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The Present is Mother of the Future

We may notice that the vase of flowers on the table is very beautiful, but the flowers never tell us of their beauty. We never hear them boast of their sweet scent.

When a person has realized nirvana, it is the same. He or she does not have to say anything. We can sense his beauty, her sweetness, just by being there.

There is no need to worry about the past or the future. The secret of happiness is to be entirely present with wh at is in front of you, to live fully in the present moment. You can’t go back and reshape the past. It’s gone! So there is no need to worry!

The next time I fly on an airplane, who knows what will happen? Maybe I will arrive safely, or maybe I won’t. When we make plans, we can make them only in the present moment. This is the only moment we can control. We can love this moment and use it well. Past suffering can never harm us, if we truly care for the present.

Take care of the present, and the future will be well. The Dharma is always in the present, and the present is the mother of the future. Take care of the mother, and mother will take care of her child.

Venerable Maha Ghosananada
Step by Step
Parallax Press
The late Venerable Maha Ghosananda
was a Patron of INEB.

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The Future of Buddhism: From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation

Sulak Sivaraksa

The International Network of Engaged Buddhists will hold our bi-annual conference on “The Future of Buddhism, from Personal Awakening to Global Transformation” at Bodhgaya, India, the place where the Buddha was fully enlightened 2,600 years ago. The future of the teachings of the Buddha is at stake. The major task ahead is to make them appropriate for humankind and all sentient beings at least for another 2400 years from now on.

In a smaller time span, this year also marks the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore of India, whose life and work truly inspired many of us, who celebrated and shared his ideas and aspirations for harmony, wholeness and integrity. He dedicated his whole life to cultivating these ideas and dreams, especially through his poetry, plays, paintings and innovation in education.

For Tagore, growth in science, technology, and material wellbeing should go hand in hand with spiritual growth. One without the other is like walking on one leg. Also, Tagore did not reject the West or industrial civilization per se. Rather he insisted that the West must also learn from the East because it has so much wisdom to offer the West. This balanced and holistic worldview is needed now more than ever, as it is a prerequisite for a sustainable and resilient future for us and for coming generations. Pure reason and pure materialism are as doomed as the pursuit of purely personal salvation. The world view of Tagore is seeing the unity of reason and religion, spirit and matter, and letting them dance together. This is the big vision where science complements spirituality, art complements ecology, and freedom complements equality.

For humanity, Tagore argued, the perfect relationship is one of love. He declared that this truth serves as the foundation of the Buddha’s teachings. According to him, we can only reach our freedom through cultivating mutual empathy. To gain freedom we need to liberate ourselves from the fetters of self and from all those passions that tend to be exclusive. It is this liberating principle that we must apply to an imprisoned world.

What we call ‘progress’ or ‘development’ does not necessarily conform to this ideal. With purely material progress, the greed for things tends to become a passion, thereby promoting unbridled competition and confusion. A reign of ugliness spreads like a callus over the whole world.

A mere addition to the height of skyscrapers or to the velocity of speed or the latest technological invention like nuclear power plants can lead only to boasting and exaggeration, sometimes with very grave consequences.

We are shocked to see in front of our own eyes our arrogance and the illusion that we can somehow control our Mother Earth. The Earth that creates the great Tsunami is the same Earth that has been giving everything to nurture us. We must re-instill the sense of awe that we might have been missing for a long time. We must meditate so that we can rediscover a way to reconnect ourselves to our Mother.

This is the age of what the American Buddhist Joanna Macy called the “Great Turning,” that has been prepared for in many parts of the world. According to her, the Great Turning has

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	<p>been occurring on three simultaneous levels: environmental movements; anti-globalization and re-localization activism; and personal spiritual awakening.</p> <p>Perhaps Tagore’s message may be relevant here. He said “the time has come for us to break open the treasure trove of our ancestors, and use it for our commerce of life. Let us, with its help, make our future our own, and not continue our existence as the eternal rag-pickers in other people’s dustbins.”</p> <p>Tagore reminds us that, “Indian civilization has been distinctive in locating its source of material and intellectual regeneration, in the forest, not the city.” Harmony in diversity is the nature of the forest, where monotonous sameness is the nature of industrialism based on a mechanical worldview.</p> <p>This is what Tagore saw as the difference between the West and India. The civilization of the West has in it the spirit of the machine which must move, and to that blind movement human lives are offered as fuel.</p> <p>The Buddha-to-be too left the city in order to search for the truth in the forest. We believe that the Buddha has discovered the Four Noble Truths in the forest on the full moon of May 2,600 years ago. Many of us in Asia embraced the Buddha’s teachings and regarded ancient India as the source of wisdom and compassion. Recently, however, most of us in Asia may still call ourselves Buddhists, but we blindly follow Western civilization, which is based on power and greed and the spirit of the machine worldwide. A civilization based on power and greed is a civilization based on violence.</p> <p>Tagore warned that “the people who have scarified their souls to the passion of profit making and the drunkenness of power are constantly pursued by phantoms of panic and suspicion, and therefore they are ruthless ... They become morally incapable of allowing freedom to others.”</p> <p>Tagore maintained that “real freedom is of the mind and spirit; it can never come to us from outside”.</p> <p>He only has freedom who ideally loves freedom himself and is glad to extend it to others ... he who distrusts freedom in others loses his moral right to it.</p> <p>Today the rule of money and greed dominates our society, economy and politics. The culture of conquest is invading our lands and forests through the mining of iron ore, bauxite and coal. Many forest areas, especially in South and South-east Asia have become war zones where every defender of the rights of the forest and forest dwellers is being treated as a criminal.</p> <p>If we are to survive ecologically and politically, where we remain democratic in essence and each citizen is to be guaranteed right livelihood, we need to give up the road to conquest and destruction and take the road of union and conservation. We need to cultivate peace and compassion instead of power and competition. We need to turn once again, to the forest as our perennial teacher of peace and freedom of unity and diversity.</p> <p>We need to take Tagore seriously and follow the Buddha and ancient India as great visionaries for our survival, and the survival of our next seven generations who should enjoy peace and social justice and environmental balance.</p> <p>We need to be culturally sensitive, politically concerned, and socially committed to have the courage to tackle questions of the common good and to point out abusive situations. To be able to see clearly, to be truly aware of the state of the world, we must begin by deprogramming ourselves and be free of prejudice toward those we criticize. By working together with others of good will, we can identify and confront abuses of power. It is critical for people of all faiths and ideologies, as well as atheists and agnostics, to listen to each other as we promote justice and balance through nonviolent means. Equality must be upheld in all situations, in order to have empathy for, as well as to stay in touch with the poor and oppressed.</p> <p>To continue the work, we need to inspire the younger generation. We must help them develop freedom, self-reliance, contentedness, compassion, and generosity, to learn to collaborate rather than compete and to appreciate quality rather than excess. The younger generation needs accurate information, not just the propaganda of governments and media. The present financial crisis is an opening for us to encourage these essential values.</p>	
	<p>For our children to realize their potential and come forth as leaders of their generation, we ourselves must be good models. We must be <i>homo sapiens</i>, not <i>homo hipocriticus</i> or <i>homo economicus</i>. We must see through neoliberal economics and free market fundamentalism. Today in Greece, austerity measures, which means privatizing the commons, are being implemented, not for the benefit of the people, but for the super rich to own even more. We must help the next generations develop the critical thinking we have lacked and the capacity for reflection taught by the Buddha to build a sustainable future. We must confront our own greed, hatred, and delusion in order for our societies to be transformed into models of justice and peace.</p> <p>Buddhist meditation teaches proper breathing as the most important element of life. When we learn to breathe in and out mindfully, greed, hatred, and delusion naturally transform into generosity, compassion, and wisdom. We are all connected to one another and we can learn to breathe from that place. Meditation is indeed a way of developing clarity, which allows us to see the precision of daily life situations as well as our thought process that we can relate with both of them fully and completely.</p> <p>Throughout the ages, nature has caused a lot of suffering, but today natural disasters are exacerbated by the arrogance of industrialists and scientists. We must respect nature and not regard other living beings as resources to be exploited. Technological developments are not always in our best interest, as seen so clearly with Bhopal, India, and at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station in Japan. We must learn to discern what advances to accept and apply, and which ones to monitor closely or discard.</p> <p>With humility and caring, not just for ourselves but for the next seven generations, we can bring about an era of <i>ahimsa</i> and <i>satyagraha</i>. We can learn from Gandhi, and even from Emperor Ashoka. Bruce Rich has recently published a very important book for all of us to learn from <i>To Uphold the World: The Message of Ashoka and Kautilya for the 21st Century</i>.</p>	
		
	<p>Some other titles are also very relevant for us such as Glenn Paige’s <i>Nonkilling Global Political Science</i> and David Loy’s <i>A Buddhist History of the West: Studies in Lack</i>, plus my own <i>The Wisdom of Sustainability: Buddhist Economics for the 21st Century</i>—not to mention the works of the Mind and Life Institute under the guidance of the Dalai Lama to shed light on the common insights of science and spirituality.</p> <p>The Gross National Product was once the universal measurement of economic well being. Today, Gross National Happiness is gaining wider acceptance.</p> <p>Although the economic theory of unlimited growth and nonstop accumulation of capital continues to dominate the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, and nearly every government, in recent years, there have been high-profile defections</p>	
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among their ranks. Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz, Jeffery Sachs, and others have expressed their recognition that mainstream economics, if left unchecked, will destroy the world and its peoples. Last year the organizers of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, invited Matthieu Ricard, a French Buddhist monk, to deliver a keynote address on Gross National Happiness. Let us hope this was more than a public relations stunt by the rich and powerful. A think tank at Schumacher College has joined with the New Economic Foundation in London to propagate the idea for Buddhist economics to be taught at the university level. The University of Pennsylvania is considering including Gross National Happiness in its Masters’ curriculum. Recently Chulalongkorn University and the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation in Bangkok collaborated with Bhutan Studies Centre in Timphu established a School of Wellbeing with much concern on Gross National Happiness.

The Powers That Be will not give up their privileges voluntarily that they will defend to the bitter end. Violent structures will not crumble by themselves. They need to be pushed—nonviolently. The way forward requires refraining from violence, even as a means to an end. The U.S. in its perpetration of violence in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and elsewhere; China in Tibet and Xinjiang; the military dictatorship in Burma; and other perpetrators of violence are on the wrong side of history. Like Aceh, the three southernmost provinces of the Thai kingdom must be granted a greater degree of self-rule. There is no other way to bring this about except through nonviolence.

Mahatma Gandhi employed *satyagraha* to expose the lies of the British empire. China and many other countries still deceive their people, but the deceitfulness of the ruling classes cannot last forever. Although the mass media as a whole brainwashes us to be addicted to capitalism and consumerism, new technologies offer opportunities for new sources of information, and a world beyond capitalism is possible.

Although he came to power through armed struggle, Fidel Castro now condemns mindless violence and has stated that he prefers nonviolence. Despite decades of American terrorism against Cuba, Castro still sees the American people as friends of Cuba and sees young Americans’ tilt toward nonviolence as a move in the right direction.

Former president José Ramos-Horta of Timor Leste also upholds the virtue of nonviolence and forgiveness. He is willing to forgive and even cooperate with Indonesia despite the latter’s bloody invasion and occupation of his country. He is inspired by Nelson Mandela, who was ready to forgive the crimes of apartheid. Former president of Indonesia Abdurrahman Wahid declared that Gandhi was his role model.

The politics in Cambodia, as in many other countries, are full of violence and deceitfulness. But the Dhammayatra movement, founded by the late Maha Ghosananda, a Cambodian Buddhist monk, is a vital and influential force in his country. We can also refer to the Saffron Revolution in Burma when Buddhist monks struggled for democracy and responded to the military dictatorship’s counter-revolutionary brutality with deep meditation and prayers. Likewise in Tibet, monks have nonviolently resisted the Chinese occupation for more than five decades, and the Dalai Lama recently embarked on a path to democratize Tibet nonviolently.

The pioneer work by Dr. Ambedkar in reestablishing Buddhism in India has indeed been a great significance and the Indian Buddhists are now growing numerically, socially, politically and spiritually. INEB members need to work more closely with Indian Buddhists, especially at the grassroots.

