in them. What follows is an attempt to look at the commonalities in order to gain as broad an insight into the issues as possible. Many women's lives changed drastically, and their fates were shaped by many of the following factors:

- when specifically targeted as victims (often along with children and the elderly), or as victims of rape as in Bosnia, Rwanda, and East Timor. The consequences of this for women, both in terms of post-traumatic stress as

Women privates in the German army, holding automatic rifles, take a brief rest during a training exercise in western Germany in February 2001. Female soldiers join in such exercises in combat units and handle weapons just like their male counterparts. Photo: AP/WWP.

well as political settings, still rage over these issues of definition (where is the dividing line between "women's interests" and those of the nation?), as well as over the ways and means of setting national priorities.

Women and War

Although the terms "war" and "conflict" often can be used to denote two different conditions, it is the intention here to employ them interchangeably to refer to what is commonly understood as a confrontation (interstate or intrastate) that involves armed struggle and incumbent violence and trauma for an entire society. I do not refer to the first and second world wars in these pages, but rather focus on the conflicts that took place toward the end of the twentieth century. Clearly, each conflict affected

well as in other aspects of social, political, and economic rehabilitation, have yet to be sufficiently studied, particularly in societies where a high value is placed on notions of women's sexual morality, such as Algeria, Palestine, Eritrea, and Guatemala;

- as orphans or widows, and the consequences thereof (being single women in war-ravaged societies or sole breadwinners and heads of households and families), and losing their property or livelihoods;

- when mobilized as part of the increasing militarization of the society as freedom fighters or as army personnel;

- in some cases, war entails the absence of a state or other official structure that should be responsible for the security of citizens and serve as a recourse to justice for everyone. Especially for the women who are paying the

price of the conflict in some way or other, security becomes impossible, thus compounding the dilemma, as in Somalia;

- as mothers, wives, or daughters of “the disappeared,” who have to reconcile their present lives with uncertainty over the fate of their loved ones and hope that someday they will be found, dead or alive, and who on that basis organized actively and bravely throughout the conflict as well as after it;

- as refugees or displaced persons, in Afghanistan, Palestine, and Cambodia, to give but a few examples. Here it is important to stress that in refugee situations, resources are often distributed to men, as in the Eritrean refugee camps in Sudan. This occurs either intentionally, since men are perceived as the “responsible” ones who would then supposedly pass on these resources, or simply because it is often men who elbow their way in more effectively under camp conditions. This unequal access to resources leads to a further weakening of women’s political, economic, and social conditions; and

- as victims of a structure (usually a state, but in some cases any community or tribe) that has directed its attention more toward militarization than to health care, education, infrastructure, and welfare (El Salvador, Guatemala).

Postwar conditions also entail certain of the following situations for some women in war-torn societies:

- being the unseen segment of a society whose specific needs and conditions have yet to be documented;

- after having fought a struggle for liberation and being promised equality with men at the end of their struggle, being expected to return to their homes and limit themselves to being mothers and wives (in Algeria after earlier civil war, in Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, and China). This is perceived and often couched in terms of the continuation of their patriotic duties;

- confronting a labor market to which men return after the war, often reducing the market’s size and increasing the economic plight of women whose livelihoods depend on employment;

- the related consequence that once the men return, the opportunities for skilled employment that women can have are diminished, and many women’s options become limited to services, unskilled or unofficial work, as in Tajikistan;

- being part of a group of soldiers or guerrillas who, after a negotiated settlement, find themselves unemployed and traumatized (as in Eritrea), as well as “no longer needed,” and thus invisible to veterans associations accustomed to being formed by men and for men. It is also important to stress in this context that disabled women in particular have the hardest time finding the right kind of care and assistance; and

- being part of a group of freedom fighters who are leaders of their communities or groups, and who expect

to play an important role in the newly emerging governments (South Africa, Namibia, and El Salvador).

Women and Negotiated Settlements—Processes and Means

Conscious that the oppressed must help themselves, large numbers of women who participated in the struggle for equal rights for all South Africans were able to integrate into the theory behind their struggle the rights of women. Continued involvement in the negotiations by women ensured that the new South Africa, in the words of Frene Ginwala, speaker of the new National Assembly, has a constitution that is “gender-sensitive and provides a unique legal framework for genuine and effective equality.”

Ginwala’s words indicate that it is not simply a matter of women being “involved” in a token manner in negotiations—as the Bonn negotiations concerning the future of Afghanistan demonstrated, for example—nor is it a “favor” done for the women. Equally, women’s active engagement in the processes of negotiation is not a matter of “condescension.” Rather, it is an issue of being integrated into the entire process of negotiations, so that the outcome is fundamentally affected and reflects this integration on a long-term basis. In South Africa, for example, such integration eventually resulted in a bundle of national institutions, mechanisms, and stipulations that guarantee—as much as possible—gender equality and sensitivity across the board.

Some analysts stress that even after a peace process is under way or technically accomplished, women remain socially, politically, and economically marginalized and still vulnerable to violence. It has been noted, for example, that single displaced women, or those with children, face more difficulties in establishing a livelihood than some men. The Rwandan experience highlights how, in the aftermath of genocide, women’s lack of property (since property passes only through the male members of a household), results in widows being forced off farms or being unable to return to them. The demobilization of soldiers, which may result in a large number of dissatisfied and armed young men roaming the country, also impacts on the level of violence in a society—and particularly on families and women adjusting to changes in the gender division of labor.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, accountability, protection of human rights, and economic development are important dimensions of preventing conflicts and consolidating peace. It is important to note that initiatives which mirror these aspects usually involve women’s organizations. Kosovo, Bosnia, and Sierra Leone are examples of places where women’s groups have drawn up and implemented action plans which took into account education, advocacy, rehabilitation, research, and training of women both to earn their livelihoods and in conflict resolution at various levels. Women’s

organizations in Afghanistan are currently involved in similar capacities, with some international assistance.

Studies indicate that a sustainable peace is one that is supported and consolidated at the grass-roots level, whereas a peace negotiated solely among the elite and without the participation of the majority of the people tends to generate a certain degree of instability. Several examples indicate that the grass-roots and local government levels are also where women's initiatives have an impressive record. Latin American women in particular have been extremely vocal in insisting that reconciliation should not be at the cost of ignoring human rights abuses, such as in Argentina and Chile. In Somalia and Eritrea, women's cross-clan networks played an important role in the settlement of disputes.

What should be noted is that war not only creates victims but also produces its share of heroes and heroines, as well as its fair share of "silver linings to the clouds." Meredith Turshen, a sociologist who has been a consultant to WHO, the ILO, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, points out that in attempting to search for something positive from war—instead of the tremendous amount of the negative and painful—she found it in the meaning of the social upheaval. "War also destroys the patriarchal structures of society that confine and degrade women. In the very breakdown of morals, traditions, customs, and community, war also opens up new beginnings," she writes in "Women's War Stories," published in *What Women Do in Wartime*, 1998.

Some women's experiences of war have resulted in learning skills and obtaining social, economic, and political exposure and strength. In effect, conflicts extend beyond the lessons of the battlefield and into the domains of everyday life. Women exiles in refugee camps in Guatemala, for instance, pointed out that their situation provided the opportunity to organize and participate in representative bodies, and to build their own organizations and networks which articulated their concerns. In Chad, Rwanda, and Mozambique, women gained more positive gender relations, access to areas of work from which they were previously barred, and to ownership of property—all of which was possible as a result of the contingencies of postwar situations.

Best Practices

Thus what is required is a post-conflict society which is inclusive of women's concerns, interests, and needs. Despite the diversity of such concerns and needs, there are some general features which are basic—if not a *sine qua non*—of any negotiated and, indeed, sustainable, peace process. Some of these are summarized below:

- gender equality—particularly in terms of duties and responsibilities—must be a constant and consistent goal. Despite the fact that many societies continue to argue in terms of "compatibility" rather than "equality," there are

very few countries where written constitutions do not grant that right. The issue is not to reinvent the wheel in most cases, but to ensure that these principles are built into all terms of reference (read mentalities) of emerging persona and institutions;

- balanced representation in all formal social, economic, and political sectors and aspects of life at all moments—including the process of negotiating a settlement itself. This can be read as a follow-up to the above, but it is not one and the same. Balanced representation is one of the means through which an aspect of gender equality takes shape. However, as current political experience indicates, having a large number of women represented is not necessarily the automatic formula for gender equality; and

- building of mechanisms, networks, and institutions which would provide for the above, as well as be responsive and flexible enough to accommodate changing needs and times. This also echoes arguments which point to the fact that once they are institutionalized, it is extremely difficult to change structures and ways of thinking. Hence the need for flexibility in whatever is being established. For example, some of the mechanisms set up, such as Gender Equality Commissions in South Africa, and even Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Chile and South Africa, have a built-in mandate which terminates their activities and relevance after a certain period. A similar notion (or one which provides for a reevaluation of the institution and mechanism after a number of years) can also be applied in these cases.

Women, like men, are not a homogenous group, but embody differences in terms of education, social background, occupation, and skills, among other things. These different aspects must also feature in any part of a negotiated settlement since they impact on the specific requirements and indeed the shape, of a future society. However, experience has indicated that these diverse interests must form an integral part from the very beginning of any process of negotiation. Not only that, women's interests need to be prioritized, not because they are gender-specific but because they are the basis of the articulation of the needs of any society.

There are several success stories in which the above concerns have been taken into account. In South Africa, women played an integral role in the redesigning of their constitution and the institutional bodies which articulate and implement their interests. Ugandan women also ensured that they were provided with specialized institutions and services which would, and do, cater to the specific needs and demands of women. In both cases, a specialized and institutionalized system was developed which aims to ensure that national budgets are "gender screened" to render them "gender-friendly."

To a more limited extent, women in Cambodia endeavored to ensure that their rights were enshrined in their constitution. Palestinian women attempted to play an ac-

In Croatia, local women volunteers visit refugees in their temporary home to provide them medical services and assess their continuing needs. Women take the lead in promoting the rehabilitation of lives affected by prolonged armed conflicts.

tive role to ensure gender equality in all their laws and institutions—through a specialized gender mainstreaming unit—from the constitution to grass-roots networks. What South African women have been able to accomplish in terms of national legislation and institution-building differs from the achievements of their Palestinian sisters. These differences reflect the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of the conflict (and the persistence of male-dominated leadership and decision-making patterns), as well as the nature of the conflict itself (the majority South Africans had their land and their state but were unable to rule it themselves, whereas the Palestinians are still in the process of both nation- and state-building). Nevertheless, each society, when viewed separately, has benefited from involving women thus far—a quiet voice is better than no voice at all.

In Northern Ireland, some of the women formed a women's political party, the Women's Coalition, which won a seat in the emerging Assembly and continues to be actively involved in the peace process and consequent plans and activities for the forthcoming Executive.

All these initiatives, and many others, though diverse in origin, constitution, and aims, have some basic aspects in common:

- the women (and occasional men) who came together had the betterment of the lot of women as a primary objective—that the “women's agenda” is part and parcel of the struggle;
- the attempts to organize, network, plan, and actively work toward realizing their visions started before a peace settlement was achieved (in some instances, before it was even deemed possible); and

- there were (and are) concerted attempts to legalize and/or institutionalize the visions—either enshrining them within constitutions, or creating specific bodies (national or otherwise) which would propagate and indeed mainstream the demands made.

Further, in the context of looking at best practices, it is sometimes easier to allude to what should *not* be done. In that context, waiting until the end of a war to involve women (by listening to their needs, including them in relevant decision-making forums, and pondering the mechanisms for responding) is a “do-not”—because more often than not it is too late.

Role of Relevant International Organizations

International organizations of various hues form the modus operandi of today's globalized world. The United Nations with its various organs has attempted to develop a reputation for “nonbiased” interventions. But there are many contemporary organizations which are formed with conflict as their *raison d'être*. In situations of conflict, an organization with internationalist credentials will often be able to maneuver better than either governments or neighboring states. Some of these organizations have an important role to play to ensure that women's concerns are responded to in a democratic post-conflict society. Until very recently, however, many of these organizations saw women as marginal to situations of conflict at worst, and “victims” of them at best.

The United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has a unique track record in highlighting the specific needs and contributions of women before, during, and after a conflict. UNIFEM has also championed engaging women

in negotiations at a global level (lobbying the UN Security Council to incorporate Resolution 1323, which highlights the importance of taking women's concerns into account as part of any postwar strategy) and bringing key Afghan women to address UN members during the bombing of Afghanistan in recent months.

Another international organization that continues to work for women in and after a conflict is International Alert, which has also carried out several studies on the issue. The following are some important considerations that such organizations have pointed to through their experiences at different stages of a conflict:

- in the run-up to conflicts, for example, key concerns include violations of human rights (gender-specific ones such as restricting women's freedoms as in Afghanistan), and displacement (as mentioned earlier, women and children have different needs from men).

During conflicts the following different needs should be catered to:

- equal resource distribution and provision of basic necessities;
- provision of protection (security) for those women who have been either displaced or have lost their family income-earner;
- skills training for women to attain some form of economic independence;
- promoting and raising awareness of human rights principles and practices; and
- supporting local woman's initiatives and institutions, while also recruiting both local and gender-sensitive staff.

The end of a conflict and peace-building often draw on the resources and expertise of many institutions. Post-conflict interventions include dealing with practical problems of reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation. The latter would often entail dealing with the roots of the conflict in order to establish more accountable, transparent, and nonviolent forms of handling future conflicts. These are also key moments for women since they can be decisive for the future roles that they play in that society—will their skills be drawn upon (and if so, how?) or will they be marginalized? To that end, issues of access to resources, security, and democratic capacity-building—all of which are geared to responding to women's needs and demands—should be critical considerations when determining the priorities of the different work programs.

What remains is the need for more information, documentation, analysis, and training in the experience and lessons learned from actual peace negotiations that took place in different conflict situations around the world. Although it has almost become a cliché to call for the "sharing of experience," it is still the case that women everywhere have shared their difficulties and their pains, but fewer women are coming together on the issue of peace-building to compare notes on what has worked and why, and have this documented. This is not only a scien-

tific or scholarly necessity, but a deeply felt need for many women and men in today's societies, in order to ensure that the cost of war is fully appreciated and addressed, and that the different experiences are incorporated into the emerging new world.

Women suffer from the effects of war in the same way that men do, but women have not only been victims, they also have gained from conflict situations (increasing their independence, leadership skills, public involvement, and awareness-raising). The issue, therefore, is to what extent it is possible to maximize and capitalize on the benefits and minimize the losses in such a way that both men and women in any society emerge capable of handling the challenges of demilitarization, demobilization, reconstruction, and rehabilitation.

Involving women in negotiating and implementing peace goes beyond either doing the "right" thing, ensuring their representation, or the need to involve minorities (the kind of excuses often put forward in this endeavor). Women are not a minority in any society, but a statistical half which embodies the ideas, experiences, and hopes of many other sections of the population, and lives and forms these many realities. Since women now play an active role in combat, they must be called upon, indeed they are obliged, to take part in the process of building peace.

Women's involvement in, and active contribution to, post-conflict society is affected by their initial positions within the different societies (the roles expected of them and so on), and as such, begins from the moment they are engaged, even if remotely, in the conflict itself. The mechanisms of this involvement (and the results) entail many responsibilities: for the women themselves, for the majority male decision-makers, as well as for the negotiating team and the regional or international organizations involved. But these mechanisms, and their outcomes, are also a function of the type and nature of the conflict, its location, the kind of leadership available, as well as the time in which the negotiations are taking place.

Women have a great deal to learn from each other the world over about how to impact positively on societies ravaged by war. Their involvement in the process of peace-making and peace-building is an important first step. The ensuing building of relevant institutions is the next crucial step. Throughout, their integration into societies—as civilians, participants, and decision-makers, is an essential safeguard for a democratic and peaceful society.

To return to the Afghanistan situation, a comment from a student there highlights why women negotiators need to be encouraged and their significance promoted: "When peace comes, I will see what it looks like. I am sure I will then forget the names of all the weapons I now know."

With words like these to inspire us, how can we fail to activate a mandate? □

Everyone Has an Equal Right to Education

Last December, during a three-day session of the NGO Conference in Tokyo on the Reconstruction of Afghanistan, representatives of twenty-seven Afghan NGOs discussed with members of Japanese NGOs long-term comprehensive plans for post-conflict recovery and reconstruction of that country. Palwasha Hassan participated in the meeting representing the Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC), an Islamabad-based NGO established in 1991, that promotes women's education, protection of women's rights, medical care, and income generation for women. Ms. Hassan is the director of the AWEC-affiliated Center for Street Children and Women in Peshawar, Pakistan. During an interview with DHARMA WORLD and reporters for the Japanese mass media, she described her hopes for creating better opportunities for education, particularly for women and children, to ensure enduring social reconstruction efforts at the hands of the Afghans themselves.