Globalization, the latest phase of capitalism, is a facade of neo-imperialism. More than ever we need self-rule—beginning with personal transformation—and the creation of a new collective subject. To bring this about requires, first of all, internal spiritual change. If we are able to transform greed into generosity, hatred into loving kindness, and delusion into wisdom, we have self-rule. Peace in the world requires the cultivating seeds of peace within. As the Dalai Lama points out, this is difficult, but it is the only way to achieve world peace.



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articles on the future of buddhism	<div>articles on the future of buddhism</div> <div>Engaged Buddhism and Ethical Issues Regarding Monastic-Lay Community Orders</div> <div>Ven. Chao-hwei Shih¹ Translated by Doris L. W. Chang²</div> <div>I. Introduction</div> <div>On Sep. 1st, 2011, Mr. Mangesh from Nagarjuna Training Institute (NTI) at Nagaloka, India, visited the Buddhist Hongshi College and asked me about my views on ethical issues regarding monastic-lay community orders. Right away, I told him that both Buddhist monastic and lay practitioners should be equal. It will be better if all of us work as a team to jointly spread the Dharma and help all sentient beings. We can work on different tasks basing on our specialties, but we should not emphasize that bhiksus and bhiksunis ought to enjoy more privileges when they perform their duties teaching Buddha Dharma and benefiting sentient beings. Mr. Mangesh felt very joyful when he heard my comments and he shared the following observation with me. He has noticed that the monastic community enjoys much higher status in contrast to its lay community within the Buddhist community order in Sri Lanka. On the contrary, in India, most jobs to spread the Dharma and help all sentient beings are performed by lay Buddhists. With his sharp insight accompanied with his acute awareness of the caste system in India, Mr. Mangesh thus commented on such inequality between monastic and lay orders: it privileges Buddhist monastic members as if they were “brāhmaṇas.” Such an expression echoes the observation I’ve made. In 2005, I wrote a paper and condemned such monastic-centered ideology that emphasizes and privileges monastic orders above all: it leads to traps and dangers to create a “new brāhmaṇas” class within the Buddhist community as a whole.</div> <div>In its <i>Brahmana</i>, Brahmanism emphasizes the idea that places the Brahmans above all. Such an emphasis to place the priests above all could also be observed in the medieval Church of Rome. As early as the sixteenth century, Protestants had already challenged such a hierarchy with the idea that “everyone can be a priest.” Besides, the belief that “all men are created equal” has become a self-evident and universal value. Our Buddhist community as a whole shall eventually be confronted with the same challenge. Therefore, it has become an urgent task for us to come up with a set of discourses that facilitate equality among the monastic and lay orders, discourses that are based on the teaching of the Buddha that “all sentient beings are equal,” that “the four groups of Buddhists are equal.”</div> <div>Since I have been promoting gender ethics and equality, written various papers as well as a book dedicated to this issue, and initiated a gender equality movement to abolish attha garu-dhamma (“the Eight Special Rules”) at the end of March, 2001, I will not discuss issues related to gender ethics in this paper, although it aims to examine the controversies regarding “equality among all four groups of Buddhists.” In the following, I shall directly address ethical issues regarding Engaged Buddhism and the relationship between monastic and lay Buddhist orders.</div> <div>II. A Simple Sketch of the Controversy over Monastic-Lay Buddhist Orders in Contemporary Chinese Buddhism</div> <div>The issue whether “the monastic order should be treated as superior to the lay order” or “both communities should be treated as equals” has generated major disputes with ethical concerns within the Buddhist community as a whole. Such disputes can also be observed within contemporary Chinese Buddhist communities.</div>	<div>In 1927, lay Buddhist leader Ou-yang Ching-wu, founder of the Buddhist College of China (China Nei-xue Yuan), proposed that the following traditional discourses should be treated as flawed positions that go against the teaching of Buddhist scriptures:</div> <div><i>Lay Buddhists should not be categorized along with the monastic. They do not belong to trini yanani (the three sage types), nor should they be treated as punya-ksetra (the fields of blessing), nor should they be treated as masters or role models. They should not teach Buddha-dharma. They should not study vinaya. Bhiksus should not study with lay Buddhists. They should never prostrate or bow under lay Buddhists. Nor should they be ranked along with lay Buddhists</i>³.</div> <div>Such an argument offended Master Tai-xu, who then published a paper entitled “Debating with Ching-wu on Being Buddhist Masters” to refute Ou-yang’s argument.⁴</div> <div>Venerable Master Yin-shun, who had dedicated his life promoting “Humanist Buddhism” (Buddhism in the Human World), had certainly read about the debating arguments written by both. He did not join the debate right away. However, after twenty-six years, in 1953, he wrote an article that has still been held with high esteem by lay Buddhists: “Directions to Establish Lay Buddhism.” In this article, he observed the development of lay Buddhism with a very positive attitude. He even pledged the hope of the “Revival of Buddhism” upon lay Buddhism.</div> <div>He began his article as follows:</div> <div><i>The revival of Chinese Buddhism is a mission involving such myriad tasks that we may not really know where to begin. However, we have always believed that we should focus on the three following areas: Buddhism of the young, Buddhism of the intellectual, and Buddhism of all lay followers... Among the three, lay followers' Buddhism should be the most important.</i> <i>Buddhist Institutions, Scriptures, and Teachings 82.</i></div> <div>He pointed out that, the development of lay Buddhism does not signify the decline of Buddhism; instead, it signals the turning point for the revival of Buddhism:</div> <div><i>For the future of Chinese Buddhism, we pledge our profound hope upon the develop ment of lay Buddhism.</i> <i>Buddhist Institutions, Scriptures, and Teachings 93.</i></div> <div>Investigating and evaluating the issue from all positions and perspectives, he found it valid and righteous to treat the monastic and lay orders equally:</div> <div><i>With Mahayana Buddhism, lay bodhisattvas no doubt play a more significant role in comparison with monastic bodhisattvas. Buddhism does not only belong to the monastic home-leavers. In terms of faith, studies and practices, attainment, whichever perspective we take to observe their significance, monastic Buddhists and lay Buddhists can be said to be completely equal.</i> <i>Buddhist Institutions, Scriptures, and Teachings 82.</i></div> <div>Throughout this article, he conducted a two-way investigation into the occasions where the issue has been treated in Buddhist scriptures, ancient history, and factual modern historical records. He presented concrete examples and showed that lay Buddhists could certainly teach Buddha-dharma, and uphold the teachings of the Buddha: respectable senior lay Buddhist Citta in the Agamas, virtuous and well-cultivated lay Buddhists recorded in Mahayana sutras such as Vimalakirti in <i>Vimalakirti Sutra</i>, Lady Srimala, Treatise on Master Prasenajit; in recent Chinese Buddhist history, there has been Lay Buddhist teacher Yang Zen-shan, Ou-yang Chien; as for Buddhism in Ceylon, there is also the example of respectable Dharmapala. The monastic community should not oppose the practices of these broad-minded lay Buddhist leaders who were also cultivated with right Buddhist faith and views. Ven. Yin-shun also addressed the worry and concern that if lay Buddhists sit upon the high seat to teach Buddhadharma, it would cause monastic Buddhism to decline. He soundly analyzed the situation and commented:</div> <div><i>If the development of lay Buddhism causes the decline of monastic Buddhism in such a serious way that it can no longer exist, the real cause of the problem</i></div>	articles on the future of buddhism
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	<p><i>does not lie in lay Buddhism. Instead, the problem lies in the downfall of monastic Buddhists—they themselves cannot cope with the time and develop Buddhism along with the time. If monastic Buddhists themselves are wholesome and sound, if they are deeply immersed in the Buddha's teachings and learn to adapt to the needs of sentient beings around their time, then they will surely work together with lay Buddhists so as to march forward with them. Furthermore, by doing so, in Buddhism, they shall always be taking leading positions.</i></p> <p><i>Buddhist Institutions, Scriptures, and Teachings 90-91</i></p>	
	<p>It could be inferred that when Ven. Yin-shun suggested that “in Buddhism, they shall always be taking leading positions,” he meant well and was trying to console those monastic members who were worried that their “leadership would be deprived.” In fact, in my view, similar disputes over “who should take the leading positions, monastic or lay Buddhists” are all mixed with some sort of unwholesome working of the mind that is trying to compete or satisfy one’s vanity. If we really take it to be our duty to spread the Buddha’s teachings as our ways to return the blessings endowed upon us by the Three Jewels and all sentient beings, both monastic and lay Buddhists should only think of how to “best place the talents upon the best positions” so as to benefit maximum sentient beings. There is really no need to calculate or argue who should take leading positions.</p> <p>I have observed that, whether it is “male chauvinism,” or “bhiksu-centeredness,” these are all manifestations of profound “māna” and “kleśa,” manifestations of subtle yet very deep and serious arrogance and vexations. This is a kind of proud and arrogant class ideology. Bhiksus with this mentality will employ the “Eight Special Rules” when they try to dominate bhiksunis. To dominate their juniors and those who are subordinate to them, they will utilize their “seniority” as fully ordained monks. Confronted with cramanera and lay Buddhists, they would adopt a paradoxical argument that “monastic issues should be resolved within the monastic community.” Their targets may be different; however, their arrogant mentality remains the same: “my way has always been a unified and consistent one.”</p> <p>Therefore, following Ven. Yin-shun’s contention that “monastic and lay Buddhists should be equal,” I would like to further refute the flawed discourses that “monastic affairs should be resolved within the monastic community,” or that “lay Buddhists should not study vinaya.”</p> <h3>III. A New Interpretation of the Discourse That “Monastic Affairs Should Be Resolved within the Monastic Community”</h3> <p>According to the original vinaya scriptures, when the monastic assembly conducts Karmas (i.e. holds meetings), those who are not concerned should be asked to leave. Not only the lay Buddhists are prohibited from participating, even those cramaneras and cramanerikas who have not received upasaṃpanna (i.e. to be fully ordained) should also leave the meeting. This is the so-called tradition that “monastic affairs should be resolved within the monastic community.”</p> <p>I think that in some occasions, especially when we are conducting Poṣadhas (the monastic assembly held among members of the monastic community every fifteen days to examine their everyday life practices), we should not only recite the vinaya, but before reciting the vinaya, we should also conduct self-examination discussions to list behaviors that violate vinaya precepts or expose mistakes to be corrected. At these occasions, it would certainly be very unfair for those bhiksus and bhiksunis whose behaviors or mistakes are exposed if lay Buddhists or cramaneras and cramanerikas were present, since these people are not obliged to follow the vinaya but as spectators, they might abuse the right to comment and criticize those being examined at the meeting. Therefore, it is righteous and fair to ask un-related participants of Poṣadhas meetings to leave so as to ensure that the monastic obligations we require these concerned monastic members to abide by and their rights to be protected are equally taken care of.</p> <p>Even if we concede that this policy to excuse un-related personnel from the meetings so as to protect the self-esteem of concerned monastic members may be extended to justify the discourse that “monastic affairs should be resolved within the monastic community,” and that this is an issue to be resolved within the community of concerned members, I still think that this is only a basic common sense among all social organizations to guarantee “equivalent treatment between obligations and rights” of their members. This should not be treated as</p>	articles on the future of buddhism
	<p>means to highlight the “privilege” or “status” of bhiksus and bhiksunis. It does not only apply to Buddhist monastic communities, it also applies to the operations of all social organizations and communities in general. Under normal circumstances, the internal affairs of every organization should be jointly decided by the members within that organization—it may be conducted through a delegate system, it may also be conducted via a democratic system directly decided by all members.</p> <p>Nevertheless, monastic members still ought to take and accept comments and suggestions made by lay Buddhists or even non-Buddhist societies. Even if there is criticism, monastic members should take it with the attitude “to correct errors if there are any, and to praise and encourage the members if no mistakes are made as criticized.” In any case, it is not proper to twist the original purpose of “resolving monastic affairs within the monastic community” and use it as a defensive measure to block the gate to receive good advice and to terminate all kinds of comments provided by lay Buddhists or public criticism raised in the society. Nor should we use it as means to elevate our own status or positions⁵.</p> <p>Such a practice is justifiable and we can find concrete supports in the Vinaya-pitaka, vinaya collections, because it is the right and duty of “reliable upāsikas,” reliable female lay Buddhists to “bring up mistakes made by bhiksus.” The two “aniyata” among the precepts for bhiksus refer to the regulations and measures the monastic community should take when lay female Buddhists file accusations of suspected cases of bhiksus’ misconducts that might violate the bhiksu’s precepts.</p> <p>Furthermore, if we study the “<i>vinaya-vibhaṅga</i>” among all vinaya scriptures, we will find out that many precepts for bhiksus and bhiksunis were set by the Buddha to prevent repeated misconduct of samgha members and their negative impacts on the society. We can find that the vinaya scriptures were set in response to lay Buddhists’ reports about some samgha members’ evil speeches and evil deeds: the Buddha had these vinaya regulations clearly set after he checked with the people involved and found the misconduct to be true. He had these precepts clearly specified so as to prevent the same misconduct from happening, to protect the samgha from “the criticism and mockery by lay Buddhists,” and to ensure the people in the society will not lose faith in Buddha-dharma. Hence, when many monastic members use the argument that “thou shall not speak ill of the jewel of samgha” to prohibit lay Buddhists from commenting on the speeches and acts of monastic members, their argument is actually based on anything valid in the Buddha-dharma, and it is against the spirit of the vinaya scriptures. Even if their lay Buddhist followers follow their instructions not to comment, should the samgha members fail to adhere to the virtue and spirit of vinaya precepts, can they really stop the public comments and criticism among so many people in the society?</p> <p>It had been a wholesome surveillance mechanism within Buddhist communities since the time of the Buddha for lay Buddhists to provide comments, suggestions, and even to bring up monastic members’ evil practices to be corrected. This is because many improper speeches and deeds might not have been bravely conducted in front of other samgha members within the residence of the samgha community. They might have taken place in public gathering places such as marketplaces after the monastic member stepped out of the samgha’s residential area. When such an event took place, the lay Buddhists’ reports would provide the samgha community a good opportunity to conduct “crisis management.” However, with the exaggerated explanations and even twisted interpretations of the ideas that “monastic affairs should be resolved within the monastic community” and that lay Buddhists “shall not speak ill of the jewel of samgha,” this system gradually stopped functioning. It has not only caused the imbalanced status and relationship between Buddhist samgha members and lay Buddhists, more seriously even, it has also affected the self-cleansing functions within the Buddhist communities.</p> <p>When lay followers bring up the monastic members’ improper speeches and actions, most of them provide their comments with a profound caring attitude with high expectations and good intentions for the samgha. Once the samgha community dismiss the self-cleansing functions facilitated by their lay followers’ comments, suggestions, and concrete reports about precept violation, then, if things get so serious, it will eventually become un-avoidable for the non-Buddhist members in the society and even the mass media to publicly attack Buddhism with sharp criticism, cold sarcasm, disrespectful mockery, and even severe condemnation. At such moments, we may not blame these people for their severe attacks and blows. When the people concerned and even the whole Buddhist community are exposed to such public humiliation and criticism, what we need to examine about ourselves is why our samgha</p>	The Future of Buddhism : From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation
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communities have been so used to allowing mal-practices to happen, and why we cannot take it seriously to deal with the good-intentioned pre-warnings provided by our lay Buddhist followers.

IV. A Fair Commentary on “Lay Buddhists Studying Vinaya”

Just as I have found the argument invalid that “monastic affairs should be resolved within the monastic community,” I have also discovered that we cannot find evidences among the vinaya scriptures to justify the contention that “lay Buddhists (or cramanera or cramanerika) should not study the vinaya.” In response to such an argument, I have also written an article entitled, “Studying the Vinaya Does Not Block Cramanerikas from Taking the Vinaya Precepts: a Clarification.” No scriptural evidences can be found to prove such a statement.

Besides, according to the records in the vinaya scriptures and basing on my actual experiences leading a Buddhist learners’ community, I think that, as novice practitioners embarking on the journey of serious monastic practices, upon entering the community, a cramanera or cramanerika, or even a female novice who is about to join the sangha community will need to learn about all kinds of regulations and precepts that a fully ordained bhiksu (bhiksuni) should follow. It is not sufficient enough for them to just learn about and keep the six precepts or ten precepts well. Otherwise, wouldn’t it be like “running the same country with two systems”? If they have not developed the everyday habit to abide by all kinds of precepts as a long-term habit, once when they are ordained, how can they remember so many varieties and contents of precepts within such a short time? Once they violate the regulations or fail to keep the precepts, they will be condemned and punished. Wouldn’t that be a kind of abuse (in Confucian terms, “it is considered abusive if we kill a person without teaching that person first”)?

Many monastic members are unwilling to allow lay Buddhists to study the vinaya. They think that once if the lay Buddhists learn about and become familiar with all the contents of upasampanna (upasampada), they might look down upon bhiksus (bhiksunis). Opposite to their ideas, I think if the lay Buddhists can understand the vinaya regulations and the reasons why they are set, they will truly understand how the monastic members lead their lives as commoners. Hence, they will not treat bhiksus as “saints” and make impractical demands upon them, or set incredibly high standards for them.

Furthermore, if the vinaya masters themselves interpret these precepts for bhiksus and bhiksunis in such a way that these precepts become so difficult to keep and so demanding that only a saint can put them into practice, then it is not surprising to find some lay Buddhists look down upon monastic members when they measure these members’ performances with such high standards. In fact, “the vinaya” is a part of everyday life. If a vinaya master teaches the precepts in such a way that even bhiksus and bhiksunis find them difficult to follow and uphold, and that they can only hide the contents of the vinaya from the public in order to prevent humiliation, mockery, or criticism, then there must be something wrong with the ways these vinaya precepts are interpreted.

According to my research, except for very few precepts whose conventional prohibition has been discontinued in general among many contemporary Buddhist practices (such as “not to eat after lunch” and “not to hold money”), most precepts listed in the vinaya scriptures can all be re-interpreted in ways that will help us keep the core spirit of the vinaya precepts while allowing us to practice them in modern monastic lives. As for the precepts that have been broken, we can also discuss them in public, objectively analyze the reasons why these precepts are not closely followed nowadays, and figure out the best ways to apply these precepts in response to the circumstances of our contemporary world.

Therefore, here is what I have written to frankly advise monastic Buddhist members:

“Let’s not think that, since people will mock us or resent us if they know about our precepts, we shall not let them know about the precepts. If we do not behave well, then it will be unhealthy to try to cover other people’s eyes so that they will not find out our mistakes and make fun of us. What kind of mentality is that?! The secular gentlemen who are virtuous and well-cultivated have already been able to know that they should not “cover up their mistakes”; as serious religious practitioners should move one step further: let’s not try to conceal or cover up our mistakes so that we can always find opportunities to correct and renew ourselves.”

“Furthermore, if we want to keep these mistakes in secret, it is technically impossible. This is

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because those who like to look down upon others and hold proud contempt against monks and nuns will not wait until they know all about the contents of the vinaya precepts to develop their arrogant contempt against the sangha. If an apple is rotten, it takes only one bite to know that it is rotten. Do we need to eat the whole apple to suddenly realize that it is rotten? Can't we see that, those outsiders who keep criticizing that "everyone of us has broken the precepts and rules" because it is sufficient enough for them to resent us by just naming the example of how we break the cramanera precepts "not to eat after lunch" and "not to hold money"! And since the cramanera precepts have already been so publicized, can you keep them away from learning about the cramanera precepts even?"

*"If this way does not work, then we'll need to turn around and reflect upon ourselves." It is not proper for lay Buddhists to develop the bad habit to "hold contempt against the sangha." As members of the sangha, we, too, should honestly and objectively face up with all kinds of doubts and uncertainty about keeping the precepts. It will be better for us to seek for explanations that are consistent with the Dharma and the vinaya. It is not proper to use terms and discourses about "precept obstacles" as a defensive mechanism when we are confronted with junior members."*⁶

V. Conclusion

Looking back, we could see that, two thousand and six hundred years ago, at a time when Brahmanism had been so dominant and treated as a “national religion,” the Buddha dared to challenge the system and propose the revolutionary ideal that “the Jāṭis (the four castes) should be equal.” He refused to accept the established discourses in the *Brahmana* such as the hierarchical idea that “Brahmans should come first and stay on top of everything.” He also put his ideal into practice to establish a Buddhist community within which “the four castes are equal.” All members in this community broke away from the myth that some castes were superior to other castes. Moreover, the only guiding principle for them to follow when it comes to the order to move, stop, enter their seats, having meals, and handling everyday life was according to the seniority when the members entered the community and became fully ordained. Originally, such a practice should be a major breakthrough in all religious histories.

Under natural circumstances, out of their reverence and belief in Buddha-dharma as well as devout practitioners, lay followers tend to develop high regards for the monastic members and even dedicate extreme respect for bhiksus (bhiksunis). Unexpectedly, over time, after repeated practices, such kind of voluntary etiquettes and rites turned into some conventions, and then became regulated by some bhiksus as a systematic and institutional practice. Furthermore, these practices have been exaggerated and over-interpreted with the statements that “monastic affairs should be resolved within the monastic community,” that “lay Buddhists should not study vinaya”—all these have been done to elevate the status of monastics as highly as possible. Besides, it frequently happens that when lay Buddhists try to teach or spread the Dharma, they will be debased as “lay Buddhists sitting on top seats [teaching the Dharma].” It seems that, instead of taking it as ways to return the blessings of the Three Jewels and duties to help all sentient beings, some have considered shouldering the responsibilities to spread the Buddha’s teachings to be certain exclusive privilege or possessions that solely belong to the monastic order. Hence, I cannot but sigh with a profound sense of pity and state: in fact, those bhiksus who promote the discourses and practices that “the monastic is superior to the lay Buddhists” or “men are superior to women” are just like “new Brahmins,” revived Brahmins in the body of Buddhists.

The International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) has provided a network for all Engaged Buddhist organizations, and it has been led by senior, respectable, and virtuous Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa, who has been both wise and brave with his leadership. This has already set a very profound model in demonstrating equality among monastic and lay Buddhist communities. We hope that Engaged Buddhism can further constitute a powerful discourse that can comprehensively deconstruct the myth of “New Brahmanism” so that all four groups of Buddhist followers can grow in a wholesome and healthy Buddhist family where we trust each other, respect each other, love and care for each other. For this reason, I have written down this article so as to generate further discussions. By sharing my limited view points regarding the ethical issues about the relationship between monastic and lay orders, I look forward to receiving more expert opinions and feedback.

- 1 The author now serves as a full professor, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies, Hsuan Chuang University, Taiwan. She has also served as the Head of Applied Ethics Research Center at Hsuan Chuang University.
 - 2 Dr. Doris L. W. Chang has served as Ven. Chao-hwei's interpreter since 2006. She serves as an associate professor of the Department of English Language and Literature at Fu Jen Catholic University. She has chaired the Continuing Education B. A. program of the department since 2008.
 - 3 Ou-yang Chien. "Interpretive Notes on the Mottos of the Buddhist College of China—Part I." *Nei-xue Annual Journal*, Vol. 3, 1st Ed. Taipei: Ding-wen Books, April, 1975, p. 646.
 - 4 Master Tai-xu. "Debating with Ching-wu on Being Buddhist Masters" *Hai-chao-yin (Sounds of Ocean Waves)* Vol. 8, Issue 9, Sep. 1927: 30-38.
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- 5 Similar discussions can be found in my earlier lectures when I was teaching Miao-yun Collections at Fu-yen Buddhist College on 19th November, 1990. Please see Chao-hwei Shi, "The Objectives to Learn Buddhism—Part II," Study Guides for Miao-yun Collections (18), Miao-xin Magazine, Issue 74, March, 2003. The e-text version can be found at Miao-xin website: (<http://www.mst.org.tw/>)
In 1995, I taught the vinaya to monastic members during their summer retreat at Mi-tou Temple (Temple of Amita-buddha) in Chia-yi, Taiwan. The same idea was also brought up at my lectures. Afterwards, the lecture was compiled by Ho Chien-hua. It was then edited and revised by myself and published as an article entitled "Resolving Monastic Affairs with the Monastic Communities." That article was recorded and edited by Chuang Shu-hwei and later published in my book: Shih, Chao-hwei, *A Bird Soaring in the Clouds Shall Fly Despite Its Fatigue*. Taipei: Fa-chieh Publishing, 1996. p.p. 29-35.
 - 6 All the view points about "lay Buddhists studying the vinaya" and the three quotations in the article can be found in Shih, Chao-hwei. "Studying the Vinaya Does Not Block cramanerikas from Taking the Vinaya Precepts: a Clarification." *A Bird Soaring in the Clouds Shall Fly Despite Its Fatigue*. Taipei: Fa-chieh Publishing, 1996. p.p. 37-48.