Could you share with us your own experiences or those of your friends as women under the Taliban rule of Afghanistan?

Institutionalized discrimination took place under the Taliban, and that meant forbidding women to have an education. I mean, girls' schools were closed and women were not allowed to work, so women teachers and others were all just sitting at home. But I must say here that this doesn't mean that we had functioning schools even before the Taliban. Because of the insecure situation in the country, even under the previous regime we didn't have schools as such, so we can't say that they were closed only because of Taliban policy. Because earlier there was no security, many schools were abandoned or closed. The Afghans' plight was almost forgotten by the international community, and people didn't want to become interested in education because somehow it looked to be a long-term commitment. Therefore, many people, or many donors, didn't pay attention to the education sector.

Ms. Hassan during her interview with reporters in Tokyo last December.

With the departure of the Taliban, do you think the situation for women in Afghanistan will change?

Just the going of the Taliban—that really doesn't mean the situation for women will improve. We will have real improvement when we have a peaceful and stable government,

which is representative of the people of Afghanistan, not of the military factions. So if that kind of government is established and promoted without foreign interference, that will bring real change.

What is the most specific role of women for the future rebuilding of your country?

I think women have the potential to contribute in every sphere. Under the constitution in previous regimes, boys and girls, women and men, all had equal rights to an education, and we have a big number of educated women who contributed as engineers, doctors, and educators. The important thing is that under the constitution these rights should also be granted in the future in Afghanistan. As an NGO, we think on the grass-roots level of the development of women. We want to include more women in the development process, and that will be possible when we provide more education to women and allow women to develop more so that they use the opportunities to

make creative contributions for the betterment of the country.

How does your faith in Islam help you to continue to take action?

One of the pillars, a strong pillar, of Islam, is education. It is even compulsory for women and men to be educated. It is a very big thing which is given to us by Islam, and we should capitalize on the right which is given to us by our religion.

May we ask you about education not just in terms of being able to read, but actual training so that people can start working?

Yes, that is a very good idea because some people have passed their school age but they still need to be educated. At this age, they are responsible for family support. At the same time, however, people need to be literate and educated. For women especially, we need a literacy program which is outside the schools, maybe in home schools. When skill training for income generation is provided, the lit-

eracy component should be attached to that. Around six million people in Afghanistan depend on relief assistance. Relief should not be given just as food and clothing for them, but literacy and skill training should be given the same weight. While the people are getting food, shelter, clothes, and other things as emergency relief, it should also be accompanied by the capacity-building of the people. We also need special education packages designed for street children and for working children, because we are not sure how soon we will be able to eradicate poverty.

We wonder if people in Afghanistan can really imagine the country under conditions of peace, because many young people might never have seen the country not involved in war.

By our faith in Islam and as Afghans, the thing we always have is hope. And the people are living by that hope. Many children were born after the war began, so they haven't seen their country at peace. But we have hope; we believe that as Afghans we

will be able to restore peace. What is important is that we be given the chance, free of interference from countries that have been provoking war in our country.

Ms. Hassan was born in a village near Kabul. The village had no school, so she went to Kabul to study, which meant that she was lucky, because many girls in her village remained illiterate. Having been raised in a time of war, however, she remembers her childhood as being constantly under tension. After the Soviet invasion in 1979, when she was in her early teens, her family migrated to Pakistan. She finished her college education there and aspires to continue her studies to better qualify her for the work in which she is now deeply involved. After the interview, she expressed regrets over the destruction by the Taliban early last year of the great Buddha statues in Bamian that represented part of the Buddhist heritage in Afghanistan, asking us to convey her personal apologies as an Afghan to the Buddhists among readers of DHARMA WORLD. □

Closing plenary session of the NGO Conference in Tokyo on the Reconstruction of Afghanistan, in which Ms. Hassan (second from left in the rear) coordinated reports of separate sectoral and regional working sessions.

World Religious Leaders Join in the Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, Italy

World religious leaders joined together in Assisi, Italy, on January 24 for the Day of Prayer for Peace in the World and offered their prayers for peace. Rissho Kosei-kai President Nichiko Niwano participated as a representative of Japanese Buddhism. At the event the participants demonstrated the shared commitment of religions to reject violence and promote a culture of dialogue as the world situation remains tense in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States.

This was the second occasion—the first was in October 1986—on which world religious leaders met in Assisi at the invitation of Pope John Paul II to pray for peace. He had again invited them to gather to pray for the end of conflict and for the promotion of true peace. He especially hoped that Christians and Muslims would come together “to declare before the world that religion must never become a cause of conflict, hatred, and violence.”

For the occasion, a huge temporary hall had been set up in the city's Saint Francis Square. In the morning of January 24, 250 representatives of 12 world religions and some 10,000 Catholic faithful took part in the Testimonies for Peace held in the hall. The 12 representatives of different Christian traditions, ecclesiastic communities, and non-Christian religions, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and African traditional religions, read their testimonies from the lectern on the platform.

In the afternoon, the participants moved to different places to offer prayers separately according to the rituals of each religion. Non-Christian representatives offered prayers in several rooms of the nearby Sacred Convent. Japanese Buddhist representatives recited together the Heart Sutra and the “Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures.” All the participants then met again in the hall at Saint Francis Square to read a Common Commit-

The Day of Prayer for Peace meeting was held in a temporary hall which had been specially built for the multireligious occasion at Saint Francis Square in Assisi.

ment to Peace. Rev. Niwano was one of the 12 representatives, each of whom proceeded to the lectern to read part of the commitment in their respective language, pledging further dedication of religionists to the realization of world peace.

In the early evening of January 23, an interreligious forum was hosted by

the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in the Vatican's Synods Hall. Some 200 religious leaders participated in the forum, in which along with 30 other designated speakers Rev. Niwano made a presentation on the need for mutual respect among all people as fellow “children of life.” (The text of his speech appears on the following page. □

Respecting One Another as "Children of Life"

Nichiko Niwano
President of Rissho Kosei-kai

Last year saw the curtain raised on a new century as well as on a great tragedy in the form of several incidents of violent terrorism against innocent civilians in the United States. In the meanwhile, conflict raged unabated in many parts of the world. It pains me to see such circumstances, in which people fight and kill each other. It goes without saying that the immediate dissolution of this lamentable state of affairs is the wish of all humanity. I feel very strongly that now more than ever the wisdom of religious teaching is crucial to finding a way for people everywhere to forgive one another, acknowledge one another's concerns, and give support to one another.

In Buddhism, we speak of prayer as the wish that springs forth from one's innermost being. Prayer embodies the greatest and most noble force—the earnest desire to do everything one can to assure that all people know happiness. Through prayer, people are healed and encouraged. The tremendous power of prayer is also seen in the many peace movements it has helped to spawn.

This wish is something that everyone possesses deep inside, and when we all become profoundly aware of its presence, we will all be joined as one . . . differences of nationality, race, and religion will be left behind as we appreciate each other and work together. Such is the power of prayer.

All living beings on earth are given life by the same great life-force and therefore live in a state of interdependence.

All people are brothers and sisters, we are all family. Irrespective of differences in race or religion, each one of us is a "child of life" who is supported in being alive at this moment in this place by a single great life-force. Once we become free of our persistence in stress-

ing differences in appearance, once we recognize and accept those differences and discover the commonality deep inside us—the truth that every person is a "child of life"—we will be able to become aware that the world is one.

Today, every one of us has a greater need than ever before to realize anew a sense of gratitude and awe for the life we have received. Awareness of the sacredness of one's own life directly leads to a deeper respect for the lives of others.

Every human being shares in the same one great life, and each individual life is equally precious and invaluable. When we are awakened to this wonderful truth of existence, our arrogance and anger evaporate and with humility we bow our heads before God and the Buddha.

To bring about peace requires great patience and efforts. But if each and every one of us continues to pray, have hope, be aware of the preciousness of life, and have respect for all people as "children of life," then I believe we can attain real peace.

Unfortunately, the twentieth century has been described as a century of warfare and of conflict. I would like to encourage all religious leaders to make the twenty-first century one of respect for life.

I am confident that here and now, at this gathering of religious leaders for the World Day of Prayer for Peace, we will make the power of prayer a reality. I will do everything I can to see that this spirit of Assisi, which is being continued in Japan at the Mount Hiei Religious Summit, is brought to every corner of Asia.

Finally, I would like to close by expressing my gratitude for this opportunity to speak at this Forum and by assuring you that as a man of religious faith, I will continue to work for lasting world peace. □

New Rissho Kosei-kai Chairman Inaugurated

Rev. Katsunori Yamanoi was inaugurated as the new chairman of Rissho Kosei-kai on January 1, 2002. He replaced Rev. Norio Sakai, the former chairman, whose six-year term of office ended on December 31, 2001. Rev. Yamanoi was born in 1941 and became a staff member of Rissho Kosei-kai in 1964. After holding the positions of director of the personnel section, auditor, and director of the general affairs section, he assumed the post of general secretary of the Niwano Peace Foundation in 1977. He became director of the personnel department and at the same time dean of the Rissho Kosei-kai seminary in 1990. He was appointed a member of the Rissho Kosei-kai board of directors in 1991, and director of the organization's finance department in 1994. □

WCRP/Japan Youth Board Co-hosts Panel on Muslim Faith

Some 270 members of the WCRP/Japan Youth Board participated in a symposium on Islam at the Tokyo Camii and Culture Center on December 23, 2001. The Japan Muslim Association, Tokyo Camii and Culture Center, and the WCRP/Japan Youth Board co-hosted the symposium, in which Professor Yoshiaki Iisaka, president of Seigakuin University in Saitama Prefecture, coordinated the discussion. The four panelists were Mr. Amin K. Tokumasu, vice president of the Japan Muslim Association; Mr. Selim Yucel Gulec, vice director of the Tokyo Camii and Culture Center;

Professor Kenji Ueda of Tokyo's Kokugakuin University; and Professor Yoshiaki Sanada of Chuo University, also in Tokyo.

Through presentations and the subsequent question-and-answer session, the panelists discussed the faith and practice of Islam, thereby guiding the young audience to an unprejudiced understanding of the religion. In his closing remarks Mr. Mimasaka Higuchi, president of the Japan Muslim Association, thanked the WCRP/Japan Youth Board for the initiative it took in holding the interreligious symposium, the first of its kind for his association. □

"Islam and the Japanese" Symposium Hosted by Japan Religions League

The Japan Religions League hosted a symposium on Islam at the Japan Press Center in Tokyo on December 20, 2001. Some 200 attendees, including representatives of Japan Religions League member organizations, scholars of religion, and local citizens, took part in the symposium under the theme "Islam and the Japanese: Reflections on the Terrorist Attacks in the United States."

Professor Yoshiaki Sanada of Chuo University in Tokyo delivered a keynote address entitled "Islam and Fundamentalism," pointing out persisting misconceptions in the media about Islam. He said that Islam, a religion that advocates peace and coexistence, had often been dubbed by the media as fundamentalism or even terrorism. He pointed out that Islam acknowledges the right to self-defense but strictly prohibits violence.

The subsequent panel discussions, in which four panelists including Professor Sanada and Mr. Hideomi Muto, director at the Japan Muslim Association, took part, focused on the history and basic teachings of Islam with Professor Nobutaka Inoue of Tokyo's Kokugakuin University coordinating. □

Rissho Kosei-kai Youth Members Join IARF Peace Project in India

Rissho Kosei-kai dispatched two youth members, to participate in an International Interfaith Youth Project in India held by the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) from December 20, 2001 to January 11, 2002. Twenty-eight religious youths gathered for the project from seven countries, including India, the U.K., the U.S., South Africa, and Japan.

The project was intended to help the youths of different faiths from various countries to learn mutual understanding and respect through reconstructing the religious facilities in Gujarat State, western India, that were damaged by the severe earthquake in January 2001.

The project participants went to Kajarada village to assist in the renovation of a mosque for the December period and from the beginning of 2002, participated in laying the foundations for a Hindu temple in Nana Dahisara village.

During the daytime, they engaged in the construction and renovation work. In the evening, they held a prayer session before their dinner and then also held a workshop to introduce their cultural and religious differences to each other. The young participants also held discussions on the subject of religious freedom. □

Appreciation Expressed by U.S. Students for Letters of Sympathy

In January Rissho Kosei-kai's Youth Division received a bundle of fifty letters, together with photos and a videotape, from American students of Our Lady of Victory Academy high school near New York, expressing appreciation for the letters of sympathy and encouragement written by senior and junior high school and elementary school members of Rissho Kosei-kai for children in the U.S. whose family members, friends, or neighbors lost their lives in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Some 4,000 letters, originally written in English, were brought to headquarters in Tokyo by October 15 and later transferred to the United States Conference of Religions for Peace and the United States Fund for UNICEF to be handed to the children and students at certain schools in New York and Boston, and some in New Jersey.

A representative of the students at Our Lady of Victory Academy, which has a multiethnic, multiracial student body, wrote: "Thank you for your kindness and compassion during this stressful time. This tragedy both surprised and upset us; your letters were very comforting and helped us to see goodness in a world plagued by hate." □

IARF youth members of different faiths and national backgrounds collaborate to lay the foundations for a Hindu temple at Nana Dahisara village in India.

European Mayors Affirm New Cooperation among All Peoples and Religions

Over 1,000 mayors of European cities, stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals, met in a congress on November 9–10, 2001, in Innsbruck, Austria, to discuss the details of a new form of cooperation and social justice among European populations, based on fraternity and peace among all peoples. Participants agreed that the challenge to Europe is to tear down cultural and religious barriers by promoting a greater awareness of the richness of the cultural and religious diversity that characterizes the European Union. The local mayors, in the presence of Austrian President Thomas Klestil, testified to their commitment for the strengthening of democracy in Europe.

The congress, called “1,000 Cities for Europe,” was promoted by Dr. Herwing Van Staa, mayor of Innsbruck and president of the European Union’s House of Commons, in cooperation with the Movement for Unity, the political arm of the lay Roman Catholic Focolare Movement. The initiative arose from a proposal by Ms. Chiara Lubich, the Focolare founder and president.

An interreligious prayer set the tone of the congress. Mr. Jeahngir Sarosh, chairman, and Ms. Lisa Palmieri-Billig, vice-chairperson of WCRP Europe, respectively, offered Zoroastrian and Jewish prayers respectively. Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist prayers also were offered.

The whole meeting was permeated by the Focolare spirit of unity among the different religions and ethnic groups that compose the new Europe beyond national boundaries. Ms. Lubich testified to this growing unity. She pointed out the key to unity in Europe: “fraternity in politics.” Like many other speakers, she referred to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. She emphasized to what extent the multicultural and multireligious citizens of New York came to grips with the tragedy there by means

of an unprecedented manifestation of solidarity. In those circumstances, the world witnessed the absolute need “to establish universal brotherhood everywhere.”

The same brotherhood, Ms. Lubich continued, is present in people of religion like the Dalai Lama—whom she quoted in her comments about what happened: “The reasons (for the events of these days) are clear to us. . . . We have forgotten the most basic human truths. . . . We are all one. This is a message that the human race has greatly ignored. Forgetting this truth is the only cause of hatred and war, and the way to remember it is simple: love in this moment and always.” Fraternity, Ms. Lubich added, is of central importance to politics and “only a brother can acknowledge full liberty and equality to another brother.”

Ms. Lubich recalled the personal story of Edith Stein, a Roman Catholic nun born into a Jewish family who died in a Nazi concentration camp, whom she described as testifying to a twofold unity: to her people and to her faith. Sister Edith, she remarked, laid the foundations for a Europe in which all religions can live and cooperate in building fraternity.

Mahatma Gandhi also embodied the spirit of universal brotherhood, Ms. Lubich said. He once said: “The golden rule is to be friends of the world and to consider as ‘one’ the whole human family. Whoever distinguishes between the faithful of his own religion and those of another, misinforms the members of his own and opens the way to rejection and irreligion.”

Ms. Lubich pointed out that today, in order to build fraternity in Europe, four dialogues are necessary: the dialogue within each Christian denomination, the ecumenical dialogue which helps to restructure the unity leading to one church, the dialogue with peoples of other religions, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and others who today are

present in large numbers in Europe as a result of widespread immigration and exchange programs linked to globalization, and finally, the dialogue “with our brothers and sisters who do not profess any religious faith, but who also have the impetus to love inscribed in the DNA of their souls.” These dialogues are possible, she said, because of the “golden rule” common to all major religions: Do to others as you would have them do to you.

For his part, European Commission President Romano Prodi emphasized that the European Union, which within only a few years will have become a family of over 500 million, must be a union of hearts and minds, its goals being the promotion of dialogue, the exchange of views, and the meeting of minds.