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	<div><div>articles on the future of buddhism</div><div>3</div></div>			
	<div><div>The Precious Necessity of Compassion</div><div>Joan Halifax, PhD Upaya Institute and Zen Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA</div></div>			
articles on the future of buddhism	<div><div>Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.(1.)</div><div>His Holiness the Dalai Lama</div></div>		The Future of Buddhism : From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation	
	<div><div>I'm up late admitting patients to the inpatient hospice unit. Just when I think I'm too old for these late nights without sleep, a person in all their rawness, vulnerability and pain lays before me and as my hands explore the deep wounds in her chest and my ears open to her words, my heart cracks open once again . . . and this night a sweet 36-year-old woman with her wildlly catastrophic breast cancer speaks of her acceptance and her hope for her children, and she speaks with such authenticity and authority. And her acceptance comes to me as the deepest humility a person an experience and then again, once again, I remember why I stay up these late nights and put myself in the company of the dying.</div><div>Gary Pasternak, MD (personal communication)</div></div>			
	<div><div>The words of the palliative care physician, Dr. Gary Pasternak, exemplify the compassion and commitment that is essential for those who care for dying people. The skillful and kind care of those who are dying is about actualizing compassion for self and other and about endeavoring to reduce or end the “total pain” and suffering that is often experienced by those who are dying and those who survive as well as those who give care, including family and professional caregivers.</div><div>The term “total pain” refers to physical, psychological, social, and spiritual pain and is a term that was coined by the founder of Hospice, Dame Cicely Saunders. Saunders wrote “I realized that we needed not only better pain control but better overall care. People needed the space</div></div>			
to be themselves. I coined the term ‘total pain’, from my understanding that dying people have physical, spiritual, psychological, and social pain that must be treated. I have been working on that ever since (2.).”		Caring for the seriously ill and dying is about alleviating the suffering or total pain of the dying and gravely ill as well as being with the suffering of family caregivers and survivors. It is about addressing the suffering of clinicians and professional caregivers. Perhaps we could coin the term “total care” to mean compassionate care, which exemplifies the type of care that addresses physical, spiritual, psychological, and social pain and suffering of dying people and caregivers, and is based on a compassionate response to total pain.		
The intent of this article is to address primarily the challenges caregivers face in caring for the dying, the need for self-compassion on the part of caregivers, and the importance of cultivating compassion for others. It also explores some of the neuroscientific underpinnings of compassion and meditation as well as the value of compassion in supporting caregiver resilience. Finally, the article explores some categories of compassion that might deepenour understanding of the richness in the expressions of compassion.		Core Challenges in Compassionate Caregiving		
First, let us look at five core challenges that affect caregiver well-being, including burnout (cumulative work demands and stress), secondary trauma (dysfunction from prolongede xposure to the pain and suffering of others), moral distress (caregiver knows what is right to do; cannot act on it), horizontal hostility (behavior that controls, devalues, disrespects, or diminishes another peer or group), and structural violence (systemic discrimination against an individual or group).		In the case of those who work with the dying, these five core challenges are compounded by the possible denial of death; the angst around pain, suffering, and death; the inability to discuss interventions and death; the inability to communicate about stresses in caregiving; workaholism, self-neglect, and perfectionism; guilt for avoiding or abandoning the dying individual; engaging in negative cognitive appraisal; and moral conflicts and distress. Caregivers also can experience a sense of futility that arises from patient demands, institutional demands, clinical errors, feelings of inadequacy, and interventions not benefiting patients.		
According to Krasner et al., (3.) in a recent article in Journal of the American Medical Association, up to 60% of practicing physicians report burnout symptoms, which include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (treating patients as objects), and a low sense of accomplishment. Krasner et al., go on to note that physician burnout is linked to poorer quality of care, including patient dissatisfaction, increased medical errors, lawsuits, and a decreased ability to express empathy. These studies challenge us in how to address caregiver suffering: What are some relevant spiritual and contemplative perspectives and practices that might give relief to caregivers and foster greater resilience and compassion in those who care for the dying?		Spirituality		
I think it is good to begin with the question of what we mean by the term “spirituality” because compassion and spirituality are often felt to be related. In 1997, Gallup (4.) did a survey on Americans’ views of death and dying. In that report, it was quoted that “American people want to reclaim and reassert the spiritual dimensions of dying.” Spirituality is indeed integral to a dying person’s realization of the developmental task of transcendence and to caregiver values and behaviors. Moreover, spirituality is a deeply personal matter.		In a report by Puchalski, et al., (5.) the word spirituality was explored by a group of 40 professionals in the end-of-life care field. The consensus was that “Spirituality is that aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose, and experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, to the significant, or sacred.”		
His Holiness the Dalai Lama (6.) has defined spirituality in the following way: “Spirituality addresses qualities of the human spirit that include love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, a sense of responsibility, which bring happiness to self and other. It as well includes a basic concern for the well-being of others. And it has an emphasis on contemplative practices cultivating ethics, stability, and prosocial mental qualities.”				
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	<p>The Mayo Clinic (7.) in Rochester, Minnesota, states “Spirituality is an integral dimension of compassionate care and an important aid to healing for patients, their families, and caregivers.” The University of Virginia Medical School (8.) says that “A good practice of medicine depends upon physicians’ awareness of both their patients’ and their own spirituality.” Part of being aware of one’s own spirituality is to have a spiritual practice such as prayer, meditation, or a contemplative practice.</p> <h3>Contemplative Dimension of Care</h3> <p>The contemplative dimension is somewhat different than the spiritual dimension but is inter-related. The world’s contemplative traditions, for example, encompass shared wisdom in moral and ethical virtues and values as well as reflective practices that cultivate the mind. It is the cultivation of the prosocial mental quality of compassion that is the primary subject of this article.</p> <p>In the work that the Upaya Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico, has done over the past 15 years in the training of end-of-life care clinicians, we have, among other things, explored six core contemplative strategies, reflective practices, or meditation techniques that support caregivers in compassionate and mindful caregiving. These include focused attention, which is defined as the capacity to have a sustaining, vivid, stable, effortless, and nonjudgmental attention (the base of presence and executive control), and cognitive control, which is defined as the ability to guide thought and behavior in accord with one’s intention and emotional balance. The training also includes insight practices; practices that assist caregivers in presencing pain and suffering; practices that develop prosocial mental states (kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity, altruism, and empathy); imaginal processes that track the psychophysiological aspects of dying; and open presence (panoramic nonjudgmental attention). Key to this curriculum is an introduction to different meditative practices.</p> <p>In exploring compassion meditation, for example, we see that the base of compassion practice includes mindful attention to the present moment. The meditation teacher Jon Kabat-Zinn (9.) has defined mindfulness as “. . . moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a specific way, that is, in the present moment, and as non-reactively, as non-judgmentally, and as openheartedly as possible.” Mindfulness is an increasingly more frequent meditation that is used in teaching compassion.</p> <p>Mindfulness is associated with self-reported positive affect, (10.) less anxiety and depression, (10.-12.) greater relationship satisfaction and less relationship stress, (13.) and specific profiles of brain activity associated with greater emotion regulation during affect labeling (14.). All these qualities form a base wherein compassion can unfold.We have seen through research, as well as our direct experience, that mindfulness is a process making the regulation of emotion possible. It creates a stable mental state where insight about the distinction between self and other is possible, without which we would experience empathic over arousal and move into personal distress. Over arousal leading to personal distress would inhibit healthy compassion. Thus, mindfulness is an essential component of compassion (15.).</p> <p>Mindful and compassionate caregiving entails listening with full attention, emotional awareness and self-regulation while caregiving, prosociality and positive regard for self and other, the ability to prioritize and be attuned to one’s surroundings, and bringing compassion and nonjudgmental acceptance to interactions (16-18.). To support these qualities, clinicians and caregivers need to value well-being, insight, compassion, and self-respect. They as well need to recognize challenges and stress. The commitment to physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and relational balance is essential. And finally, caregivers need to engage in strategies supporting compassionate action toward the dying person, community, colleagues, and self.</p> <h3>Evidence Base for Compassion</h3> <p>In the extensive neuroscience research on meditation being done around the world, mental training has demonstrated that some meditative practices foster an increased ability to be attentive and have emotional balance and control over thoughts and behaviors. They also lead to greater stress reduction, enhanced immune responses, and decreased inflammatory responses. The three main types of meditative techniques currently studied in various neuroscience labs include Focused Attention (Concentrative) Meditation, Open Presence (Receptive) Meditation, and Compassion Meditation (19.). In this article, we concentrate on research on empathy and compassion.</p>	
	<p>Neuroscientists Klimecki and Singer (20.) found that a capacity to be aware of one’s own visceral processes is related to empathy. Our ability to read our body’s visceral experience, for example, sensing our heartbeat, our digestive processes, and so forth, appears to prime us to be able to feel into the experience of another. Singer’s work on empathy was enriched by her investigation of alexithymia. Those who suffer from this disorder have impaired interoceptive awareness, which is linked with a deficit in the capacity for empathy. Empathy is a building block of compassion. This of course has some interesting implications in the health care field, where caregivers can be burned out, out of touch with the body, and essentially numb.</p> <p>In this regard, it seems important to turn to some of the neuroscience research on compassion meditation practices to get a picture of what is going on in the brain and minds of advanced practitioners of compassion meditation. Note that all practitioners of Buddhist meditation engage in some form of mindfulness meditation as a base for all other meditation techniques. This is done to stabilize the mind and relax the body, so the reflective dimension of the mental experience can be fostered. When mental stability is present, then the practitioner can proceed to deconstruct the ego through compassion practices that can lead to a nonreferential or unbiased orientation.</p> <p>Lutz et al., (21.) at the Keck Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, mounted research experiments comparing adept meditators (with 10,000 plus hours of meditation practice) with novice practitioners. There were a number of results that were quite interesting. First, areas of the brain associated with emotion sharing and empathy, particularly the anterior insula and anterior cingulate cortex, were shown to be activated during compassion meditation in response to emotionally charged sounds (i.e., baby cries, screams) in both adept and novice meditators. The advanced meditation practitioners had greater activation of these areas as well as the somatosensory regions of the brain associated with body sensations and interoception.</p> <p>Lutz et al., (22.) also saw that compassion meditation increased emotional cardiovascular arousal in experienced meditators but not novices. Identified was neurovisceral coupling of the brain and heart, where there was an increase in heart rate that was linked with the activation of brain regions during compassion meditation. This was found in only the adepts. The left insula cortex, associated with empathy and response to strong emotions such as love and disgust, was activated, as was the premotor cortex, associated with the intention to act or move the body, and the somatosensory region, associated with body sensations and interoception. There was also significant activation of the temporoparietal junction, which is associated with the capacity to distinguish between self and other, and in perceiving the mental and emotional states of others. Both the insula and temporoparietal junction are linked to emotion sharing and empathy. According to Richard Davidson, the Director of Madison’s Keck Laboratory, the combination of these two effects was much more noticeable in the expert meditators as opposed to the novices. Singer et al., (23.) note that there is accumulating evidence that highlights a crucial role of the insular cortex in feelings, empathy, and processing uncertainty in the context of decision making.</p> <p>In the experiment at Keck Laboratory, Lutz noted that expert meditators had greater activity in the left prefrontal cortex, which is active in positive emotions such as happiness, and that this overshadowed activity in the right prefrontal area, which is more active in negative emotions and anxiety (24.). This explains some studies that showed that people who are compassionate also have less depression and greater satisfaction.</p> <p>In another compassion study that was conducted by Pace et al., (25.) at Emory University, novice meditators, who were taught a compassion-based meditation over six weeks, were divided into high- and low-practice groups. This study focused on the effects of compassion meditation on a biological immune functioning marker, interleukin-6, and self-reported psychological distress in response to a laboratory psychosocial stressor, compared with the low practice and control groups.</p> <p>We can summarize these results on compassion meditation research in the following ways. Compassion meditation appears to specifically enhance brain-heart communication and resonance (in other words, heart rate variability or “vagal tone” and emotion response/ regulation; the vagus carries information between brain and heart, and the pattern of variability in heart rate provides an indication of the nature of a person’s emotional response and their ability to regulate emotion). Positive emotions and integrative brain electrical activity (gamma) also are increased, as is brain response in related regions to emotional stimuli, and there is a reduction of inflammatory and negative mood response even after relatively brief meditation</p>	