In the White Book on European governance, the Commission has explicitly identified religious communities as its partners. This was reaffirmed by Mr. Prodi on January 11. On that occasion, Pope John Paul II had expressed disappointment because at the December meeting in Laeken the European Council had omitted including religion as one of the fundamental elements in drafting the constitution of the Union. In particular, the pope had lamented “the marginalization of religions,” those same religions, he said, which contribute to the culture and humanism of Europe. Furthermore, the pope referred to the rights of the “community of believers,” thus encompassing all the diverse spiritual and religious beliefs that are part of the European Union.

It was perhaps an oversight that Mr. Prodi will certainly make up for at the Union’s next meeting. Since, as Ms. Lubich said, “The vocation of Europe lies in this universal brotherhood which creates unity while it keeps the distinctions. Today the unity of Europe asks European politicians to interpret the signs of the times and to formulate, as it were, a pact of fraternity with one another,” because fraternity “enhances the authentic values of each and rebuilds the whole of the political design of a nation.” □

Eva Ruth Palmieri

Winning the "Ghost War"

by Joseph Grange

An American philosopher warns that the heightened emotions of the "war on terrorism" can lead to serious delusions. It is time, he says, that people seek to take control of events.

The Dutch philosopher Benedict Spinoza (1632–77) stands at the forefront of modern democratic political theory. More than anyone else, he warned us against living solely by our emotions. An emotion is a confused idea. It victimizes us and puts us into bondage. The events of September 11, 2001 threaten us with just such a problem.

In this particular case, I believe the problem is that American politicians are feeding on the people's rage and making them confuse revenge with justice. What can help at this hour is to pour reason on our emotions so that some of their heat is taken away. Emotions create delusions. When they take over the minds of the population, they also create illusions. This is our present plight.

The war spirit drummed up in America matches the religious fanaticism of our opponents. It threatens to make us fight a "ghost war." I call the present war a ghost war for two reasons. First, the United States is not at war in any legal, constitutional sense. War has not been declared. No democratic debate about the nature and conduct of this war has taken place. This makes it a ghost war from the U.S. side.

But it is also a ghost war from the side of Osama bin Laden. He is a ghost who is not like any conventional enemy. How does one fight a ghost? One exorcises it or dispels it by using opposing forces to drive it out. One does not defeat it by using its weapons. So far we have had recourse only to the ways of the ghost. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82), the U.S. essayist, philosopher, and poet, said: "Events are in the saddle and ride mankind." It is time we sought to get control of the horse. One way is to become wise. Here are the words of Sun Tzu, an-

cient Chinese master of war: "All things and events that have a distinguishing shape have a name, and all things that can be named can be prevailed over."

We name this war a ghost war. We can win by being opposite to the ways of the ghost. What does that mean? It means we have recourse to reason rather than to force.

We understand that a crime has been committed and we seek out the guilty ones. We have a trial. We seek justice, not revenge. It also means that there will be no lying by the U.S. side, no looting of the U.S. treasury by special interests, no maiming of the innocent, no "spinning" by "media experts," no false stories about U.S. success, no more trivializing the importance of Americans' loss of their civil rights.

It means that we ask hard questions and look for reasonable answers. Americans ask: Why do so many hate us? And we refuse easy answers like: Because they "envy our wealth." We look at the global policies whereby Americans have become so wealthy, we investigate the oil and natural gas interests that lurk behind so much of U.S. war rhetoric, we ask what kind of a world we really want to live in.

Is there not at the present time an inhuman divide between the rich and the poor? We ask for a history that will tell us how this came to be.

We slow down and show the great power of patience. When the U.S. bombs Afghanistan, we recognize that more likely than not we are just moving the rocks around.

We remember Vietnam, where America's superior weapons did not lead to victory. There is much sophistry in the present rhetoric of the "war spirit." We make it a point to remember Aristotle's definition: "Sophistry is the art of making money from an apparent but unreal wisdom."

We must ask hard questions: How do we follow the money that will lead us to the ghost war? What are the arts by which this ghost war is made to seem real? I would urge a study of the media. What is the wisdom in conducting this war? It seems apparent enough. Let us find and eliminate those responsible for it. The reality is that they

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are responsible. Now how did they achieve this? Where were America's "protectors," America's government?

Wisdom begins with a turn inward that asks hard questions: Who are the summer soldiers and the sunshine patriots who seek to turn this tragedy into profit for themselves?

The ghost war creates both delusion and illusion. Here is Spinoza's account of how this happens from his *Political Treatise*: "... there is no passion that is not sometimes overpowered by a stronger contrary one; for we see the fear of death overpowered by the greed for another's property. . . . In extreme difficulties . . . when all, without regard to the future or the laws, approve only that which their actual fear suggests, turn towards the man who is renowned for his victories, and set him free from the laws and (establishing thereby the worst of precedents) continue him in command, and entrust to his fidelity all affairs of state: and this, in fact, was the cause of the destruction of the Roman Empire."

Spinoza's remedy for this is more democracy: "And so, although from terror there arise some confusion in the republic, yet no one will be able to elude the law . . . ; and in the end it will be necessary to have recourse to the constitution ordained once for all, and approved by all, and to order the affairs of the republic according to existing laws."

And, finally, to show that others also think this way, I conclude with the words of a Native American Hopi elder

spoken to the Hopi Nation at Oraibi, Arizona: "You have been telling the people that this is the Eleventh Hour. Now you must go back and tell them that this is the Hour. And there are things to be considered: Where are you living? What are you doing? What are your relationships? It is time to speak your truth. Create your community. Be good to each other. And do not look outside yourself for a leader.

"This could be a good time! There is a river flowing swiftly now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold onto the shore.

"They will feel that they are being torn apart and will suffer greatly. Know the river has its destination. The elders say we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open, and our heads above water. And I say, see who is in there with you and celebrate. At this time in history, we are to take nothing personally. Least of all ourselves, for the moment that we do, our spiritual journey comes to an end. The time of the lone wolf is over. Gather yourselves!

"Banish the word 'struggle' from your attitude and vocabulary. All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration. We are the ones we have been waiting for."

The ghost war will claim many victims. It is up to democracy to see that none are the victims of revenge and that all are given justice. □

The Case for Religion

by Jamshed K. Fozdar

Today, if the past and present vilify religion because of . . . sects and creeds—of “the many” where there should be one . . . —religion vindicates itself by answering that its “vilifiers” search their hearts and history.

The fundamental question today is “Where are we headed?” instead of “What or who are we?” There is nothing surprising in this attitude, since the majority of Homo sapiens, having no basis for reflection, try to correlate their existence with what they smell, feel, or hear around them in their daily lives. Even when reflection is exercised with the desire to analyze either surroundings or self, the picture becomes too disturbing and we quickly take the easy way out by putting a stop to “thinking,” which seems only to frustrate and frighten, and bury ourselves in the distractions of this homemade universe scooped by ourselves out of the immense non-human cosmos around us. Here, within a private catacomb—a world of our own—we perform curious antics, perpetrate our crimes and lunacies, feel the emotions appropriate to our environment, and cherish ambitions that make sense only in a madhouse.

In which direction can these billions of people—some frustrated, some cynical—turn, in order that they might not see reflected that frustration and blankness which has been built up within them? Is it possible to account for their behavior as a transient effect of an accelerated social development (globalization) and thus accept it as a “malady” with a “cure” in time? If, on the other hand, the idea of an automatic cure in time seems too nebulous and therefore unattractive, in which direction then are we to turn, in order to see that which is not our own image?

Can we regain our health, both moral and material, by a “prescription” from one or the other of the physicians of human sciences or arts? If so, which one? Will the answer to our ills lie in the endeavors of the economist striving to find a plan to guarantee economic stability and abundance for the world? Or, must the solution be within the realms of the physicist and the engineer—working to provide humans with the power that “runs” the suns, to satisfy their every physical desire? Will the obvious scientific principle, “the greatest and most lasting good for everyone can best be achieved by everyone giving their best for the Whole,” furnish us with the answer to our dilemma when applied in everyday human affairs? To hope for a solution to our problem from these man-made “oracles” is to ask very sick persons to cure themselves. The odds are, the person will die!

If a solution exists that can effect a cure, it must come from a perspective outside the sick “body” of the planet,

and if it must claim to be correct concerning our time, it must be correct concerning eternity, since the program that it gives for the “things of time” must have its fulcrum outside time, in the timeless—“the eternal.”

History, if it is to guide in any way, shows only this: that of all the cures offered to decaying societies of the past, the “jar” of religion has most often and regularly been called upon to administer a “potion.” In fact, religious vision and its history of persistent expansion still remains our only ground for optimism. Apart from this, human life appears as a flash of occasional enjoyments lighting upon a mass of pain and misery—“a bagatelle of transient experience.” The “doctors” who prescribed the dosage and administered the contents from that “jar” of religion, have today, in our eyes, become “supermen.”

Those religious “doctors,” Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Shakyamuni, Jesus, Mohammad, not only administered the healing potion from religion’s “jar” but partook of it themselves to prove to the spiritually sick the validity of their claim and the guarantee of cure. They went even further. They vehemently proclaimed that religion’s wonderful “elixir” was not of their own brewing but from an entity whose messengers and servants they were, and who were merely carrying out its commands. The past also shows that despite a rebellious attitude by sick societies,

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the cure was effected, although almost always at the expense of the physician's life, and this sacrifice was gladly consented to by the physician concerned, age after age.

One might well wonder what could be the basis for such behavior and what the objective! Wonder also at that something extra—something complete—in the contents of the “jar” of religion which guaranteed the success of its cure. The obvious explanation for the failures of our modern man-made “oracles” is that IF they must claim to have “the solution” for the problems of our world, the solution must contain the answers not only to questions concerning our physical well-being, but, more importantly, for our ethical health as well. For, in the final analysis, we are spiritual beings. Unfortunately, in all fields of human learning, the questions pertaining to our intrinsic nature, the spiritual within us, remain unanswered by the so-called leaders of thought, who, in order to disguise the bankruptcy of their minds, minimize the importance of the vital spiritual questions that confront us all, and instead, attempt to tinge them with the aura of superstition and fancy.

The following words of that great English scientist Sir Arthur Eddington (1882–1944) should be of interest in relation to this point: “In regard to the nature of things, this knowledge (of physical science) is only an empty shell—a form of symbols. It is knowledge of structural form and not knowledge of content. All through the physical world runs that unknown content which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness. Here is a hint of aspect deep within the world of physics and yet unattainable by the methods of physics.” In other words, all solutions which address only the physical or material needs of humanity are incomplete—incomplete in the essential. They may even go as far as showing us *how* to live at peace with each other, but insofar as they lay no claim to answering our questions concerning the spiritual within us—our intrinsic self—they cannot tell us *why* we should live at peace with our fellow humans, *why* we should labor to help them even to the extent of denying ourselves our wants, our desires. They cannot tell us *why* we should not be selfish even as the beasts, if by doing so we can guarantee for ourselves a few happy hours on this “speck of sand” before the “curtain” falls on our entity and snuffs out forever our consciousness, which, according to those who would answer the question, is only a “chance occurrence” in an alien cosmos that seems to have no more respect for the human being than for its components called atoms.

Here is where religion enters. It alone tells Homo sapiens that we are more than the sum of our physical parts and that the disintegration of our physical being can in no sense destroy our consciousness, our mind, and our soul, and maintains that the destruction of one's physical self leaves this rational soul in the same situation as a “bird on the wing” after it escapes from its cage—immeasurably freer in its movements. And to the obvious question, “If existence in ‘the hereafter’ is more free, then why

have we been relegated to abide for the span of our physical lives in this ‘clay carcass’?” religion answers that just as the period in the womb was programmed to enable us to develop all the physical components and attributes of our bodies so that we can navigate in this physical realm, the purpose of our lives on this physical plane is to educate our consciousness in the exercise of free choice, to learn of the creation around us, which in small measure reflects the Creator, i.e., “the Causeless Cause,” the Uncreated, and to learn of the existence and nature of the road we must travel beyond, so as to develop our mental and spiritual attributes to reflect more closely the perfections of the Creator—to enable us to navigate toward our ultimate goal—“spiritual bliss,” Moksha, nirvana, Paradise, or whatever name one uses to describe it. As to the time each soul takes to attain this goal, in other words, the rate of progress toward perfection, this is governed by our actions here on earth toward our fellow beings and the exercise of our free choice in our work for the service of humanity, or its antithesis, service only for our own self! Our actions here determine our rate of travel on the road “beyond” to our goal, fast or slow: this, as religion states, is “heaven” or “hell” and it unequivocally proclaims that the criterion of goodness is selfless love for humanity and that only through working for the collective whole—collective salvation—can the individual also be assured of his or her own salvation.

Unfortunately, in our age, the questions of right and responsibility are glossed over by self-interest, resulting in moral chaos. In our personal relationships two systems of thought are at war against each other, one which speaks of interdependence, the other of independence. One which accepts responsibility for the human family, the other which insists on the freedom of individuals to do as they please. The latter worship the god of individualism and refute the necessity for fellowship. But the clearest sign that this false god and its deluded votaries are doomed to failure is that such a process cannot reproduce itself, it cannot sustain its own continuity.

Absolute freedom on the part of the individual, in the sense of untrammelled expression of one's egocentric will, is an illusion in a universe dedicated to harmonious order. However, if the standards of revealed truth are compromised, then society itself loses its power of enforcement, as individuals attempt to become a law unto themselves devoid of the powerful motives for righteous conduct predicated upon the spiritual principles found in all religions.

Therefore, religion alone offers a meaning to “the scheme of things entire” for the thirsty mind of humanity. Its premise, the law of causality, the primal cause as an intelligence beyond our ken, is indisputable. Through thousands of years of recorded religious history, its unwavering claim of a “continuum” to our intrinsic consciousness after physical annihilation is to say the least, in the

light of our present research into the study of the mind, a perfect example of logic. As to its thesis that the universe was created for "intelligence" to appreciate and enjoy, and that we are not "chance products" in an alien cosmos but its "very purpose for being," this again, until it has been definitely ascertained that we are the only "intelligence" in the universe, cannot be disproved—or even "bettered." So powerfully does religion claim to be our master oracle, our "elixir of life" both physical and spiritual, that it leaves no room for any defects of humanity's practice or preaching of it to be associated with its fundamental claim, namely, that it (religion) is "sent down" age upon age through the appearance of the avatars, the buddhas, to enable human beings to develop and progress. And since progress is a continuous thing, religion is a functional thing. It does not stop, it cannot stop, even as human progress cannot, and to be seen in its true light it must be viewed as chapters in an eternal book written by one Great Author for "the children of space and time" to aid them step-by-step to progress ad infinitum.

And today, if the past and present vilify religion because of the existence of sects and creeds—of "the many" where there should be one; of disunity when the "claim" was for unity; of hatred and bigotry, where the pattern was of love and light—religion vindicates itself in no uncertain terms by answering that its "vilifiers" search their hearts and history. Did it not claim to be a functional thing? Yet did they not make it into a historical event? The followers of different "chapters," loudly "touting" that the unfolding of their particular "chapter" was the greatest historical event of all time, became drugged with the glory of an "event" not of their making and blinded even to the written text of each and every chapter—even their own, which unequivocally claimed connection with chapters already unfolded and prophesied concerning those yet to unfold. It proclaims aloud that its mantle was never meant to cloak sectarianism, bigotry, and hatred, however much they claim to be under its shadow. Their followers may have been its students once, but that was before they relaxed their vigilance and descended into the fallacy of belief which erroneously asserts that knowledge and progress are finite, and began to proclaim that their respective "chapters" were the culmination of knowledge and the apex of progress.

How could such prejudice, cloistered in stagnation, claim to be associated with something that is the source of enlightenment—free and progressive—religion? That its case is presented by this thesis leaves no doubt that religion has *other* followers. To them it had never lost its meaning, the potency of its "storehouse" was never exhausted, its "book" was never closed. To them, in fulfillment of past chapters, another chapter has unfolded, pregnant with the promise for the present, offering to suffering humanity a solution to its every ill.

True to its claim and typical of the "chapters" gone be-

fore, it accepts no compromise—no half-measures—for, in the words of its founding avatar, Baha'u'llah, "the vitality of man's belief in God is dying out in every land: nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the elixir of His potent revelation can cleanse and revive it? . . . We can well perceive how the whole human race is encompassed by great and incalculable afflictions. We see it languishing on its bed of sickness, sore tried and disillusioned. They that are intoxicated by self-conceit have interposed themselves between it and the divine and infallible physician. Witness how they have entangled all people, themselves included, in the mesh of their devices. They can neither discover the cause of the disease, nor have they any knowledge of the remedy. They have conceived the straight to be crooked, and have imagined their friend an enemy. The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind, He perceiveth the disease, and precibeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. Soon will the present day Order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead."