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	<p>practice. Thus, there is evidence for the power of compassion meditation to produce positive emotional states and neural integration as well as enhanced biological immune responses. Certainly, the practice of compassion meditation has significance for clinicians but might have interesting benefits for patients as well.</p> <h2>How to Engender Compassion?</h2> <p>We can then ask, what do clinicians and caregivers need to do to engender empathic concern and compassion? Note that in looking at these data, we begin to put together a simple equation with regard to some of the elements that comprise compassion. They include the ability to be interoceptive (somatic awareness), which can prime for empathy. Empathy, positive regard for others, kindness, and insight form a basis for empathic concern or compassion.</p> <p>In the 1980s, the social psychologist Batson et al., (26.) noted that there were two distinct emotions that motivate people to help others. The first was termed empathic concern. They reported that empathic concern is another focused congruent emotion that is produced when an individual witnesses another’s suffering. This experience of concern is accompanied by feelings such as tenderness, sympathy, or compassion. Batson et al. called the other emotion personal distress. The focus here is on one’s self and is prompted by the need to relieve one’s own uncomfortable feelings in response to the perceived suffering of others.</p> <p>Since the pioneering work on altruism and empathy by Batson et al., we have learned that it is essential to nourish two qualities in order for there to be healthy empathic concern and compassion. First is the ability to be self-aware, in other words to know/sense/feel what is happening in the body/mind, as we encounter the suffering of another. Somatic sensitivity mirrors the process by which we also can sense into the experience of another. As well, it signals us when we are going into an over aroused state and are about to experience personal distress. Through our sensitivity to what the body is saying, we can choose to down regulate our arousal level. Mindfulness is key here, for it allows us to be aware of what is going on in our body/mind. Through the experience of emotion regulation facilitated by mindfulness and a metacognitive perspective, an individual can more easily differentiate between self and other, the second ability that is important in cultivating healthy empathic concern or compassion. Otherwise, the physiological activation of shared experience can lead to burnout, secondary trauma, or moral distress.</p> <p>More recently, Eisenberg, (27.) another social psychologist, elaborated on the work of Batson et al. She has noted that empathy or emotional attunement, combined with perspective taking or cognitive attunement, plus memory, combine to give rise to an arousal level that is sufficiently uncomfortable that one feels motivated to “do” something to alleviate the suffering of the so-called “object of awareness.” If the arousal level is not regulated, then the subject experiences “personal distress,” which leads to selfish prosocial behavior or avoidance behaviors. In other words, one can feel acutely distressed about the suffering of another and engage in behaviors that appear to be helpful to the suffering person, but if he or she is motivated, consciously or unconsciously by the need to reduce his or her own distress, this is then a selfish prosocial behavior arising from personal distress. Our own observation is that personal distress can lead to the three common fear responses of fight (moral outrage), flight (abandonment), or freeze (numbing).</p> <p>We can ask the question: how does one regulate emotional responses, so that compassion can be nurtured and caregivers do not fall into reactions of avoidance, abandonment, numbness, or moral outrage? Clearly, one of the most powerful interventions is mindful focused attention, the ability to intentionally guide the mind in accord with our intentions and stabilize the mental continuum to haveinsight about suffering, its origins, and how to transform suffering.</p> <p>This is a portion of a letter sent to me by a physician who had just gone through the training in contemplative care of the dying at Upaya Institute. Our doctor recalls a recent encounter in the emergency department with an elderly woman. She writes about her experience of inflicting pain while trying to save the patient’s life.</p> <p><i>I entered a room with an elderly woman on a gurney. She was stricken in pain and in extremis. I grabbed a towel, as she was in the throes of diaphoresis and wiped her chest. We visited and began to figure out her chest pain. The monitor showed a heart rate of 200, blood pressure 110. She was fully awake. She needed</i></p>	<p><i>medication. In the next three minutes, her pressure was 60, [and] awake but going out, she was going to arrest.</i></p> <p><i>There is no medicine to be given at this point. Pain meds will guarantee an arrest. In a split second, I had to make the call. She needed to be shocked; she was awake. In this second, I felt an absolute confluence between precepts, delivering an exquisitely painful intervention to save her life. Oh no, I thought. This has to be done. I apologized to her. I leaned over her face and spoke right into her eyes. I am sorry, this is going to be painful but we have to shock your heart. The stone in my stomach grounded my heels. I looked at the nurse; ok shock at 100.</i></p> <p><i>She pulled up her knees and screamed as though she was from a distant land. She cried out with great intensity. The pressure improved. She was back. We stabilized her, she did fine.</i></p> <p><i>She never received a dose of morphine. I asked her a minute later if she had any pain. She said no I feel much better doctor. Good I said. Hmmm.</i></p> <p><i>When you inflict pain on somebody while awake, it causes quite a transformative edge. Sure, doctors do this all the time. It is big, it is small.</i></p> <p><i>It was a new level of bearing witness. In this instance, my cognition was on pause. I was fully present for the shock. When the paddles discharged, my mind went to that moment at the end phase of the dissolution process when you, Roshi, took us back into the personality. You said ok when you open your eyes don’t focus, be present but don’t focus. I did not focus. Every ounce of her pain went through me. It was very intense but it was all ok. No issues and so it was. The mind is incredibly capable of handling traumatic events if prepared! There was noempathic over-arousal. You shape shift a bit and open every fiber of your being for them; mind still, mind still.</i></p> <p><i>These teachings are crystal clear in value. I have to study them in depth. Traumatic situations happen all the time. This is the gentle handling the hardest. No song, just mindfulness.</i></p> <p><i>Full bow in honor of all that is.</i></p>
	<h2>Is All Compassion the Same?</h2> <p>Finally, we need to ask if there are different types of compassion. From the perspective of traditional Buddhism, for example, two main streams of compassion are identified: referential compassion and nonreferential compassion. Referential or biased compassion is compassion that has an object.</p> <p>Nonreferential or unbiased compassion is compassion that has no object. Referential compassion has a number of subcategories. These include biologically based compassion, which includes instinctual compassion (the parent/child bond); unripened compassion, where compassion is present but compromised (unwanted infant); and attached compassion (existing in the case of family members or through a sexual bond).</p> <p>Another category is compassion through identification. This is a form of referential compassion that arises through the identification with suffering of another who has sufferingsimilar to one’s own.</p> <p>Reasoned compassion has two subcategories: The first is ethically based compassion, where compassion is a moral imperative. The second category is conceptually based compassion, where the subject has a profound insight into the nature, interdependence, nonduality, cause and effect, and selflessness.</p> <p>Nonreferential or unbiased compassion is the type of compassion that the researchers at the Keck Laboratory investigated. Nonreferential compassion or universal compassion is a form of pervasive compassion that is not directed toward one’s self or toward another being. Compassion begins with the profound aspiration to bring an end to suffering because we have at some</p>	articles on the future of buddhism
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level realized that we are not separate from any being or thing. Through this experience of interconnectedness, we naturally wish freedom from suffering for all, thus we respond to suffering to transform or end it. Finally, we endeavor tofree ourselves from any thought as to the outcome of our actions, as we cannot really control what happens, but we do our best; we wish for the best.

In Buddhism, there are so-called near and far enemies of compassion. The far enemy is cruelty. This enemy is easy to detect. But the near enemies of compassion are often difficult to recognize. They include fear, grief, pity, anxiety, and righteous anger, all expressions of personal distress. The so-called “near enemies” can drain or destroy us. Thus, we must look truthfully at our own experience and see if our response to suffering is healthy; we then evaluate our choice in how we are responding and let go of blame and judgment.

Conclusion

As caregivers, we encounter many, as Pasternak notes, who trigger those cracks in our heart and open us once again to suffering. Our work as caregivers of those who are dying is never to deny the truth and presence of suffering, impermanence, and death. As we are touched by these realities of existence, we realize that compassion is a moral, social, psychological, and spiritual imperative. But to do this work, we need to focus attention on our own spiritual resources to support our work. That is why caregivers should have a spiritual practice such as compassion meditation to have the strength and perspective to acknowledge the pain and suffering in others and ourselves and develop an appropriate and transformative relationship to suffering through insight and the regulation of our emotions.

This is a profound path for those who care for the dying. It is the path that the great healers and teachers of the past have walked. And it is a path of sanity that clinicians and caregivers can discover, day after day, as they care for the dying. It is also beneath the feet of every human being. Fortunately, we live in a time when science is validating what humans have known throughout the ages: that compassion is not a luxury; it is a necessity for our wellbeing, resilience, and survival. May we see into the life of things, and may we have the courage to actualize compassion in our lives for the benefit of all those who suffer.

*With an eye made quiet by the power of
harmony, and the deep power of joy,
we see into the life of things. (28.)*

William Wordsworth

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The Future is Always Arriving

Hozan Alan Senauke

Seeds of the future are planted in the present. The future is always arriving. In the dharma forest countless Buddhist traditions are alive today in Asia and the West, and I expect they will continue to evolve and flower long into the future. Like all conditioned things traditions change, but *buddhadharma* cannot be harmed or impeded. *Buddhadharma* is not going anywhere. But Buddhist traditions and institutions are always in motion, always changing. If we look closely we can glimpse their colors and outlines, their gifts and challenges.

Here is a simple outline of what I am seeing and foreseeing, primarily in the United States, which I know best. My aim is to promote discussion, not to reach conclusions. Some of these developments appear positive (i.e., expansive) to me, and some appear negative (i.e., restrictive or destructive). But of course we know that what seems positive to one person can look very different to another. And we know that the dualistic notion of 'positive' and 'negative' include each other and are themselves subject to impermanence and transformation. With that caveat, here are some trends in the present leaning towards the future.

On one side?

Feminization

Lay Practice

Social Engagement

On the other side?

Sectarianism

Consumerism and Commodification

Mixing Up or Watering Down Buddhism

Before going further, please note that generalizations about Buddhism and Buddhist practice can be mistaken and misleading. Buddhist trends in the United States are different from Europe. Buddhist traditions in Thailand differ from Japan. And so on. Among the different cultures of Asia, the many schools and styles of Buddhist practice in the United States, Europe, Asia, and elsewhere, it may be that we can really only agree that the Buddha taught about suffering and the end of suffering.

Feminization

The historical record, however uncertain, suggests that the monastic *sangha* followed a patriarchal cultural model from the beginning. Ultimately the *bhikkhuni sangha* died out in most of Asia, even though the record of women's practice and devotion was and is compelling and unbroken. Over the last twenty years there have been some remarkable trends which start to deconstruct two thousand years of patriarchy and misogyny. In the West, fully half the teachers in our Zen and Vipassana centers are women, fully empowered to teach and transmit the dharma. In Asia there has been a revival of the *bhikkuni* order in many of the Theravada countries, and a strengthening of existing orders in the Mahayana schools. This development is uneven and sometimes controversial, but the tide is inexorable.

Lay Practice

Shakyamuni Buddha proposed a fourfold order: monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen. Over centuries the role of lay people has devolved into service for the monks, out of reverence for the robe and the Buddha himself. The underlying premise is that generosity and devotion towards the monks is meritorious action which will lead (at some indeterminate future) to rebirth as a monk oneself. But the Buddha never said that laypeople could not attain realization. With no disrespect for monastic life, there has been an unprecedented flowering of lay practice in the West and in Asia. Our local meditation halls and retreat centers are busy and growing. This is only logical in a troubled world. Women and men of all classes and backgrounds turn to the dharma as a path of peace and stability, a path they can follow themselves and pass on to their children.

Engagement

When I began working at Buddhist Peace Fellowship more than twenty years ago, engaged Buddhism was a marginal tendency in the West. ‘Real’ Buddhists would dismissively suggest that our practice was just conventional activism in Buddhist clothes. I have seen this perception change over the years. Buddhist centers are regularly teaching in prisons, feeding and sheltering the homeless, offering chaplaincy in hospitals and hospices, and turning out to protest against injustices and war at home and abroad. Many of us in the west have come to the dharma after turning away from our birth traditions of Christianity and Judaism. Still, principles of social justice at the heart of the Abrahamic traditions have a place in our own hearts. We are shaping a Western approach to Buddhism that integrates the Buddha’s teachings of ‘just’ and the old prophets’ call for social justice.

Asian Buddhism, though influenced by Western social thought, has always been engaged. Monks and nuns are symbiotically linked to their communities and cultures. They live side by side. Formally and informally they serve as teachers, counselors, and advocates. In decades of war in Vietnam Buddhist monastics healed the wounded and intervened against violence on both sides. In Burma's 2007, Saffron Revolution, monks and nuns took to the streets in tens of thousands to protest the military junta's oppression and exploitation of Burma's peoples.

I believe that we will continue to inspire and influence each other, moving towards a Buddhism that is independent of nationalism that supports social, economic, environmental, and religious rights across all borders.

Then there are the difficult challenges we face . . .

Sectarianism

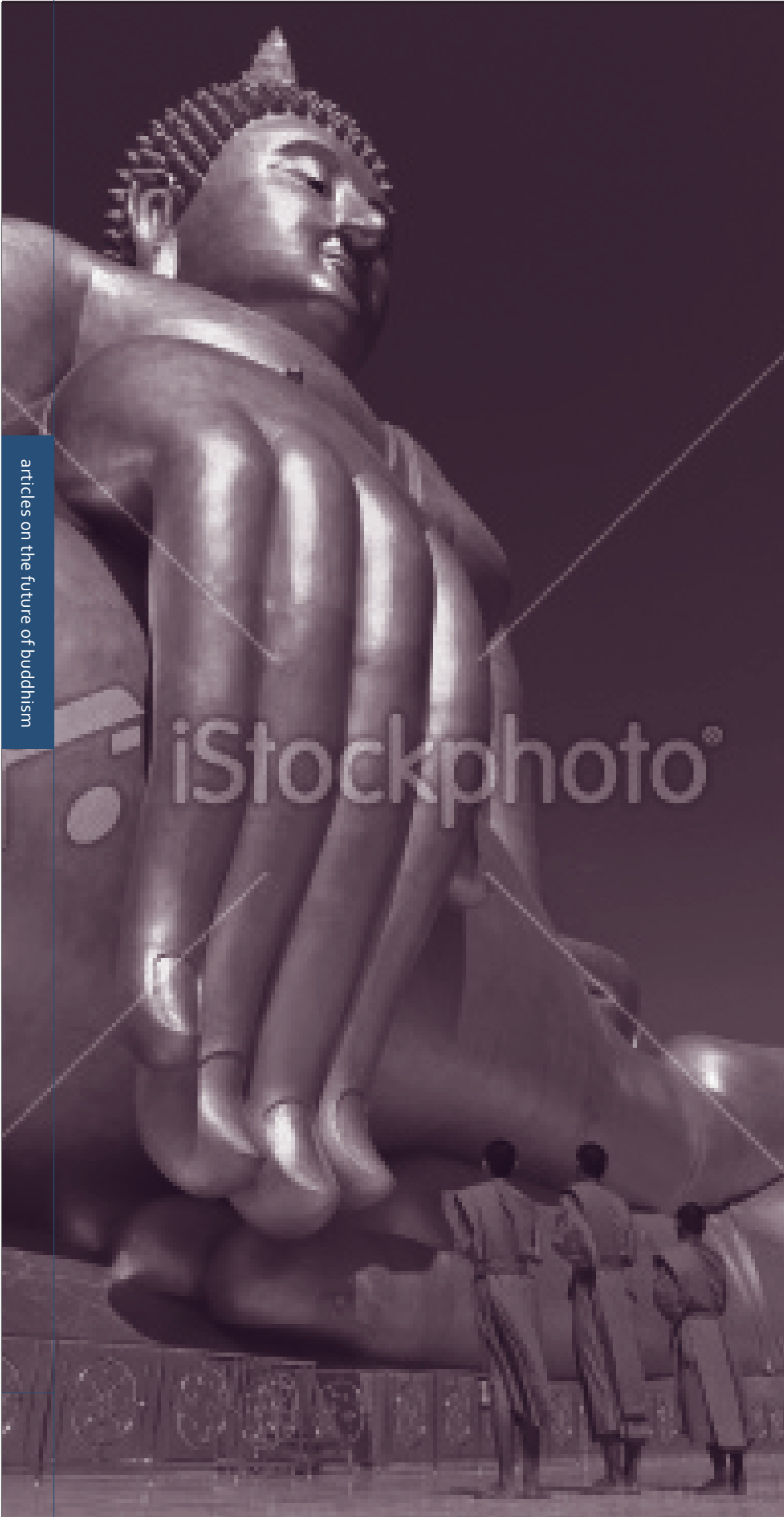
Sectarianism is simply tribalism wearing religious robes. It is unfortunately prevalent in every religious tradition in every culture and age. It boils down to an assertion that my Buddhism is truer, realer, better than yours. It is a force that divides natural allies. Despite the best intentions of wise sisters and brothers it keeps raising its head. We separate ourselves on the basis of Mahayana/Hinayana, according to various interpretations of karma, on matters of monastic rules, and on a thousand obscure points of doctrine.

Sectarianism also emerges where access to resources varies. This is clearest in poor nations. In such places, resources or the lack of resources can mean survival for people and for religious organizations. Material poverty can translate into envy and resentment. Those with relative privilege – although the privilege may be very small – are inclined to protect what they have. A kind of zero-sum mentality prevails which leads to stinginess rather than compassion and generosity.

If anything, the gap between rich and poor has widened over the last twenty or thirty years. There are no signs yet that humankind is moving in the other direction.

Consumerism and Commodification

Fourteen years ago at a meeting of INEB's Think Sangha we came up with a one-line description of the new dominant religion, consumerism: *The meaning of one's life, the acquisition and consumption of things*. The economic paradigm clouds our minds. In this world meaning is money and money is meaning. Buddhists are not immune from this kind of deluded thinking.



Buddhism is promoted by movie stars. A small number of charismatic Buddhists a couple of Asian men and a bunch of Western teachers, all of whom seem constantly to jet around the world — grace the covers of slick magazines. Retreats promise the dream of peace and fulfillment . . . along with gourmet vegetarian food and comfortable beds. That is, if one has money to pay and leisure time to spend.

I may be overstating the present problem. There are many wonderful and authentic teachers around, including many of those we see on magazine covers. The problem is not so much with the teachers or with retreats, but with an inexorable capitalist system that turns everything and everyone into objects which can be bought and sold. It is not getting any better. And this trend leads to my third concern.

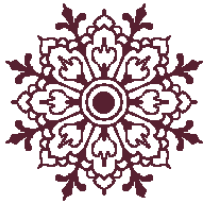
Mixing Up or Watering Down Buddhism

Over the last fifteen years in the West, Buddhist principles and practices are becoming key to a new ‘mindfulness industry.’ A creative approach to stress reduction and pain relief that began in a clinical setting has moved into corporation offices and even the military. I don’t necessarily think this is a bad idea. All beings rightly wish to be free from suffering. But I fear that this approach — mindfulness as a ‘technique’ — is a step away from the Three Treasures — Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha — and a step towards commodification or turning Buddhism into a self-improvement program.

Centrally what seems missing to me is *sila* or ethics. It is a conundrum. We certainly hope to see people working mindfully in corporations and in the military. We hope they will behave ethically and openly with each other. But then we have to step back and look at whole systems. Corporations aim to sell us things, whether we need them or not. Their first principle is: expand or die. The military, while arguably serving a necessary role to protect and serve, most effectively seems to serve avaricious and imperial national interests. And this interest has been effectively co-opted by corporations themselves. So, if mindfulness supports ethical action within a system, what do we see when, mindfully, we look at the system itself?

If the future is always arriving, then it is always arising in the present. At the same time, the future, like each moment of time, is independent. Even if we think we see what is going on now, it is impossible to predict what will happen. Nonetheless, our words and actions determine present and future times. Harmonious action, respectful words, and mutual appreciation are best practices for all times. I believe this has always been the heart of INEB. It is why I keep coming back. But these practices can never be taken for granted. They are so obvious to see . . . and so hard to do.

Hozan Alan Senauke is a Soto Zen Buddhist priest, vice-abbot of Berkeley Zen Center in California. Alan is founder of the Clear View Project, senior advisor to Buddhist Peace Fellowship, and a long-time friend of INEB. His latest book is ‘The Bodhisattva’s Embrace: Dispatches from Engaged Buddhism’s Front Lines.



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FUTURE of BUDDHISM:
from Personal Awakening
to Global Transformation

Hans van Willenswaard

More or less the same day that Sulak Sivaraksa delivered his acceptance speech to receive the Niwano Peace Prize in Kyoto, Japan, the UN General Assembly adopted a unique resolution on happiness prepared by member state Bhutan. This historically significant parallel, rather than just a coincidence, challenges the world to “re-think” development.

The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on happiness. It says happiness is critical in advancing economic growth and social progress, news agencies reported:

*Calling the ‘pursuit of happiness’
a ‘fundamental human goal’,
the resolution recognised that it was a universal goal
in the spirit of the UN Millennium
Development Goals.*

The resolution called on a “balanced approach” to economic growth that can lead to sustainable development, poverty eradication, happiness and well-being of the planet.

It also invited the world body to “pursue the elaboration of additional measures that better capture the importance of the pursuit of happiness and well-being in development with a view to guiding public policies.”

Lhatu Wangchuk, Bhutan’s ambassador to the UN, whose country was a co-sponsor of the resolution, said it was “inspired by the belief that we need to begin discussing a topic whose moment has come, at the UN.” He said Bhutan has offered to convene a panel discussion on the theme of happiness and well-being at the next session of the General Assembly to be held in September.

Prior to this discussion facilitated by Bhutan in September this year at the United Nations, Sulak Sivaraksa will speak at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, in the framework of an international exchange platform 25-27 August 2011, organized by the School for Wellbeing Studies and Research. The title of the platform is *Re-thinking Property. Pathway to a Well-Being Society Scenario?* Other resource persons will include Nicanor Perlas (Right Livelihood Award recipient, Philippines), Dasho Karma Ura (President Centre for Bhutan

Studies), Ramaswami Sudarshan (UNDP), Ms Cheah Vannath (Cambodia), Sombath Somphone (Laos) and Takayoshi Kusago (professor of Social Systems Design, Kansai University, Japan).

Earlier in August, a preparatory gathering will take place in Bhutan, organized by the Centre for Bhutan Studies, involving economist Jeffrey Sachs,

Bhutan’s Ambassador to the UN Lhatu Wangchuk hands over the resolution to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon

UN Advisor on the Millennium Development Goals; Richard Layard, professor at the London School of Economics and author of the book *Happiness: Messages from a New Science*; and John Helliwell, expert in wellbeing studies from Canada. Among the participants the School for Wellbeing Studies and Research was invited to present its views.

The Re-thinking Property exchange platform in Bangkok, later in August, will bring Asian scholars, activists and business leaders together, in a global context. The aim is to explore options for “alternative development” in light of the Bhutanese call to re-new attention for the universal pursuit of happiness. A leading thought behind this Bangkok experimental contribution to the global dialogue on happiness and wellbeing policies – a shift from the present unqualified economic bias – is, as tentatively formulated: distinct dimensions of happiness may resonate with archetypical attitudes constituting various property regimes.

In order to realize a “balanced approach” to economic growth that can lead to sustainable development, poverty eradication and wellbeing for the planet, as promoted in the Bhutanese resolution, we have to re-think the legal as well as cultural foundations of property regimes. The world is confronted with challenges in various fields. Among them the call of U.K. opposition leader Ed Milliband to re-think property regimes in the media-world, the raise of peer-to-peer networks in fields of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and social networking as new space for civil society action. Regarding land property an international coalition against “land-grabbing” was formed during the World Social Forum 2011 in Dakar. An interesting case is that a regulation is in the making which would entitle the government of Thailand to hold all intellectual property rights on seeds: not really the answer local seed breeders and farmers may expect to effectively counter the dominance of multi-national seed corporations.

The neo-liberal world view emphasizes and promotes a private property regime, favouring not only individuals, but also corporations that are attributed the same rights as “free” individuals. While in communism or socialism public property (ownership by the state) is placed central to uphold its model of the “welfare state”. The global movement towards an alternative development-path in contrast is recognizing more and more the centrality of common property. A key presentation during the Bangkok exchange platform on *Re-thinking Property* will be made by Silke Helfrich of the *Commons Strategy Group*, a global network of “commons” activists.