The revelation of Baha'u'llah, enunciated by him well over a century ago and comprising more than one hundred volumes, deals with every aspect of humanity's need for our age. Predicated upon the following fundamental principles, it constitutes the bedrock of humanity's peace and progress:

1. Unfettered search for the truth.
2. The source of creation is one.
3. Humanity is one.
4. Religion must be the cause of love and unity.
5. Equality of opportunity for men and women.
6. A spiritual solution of the economic problems of the world.
7. Abolishing all prejudice.
8. Religion and science must be in harmony.
9. World peace through the establishment of a supranational body.
10. Religion is the process of progressive divine revelation.
11. Compulsory universal education for all.
12. An international language to be chosen or invented.

The name of the religious faith established by Baha'u'llah is "Baha'i" which means "light." Dare we remain in darkness? □

The Social and Ethical Meaning of Shinran's Teaching for Our Time

by Myoshin-Friedrich Fenzl

An Austrian Buddhist leader says it is now time to reconsider critically the attitude of Buddhism toward modern society.

We live in an age of great political disturbance, social change, and spiritual instability. Many traditional values that for generations had given people firm roots in society, and guided them in their social and human relations, are threatened with collapse. It seems they have lost their meaning. We can perceive this development today in every civilized and industrialized country of the East and the West, in Japan as well as in Europe and North America.

But I will take a look mainly at the situation that exists on the European continent and examine in what way Buddhism can respond to these changes. It seems to me that many Western Buddhists have not recognized, or worse, have not even thought of, this menace of our time. It is disturbing to recognize that they live lives far from reality and away from the living organism of society, that they isolate themselves in a kind of social insularity, and follow mysticism detached from secular life and the everyday problems of human existence.

It is time now to reconsider critically the attitude of Buddhism toward modern society. I am sincerely convinced that Shin Buddhism is the striking Buddhist reply to the problems and challenges of Western society.

It might be necessary to reconsider some parts of its doctrine in view of new developments in our society and to renew some of the genuine ideals taught by Shinran (1173–1262) over seven centuries ago. But in principle I should agree with the statement of the well-known British Buddhologist, Professor Edward Conze, who wrote in his famous book *Buddhism—Its Essence and Development* about fifty years ago:

“The democratic spirit of *shin* and its acceptance of social obligations is the reason for its success in our time. It was the only Buddhist denomination which has given evidence in the last five decades that Buddhism is able to adapt itself to an industrialized social environment.”

Jodo-Shin is a democratic religion. About 750 years ago Shinran was the first of the great reformers in feudalistic Japan, who taught a way of salvation for the underprivileged classes, the hard-working people who were not able to spend much time on the luxurious, elaborate, and sophisticated rites and ceremonies of the older Buddhist sects, and for the outcasts of society, the members of despised trades, described in the *Tannisho* (chapter 8) as:

“... those who live by casting nets or angling in the sea or rivers, those who sustain their lives by hunting beasts and birds in the fields and mountains, or those who pass their lives by tilling the soil. . . .”

He showed us very clearly that we are all ignorant *bom-bu* (ordinary mortals), involved in our *klesa* (defilements), and that it is not our professional positions or social dignities that decide our way to salvation, but our sincere and honest faith in Amida Buddha alone. Shinran followed here the path of Shakyamuni, who in ancient India condemned the presumptuous pretensions of the Brahmin caste to be the only bearers of religious truth.

Shin Buddhism advocates the equality of women. Many years before the female priesthood was even discussed in other religions (also in those of the Christian West)

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women were permitted in Shin-shu to be trained as priests and ordained (*toku-do*). Some years ago feelings ran high when a new Bible translation was published in the United States in which the term "godfather" was replaced by "god-mother." Such an incident would just cause amusement in Shin Buddhism, as in Shin we speak of *oya-sama* when we think of Amida. *Oya-sama* means parent Buddha, and parents obviously include both father and mother, man and woman. It is also noteworthy that Shin Buddhism was a kind of trendsetter in the higher education of women in Japan of the Meiji period, and that five out of six Buddhist women's colleges were founded and run by Jodo-Shin.

Shin Buddhism is a dynamic religion, not a doctrine of escapism or moody asceticism. When strangers visit our temples and shrine-rooms, they will immediately notice a standing Buddha statue instead of a meditating Buddha sitting on a lotus flower, which is typical in traditional Buddhist temples. The upright standing Buddha making the mudra (gesture) of compassion shows the dynamic, active, and world-facing Buddha. We Shin Buddhists follow the way of *oso-eko*, to transfer the boundless merit of Amida to all sentient beings so that they can enter the Pure Land and return by *genso-eko* to the *saha*-world of suffering, evil passions, and everlasting change to assist our fellow beings who are in need of salvation.

Jodo-Shin is undoubtedly a social religion. Its basic social idea is expressed in the bodhisattva attitude of helping fellow beings who are not in a position to save themselves. In Buddhism we sometimes recognize a fatal tendency to quietism, which culminates in the statement, "As all human beings have created their own karma, they have to see how to handle their fate by themselves and overcome the burden by self-power." Shin Buddhism opposes this view by saying that all living beings are protected by Amida Buddha's immeasurable compassion and mercy and that we can repay this compassion by seeking to help our suffering fellow beings.

Shinran had to face the serious problems of Confucian social class distinction and to overcome the hierarchical thinking of feudal society. The Confucian society the Japanese had adopted from ancient China divided people into so-called "inferior" and "superior" categories. Shinran recognized early on the injustice of this class distinction, which was also practiced in temples by distinguished "educated teaching clerics" over "ignorant, uneducated lay people."

According to Confucian ethics, five social relationships were recognized, those between ruler and subject, parents and children, older and younger siblings, husband and

Portrait of Shinran, founder of the Jodo-Shin sect. Kamakura period (1192–1333). Nara National Museum.

wife, and teacher and disciple. In contrast to this distinguishing division, Shinran stated that an authoritarian society based on class distinctions and hierarchical thinking had no place in Buddhism. Or, as Alfred Bloom points out in his remarkable book *Tannisho, a Resource of Modern Living*:

"Shinran declared that he had no disciples but he addressed farmers, often illiterate and uneducated people, in horrific terms as religious fellow-travelers being of the same blindness, equal foolishness and exposed to the same suffering."

Two years ago I received a book written by an American Shin minister, Rev. Hogen Fujimoto, *Out of the Mud Grows the Lotus*. In this book Rev. Fujimoto describes his impressions and experiences

as a Buddhist prison chaplain in California. It is a moving and impressive book, which I would like to recommend to every Buddhist. My teacher and friend, the late Rev. Shogo Hoshi, had already installed the first Buddhist prison chaplaincy in Austria for German-speaking inmates in 1962, and Rev. Shitoku Adrian Peel did the same in Belgium in 1976.

Let me take this opportunity to give a short biography of Kurt-Conrad Kreuzroither, who was the first Jodo Shin Buddhist in Austria.

It was in 1962 that I received a letter from a young convict imprisoned in Garsten, the Austrian state penitentiary in Upper Austria. Kurt-Conrad Kreuzroither had killed a man while robbing a gasoline station. He was sentenced to life in prison. My friend Shon Hoshi, another German Shin Buddhist, and I took care of him. He showed a strong and serious interest in Buddhism and finally converted to Jodo-Shin in 1963. I suppose that this event completely changed his outlook.

He became a quiet and inconspicuous inmate, was appointed foreman of his working team, and invented a device to improve the efficiency of sewing machines. He installed a small shrine with an Amida scroll in his cell, collected money for orphans and other victims of the Vietnam War, and finally converted one of his fellow inmates to Buddhism. In 1974, after eighteen years in prison, he was selected to be released on parole. A few days before he was due to leave prison he committed suicide at work. Did he feel unable to face a life of freedom? We do not know, but I can assure you that we, the Buddhist staff, felt very saddened and somewhat guilty about the early death of our young friend.

Let me conclude with an appeal to reconsider and appreciate the high ethical and social values of Shin Buddhism in the period of *mappo*, the age of the decline of the Dharma. □

Removing the Framework of Ego

by Nichiko Niwano

Self-attachment or egocentricity means seeing and thinking about things in reverse order, being bound to a rigid way of thinking. It is a sign of an impoverished spirit.

I often quote the poem “Playground” from *Inochi ni deau tabi* (Journey to Life) by the educator Satoru Takeshita:

When I’m playing,
It feels so small.
When I’m set to picking up pebbles during
morning cleanup,
It feels so big.

The size of the playground does not actually change, but it seems small to the child at play. When we are told to pick up the loose stones, though, it suddenly seems enormous. This poem by a fourth-grader makes an incisive point, expressing how self-centered our thinking is, how we see things only in reference to ourselves.

Buddhism is a teaching that removes self-attachment. It is when things do not go as we wish that we suffer. If we come to terms with the fact that by nature life is

something that does not go according to plan, a broad perspective opens up before us; but if we cling to the desire to make life follow our wishes, our suffering simply deepens. This wish to make everything conform to our wishes is self-attachment. We suffer because we wedge ourselves into the framework of ego. The Truth and the Dharma taught by Shakyamuni remove that framework and make our relationships with others harmonious.

When we are enveloped in mist or fog, we cannot see our surroundings clearly. Likewise, when the mist of self-attachment arises, when we are wrapped in the fog of self-centeredness, we cannot see things as they are. Wide and narrow, deep and shallow, big and small—such comparisons, too, reflect our egocentric view of things. When this egocentrism, this self-attachment, disappears, the things of the world can be seen as they really are.

When we rid ourselves of ego, we can also see others clearly. We realize the folly of competition based on pre-occupation with the relative differences between ourselves and others. Realizing that others, too, are irreplaceable beings, we are able to accord them the respect they are due. When this happens, we can all be as one.

Humility is the most important quality for human beings, and it is generated by recognition of the Truth and the Dharma of Buddhism. My dearest wish is for everyone to throw off the framework of ego or self-attachment and join in a circle of harmony.

Breaking Free of Egocentricity

Urabon is the Japanese transliteration of the Sanskrit *ullambana*. *Ullambana* can also be translated into Japanese as *token*, written with two characters, meaning to hang or suspend (*ken*) upside down (*to*). Being hung or suspended upside down is certainly painful, but even without going that far we human beings suffer over all sorts of things. *Token* means that everything we see, hear, and think is topsy-turvy.

The reason we see things as inverted is that we think of everything in a self-centered way, under the illusion that we

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On January 24, during the meeting of the Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, Italy, Rev. Niwano read part of a "Common Commitment to Peace" as one of the twelve designated representatives of the world's religions.

are right. We are, in effect, suspended upside down. This state can also be expressed by the Sanskrit *viparyasa*—error, delusion. The word is translated into Japanese as *tendo*, which also means with positions reversed, indicating a way of seeing and thinking that is totally in error. For example, if we could accept advice without resistance, we would not suffer; but in reality we find this almost impossible. We misinterpret well-intentioned advice and as a result bring suffering both to ourselves and to those around us.

Self-attachment or egocentricity means seeing and thinking about things in reverse order, being bound to a rigid and cramped way of thinking. This is a sign of an impoverished spirit.

The tale of the origin of the festival of Ullambana (Bon in Japanese) symbolizes this spiritual impoverishment. One day, so the story goes, Maudgalyayana, one of Shakyamuni's ten great disciples, wondered how his deceased mother was faring. Meditating on this, he learned that she had fallen into the realm of hungry spirits, suffering ceaseless hunger and thirst. Maudgalyayana, being a devoted son, was dismayed and immediately took her food and water, but as soon as she tried to partake of them, the food and water went up in flames.

After much anguished thought, Maudgalyayana asked Shakyamuni for his help. In response, the Buddha preached the Ullambana Sutra, in which he taught Maudgalyayana

to make offerings to the seekers of the Way of the Sangha in order to gain his mother's deliverance. Maudgalyayana blamed himself for his mother's plight, reasoning that if he had not existed, his mother would not have committed the sin of clinging greedily to her precious son. It was he who had led his mother astray and caused her to become a hungry spirit, so to save her he himself would have to be saved. He realized that for seekers of the Way to attain enlightenment as soon as possible and spread the Buddha's teaching far and wide would lead to his mother's salvation also. In other words, he understood that all suffering people, not only his mother, needed to be saved, and that when everyone was saved—and only then—his mother would attain true salvation. When Maudgalyayana reached this understanding, his mother finally was delivered from the realm of hungry spirits.

When our way of seeing and thinking is topsy-turvy, everything becomes painful. That is why it is so important to remove the framework of ego so that we can become capable of serving others and seeing everything as it truly is.

Chapter 7 of the Lotus Sutra, "The Parable of the Magic City," contains this verse: "May this [deed of] merit / Extend to all [living things] / That we with all the living / May together accomplish the Buddha Way!" As this shows, the salvation of all is the goal of the Buddha Way. □

Let Me Shine in Life for Family and Friends

by Noriko Uchida

A woman who has faced the ordeal of surgery and chemotherapy to halt her cancer has learned to be grateful for being given life—and to stop blaming others.

That's good. Keep well, now." Over the telephone, my friend's voice sounds friendly and familiar to me.

"I'm really fine," I say.

"When I called you the other day, you didn't answer," she responds, "so I was a little worried about you."

"Oh, I'm sorry. I have been kind of busy. . . ."

"I'm just glad to hear that you are feeling well enough to be up and about. But don't tire yourself out, all right?"

My friends often call me for this type of conversation. I

am very grateful for their calls, which make me happy. My friends know that I am still receiving chemotherapy and are kind enough to be concerned about my condition.

In 1996 I learned I had ovarian cancer. I had been experiencing pains in my back, but I thought they probably were caused by accumulated fatigue from working too hard. My abdomen then became swollen. That led me to think something indeed must be wrong, so I visited a nearby internal medicine clinic.

"Nothing in particular seems to be wrong," the doctor said, so thinking it was nothing but exhaustion after all, I went about my daily routine as usual.

At that time I had two jobs, one in the daytime and another in the evening. I had been fond of exercise, which I used to enjoy in the forms of swimming and Ping-Pong. My husband and I were still paying off the mortgage on our new home, however, and the education of our two daughters, who were then in junior high school, was proving costly because we were paying for them to attend cram school in the evening and providing them special lessons from tutors at home. So rather than my spending time on hobbies and other personal interests, I thought I would go to work instead. At first I had only the day job; but as my husband was busy at his work and returned home late in the evening, I began to do some part-time work in the evenings, as well.

I am not very agile and needed to take a lot of time to finish my housework. Because of my two jobs, it was late at night before I finished everything and could go to bed. Because I did some of my housework in the morning before heading off to my job, I had to get up early and always felt tired.

An Operation and a Long Hospital Stay

As time went by, my abdomen became even more swollen, and I lost my appetite. I went to see the doctor again, and this time he diagnosed my trouble as gastritis. I took the medicine he prescribed, but it did not do me much good.

Noriko Uchida is a member of the Saitama Branch of Rissho Kosei-kai.

Mrs. Uchida drives her husband's parents to and from a regular hospital visit.

Encouraged by my elder sister, I then went to a larger general hospital. As the result of a series of tests, it was determined that I needed to have surgery. The swelling in my abdomen was caused by an abnormal accumulation of fluid. I then received an introduction to the Saitama Prefectural Cancer Center, where I was told, "There is a tumor on your ovaries, but we do not yet know whether it is malignant or benign."

During my visits to the center, the meaning of the word "cancer" really never entered my head. I just assumed that the tumor would be benign and expected to get well as soon as I recovered from the operation. I even asked the nurse, "How long will I have to stay in the hospital?"

The date for the operation was set and I checked in. Nearly three months had passed since I had started to feel unwell. The doctors explained the operation to my husband and me on the understanding that the tumor was malignant.

"I have cancer?" I wondered for the first time. However, I still could only think of the situation as something that was happening to somebody else. The outcome was that I had Phase IV ovarian cancer, which had spread to my lymphatic system and liver. My stay in the hospital was extended to six months, I had two operations, and initially six sessions of chemotherapy 20 percent stronger than the dose usually prescribed. I feared for my life. But I also knew that I wanted to get back to my family and my job as soon as I could.

So although on the one hand I was trying my best to get well, on the other hand I was blaming my situation on

others, wondering, "Why didn't the first doctor I visited discover the cancer?" or "If only our family had a little more money, I would not have had to work so hard and maybe I would not have fallen ill."

Searching for Tranquillity

I learned later that at the time my illness was diagnosed my father-in-law, a member of Rissho Kosei-kai, spoke to other members at an evening hoza counseling group, asking them, "Please do something for my daughter-in-law, who has cancer." While I was away from home, my father-in-law and an area leader of the Saitama Branch visited our house, and from then on the leader brought a copy of the Rissho Kosei-kai periodical *Kosei* to our home every month. I never even bothered to open them, but just continued to blame my troubles on some external source as usual and to voice complaints.

Some time passed after I was released from the hospital. At that time, of course, I was still being treated for the cancer, we were still not comfortably off financially, and we were worried because our younger daughter had stopped attending school. Maybe that was why I casually picked up a copy of the magazine. To my surprise, I found stories in it about people experiencing all kinds of difficulties and how they resolved them through the Buddha's teachings. I wondered how I could develop such feelings of tranquillity.