The three perceived dimensions of happiness corresponding with these particular property regimes are: *satisfaction of needs* corresponding with private property; *contentment* and detachment from outer conditions with state or collective ownership; and *happiness generated by fulfillment of meaning*, altruism, corresponding with common property.

None of the three property regimes can stand alone. However, in the present world-economy private property and public property regimes have merged into one inter-locked system of “state-capitalism” (China) and “capitalism supported by the state” (USA) that denies enough space for emerging civil society networks based on common property principles. A “balanced approach to economic growth” requires that this space, enabling a civil society driven economy, should be reclaimed and re-created, in order to keep private property and public property regimes in check. Pushing them back within the boundaries of where they are meaningful and supporting sustainable development, poverty eradication and wellbeing of the planet.

Within this “action-research platform” a re-newed role for Buddhist Economics is emerging. During the *Re-thinking Property* event in Bangkok Prof. Hisashi Nakamura (Japan) and Prof. Apichai Puntasen (Thailand) will open the debate on the contribution of Buddhist philosophy towards re-thinking world economy.

Ultimately they will facilitate the dialogue on Buddhist Economics during the, what is expected to become, groundbreaking INEB conference *From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation* in Bodhgaya, October 2011. Forty years ago, in the late 60s and early 70s of the 20st century, wisdom leaders anticipated the problems that are surrounding us everywhere now. And they also pointed to solutions: E.F. Schumacher, inspired by the economy of Burma, wrote his book *Small is Beautiful. Economics As If People Matter*. Sulak Sivaraksa established the *Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation* already in 1968. The Club of Rome published its *Limits to Growth*. In France the *International Federation of Organic Movements* (IFOAM) was formed. And the King of Bhutan conceptualized *Gross National Happiness*.

Hopefully, the coming decade will become the decade of personal awakening leading to global transfor- mation. We have to join hands now to make happen what was foreseen as needed and possible by our wisdom leaders 50 years ago. In Buddhist terms: from Enlightenment to Maha Puja.

articles on the
future of buddhism



What is the future of Buddhism?

Venetia Walkey

Understanding the nature of impermanence is vital to our understanding of the Buddha's teachings. Everything that exists is constantly changing. Nothing exists independently. We cannot be certain of anything, apart from the knowledge that one day we will die.

If we practice mindfulness of breathing in and breathing out we have a simple example to observe. When our body dies, there is no more breath.

If we observe our minds objectively, then we can see how our thoughts and mental and physical feelings come and go and are constantly changing. They may be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. Our reactions to them whether negative, positive or neutral depend on our conditioning. If we watch our minds objectively, we must maintain awareness and accept that sooner or later personal relationships, economic, social cultural, political, and environmental situations will change.

The Buddha taught us the importance of not becoming attached to things which make us happy. We can enjoy them fully while they last, but if we are strongly attached we will suffer when we are deprived of them. We also become attached to our negative feelings and must learn to let them go. They are overweight baggage for which we must pay a high price on our journey through life. We need light, not heavy hearts.

As human beings we are all deeply concerned for the future of the survival of Gaia our Mother Earth and everything that depends upon our fragile biosphere and the universe. We attach to many different ways of solving the universal problems, depending on our motivation and beliefs. Human consciousness and awareness is gradually evolving. Holistic education is fundamental to developing a peaceful, harmonious and civilised society. All sentient beings want to avoid suffering, and desire happiness, but we are easily deluded and exploited in our pursuit of happiness, if we lack noble spiritual guides and friends.

If we have chosen the Buddha to be our guide, it is only by practicing his teachings to the best of our ability to develop our full positive potential, that we may encourage others to follow the Noble Eightfold Path of Right Conduct that enables us to make wise choices in life.

The Buddha metaphorically turned the wheel of the law in the Deer Park at Sarnath, after he became enlightened. He invited us to follow in the hoof prints of the oxen who hauled the wagon. The wagon wheel symbolized the wheel of Right Conduct. If we are guided by the wheel of Right Conduct, remembering that this is the foundation of Holistic Education, we will be able to proceed towards justice and peace in the world and be able to help others on their psycho physical journey through life.

Einstein believed that Buddhism would be the religion of the future because it has no dogma only doctrine. It is based on pure logic

If we do not become attached to the many different traditions and forms of the Buddhist teaching and institutions we can enhance understanding the study and practice of the teachings as a transformative practical science of positive personal development to assist us on our

psycho/ physical journey through life. It is a valuable guide for people of all beliefs and for those who have lost or not yet found their right direction in life, as well as for those who are seeking for virtue, truth and beauty which has not been commodified and commercialized.

The Dhamma, Truth, is indestructible and has existed and survived long before and during recorded history. The perennial wisdom of the great spiritual teachers and what remains of the indigenous wisdom of those who were persecuted and marginalized is available to everyone who cares to learn how to become a truly human being.

As a system of high spiritual technology, the applied psychology of the Buddhist teaching gives us the opportunity to eliminate our negative habits of body mind and speech which cause suffering to ourselves, our fellow beings, our environment and the universe. Peace depends on us.

When Mahatma Gandhi was asked to define civilisation, he replied “Right Conduct.” If the Buddhist teaching can be continually updated and presented in ways to which people can relate according to their needs, and particular situations, they can learn how to apply them to keep their balance. This will help them find the middle way to navigate the raft of the Dhamma through the turbulent waters of the constantly changing, confusing and terrifying situations which beset us.

In Plato's Laws, Ethics and the Arts were the foundation stone of education to create a harmonious, civilized and peaceful society where wisdom was the goal. Wise elders were elected for their exemplary character to ensure that the standards were not degraded.

The key for survival lies in the quality of education for hearts hands and minds. Education which is purely knowledge based and lacking in wisdom is a recipe for disaster. Great spiritual leaders are few and far between. Wise guardians may exist as members of The World Future Forum

The interfaith movement is admirable and essential to bring the wisdom of the great spiritual traditions together. Moral ethics are the foundation of all the great religions without them we cannot develop right relationships, good will and contribute towards the progress of justice and peace in society. Without a sound foundation of moral ethics we cannot connect with our higher consciousness and our innate creativity and spirituality. Spirituality is the unifying principle of all human beings.

We have never before had such amazing tools for communication. If the Buddhist teachings are presented in entertaining ways which are fashionable and fun, they will attract young people to explore their own positive potential and encourage the understanding of the vital importance of right conduct. They will be enabled to make wise choices in life and to develop healthy bodies, minds and spirits for their own and others true well being. The level of spiritual and environmental awareness will grow.

The arts are a vital means of communication. Artists have a vital role to play in diverting the current suicidal thrust of human consciousness and many are courageously helping to unite people who are divided by their historical, racial, cultural, political and religious differences. The arts transcend racial, cultural and political boundaries. They providing an outlet for the oppressed to express and communicate injustice and inequality, and to promote human rights and responsibilities. They are a vital asset in education.

Socially engaged Buddhists are involved in networking internationally, promoting human rights and responsibilities, peaceful conflict resolution, holistic education, sustainable agriculture, economics, self sufficiency and life styles. They try to balance the inner work to ensure that the outer work is based on right motivation, mindfulness, and understanding, for the good of the whole; generosity and restraint on a personal level; and loving kindness for all sentient beings, including themselves.

As long as we do not become attached to the rules and rituals and institutionalized forms of Buddhism's many different traditions and use all skilful means in the here and now, to communicate and sincerely study and practice the teachings, the legacy of the wisdom of the Buddha, will survive. Throughout the centuries it has adapted to different geographical locations, conditions and cultures. Its positive influence is pervading many aspects of civil society, in humanistic psychology, complementary medicine, sustainable agriculture, ecology,



life styles and right livelihood. It is applied to economics, peaceful conflict resolution and holistic education.

The Buddha has been recognized by the United Nations (UN) as the greatest influence for World Peace within living memory. A Buddha Reliquary has been established in the UN building in Geneva, Switzerland, where the Buddha's birthday is commemorated. Truth is indestructible, it survives ideologies and isms, and it cannot be imprisoned. It can be suppressed and denied but it will always reveal itself sooner or later.

The challenge today is for survival in the face of over rapid scientific developments without proper research into the possible consequences. We will soon be sending robots programmed by fallible human beings, to explore outer space and exploit the resources of the universe. Genetic engineering, stem cell experimentation, nanotechnology, bio technology, presents us with both advantages and risks. Warfare conducted long distance via computers, may reduce bloodshed but is fraught with danger. Oceanography will exploit the resources under the sea bed. There is no end to human greed and ingenuity. Nothing is sacrosanct.

The Buddha forecast a time when the rain of the Dhamma would no longer nourish the land, a time which would be personified by speed and heat. A time when many new diseases would manifest and when natural disasters, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and floods would devastate the world. Because of the disappearance of moral ethics, good teachers would be hard to find. Many Monks would become parasites on the people, especially in the cities. We are living in a period of transition. The crisis presents us with opportunities for positive change.

Spiritual communities will endeavour to survive and preserve the ancient wisdom. The Buddha taught us not to be attached even to the teachings, but to practice and integrate them into our daily lives. The future of Buddhism in its current secular forms is unpredictable. That it is growing in popularity is undeniable. The practice of right understanding, right mindfulness, Right Conduct and awareness that everything we think and say and do depends on our personal and circumstantial conditioning and produces an effect. We must accept the consequences whether they are good or bad and take responsibility for them. We are interdependent and interconnected with everything that exists. What is important is to concentrate mindfully on the present moment and live creatively each day in the knowledge that it might be our last.

Who knows whether Buddhist communities might continue to exist on satellites or biospheres in outer space. Peaceful coexistence with other forms of life and the ability to adapt to existing conditions will be easier for Intronauts who have explored inner space through meditation, than for the astronauts who have pioneered outer space, but they will be mutually dependant. They may also have to depend on the robots. How they behave will depend on their conditioning. If they have been programmed regardless of moral ethics there will be conflicting situations to contend with. Hopefully there will be robots that have been intelligently programmed as well. Speculating about the future of Buddhism is intellectually stimulating, but its survival depends on its intelligent and practical application here and now.

Impermanence

*Earthquakes tidal waves, volcanoes erupting,
Wake us to the fact that what lies beneath the surface
Is unstable.*

*So with society.
Unease, unrest, disease, resentment,
Stirring revolution, both civil and uncivil,
Disrupts our little plans.
We can only be certain of uncertainty.
To live creatively each day according to changing conditions,
Just to live with that.
To die each day
Just as each day dies,
Begin anew.*



The Vihara of Compassion:
An Introduction to Buddhist
Care for the Dying and
Bereaved in the Modern World

Jonathan Watts
Jodo Shu Research Institute, Tokyo

This paper is an excerpt from the Introduction to The Vihara of Compassion: Buddhist Care for the Dying and Bereaved, which will be published in late 2012 by Wisdom Publications (USA). It brings together 5 years of research on Buddhist initiatives in hospice care, death and dying and Buddhist chaplaincy in East Asia, South East Asia, Europe, and the United States.

Buddhist Care for the Dying and Bereaved: Past and Present

Buddhist understandings of death and practices developed for dying persons and the moment of death have been hallmarks of the tradition since its beginning in India 2,500 years ago. Over the last forty years, they have been an important part of the global revival of Buddhism, especially in the West—from the popularization of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* to Zen poetry about death to Theravadan meditation on the decaying body to belief in welcoming Amida Buddha on one’s deathbed.

Buddhist based initiatives for caring for dying and bereaved persons through developing trained professionals and building facilities that have mushroomed since the late 1980s. When speaking of ‘hospice,’ one is drawn back to its Christian origins in 11th century Europe; Mother Mary Aikenhead (1787-1858), the Irish nun, and the Religious Sisters of Charity who created the modern hospice archetype; and Dame Cicely Saunders, the Anglican nurse who founded the first modern hospice, St. Christopher’s Hospice, in London in 1967. Saunders has had a major impact on the Buddhist hospice movement around the world.