A few days later Ms. Keiko Ii, a Rissho Kosei-kai chapter leader, visited our house. As if drawn by her personal warmth, I told her a number of things that were troubling me. She listened intently to me, tears welling up in her

eyes, and said, "You have had some hard times, haven't you?" Just talking to her about my problems helped to calm me a great deal.

I also took part in a study meeting on family education problems since I was still wondering what to do about my younger daughter. This offered an opportunity for me to take a fresh look at how I was communicating with her until then.

I had been completely caught up in my combined duties of child-rearing, housework, and job. I had been thinking that if I just tried my best and kept working hard, everything would be all right. That was a self-centered way of thinking, however. I had not been giving enough attention to sympathizing with my daughters and showing concern for what they were thinking, with a view to creating a sincere, heartfelt relationship with them.

"I wish I had heard this when my daughters were still small!" I thought after the meeting. "But even now, there must be something I can do." So I began to talk with them more, always being the first to extend morning greetings and to say "thank you" for even small courtesies, trying to change the part of myself that would blame others for my own failings, and trying to say "I am sorry" from the bottom of my heart. I tried to change my approach not only toward my children, but also toward my husband.

Besides this, we were taught by the lecturer to think about what the other person must be feeling. I realized then that my own unhappy feelings arose because I assumed that I was always right and blamed others for anything that went wrong. In this way I became able to step back and think about whether there was not something in my own conduct that I needed to reflect on.

When someone tells you something you do not want to hear and you answer them back with an emotional reply, it leaves you feeling uncomfortable afterward. Even if you do not verbalize your reply but simply feel that way in your heart, you still have the sensation that you have communicated this to the other person. If you accept what is said to you as it comes, however, you will be able to think about how the other person is feeling, and you can also reflect on yourself. I realized as I practiced this that when you do this, your relationship with the other person does not go bad.

My way of thinking changed, and as I put this into practice my relationships with the people around me changed. The most important part of this was that I achieved a sense of calm.

For Others

It has now been six years since I first learned I had cancer. A friend who had an ovarian tumor and with whom I shared a room at the hospital and who taught me a lot, has since passed away. Other friends also have died. When I think about this, the fact that I am still being

Mrs. Uchida (right) and a fellow member take a stroll near the Saitama Branch, sharing personal reflections on their faith.

given life seems a great mystery to me and I am filled with a deep feeling of gratitude.

When I have time, I visit the houses of my friends who have passed away to humbly offer incense at their home Buddhist altars, where the families honor deceased family members. When I am worried about my other friends, I call them up on the telephone. I cannot help but feel concerned about the people around me.

I also ask to be allowed to listen to the stories of other people who have problems. I do this because of the way my chapter leader kindly listened to me when I was troubled enough to burst into tears. This gave me a great sense of peace at that time, so I do my best to listen with sincerity to what other people have to say. I encourage them, telling them that everything will turn out all right, hoping that I will be able to work together with them.

I have been appointed neighborhood group leader for our branch and also have been made responsible for the distribution of *Rissho Kosei-kai* periodicals. As I am continuing with my chemotherapy and go into the hospital for a short stay about once a month, I did feel that taking on these responsibilities was something of a burden. That is because I do not feel at all well after the chemotherapy sessions.

However, my chapter leader said to me, "It is wonderful to be allowed to do things for your family and for other people." That certainly is true, and when I am busily going about my tasks, I do not get dragged down by what I am going through with my disease.

I will soon complete my thirtieth session of chemotherapy. I cannot see beyond that. I am grateful for the life granted to me by the Buddha and hope to lead a full life to the best extent I can. The thought that occurs to me constantly is this: "There must still be something that I can do. What is it that I can do?" □

A Fierce Pair of Goblins

by Takeshi Kuno, Photos by Kozo Ogawa

The carver of one of these early Kamakura period statues was the great Koben, but the sculptor of the other remains unknown. Regardless, together they are superb and lively examples of the sculpture of their time.

The fearsome duo pictured here are the lantern-carrying goblins Tentoki, on the right, and Ryutoki, on the left. The statues are in the possession of the temple Kofuku-ji in Nara. Tentoki, 78.2 cm high, is depicted wearing horns, his open mouth stretched wide, and staring angrily ahead. A scarf is knotted around his shoulders, he wears a loincloth, and an animal skin is draped around his waist. The goblin's hips are twisted from the weight of the lantern he is carrying on his left shoulder.

Ryutoki, 77.8 cm high, balances his lantern on his head, he gazes upward, and his lips are tightly pursed. He also has a scarf around his shoulders and wears a loincloth. The figure stands with feet set widely apart on a rock pedestal. His arms are held in front of his belly, with the left hand clasping the right wrist and the right hand gripping the tail of the dragon that is entwined around the upper half of his body.

The two figures were carved as an *aun* (Skt., *ah um*) pair, one with the mouth fully open and the other with the mouth closed. They are said to have been originally placed before the Buddha image in the Saikondo of Kofuku-ji, although no records exist that they were part of the original group of statues set on the altar when the hall was constructed in the Tempyo era (710–94). It is most likely that they were made when the hall was refurbished during the Kamakura period (1185–1333).

Both statues were carved from *hinoki* wood (Japanese cypress) using the joined-block method (*yosegi-zukuri*), but the construction of each is slightly different. The body of Tentoki, the upper half of which leans to the right, was carved in two parts and joined at the waist. The

upper body proper, comprising the head and the upper torso, was also split into two parts, carved to form the back and front and then joined. The arms were attached to the body at the shoulders, the parts of the left arm being joined at the elbow and the wrist, and those of the right arm, at the wrist.

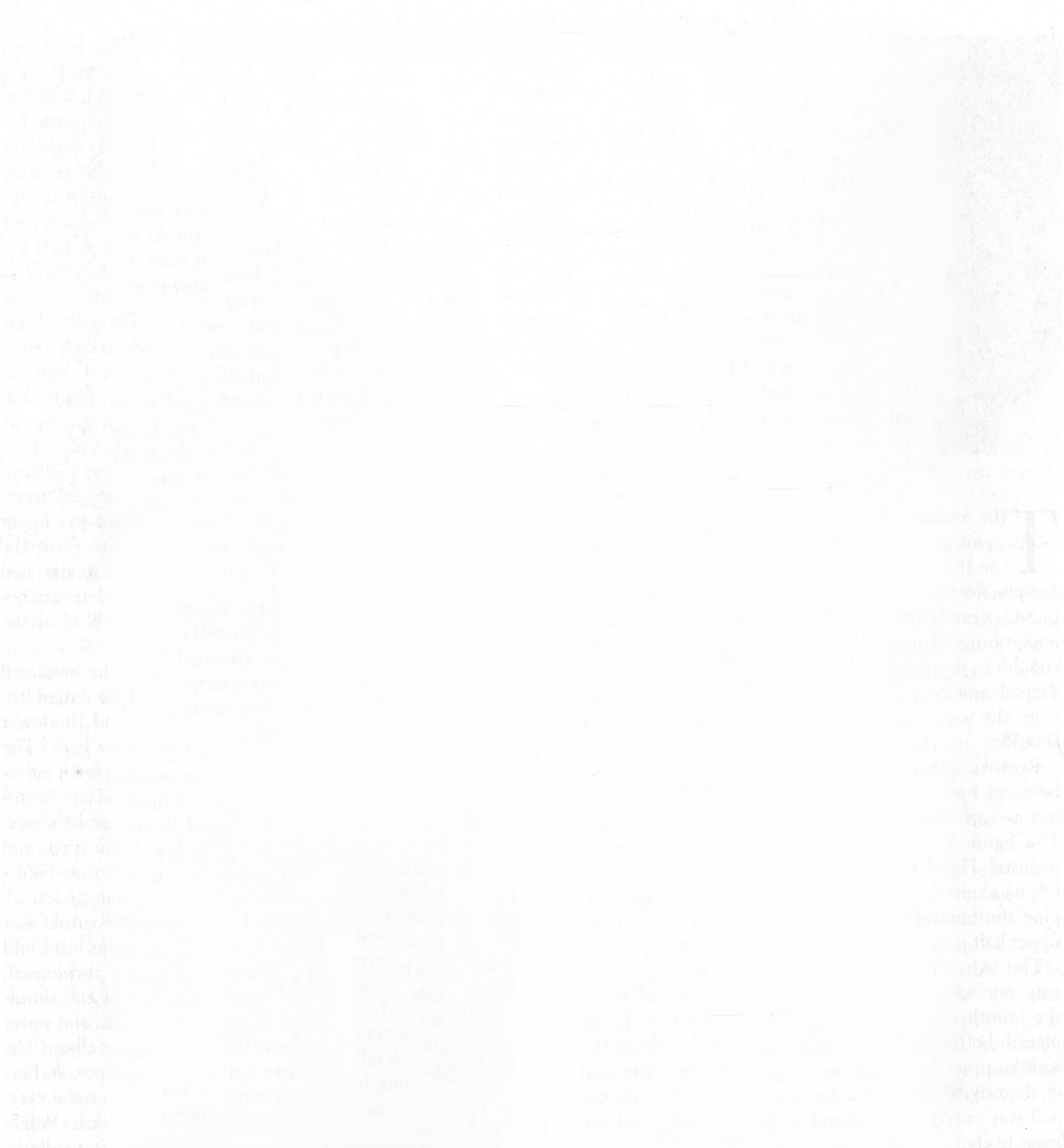
The body was divided on a median line at the waist and the two parts of the lower back and front were joined, together with the left hip, the animal skin, and the lower hem part of the skirt-like animal skin on the back. The statue also has a diagonal join on the right leg from below the knee to above the rear of the ankle. The Tentoki image still shows traces of its white undercoat and the vermillion used on the torso, the verdigris on the scarf, and the orange on the hair. The inset crystal eyes were painted in the center with black and gold concentric circles.

The construction of the upper body of Ryutoki was simple because the image stands straight. The head and upper body were carved as a unit, then split and joined, while the arms were attached to the body at the shoulders. The arms were carved from two blocks, the lower clasped arms joined to the upper arms at the elbow. His elaborate eyebrows were made from sheet copper, and his fangs are of crystal. The dragon also has inset crystal eyes, and the dorsal fin was made from animal skin. While Tentoki's body was vermillion, Ryutoki's was verdigris, and his hair included strips of gold foil on a dark brown base.

There is a distinct contrast in the way the two statues were made, in that materials such as copper, crystal, and animal skin were used in the image of Ryutoki, which obviously received a great deal of thought. The lanterns carried by both are not the originals but later additions.

The statues escaped damage when the Saikondo was destroyed by fire at New Year's of 1717. The temple records for that year report a written fragment was found

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Tentoki. Height: 78.2 cm. Kofuku-ji, Nara.

inside the body of the Ryutoki image saying that the statue was the work of the sculptor of Buddhist statues Koben (fl. 1190–1215), according to the wishes of the great priest Shosho. Koben earlier had been honored with the religious title *hokyo*. The fragment crediting him with the statue has been lost, however.

Koben was a son of Unkei (d. 1223) who had worked

under his father from the time he was young. During the years 1190–99 he assisted his father in carving images of the two heavenly deities to stand inside the central gate of the temple Kyoo Gokoku-ji in Kyoto, and around 1212, when Unkei was producing images for the then recently completed Hokuendo (North Octagonal Hall) at Kofuku-ji, Koben shared responsibility for the statue of

Ryutoki. Height: 77.8 cm. Kofuku-ji, Nara.

Komokuten. The statue of Ryutoki, however, is the only one of his sculptures that has survived. The distinctive ability of the artist that it displays is evident to anyone who sees it. The superb carving technique employed to depict the goblin's body and the use of burlesque in the facial expression doubtless were learned from his father.

Regarding the creator of the Tentoki statue, some ob-

servers say that it too was carved by Koben, while others believe it was carved by a sculptor of the same school in harmony with the style of the Ryutoki image. No final agreement has been reached. What is certain, however, is that these two goblin statues are lively representative examples of the sculpture of the first part of the Kamakura period. □

Gotama Crosses the Ganges

by Hajime Nakamura

*People strive to move beyond the difficulties of life and cross to the other side,
but there are various methods for reaching the ideal realm.*

Gotama next crossed the Ganges. The gate that he departed from was called the Gotama Gate (Gotama-dvāra), and the ford by which he crossed the river was called the Gotama Ford (Gotama-tittha).

“(32) At that time Sunīdha and Vassakāra, ministers of the kingdom of Magadha, followed behind the Venerable Master, saying: ‘The gate by which the *samana* Gotama leaves today will be called the Gotama Gate, and the ford by which he crosses the Ganges River will be called the Gotama Ford.’ And so the gate by which the Venerable Master left was called the Gotama Gate.” (Mahāpari-nibbāna-suttanta, I, 32)

There is no place today that can be identified as the Gotama Ford, though there are many fords along the Patna bank. One large landing place caters to ferries, and there are numerous others where smaller craft can land. The one that I went to see was simply a sandy cliff, having neither steps nor pavement nor any kind of facility. Several small boats transporting sand were moored there. Laborers carried the sand away in flat baskets on their heads, probably to be used for mixing with concrete for construction. When the boats had pulled into the shallows, the laborers waded out to receive their loads. The scene would scarcely have changed from the time of Gotama.

“(33) Then the Venerable Master came to the Ganges River. At that time the river was very full, and the water lapped up to the ford, and so flat was it that even a crow could drink the water. Some people were seeking a boat, some were seeking a [large] raft, and some were tying together a [small] raft. All wished to reach the other shore. Then, as quickly as a strong man stretches out a bent arm, and again bends the outstretched arm, in such a short time as this, [the Venerable Master] disappeared

from this shore and with his band of *bhikkhus* appeared on the other shore.

“(34) Then the Venerable Master saw how some people were seeking a boat, some were seeking a [large] raft, and some were tying together a [small] raft, wishing to reach the other shore. Perceiving this, the Venerable Master uttered these words of inspiration:

“Some cross the [wide and deep] sea or lake, by making a solid path, not touching the marsh land,

“Others cross it by tying together a raft [of planks or vines];

“The wise, however, have crossed already.” (Mahāpari-nibbāna-suttanta, I, 33–34)

The Pāli text attributes the verse to Gotama Buddha, whereas the Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Sarvāstivādin texts say it was recited by “a *bhikkhu*.” Probably it was an ancient verse that had been introduced into the narrative, which would account for the different attributions.

As further verses in the other versions not contained in the Pāli indicate, the subject of the verse is praise for the enlightened person who will no longer be reborn into this pain-filled existence. It can be interpreted in four possible ways. First, it commends devising various methods for crossing rivers and swamps; that is, it represents a version of the idea of *upāya* (skillful, or expedient, means). In that case it might include an element of praise for those people who, in a time when transportation was underdeveloped, actually opened up communications in a practical way. While Buddhism and Jainism are very similar, Buddhism differs in that it commends the making of things as virtuous action. This was emphasized particularly in Mahāyāna Buddhism, but it is possible to follow an interpretation here that would indicate the sprouting of the idea. Second, ordinary people try various means to cross the river or swamp, but the “wise” (the Buddha and his followers) have already crossed without using a raft (*vinā yeva kullena*). This is Buddhaghosa’s interpretation. It is the religious understanding of the verse in that it praises the Buddha and his disciples. Third, ordinary people perform actions which can be compared to a raft, like

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.

relying on religious rituals and prayers to the deities, but the wise have already crossed the sea of passion and desire (see Dhammapada, 91). This is Rhys Davids's interpretation. Fourth, the wise quickly build a bridge, to get the better of the flood of an existence marked by desire. Ordinary people scurry around seeking a raft and come across the bridge made by the wise, which is the quickest way to the other shore. This is Franke's interpretation. Since it is difficult to know at this stage which is the correct version, I have contented myself with translating it literally.

Another meaning, however, may be implied. Life is filled with various anxieties and difficulties. People strive to move beyond them and reach the ideal realm. This is stated metaphorically in terms of people building numbers of boats and rafts to reach the other shore. In the same way, it can be said that there are various methods of reaching the ideal, suitable for different types of people. This interpretation allows us to achieve an understanding of the ideas and practices of others, thus diminishing potential sources of conflict born of narrow-mindedness and establishing a spirit of tolerance.

The Pan-ni-yüan-ching here translates the state of nirvana as *sheng-hsien* ("becoming an immortal"), which suggests Taoist influence.

To Koṭigāma and Nādika

After crossing the Ganges, Gotama led his *bhikkhus* to Koṭigāma.

"(1) Then the Venerable Master said to the young Ānanda: 'Come, Ānanda, let us go to Koṭigāma.' 'Yes, Master,' replied the young Ānanda. Then the Venerable Master went to Koṭigāma together with a large company of *bhikkhus*. There the Venerable Master stayed in the village itself." (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, II, 1)

At Koṭigāma, he is said to have taught the Four Noble Truths.

"(2) Then the Venerable Master said to the *bhikkhus*: 'Bhikkhus, because the Four Noble Truths have not been realized, not penetrated, I and you too have for a long time gone from existence to existence in the round of birth and death. What are these four truths? *Bhikkhus*, because the noble truth of suffering has not been realized, not penetrated, I and you too have for a long time gone from existence to existence in the round of birth and death. *Bhikkhus*, because the noble truth of the origin of suffering has not been realized, not penetrated, I and you too have for a long time gone from existence to existence in the round of birth and death. *Bhikkhus*, because the noble truth of the extinction of suffering has not been realized, not penetrated, I and you too have for a long time gone from existence to existence in the round of birth and death. *Bhikkhus*, because the noble truth of the way to the extinction of suffering has not been realized, not penetrated, I and you too have for a long time

gone from existence to existence in the round of birth and death. However, *bhikkhus*, the noble truth of suffering has been realized and penetrated, the noble truth of the origin of suffering has been realized and penetrated, the noble truth of the extinction of suffering has been realized and penetrated, and the noble truth of the way to the extinction of suffering has been realized and penetrated. The craving for existence has been eliminated. The [craving] that leads to existence has been eliminated. No more will there be any more deluded existence." (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, II, 2)

"(3) The Venerable Master spoke thus. After the Sugata had spoken the Master said:

"Not seeing the Four Noble Truths as they are,
Long is the path that is traversed from life to life.
Those [noble truths] have already been seen,
The craving that leads to existence has been eliminated.

The roots of suffering have been eliminated.

No more will there be any more deluded existence."

(Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, II, 3)

It is usual to preach the Eightfold Path as the practice of the teaching based on the Four Noble Truths, yet here no mention is made of it. Instead, the Buddha is said to have spoken of practicing morality, concentration, and wisdom.

"(4) Next the Venerable Master, while staying in Koṭigāma, gave for the sake of the *bhikkhus* a large number of discourses concerning the Dhamma. 'Such and such are the precepts and regulations. Such and such is concentration. Such and such is wisdom. Concentration perfected with the precepts brings a great result, great merit. Wisdom nurtured with concentration brings a great result, great merit. A mind nurtured with wisdom is completely liberated from all stain—the stain of the desires, the stain of becoming, the stain of false views, and the stain of ignorance.'" (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, II, 4)

The Sanskrit text is somewhat different.

"(VIII, 1) Then the Venerable Master said to the young Ānanda:

"(VIII, 2) 'Ānanda, let us go to Kuṭigrāmata.'

"(VIII, 3) 'Yes, Master,' replied the young Ānanda.

"(VIII, 4) Then the Venerable Master went to Kuṭigrāmata on foot. As he walked, he came to Kuṭigrāmata. He stayed in the Śimśapā grove north of the village.

"(VIII, 5) Then the Venerable Master said to the *bhikṣus*:

"(VIII, 6) 'Bhikṣus, such and such are the precepts and regulations. Such and such is concentration. Such and such is wisdom. Concentration practiced with the precepts continues a long time. A mind bound by the practice of wisdom is completely liberated from greed, from anger, and from delusion.

"(VIII, 7) 'A fine disciple of the Buddha whose mind is completely liberated knows [the Truth] perfectly. My

A simple fort on the northern shore of the Ganges. Photo by Isamu Maruyama.

births are exhausted. I have accomplished my pure practice. I have done all that needs to be done. Henceforth, I will not know any other deluded existence.” (Ernst Waldschmidt, *Das Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, VIII, 1–7)

The sentences equivalent to section VIII, 6 of the Sanskrit appear in quite a number of places in the Pāli text. They do not reappear often in the Sanskrit.

Again, only the outline of the discourse is given. “Such and such are the precepts and regulations” is *iti sīlam*; *iti* (“thus”) does not indicate what specifically was said, and we do not gain any knowledge of this from the context. This is a standard device for outlining what Gotama said regarding religious practice. Of course, at the time of the actual discourse the details would have been filled in; the above device was no more than a means to aid memorization. From such lists were later devised the so-called threefold practice (*tisso sikkhā*)—morality (*sīla*), concen-

tration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), to which were further added emancipation (*vimutti*), and the doctrine of the Law-body equated with the five attributes—morality, concentration, wisdom, emancipation, and perfect knowledge of the state of emancipation. The Yu-hsing-ching speaks of the “four profound truths,” which no doubt represent a prior stage in the development of the number of the teachings, as seen in the doctrine of the Law-body equated with the five attributes.

A comparison of the various texts of the Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta shows that the names of places visited by the Buddha on his last journey are almost identical. However, there are considerable differences in the description of what was taught at these places. This suggests the historicity of the fact of the discourses, but that the content of his discourses in the texts was fiction created by later scholars. This is clearly observable in instances

The site of the village of Nāḍika. The mound in the rear is considered to be the location of the "Brick House," in which Gotama dwelt and gave a large number of lectures concerning the Dharma for the sake of the bhikkhus. Photo by Isamu Maruyama.

where doctrine is given in the form of categories in the number of the teachings. The actual discourse itself, however, may be reflected in places where all versions are in agreement and where the doctrine is not set out in categories.

At Nāḍika—The Fate of the Dead

The Pāli text says that after staying at Koṭigāma for a while, Gotama Buddha went on to the village of Nāḍika, where he dwelt in the "Brick House."

"(5) Now, the Venerable Master, having stayed at Koṭigāma as long as he wished, said to the young Ānanda: 'Come, Ānanda, let us go to the place of the Nāḍikas.' 'Yes, Master,' replied the young Ānanda. Then, the Venerable Master went to the place of the Nāḍikas together with a large company of *bhikkhus*. At Nāḍika, the Venerable Master stayed within the Brick House." (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, II, 5)

The village of Nāḍika was, according to the Sanskrit version, in the country of the Vṛjjis. At Nāḍika, as at Koṭigāma, Sakyamuni gave discourses on the Dhamma (*dhammī kathā*), but there are great differences among the various recensions concerning the subject of those talks. We have no knowledge of what was actually taught. The Yu-hsing-ching says that the Buddha taught "the four profound truths" (morality, concentration, wisdom, and emancipation) at Koṭigāma, while the Pāli recension says he taught the Four Noble Truths. Gotama Buddha offered teachings at Koṭigāma, but their content had

been forgotten; what we have now are the opinions of those who compiled the Buddhist scriptures in later times and who inserted various categories of points of doctrine in their place. Though Buddhism has many teachings, they all return to the one truth, and as a result there is not a great deal of difference when it comes to actual practice.

All the traditions agree that in Nāḍika the Buddha spoke of the types of rebirth undergone by a number of Buddhists, lay and ordained, male and female.

"(6) Then the young Ānanda approached the Venerable Master and drawing near, greeted him and sat to one side. Having sat to one side, the young Ānanda said to the Venerable Master: 'Venerable One, the *bhikkhu* Sālha has died at Nāḍika. What is the destination of his rebirth? Where has he been reborn? Venerable One, the *bhikkhuni* Nandā has died. What is the destination of her rebirth? Where has she been reborn? Venerable One, the male lay believer Sudatta has died at Nāḍika. What is the destination of his rebirth? Where has he been reborn? Venerable One, the female lay believer Sujātā has died at Nāḍika. What is the destination of her rebirth? Where has she been reborn? Venerable One, the male lay believer Kakudha has died at Nāḍika. What is the destination of his rebirth? Where has he been reborn? Venerable One, the male lay believer Kālīṅga. . . . Nikaṭa. . . . Kaṭṭhasabha. . . . Tuṭṭha. . . . Santuṭṭha. . . . Bhadda. . . . Subhadda has died at Nāḍika. What is the destination of his rebirth? Where has he been reborn?'

“(7) ‘Ānanda, the *bhikkhu* Sālha knew, attained, and realized in this life, the unstained emancipation of mind and emancipation by wisdom, through the disappearance of all stain. Ānanda, the *bhikkhuni* Nandā has destroyed the five fetters that bind people to the lower realm [the realm of desire] and has been reborn spontaneously and has entered *nibbāna*, never to return [to this world] from that realm. Ānanda, the male lay believer Sudatta, having destroyed the three fetters and reduced greed, anger, and delusion, has become a once-returner, and will return to this life [in the realm of desire] only once more, when he will put an end to all suffering.

“Ānanda, the female lay believer Sujātā, having destroyed the three fetters, is a stream-enterer and never falls into evil states, and is certain of attaining enlightenment. Ānanda, the male lay believer Kakudha has destroyed the five fetters that bind people to the lower realm and has been reborn spontaneously and will enter *nibbāna*, never to return [to this world] from that realm. Ānanda, the male lay believer Kālīnga. . . . Nikāṭa. . . . Kaṭṭissabha. . . . Tuṭṭha. . . . Santuṭṭha. . . . Bhadda. . . . Subhadda has destroyed the five fetters that bind people to the lower realm and has been reborn spontaneously and will enter *nibbāna*, never to return [to this world] from that realm.

“Further, Ānanda, more than fifty lay believers who have died at Nāḍika have destroyed the five fetters that bind people to the lower realm and have been reborn spontaneously and will enter *nibbāna*, never to return [to this world] from that realm. Ānanda, more than ninety lay believers who have died at Nāḍika have destroyed the three fetters and reduced greed, anger, and delusion, have become once-returners, and will return [to this world] only once more, when they will put an end to all suffering. Ānanda, more than five hundred lay believers who have died at Nāḍika, having destroyed the three fetters, are stream-enterers, and not capable of falling into evil states, are certain of attaining enlightenment.

“(8) ‘Ānanda, it is not strange that one born a human being should die. That you should come to the one who has perfected his practice when each person dies to ask his or her fate, is troubling to the one who has perfected his practice. Therefore, Ānanda, I will instruct you in the gate of the teaching called the “Mirror of Dhamma,” whereby an accomplished disciple, if he wishes, can clearly discern his own fate: “I have destroyed the hells. I have destroyed the realm of the animals. I have destroyed the realm of the hungry spirits. I will not fall into an evil, painful place. I have become a stream-enterer, and cannot fall into [evil states]. I am certain to attain enlightenment.”

“(9) ‘Ānanda, what is this gate of the teaching called the “Mirror of Dhamma,” whereby an accomplished disciple, if he wishes, can clearly discern his own fate: “I have destroyed the hells. I have destroyed the realm of

the animals. I have destroyed the realm of the hungry spirits. I will not fall into an evil, painful place. I have become a stream-enterer, and cannot fall into [evil states]. I am certain to attain enlightenment.” Here, Ānanda, the accomplished disciple has pure faith in the Buddha, saying: “This Venerable Master is an Arahant, a perfectly enlightened being, endowed with wisdom and conduct, a Sugata, one who knows all worlds, incomparable, a trainer of stubborn men, a teacher of deities and human beings, a Buddha [an enlightened being], a Venerable Master.”

“He also has pure faith in the Dhamma, saying: “Well-taught by the Venerable Master is the Dhamma, able to be visualized here and now, directly efficacious, verifiable, leading to the ideal, witnessed by the wise themselves.” He also has pure faith in the Saṅgha, saying: “Well-trained is the band of the followers of the Venerable Master. Upright in training is the band of the followers of the Venerable Master. Following in practice correct principles is the band of the followers of the Venerable Master. Of harmonious practice is the band of the followers of the Venerable Master. The band of the followers of the Venerable Master is of eight stages of effort and attainment. They are worthy of respect, worthy of offerings, worthy of entertainment, worthy of veneration, the greatest field of merit for the world.” He is endowed with the precepts that are loved by the sages, unbroken, without flaw, without impurities, unsullied, free from all restrictions, praised by the knowledgeable, unstained, and conducive to concentration.

“This, Ānanda, is the gate of the teaching called the “Mirror of Dhamma,” whereby an accomplished disciple, if he wishes, can clearly discern his own fate: “I have destroyed the hells. I have destroyed the realm of the animals. I have destroyed the realm of the hungry spirits. I will not fall into an evil, painful place. I have become a stream-enterer, and cannot fall into [evil states]. I am certain to attain enlightenment.”

“(10) Now, the Venerable Master, while staying at the Brick House in Nāḍika, gave for the sake of the *bhikkhus* a large number of lectures concerning the Dhamma. ‘Such and such are the precepts and regulations. Such and such is concentration. Such and such is wisdom. Concentration perfected with the precepts brings a great result, great merit. Wisdom nurtured with concentration brings a great result, great merit. A mind nurtured with wisdom is completely liberated from all stain, the stain of the desires, the stain of becoming, the stain of false views, and the stain of ignorance.” (Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta, II, 6–10)

This too may be considered the interpolation of later compilers, not a reflection of what Gotama actually taught at Nāḍika. Since he was not just a rational philosopher, however, he may well have taught each of the people to discern his or her future life.

To be continued

The Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law

Chapter 4 Faith Discernment (4)

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

TEXT Now we have just realized that the World-honored One does not begrudge the Buddha wisdom. Wherefore? From of old we are really sons of the Buddha, but only have taken pleasure in minor matters; if we had had a mind to take pleasure in the great, the Buddha would have preached the Great Vehicle Law to us. Now he in this sutra preaches only the One Vehicle; and though formerly in the presence of bodhisattvas he spoke disparagingly of shravakas who were pleased with minor matters, yet the Buddha had in reality been instructing them in the Great Vehicle. Therefore we say that though we had no mind to hope or expect it, [yet] now the great treasure of the King of the Law has of itself come to us, and such things that Buddha sons should obtain we have all obtained."

COMMENTARY Shakyamuni actually teaches only the One Vehicle; even the so-called small-vehicle and tactful teachings enable a person of superior capacity to attain the highest enlightenment. Let us imagine that the supreme teaching can be represented by the number 10. We teach a child the fact (the truth) that $1+1=2$. At first the child only knows that $1+1=2$, but as time passes he or she learns that $2+1=3$, that $3+1=4$, and so on, all the way up to 10. No one can say that the first teaching, $1+1=2$, is not the truth; it is indisputable that it is vital as the very foundation of mathematics. If we suppose the number 10 to be that which is the perfect and highest, $1+1=2$ is undeniably a part of it. Thus the teaching $1+1=2$ may be the first step, but it is also no different in terms of truth from the teaching $9+1=10$. A clever child, having been told that $1+1=2$, will manage to work out all the additions up to 10.

In the same way, there is originally no distinction between the Hinayana and Mahayana teachings. The Buddha's teachings are originally one; they have been given different names just for convenience, as steps to teach and lead people. The "Tactfulness" chapter reiterates this point over and over, and it is emphasized again here in

the confession of the four great shravakas. We must clearly understand that even though some Buddhist sutras contain disparaging words about Hinayana, such expressions are intended only to encourage people not to remain fixed at a lower stage.

TEXT Then Maha-Kashyapa, desiring to proclaim this meaning over again, spoke [thus] in verse:

"We on this day / Have heard the Buddha's voice teach / And are ecstatic with joy at / Having obtained the unprecedented. / The Buddha declares that [we] shravakas / Will become buddhas; / [His] peerless collection of treasures / We have received without seeking.

COMMENTARY [His] *peerless collection of treasures*. This refers to the Buddha-wisdom, which illuminates every aspect of truth in the world.

TEXT It is like a youth, / Immature and ignorant, / Who leaves his father and runs away / To other lands far distant, / Wandering about in many countries / For over fifty years. / His father, with anxious care, / Searches in all directions. / Wearied with his search, / He abides in a certain city, / Where he builds a house, / Enjoying the pleasures of life; / Very rich is his house, / With abundance of gold and silver, / Moonstones and agates, / Pearls and lapis lazuli, / Elephants, horses, oxen, and sheep, / Palanquins, litters, carriages, / Husbandmen, young slaves, / And a multitude of people; / His revenues and investments / Spread even to other countries; / His traders and customers / Are found everywhere; / A thousand myriad kotis of people / Surround and honor him; / Constantly by the king / He is held in affection; / All the ministers and noble families / Honor him highly; / For all these reasons / His guests are many;

COMMENTARY *Enjoying the pleasures of life*. In the original Chinese text, this phrase reads "enjoying for himself the objects of the five desires," that is, leading an affluent life filled with the pleasures of the five senses.

TEXT Such are the abundance of his wealth / And the greatness of his power. / But his years are wearing away / And he grieves the more over his son; / Morning and night he ponders: / "The time of my death is approaching; / My foolish son has left me / For over fifty years; / These things in my storehouses— / What shall I do [with them]?" / At that time the poor son / Seeks food and clothing / From city to city, / From country to country, / Sometimes getting something, / Sometimes nothing; / Famished, weak, and gaunt, / Covered with scabs and sores, / Gradually he passes along / To the city where his father dwells. / Hired for wages he roams about, / At last reaching his father's house. / At that very hour the elder / Within his gates / Has set up a great jeweled curtain / And sits on a lion seat / Surrounded by his attendants, / Everybody taking care of him. / Some are counting / Gold, silver, and precious things, / [Others] incoming and outgoing goods, / Noting and recording bonds. / The poor son, seeing his father / So noble and splendid, / Thinks: "This must be a king / Or one of royal rank." / Alarmed and wondering, [he says]: / "Why have I come here?" / Again he thinks to himself: / "If I tarry [here] long / I may suffer oppression / And be driven to forced labor." / Having pondered thus, / He runs off in haste / In search of some poor place, / That he may go and hire his labor.

COMMENTARY *Noting and recording bonds.* "Noting" refers to bookkeeping and "recording bonds" to letters and such documents as warehouse receipts and loan bonds.

• *I may suffer oppression.* "Oppression" here means to be seized forcibly.

TEXT At that time the elder / On the lion seat, / Seeing his son from afar, / Secretly recognizes him / And instantly orders servants / To pursue and fetch him back. / The poor son cries in alarm, / Faints away, and falls on the ground, [saying]: / "These men have caught me; / I shall certainly be killed. / Why, for food and clothing, / Did I come here?"

COMMENTARY *Secretly recognizes him.* There is great depth to this phrase. The elder knows his son immediately but utters no words, though he is churning with emotion. This is how the Buddha feels about us as living beings; though we are not aware of his feelings, the Buddha always silently recognizes us. This is what we are so grateful for.

At the risk of repeating myself, I would like to point out that the servants' attitude holds a valuable lesson for us. However well intentioned and outstanding their mission may be, because of their attitude their mission will be counterproductive. Buddhism highly values "a gentle face and loving words" as a great donation. Even in everyday life, a gentle face and loving words make others feel hap-

py and create a harmonious atmosphere. They may seem insignificant, but their merits are immeasurable. They are essential, for example, when we are leading Buddhist beginners to the Dharma. There are some who try to intimidate or terrify people to make them believe, but this is completely the wrong course. Religious faiths that coerce people into joining them cannot be true.

If the servants had gone to the poor son with a gentle face and loving words, they might have been able to dispel his feelings of inferiority and lead him to where his affectionate father was waiting for him. We should reflect on the lessons contained in this episode.

TEXT The elder, knowing that his son, / Being foolish and inferior, / Will not believe in his word, / Nor believe that he is his father, / With tactful method / Again dispatches other men, / One-eyed, squat, common, / And unimposing, [saying]: / "You [go and] tell him, / Saying: "You be hired along with us / To remove dirt and rubbish / And you shall be given double wages." / The poor son hearing this / Is glad, and comes with them, / For the purpose of removing dirt / And cleansing outhouses. / The elder, through a lattice, / Continually sees his son, / And thinks of him as foolish / And pleased with humble things. / Then the elder, / Donning a tattered dirty garment, / Takes a dirt hod, / Goes to where his son is, / And by [this] device gets near him, / Bidding him be diligent, [saying]: / "I have [decided to] increase your wages, / Besides oil for your feet, / And plenty of food and drink, / And thick warm mats." / Then with sharp words he thus chides: / "Get you on with the work." / Again he speaks gently: / "You are as if you were my son."

COMMENTARY *Oil for your feet.* In India at that time people tended to go barefoot, so that their soles became hard and cracked. They would apply oil to their soles to relieve the pain. Oil for the feet was therefore a necessity of life.

TEXT The elder, being wise, / Gradually causes him to go in and out, / And after twenty years / Employs him in house affairs, / Showing him gold and silver, / Pearls and crystal, / And the incoming and outgoing of things; / All these he makes him know. / Still he dwells without, / Lodging in a hovel, / For himself thinking of penurious things, / [Saying]: "These things are not mine."

COMMENTARY *Gradually causes him to go in and out.* At first the elder has his son clean away sewage and rubbish. Gradually the son is encouraged to go in and out of the elder's house freely. This signifies that the son (shravakas) is gradually led from Hinayana to the core of the Buddha's teaching.

• *All these he makes him know.* "Know" here means to govern or rule.

TEXT The father, knowing his son's mind / Has gradually developed, / And wishing to give him his wealth, / Gathers together his relatives, / The king and ministers, / Kshatriyas and citizens. / In this great assembly, / He announces: 'This is my son, / Who left me and went elsewhere / Fifty years ago; / Since I saw my son arrive, / Twenty years have passed. / Long ago in a certain city / I lost this son; / In wandering round in search of him, / At last I arrived here. / All that I have, / Houses and people, / I entirely give to him; / He is free to use them as he will.' / The son thinks of his former poverty / And inferior disposition, / [Yet] anew from his father / Obtains such great treasures, / Together with houses and buildings / And all this wealth, / [And so] rejoices greatly / On receiving such unexpected [fortune]. / So it is with the Buddha; / Knowing that we are pleased with trifles, / He did not before proclaim, / 'You will become buddhas,' / But said that we / Who are attaining faultlessness / And perfect in Hinayana / Are his shravaka disciples.

COMMENTARY *We are pleased with trifles.* The shravakas desire only their own peace of mind, lacking the great ideal of saving all people and attaining happiness together with all people.

- *Attaining faultlessness.* Since "faultlessness" indicates a mental state with no defilements, this phrase means eliminating every defilement.

- *Perfect in Hinayana.* The Hinayana enlightenment signifies the stage at which all defilements have been eliminated and physical purity and mental peace attained. The shravaka disciples are those who listen to the teachings in order to perfect this stage.

TEXT The Buddha commands us: / 'Preach the most high Way, / And that these who practice it / Will become buddhas.' / We, receiving the Buddha's teaching, / For the sake of great bodhisattvas, / By numerous reasonings, / By various parables, / And by so many expressions, / Preach the supreme Way.

COMMENTARY Here again, "great bodhisattvas" does not refer to the Law-body bodhisattvas, such as Manjushri, Samantabhadra, and Avalokiteshvara, but to lay followers who seek to attain the highest enlightenment. They are called "great bodhisattvas" because they are admirable, outstanding people.

TEXT The sons of the Buddha, / Hearing the Law from us, / Day and night ponder over / And with unflagging zeal practice it. / Then the buddhas / Will predict of them: / 'You, in a future generation, / Shall become buddhas.' / The mystic Law / Of all the buddhas / [Can] only to bodhisattvas / Be expounded in full reality, / So not to us [till now] / Was this truth preached. / Just as that poor son / Who came to be near his father, / Though he knew all the goods, / Had no hope of possessing them, / [So]

we, though we proclaimed / The treasury of the Buddha Law, / Yet had no will or wish for it, / Being also like him.

COMMENTARY *With unflagging zeal practice it.* The Chinese word translated as "unflagging zeal" also has the sense of pure, unadulterated effort, and "practice" means to acquire the teaching by studying and practicing it repeatedly. Such repeated study and practice, requiring utter concentration on the wholehearted effort to acquire the teaching, applies not only to the Buddha Law but also to every kind of activity.

- [Can] only to bodhisattvas be expounded in full reality, so not to us [till now] was this truth preached. "Expounded in full reality" conveys the sense that the contents of the teaching are to be specifically itemized; it should be understood in the sense of transmitting the teaching exactly as it has been taught. "This truth," on the other hand, refers to the fundamental, essential spirit of the teaching, and yet the shravakas did not attempt to grasp it for themselves. While the bodhisattvas went on to receive the assurance of buddhahood, the shravakas remained satisfied with their present state.

There are many such instances all around us. In the world of sports, for example, there are many excellent coaches and managers who turn out first-rate competitors though they themselves have never reached sports stardom. Despite their own limitations as athletes, they should be highly valued for what they do. The circumstances are different in the realm of the Buddha Law, however. The ultimate ideal of the Buddha Law is to have all people attain the Buddha-wisdom. Shakyamuni's aspiration is that not a single person will fail to achieve this. Unless all have attained the Buddha-wisdom, the world cannot be perfectly at peace and individual people cannot be truly happy. The Buddha therefore takes great pains to bring even shravakas and pratyekabuddhas, content with their own enlightenment and their own happiness, to realization of the true Buddha Law and the highest enlightenment, using a variety of means to ensure that no one is neglected. Maha-Kashyapa and the other shravakas thus fully realize the parental affection of the Buddha.

TEXT We, with the extinction of inward [fires], / Considered ourselves satisfied; / Having thus settled this matter, / Nothing more remained to be done. / Even if we had heard / Of the purification of buddha lands / And the conversion of living beings, / We would never have rejoiced.

COMMENTARY *The extinction of inward [fires].* This means to extinguish completely the defilements within one's mind and attain peace of mind. To be sure, this is a form of extinction (nirvana), but it does not go far enough. Complete extinction necessitates the extinction of outward defilements, as well. The extinction of out-

ward defilements means eliminating the sense of discrimination between oneself and others and gaining the realization that oneself and others are of one body. It also means doing away with one's sense of discrimination toward everything in the universe and dissolving into one mind together with all the phenomena of the universe. At that point there is nothing to fear and no reason to hesitate anymore; one will be able to dwell calmly within the universe, developing better communication with all things, living a life of pure harmony with all people.

This is the true meaning of extinction. It is the state of the Mahayana nirvana. The shravakas, though, were content with having extinguished the defilements in their minds ("We, with the extinction of inward [fires], considered ourselves satisfied"), and having realized that nirvana alone ("Having thus settled this matter"), they had no aspiration to look to what was far superior to it, the Mahayana teachings ("Nothing more remained to be done"). Even if they had heard of the Buddha's vow to purify all in the world and to instruct all living beings, and of his efforts toward this, they would have thought that this was within the power of the Buddha alone and would therefore have had no urge to aid him in his efforts ("We would never have rejoiced").

TEXT And wherefore? / [Because we fancied that] all things / Were altogether void, / Without birth, without extinction, / Nothing large, nothing small, / Without fault, without effort. / Thinking thus, / With no conception of joy, / We, for long, / Neither coveted nor were attached / To the Buddha wisdom, / Nor had we any will or wish [for it]. / But we, in regard to the Law, / Considered we had reached finality.

COMMENTARY *Void.* The Chinese characters translated as "void" here have two meanings: emptiness (*shunyata*) and tranquillity (*shamatha*). Emptiness signifies that there is no substance with a fixed, unchanging form, that is, there is no absolute existence. Tranquillity means to be apart from change. Everything in the universe undergoes constant change. Despite this, everything is constantly in a great harmony; this is the real aspect of all things. This condition of great harmony is tranquillity.

- *Without birth, without extinction, nothing large, nothing small.* Everything in the universe has, in phenomenal terms, various forms—arising and extinguishing, large and small, and so on. Everything appears through dependent origination, and there is no substance (self) that arises or is extinguished of itself, apart from the law of dependent origination, and has a fixed, individual form as large or small. This is emptiness.

- *Without fault.* All things are originally in the state of nirvana, unpolluted and undefiled. This is the state of being "without fault" or nondelusion (*anasrava*). People, however, are unable to understand this and suffer through

being swayed away by the phenomena they see before them. Suffering has its origin not in things themselves but in the way we regard them.

- *Without effort.* Phenomena that have come into being through a combination of causes and conditions are considered to be "conditioned" (*samskrita*). The opposite is "unconditioned" (*asamskrita*), which is translated as "without effort." Thusness, or Absolute Truth (*tathata*), nirvana, and emptiness, unaffected by causes and conditions, are included in the category of "unconditioned."

- *Neither coveted nor were attached.* This is not covetousness or attachment in the usual sense, but a strong aspiration to the truth and the unceasing endeavor to attain it.

- *We had reached finality.* "Finality" here refers to the supreme and ultimate state.

TEXT We, for a long time / Practicing the Law of the Void, / Obtained release from the triple world's / Distressing troubles, / Dwelling in the final bodily state / Of nirvana [in which form still] remains; / Being instructed by the Buddha, [we thought] / We had, without a doubt, attained the Way / And that we had therefore / Repaid the Buddha's grace. / Though we, for the sake / Of all Buddha sons, / Have preached the Bodhisattva Law / That they should seek the Buddha Way, / Yet we, in regard to this Law, / Had never any wish or pleasure.

COMMENTARY *Practicing the Law of the Void.* There are two ways of interpreting "Void," or emptiness. Hinayana says that because all things have come into being through a combination of causes and conditions, there is no existence when those causes and conditions cease to be, and therefore those things are void, or empty. This represents a negative view of phenomena. Mahayana, on the other hand, says that all things are essentially equal in the sense that they arise, change, and are extinguished through dependent origination, and yet they are in a great harmony as they change constantly. This is a broad and positive view of phenomena. Here, "Law of the Void" refers of course to the Hinayana viewpoint of emptiness.

- *The final bodily state.* This indicates the arhat state, the final form of rebirth for a person in this world, and means that there will be no more transmigration. Sometimes "the final bodily state" indicates the bodhisattvas.

- *Nirvana [in which form still] remains.* This refers to nirvana with residue (*sopadhisheśha-nirvana*), meaning that although all delusions have been eliminated, the physical body remains. When both body and mind have been extinguished, one enters the state of nirvana without residue (*nirupadhisheśha-nirvana*). When Shakyamuni passed from the world, he entered nirvana without residue.

- *Being instructed by the Buddha, [we thought] we had, without a doubt, attained the Way.* The shravakas had faithfully learned, practiced, and indeed perfected what had been instructed by the Buddha.

• *And that we had therefore repaid the Buddha's grace.* To act in accordance with the Buddha's teaching and to attain the state to which we have been led is to repay our debt of gratitude for the Buddha's compassion. This is extremely important. It is not limited to the Buddha's grace. The first essential, when we repay our debt of gratitude for our teachers' kindness, is to put their teachings into practice and achieve what we have been taught. There are also many other ways in which we can repay our debt of gratitude, but unless we do this first our return for someone's kindness cannot be true. A further way to repay our debt of gratitude is to take a great leap forward from what we have been taught, not content to reach just the first stage. Parents and teachers feel no greater joy than seeing their children and students become much finer people than they had expected. To refuse to be satisfied with moderate achievements but to advance further and further is the best path we can follow, bringing joy not only to ourselves but also to our parents, our teachers, people around us, and the Buddha. The shravakas, though, did not have this enterprising outlook, and are now repenting that.

• *The Bodhisattva Law.* This means the teachings for bodhisattvas, particularly the Six Perfections.

• *Yet we, in regard to this Law, had never any wish or pleasure.* This Law is the Bodhisattva Law. The shravakas had no wish to learn and acquire the bodhisattva teachings.

TEXT Our Leader saw and let us alone, / Because he looked into our minds; / [So] at first he did not stir up our zeal / By telling of the true gain. / Just as the rich elder, / Knowing his son's inferior disposition, / By his tactfulness / Subdues his mind, / And afterward gives him / All his wealth, / So is it with the Buddha / In his display of rarities. / Knowing those who delight in trifles, / And by his tactfulness / Subduing their minds, / He instructs them in the greater wisdom.

COMMENTARY *Our Leader saw and let us alone.* "Leader" refers to Shakyamuni, the great leader of all the world. "Let us alone" does not mean that Shakyamuni rejected the shravakas but that he quietly left them to their own devices.

• *The true gain.* This indicates actual merit, the salvation of the whole world, not just "the extinction of inward [fires]" to attain individual peace of mind.

• *In his display of rarities.* The Buddha has shown us rare and wonderful things, incomparable and welcome things.

• *Subduing.* This means to change people by removing all evil from the three actions of body, speech, and thought. The word *subdue* also refers to the conquering of the demon Mara by the power of the Buddha Law. The word is made up of two Chinese characters. The first means "to regulate," that is, to help a person of gentle

disposition to gain peace of mind by teaching him or her the Buddha Law. The second means "to subordinate," and refers to overpowering all evil arising from the stubborn or perverse disposition of a person through supernatural powers derived from the Buddha Law. Both types of actions are necessary when spreading the Buddha Law, but the former is the more important, being the proper and preferred course to follow. We are taught that the latter is only to be applied when dealing with those who slander the Buddha Law, those who are very stubborn, or those who are truly villainous.

TEXT Today we have obtained / That which we have never had before; / What we have not previously looked for / Now we have unexpectedly obtained, / Just as that poor son / Obtained inestimable treasures.

COMMENTARY The shravakas have now begun to understand that the practice they have thus far undertaken to rid the mind of its delusions and to gain peace of mind is by no means unrelated to supreme wisdom. Such practice is the foundation, and the important preparatory stage, for the task of saving people and the world. Until now the shravakas had no understanding that this is so. Having heard the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, they now know clearly that they too have been following the way to the truth. With this realization, a new world has opened before their gaze: they see that the duty of the Buddha's disciples is to save people and the world and that to attain happiness together with all others is to attain true nirvana. Within their hearts wells the courage to pursue this course with determination and vigor. The world that has appeared before them is bright, positive, and active. The joy they feel is of a kind they have never before experienced. In comparison with the passive joy they felt when they realized they had finally eliminated all their delusions, this is a vast and throbbing exaltation. Truly, "we have obtained that which we have never had before."

TEXT World-honored One! Now we / Have got the Way and got the fruit, / And, in the faultless Law, / Attained to clear vision. / We for long / Having kept the Buddha's pure commands, / Today for the first time / Obtained their fruit and reward. / In the Law of the Law king, / Having long practiced holy deeds, / Now we have attained to the faultless, / Peerless great fruit;

COMMENTARY *Got the Way.* The paths taken by human beings are all termed "ways"; some are positive and some are negative, such as the evil paths or the undesirable realms (*durgati*) of ashuras, animals, hungry spirits, and hell. Nevertheless, when we speak of "the way" we usually mean a good path, a right path; in Buddhism particularly it almost invariably refers to the way to enlightenment, that is, the Buddha Way. Here "got the Way" indicates that the shravakas have been able to realize the true

meaning of the Buddha Way, which is not the attainment of individual peace of mind through the simple elimination of the defilements but the vast and great wisdom to save all living beings.

- *The fruit.* This means the state of enlightenment attained through religious practice. There are various fruits, depending on the stage of practice one has achieved; here “fruit” indicates attainment of the realization of the real aspect of all things.

- *In the faultless Law, attained to clear vision.* Here “faultless” means the state of having completely transcended defilements through the realization of the real aspect of all things. This is the highest form of faultlessness, or nondelusion. Nondelusion of a lower stage is the condition of having removed the defilements by concentrating on eliminating them and by perfecting religious practice. Those who remain at that stage tend to look down on others through a sense of discrimination, the feeling that while they have completely removed their own defilements other people still have such and such defilements. At the state of nondelusion attained by realizing the truth of the real aspect of all things, however, there is no such sense of discrimination, because those who have attained the truth come to see that even the defilements, which they condemned so strictly when they were at a lower stage, are not necessarily “evil.” The defilements can be seen as a kind of motivational force, causing the world to develop by maintaining a great harmony while changing constantly. Thus the shravakas do not have to question the defilements. They no longer look at a person in terms of his or her state of defilement, but are able to see the buddha-nature deep within that is shared equally by all. They realize that they are all brothers and sisters, of one body.

This is the bodhisattva state and truly a pure way of viewing things, that is, “clear vision.” A discriminatory way of looking at others, congratulating oneself on one’s own elimination of the defilements while noting that others remain within their grasp, cannot be said to be “clear vision” in the true sense.

- *Holy deeds.* This indicates pure acts (*brahma-carya*), that is, religious life and practices conforming to the Eightfold Path and the Six Perfections. Unlike the rigidity of Hinayana, the views of Mahayana are free, expansive, and unrestricted, but such freedom can never be attained without effort; keeping the pure precepts of the Buddha and practicing the Eightfold Path and the Six Perfections, we finally reach the state of unhindered freedom when we have attained high enlightenment. Thus the shravakas, “in the Law of the Law king, having long practiced holy deeds, now . . . have attained to the faultless, peerless great fruit.” Anyone who thinks it is possible to attain Mahayana enlightenment in one bound, without having practiced “holy deeds,” must realize that this is a great miscomprehension.

TEXT Now we are / Really hearers of the sound, / Who cause all beings to hear / The sound of the Buddha Way. / Now we are / Really arhats, / Who, in all the worlds / Of gods, men, *maras*, and Brahmas, / Universally by them / Are worthy of worship.

COMMENTARY *Really hearers of the sound.* “Hearers of the sound” refers to shravakas. There are said to be five types of shravakas.

- (1) The shravaka fixed in attainment: one who has long studied the teachings of Hinayana and mastered them, and who is *sure* to attain the highest stage of the arhat sometime in the future. This is the usual meaning of “shravaka.”

- (2) The shravaka proud of attainment: one who is content with only hearing and studying the teachings and thinks he or she has fully realized the Law although he or she has not. This is a shravaka in name only, whose mental state remains at the stage of an ordinary person.

- (3) The shravaka who is a retrogressed bodhisattva: a former bodhisattva who in the course of transmigration has retrogressed to the state of shravaka but has fortunately been able to meet the Buddha in this life and to hear the Hinayana teachings.

- (4) The incarnated shravaka: a bodhisattva or buddha who appears in the guise of a shravaka, concealing his or her true aspect by skillful means to lead shravakas and other living beings to the Buddha Way of Mahayana.

- (5) The Mahayana shravaka: also called the Buddha Way shravaka, one who leads all living beings to the great nirvana, teaching them the Buddha’s enlightenment (causing “all beings to hear the sound of the Buddha Way”). Those here said to be “really hearers of the sound” are Mahayana shravakas.

As the text says, shravakas who have until now only heard the teachings become instantly, through the teaching of the One Vehicle, shravakas who cause others to hear the teachings. In other words, any distinction between shravakas and bodhisattvas has completely disappeared; in fact, according to the One Vehicle teaching, such a distinction has never existed. What has changed is that the stage of only hearing has shifted to the stage of causing others to hear. This means there should be no difference between people as shravakas and bodhisattvas; the only difference is that those who previously were not proactive have now gone into action. The question is whether taking an active attitude has a major effect on the values by which one lives. One who so acts is a true shravaka, a true bodhisattva, a true human being.

- *Really arhats.* “Arhats” means literally “those who are worthy of offerings, or worship.”

- *Who, in all the worlds of gods, men, maras, and Brahmas, universally by them are worthy of worship.* These shravakas have no desire for worship or offerings. The expression is a metaphorical description of their abandonment

of their former sense of inferiority and their discovery of their own dignity. They are not proud; rather they have realized their own worth.

TEXT The World-honored One, in his great grace, / By things which are rare / Has compassion for and instructs / And benefits us; / Through countless kotis of kalpas, / Who could repay him?

COMMENTARY *Things which are rare.* This phrase indicates the benevolent teaching that is rarely to be received, that is, the teaching of the One Buddha Vehicle.

• *Benefits us.* Here “benefits” refers not to a small, temporary benefit but to a magnificent, infinitely increasing, eternal benefit. There is no benefit greater than that accorded the shravakas through the teaching that can save all living beings. We too can help people materially and ease the pain of illness, and naturally these are worthy actions, but the greatest benefit we can give them is to lead them to the Buddha’s teaching. Even without money or an education, we can extend such a benefit to people if we are sincere. We must never forget that this is the highest and greatest work we can do in this life.

TEXT Service by hands and feet, / Homage with the head, / All kinds of offerings / Are all unable to repay him. / If one bore [him] on one’s head, / Or carried [him] on one’s shoulders / Through kalpas [numerous] as the sands of the Ganges; / Or revered him with one’s whole mind, / Or with the best of food, / Or garments of countless value / And all kinds of bed things, / Or every sort of medication; / Or with ox-head sandalwood / And all kinds of jewels / Erected stupas and monasteries; / Or carpeted the ground with precious garments; / With such things as these / To pay homage / Through kalpas as the sands of the Ganges, / Yet one would be unable to repay.

COMMENTARY *Service by hands and feet.* Literally, this can mean “to make an offering of our hands and feet,” but the true meaning is that we must serve the Buddha, even though it may cost us our life.

• *If one bore [him] on one’s head, or carried [him] on one’s shoulders.* We will not put the Buddha to the trouble of walking on the ground, carrying him always on our head or shoulders to every corner of the earth.

• *Ox-head sandalwood.* This is a sweet-smelling wood (*goshirsha-candana*) from Ox Head Peak (Mount Goshirsha) in India.

• *Carpeted the ground with precious garments.* Laying one’s fine garments on the ground for the Buddha to tread on is an expression of the highest respect and devotion. (See the November/December 1999 issue of DHARMA WORLD.)

TEXT Buddhas rarely [appear with their] / Infinite and boundless, / Inconceivably / Great transcendent powers; /

They are faultless and effortless, / The kings of the Law, / Who are able, for inferior [minds], / Patiently [to bide their time] in this matter, / And for common folk attached to externals / To preach as is befitting.

COMMENTARY *Buddhas rarely [appear with their] infinite and boundless, inconceivably great transcendent powers.* This passage can also be interpreted as “Buddhas [possess] rare, infinite and boundless . . . powers.”

• *Patiently [to bide their time] in this matter.* It is natural that the buddhas, who have realized the highest truth, should wish to teach this truth to all people, but they are patient and forbear from teaching the truth directly to those who are weak-willed and inferior in their capacity to practice the Buddha Way.

• *Common folk attached to externals.* “Externals” refers to all phenomena of the world, things with form and color. The phrase refers to ordinary people beguiled by and attached to phenomena.

TEXT Buddhas in the Law / Attain to supreme power. / Knowing all living beings, / With their various desires and pleasures, / And their powers, / [So] according to their capacities, / By innumerable parables, / They preach the Law to them.

COMMENTARY *Their powers.* This indicates the power to resolve to achieve a purpose and to put the resolution into practice. We usually use the expression “strong-willed” in regard to the passive ability not to yield to an evil temptation or to put up with pain, but this is a mistake. It can also be used in reference to more active, spiritual matters to mean the energy to determine to do something and to carry out the determination. This is the meaning of “powers” in this passage.

• *According to their capacities.* “Capacities” refers to whether people have the strength to hear and understand a teaching and the ability to put their faith in it. The Buddha gives people the teaching appropriate to their capacity for faith and understanding. This is an important point that must be well considered, whatever the times and whoever the person.

TEXT According as all living beings / In past lives [have planted] good roots, / [The buddhas,] knowing the mature / And the immature, / And taking account of each, / Discriminating and understanding, / In the One Vehicle, as may be befitting, / They preach the three.”

COMMENTARY *In past lives [have planted] good roots.* This refers to the good acts done in former lives. The more the number of good acts grows, the more mature a person’s capacity will be to hear, believe, and understand the Dharma in this life. The performance of good acts purifies the mind and rids one of a self-centered view of

things. As one comes to understand the real aspect of things, one is naturally inclined to seek the true teaching and to believe in it. It is therefore very important that we accumulate these "good roots."

- *Knowing the mature and the immature.* This means to know whether a person's capacity is sufficiently mature, in other words, to be able to discern how well a person's mind is prepared to hear the teaching.

- *Taking account of each.* This signifies weighing precisely a person's capacity.

- *They preach the three.* The buddhas teach the one and only Way of the Buddha, dividing it into the three vehicles: the vehicles of the shravaka, the pratyekabuddha, and the bodhisattva.

With Maha-Kashyapa's candid statement of his own faith and discernment, which is also his heartfelt declaration of gratitude for the Buddha's great compassion in teaching all living beings according to the degree of their faith and understanding, the chapter finishes.

When we look back at the chapter as a whole, we can discern ten essential points.

(1) Living beings disregard the Buddha's teaching and continue to wander in the world of delusion because they do not know the universal truth or that they are the children of the Buddha, and therefore think the defiled world attractive.

(2) When roaming about the world of delusion they unconsciously turn toward their homeland (the Buddha's teaching) because, although they do not realize it, they are truly the children of the Buddha, endowed with the buddha-nature.

(3) Though the poor son (living beings) saw his father (the Buddha), he did not know him to be his father. The father, however, knew his son at a glance. The Buddha never forgets living beings. The great compassion of the Buddha that sustains our life constantly envelops us.

(4) The Buddha intends from the first to give all living beings the highest teaching, but because they do not yet have the capacity to accept it, he causes them to receive a lesser teaching at first and gradually raises their capacity. We must not forget this progression when leading others to a teaching.

(5) A true believer, even if not particularly advanced in capacity, can persevere with his or her practice over many years and so can, at some point, definitely attain the highest enlightenment.

(6) True enlightenment is first realized when a person feels keenly and understands that he or she is a child of the Buddha, sharing the same lineage.

(7) To attain this understanding it is important that a person first abandons all inferior feelings and plants in his or her heart the confidence that he or she is worthy, being one with the Buddha and being sustained through the Buddha (the great life of the universe).

(8) The quickest way to plant such confidence is to study repeatedly, understand, and believe in the teaching of the Lotus Sutra. To deepen faith and understanding, it is important to declare one's own faith and understanding before others, as the four great shravakas did.

(9) When we discover our own dignity in being one with the Buddha, we understand the dignity of others, who are also endowed with the buddha-nature. No longer can we sully ourselves by bad, perverse actions, nor can we do anything that corrupts others or makes them unhappy. Herein is manifested the perfection of the personalities of ourselves and others.

(10) Realizing that all people are equally endowed with the buddha-nature and that they are the children of the Buddha, we lose previously held feelings of antagonism toward others and are suffused with a sense of oneness—the sense that all people are brothers and sisters. When everybody can thus love all others, the world will for the first time gain perfect peace.

I will conclude by examining a little more closely the idea of the chapter title, "Faith Discernment." Faith is a function of the emotions, while discernment is a function of the intellect. It is said that faith and religion are not a matter of logic and must therefore be a matter of belief. Belief without understanding, though, I regard as very dangerous. It is safe enough to put one's faith in a religion like Buddhism, which has a history of more than 2,500 years and which almost all people recognize as a high religion. To mistakenly believe in a religion that is false or useless, on the other hand, not only hurts you but also brings harm to your society and the people around you.

Even to simply believe a good teaching rather than understand it can invite a loss of that belief when something goes wrong. For example, one may believe that faith in Buddhism will result in a cure for illness and improvement in one's circumstances. Sure enough, one gets better. While one is still feeling thankful, however, the illness recurs, and doubts about the teachings arise in one's mind. If some small mishap occurs at work, those doubts will only increase and the formerly firm faith will crumble. This is stubborn faith, not firm belief. True, firm belief is faith that an understanding of the truth is the mind's support or haven. This understanding of the truth is discernment.

Nagarjuna discusses the connection between faith and discernment in the first volume of his famous *Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* (Maha-prajnaparamita-shastra, called in Chinese the Ta-chih-tu-lun). "In the great ocean of the Buddha Law, faith is the portal and wisdom is the ferry." "The portal" indicates "the condition that causes people to enter wisdom (the Buddha's teaching)." When entering the Buddha Way, it is important first to believe in it. Unless people are convinced that this teaching will lead them to salvation, they will not devote themselves to it. "The ferry" refers to "the subject

that saves people.” To really save oneself, one must attain enlightenment through wisdom. It is exactly as Nagarjuna says. A stubborn faith will not lead to true salvation, and that faith is in constant danger of collapse. We can express Nagarjuna’s words as follows: faith (emotion)—discernment (intellect)—salvation. This is the route for ordinary people to enter faith and is also their course toward relief.

In the Nirvana Sutra, the Buddha says, “Faith without discernment leads to an increase in ignorance; discernment without faith leads to an increase in false views. However, when faith and discernment perfectly interpenetrate, this is the true basis of action.” This admirable teaching elucidates thoroughly the connection between faith and discernment. I observed above that faith is a function of the emotions and discernment is a function of the intellect. As discernment (understanding) deepens, it does not remain merely a function of the intellect but permeates the whole mind. Thus a deepening of the intellect gives rise to sentiment, similar to emotion but deeper and more refined. The emotions are the surface workings of the mind and can change easily, but sentiment lies deep and steady within the mind and is accompanied by intellectual workings. When we study the Buddha Law and our understanding of it deepens, this sentiment emerges naturally. Such religious sentiment is usually called religious faith.

Logical understanding, however, does not possess power. Therefore intellectual enlightenment, born only of under-

standing, cannot manifest itself in action. It is only when discernment deepens to become religious sentiment and faith that power forms to raise the quality of individual human life, and that the energy to save people and the world is born. This is what Shakyamuni meant by “when faith and discernment perfectly interpenetrate, this is the true basis of action.” When faith and discernment are united and perfectly interpenetrate, there is true religious faith.

Nevertheless, the Buddha’s teaching can be understood through the intellect, and thus the Buddha never pushes it as a matter of faith. It is of first importance therefore to study hard and understand the teaching. From that faith will emerge naturally, and when faith and discernment form a harmonious whole, a strong religious faith grows. Discernment may not be a strong point for those whose minds are gentle and obedient, but they will readily raise the mind of faith if told that what they are hearing is a true teaching. That is fine, as long as it applies to the teaching of the Buddha. They will gradually grow to understand that teaching through hearing and reading with full gratitude, and so eventually it will become possible for discernment to perfectly interpenetrate with faith. Whether a person enters religion from faith or from discernment is immaterial. But unless the two form a harmonious whole, a powerful religious faith cannot develop.

Here I end my commentary on chapter 4 of the Lotus Sutra, “Faith Discernment.”

To be continued

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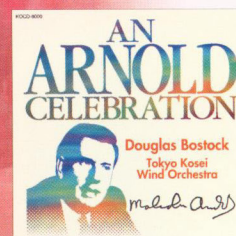
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