At the same time, the Buddhist hospice movement marks a recovery of these aforementioned practices of Buddhism towards death and their application in new, modern conditions and societies. Indeed, the Vihara Movement in Japan has consciously named itself using the traditional and ancient Buddhist term for temple, *vihara*. Like the term ‘hospice,’ *vihara* has also had the meaning of a place for travelers to rest in addition to a place that might offer social welfare and medical care for the poor. According to Chinese Buddhist canonical sources, the famous Jetavana Vihara established by the historical Buddha himself eventually developed into a comprehensive center for spiritual, economic, and medical care. The great Indian monarch, Ashoka (r. 270-232 BC), who is credited with first unifying the Indian subcontinent under one rule, was known to have promoted developing herbal medicine and dispensaries through Buddhist temples. This tradition established in India eventually spread throughout the Buddhist world. The historical Buddha offers an original template for the role of the Buddhist caregiver as the ‘Great Physician’. There are numerous examples of the Buddha and his close disciples guiding both ordained persons and lay persons through painful physical illnesses to illumination on their death beds. These stories serve as the primary Buddhist template for dying persons to have a monk as a deathbed counselor (Skt. *kalyanamitra*).

In this book, we have culled some of the best and most inspired examples of Buddhist care for dying and bereaved persons from all over the world, covering the entire Buddhist tradition with essays from the Theravada tradition in Thailand and Cambodia; the Tibetan tradition in

the Rigpa Spiritual Care Program, which functions primarily in Europe and the United States; the East Asian Mahayana tradition in Taiwan; and the *Lotus Sutra*, Pure Land, and Zen traditions in both Japan and the United States.

Essential Themes in Buddhist Care for Dying and Bereaved Persons

1) Buddhist Spirituality

The original Buddhist emphasis is on the importance of having a calm and meditative mental state at the time of death. This is important not only in terms of the soteriological import of the future transmigration of the consciousness, but also more simply in terms of having a “good death” that is filled with peace rather than struggle and angst. In this way, open mourning and the disturbing or moving the corpse for a period after death should not be done. This type of orientation leads to much stricter, disciplined, and formalized forms of dying where a religious professional, usually a monk or nun, is employed to support the dying person as a guide to achieving a peaceful and “good death”. In terms of the modern initiatives in this book, this orientation expresses itself with an emphasis on highly trained religious professionals called chaplains who understand how to properly handle the issues that arise not only for the dying person, but for their families and care givers as well. This orientation may also express itself in more specifically Buddhist stylized facilities.

The other orientation in Buddhism views intention —enlightened intention is one of the practices of the Noble Eightfold Path— as the fulcrum for karmic action and the eventual transmigration of the consciousness. This type of orientation has led certain Buddhists to promote organ donation as an act of bodhisattvic compassion, based in an enlightened intention that would override any disturbances to the consciousness of the deceased. In terms of care for the dying and bereaved, this type of orientation, which emphasizes intention over form, dovetails with the modern hospice movement’s emphasis on presence and compassion-ate listening by the caregiver. The professional chaplaincy movement also emphasizes this point for the chaplain not to impose their religious vision on the patient, but rather acting as a facilitator for the patient to discover their own spirituality. This orientation also does not attach to the concept of a “good death,” although it may still be hoped for. In practical terms, initiatives that emphasize this orientation eschew the use of chaplains and instead rely on volunteers who have varying levels of training.

These two tensions co-exist among the initiatives in this volume in that many authors feel it is not possible and often counter productive to teach new spiritual orientations or practices, especially meditation, to people who are dying. On the other hand, many of the authors in this volume concur that those who have developed spiritual orientations before becoming ill seem to have better deaths. One of the more surprising results of studying these initiatives then is that we find an emphasis on developing a strong and committed Buddhist practice more for the caregiver than for the patient. Examples of learning about self care range from Zen volunteers in San Francisco who meditate together to German and American medical professionals with Christian or secular orientations who learn Buddhist self care methods from the Rigpa and Upaya programs to ordained Buddhist chaplains in Taiwan and the United States who must internalize their seminary educations through practice as interns. A common perspective and point of emphasis is the need to receive proper training in spiritual competencies that will sustain the intense work of “being with dying.”

2) Informed Consent and Truth Telling

“Informed Consent” and “Truth Telling” are curious, specialist terms developed by the modern medical system. The former refers to the process of medical professionals, usually the head doctor, informing a patient of the particulars of their medical situation, in short, their diagnosis. The latter refers to the process of the doctor informing the patient of the outlook for improving or perhaps the inevitability of their death, in short, their prognosis. In the present era, a bias has developed that Asian societies, especially among conservative Buddhist in East Asia that deeply value collectively, do not agree with these two concepts and that they reflect Western notions of individual autonomy. What the variety of chapters in this volume expose is that the kind of denial of death that has lead to tragic forms of silence concerning the informing of patients of their condition and impending death, especially in Japan, appears to be more of the result of the culture of modernism than an inherent predisposition in Asian culture to collectivity and silence.

Caroline Brazier shows in her chapter that a culture of silence around death developed in Britain from the trauma of mass death during the two world wars, the development of modern psychology based on Freud’s admonition to “forget the dead,” and the scientific materialism prevalent in modern medicine that sees death as defeat. In terms of achieving a “good death” and following many of the meaningful Buddhist practices surrounding death as outlined above, the path towards this direction is completely shut off if the fundamental step of acknowledging death is not taken by care givers, families, or patients. However, if a patient is told of their terminal prognosis but then are left to cope by themselves without a supportive family or care giver structure, then such “truth telling” can be devastating. In this way, many of the initiatives in this book show how to build communities of care around patients and their families.

3) Communication Skills in Medical and Religious Professionals

Besides cultural issues, one of the causes of the lack of informed consent and especially truth telling is the fact that modern medical doctors are poorly trained in interpersonal communication skills. In response, both the Upaya Being with Dying Program and the Rigpa Spiritual Care Program have specific teaching components for developing the interpersonal communication skills of medical care professionals. On the other hand, we find a perhaps more shocking revelation throughout the chapters that religious professionals have equally poor communication skills. Transforming this problem was the core motivation of Congregationalist minister Rev. Anton T. Boisen to create the first Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) programs for developing chaplains in the United States in the 1920s. Generally, in the Buddhist world, monastic education often makes monks into preachers more than listeners and compassionate companions—the root meaning of the term *kalyanamitra*.

4) Buddhist Chaplains & the Team Care System

Cultivating Buddhist chaplains is an important theme running through many of the chapters, whether they are certified religions professionals (ordained monks and nuns) or lay volunteers. Many of the authors note the great challenges experienced by chaplains in such training: first, in terms of adapting to the intense demands of medical environments, and second, in terms of learning how to bring their still intellectual knowledge of spirituality down into the heart as a practical and engaged way of relating to people. One significant difference from the chaplaincy model over the volunteer model is that chaplains usually work as paid professionals in medical institutions and have a wider range of skilled responsibilities, such as ethics work as part of a team of professional clinicians in the hospital, work with the community, and nurturing the spiritual health of the medical organization itself. Rev. Julie Hanada has remarked that in her experience chaplains may spend up to 50% of their time working with the care team itself, dealing with a whole host of issues that plague medical professionals in their demanding work institutional transformation.

5) Institutions: Hospitals vs. Hospices vs. Home Care

Reforming existing medical institutions and developing holistic medical care environments where spiritual care is integral are two very important areas of work. While we have seen a number of different initiatives attempt to influence the culture of denying death in medical institutions, specifically the work to scientifically prove the efficacy of spiritual care, the personal power of a sympathetic chief doctor or medical administrator has often been the key for driving change. On the other front, we can see numerous groundbreaking and radical initiatives for Buddhist based care beginning as grassroots initiatives, particularly with marginalized persons. In Thailand, Cambodia, and the United States, Buddhist based care for dying and bereaved persons began in the AIDS communities. Much of the hospice movement, both East and West, Christian and Buddhist, has developed from home hospice care by volunteer groups. It is at this level that perhaps the most radical visions in this volume are presented. For example, the Rigpa Spiritual Care Program has been building religious communities and spiritual care centers side by side where the Buddha’s first noble truth of suffering in the encounter with birth, aging, sickness, and death is part of the very fabric of daily life.

6) Grieving

This is an area where many of the initiatives we have looked at are actually somewhat undeveloped. Supporting grieving that comes after death is not something that hospitals or palliative care wards are mandated to do, so the wall persists between pre- and post-mortem worlds with grieving families moving on to try to find new communities to support them in the post-mortem process. Many of the initiatives in this volume attempt to support these grieving persons. This is where Japanese Buddhism in particular has critical potential for the ongoing Buddhist hospice movement. The Japanese Buddhist practice of regular memorial services for the dead has served for hundreds of years as a highly developed grief care system uniting spiritual values with the regular practice of remembrance, all connected to a community of support. This is one major area of endeavor that many of the Buddhist hospice movements could further develop and which makes potential Japanese Buddhist contributions to this field highly significant. The spirit of holistic care that runs throughout the hospice movement could invite the extension of hospice care into regular grief care work, thus building a bridge to not only a more holistic culture of living with death but also the subsequent birth of institutions and communities that reflect this culture.

To learn more, visit the homepage of the Jodo Shu Research Institute’s (JSRI) Ojo and Death Project: <http://www.jsri.jp/English/Main.html> Or write the author, [Jonathan Watts: watts@jsri.jp](mailto:jonathan.watts@jsri.jp)



articles on the
future of buddhism



Why the Buddha Touched the Earth

John Stanley & David Loy

“ *The entire cosmos is a cooperative. The sun, the moon, and the stars live together as a cooperative. The same is true for humans and animals, trees, and the Earth. When we realize that the world is a mutual, interdependent, cooperative enterprise -- then we can build a noble environment. If our lives are not based on this truth, then we shall perish.* ”

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

“ The term ‘engaged Buddhism’ was created to restore the true meaning of Buddhism. Engaged Buddhism is simply Buddhism applied in our daily lives. If it's not engaged, it can't be called Buddhism. Buddhist practice takes place not only in monasteries, meditation halls and Buddhist institutes, but in whatever situation we find ourselves. Engaged Buddhism means the activities of daily life combined with the practice of mindfulness. ”

Thich Nhat Hanh

In one of Buddhism's iconic images, Gautama Buddha sits in meditation with his left palm upright on his lap, while his right hand touches the earth. Demonic forces have tried to unseat him, because their king, Mara, claims that place under the bodhi tree. As they proclaim their leader's powers, Mara demands that Gautama produce a witness to confirm his spiritual awakening. The Buddha simply touches the earth with his right hand, and the Earth itself immediately responds: "I am your witness." Mara and his minions vanish. The morning star appears in the sky. This moment of supreme enlightenment is the central experience from which the whole of the Buddhist tradition unfolds.

The great 20th-century Vedantin, Ramana Maharshi said that the Earth is in a constant state of *dhyana*. The Buddha's earth-witness *mudra* (hand position) is a beautiful example of "embodied cognition." His posture and gesture embody unshakeable self-realization. He

does not ask heavenly beings for assistance. Instead, without using any words, the Buddha calls on the Earth to bear witness.

The Earth has observed much more than the Buddha's awakening. For the last 3 billion years the Earth has borne witness to the evolution of its innumerable life-forms, from unicellular creatures to the extraordinary diversity and complexity of plant and animal life that flourishes today. We not only observe this multiplicity, we are part of it—even as our species continues to damage it. Many biologists predict that half the Earth's plant and animal species could disappear by the end of this century, on the current growth trajectories of human population, economy and pollution. This sobering fact reminds us that global warming is the primary, but not the only, extraordinary ecological crisis confronting us today.

Has Mara taken a new form today — as our own species? Just as Mara claimed the Buddha's sitting-place as his own, *Homo sapiens* today claims, in effect, that the only really important species is itself. All other species have meaning and value only insofar as they serve our purposes. Indeed, powerful elements of our economic system (notably Big Oil and its enablers) seem to have relocated to the state of “zero empathy,” a characteristic of psychopathic or narcissistic personalities.

The Earth community has a self-emergent, interdependent, cooperative nature. We humans have no substance or reality that is separate from this community. Thich Nhat Hanh refers to this as our “inter-being”: we and other species “inter-are.” If we base our life and conduct on this truth, we transcend the notion that Buddhist practice takes place within a religious framework that promotes only our own individual awakening. We realize the importance of integrating the practice of mindfulness into the activities of daily life. And if we really consider Mother Earth as an integral community and a witness of enlightenment, don’t we have a responsibility to protect her through mindful “sacred activism”?

This year the U.S. president will determine whether or not to approve a proposed pipeline, which will extend from the “great American carbon bomb” of the Alberta Tar Sands to the Texas oil refineries. The implications are enormous. The devastation that would result from processing and burning even half the Tar Sands oil is literally incalculable: the resulting increase in atmospheric carbon would trigger “tipping points” for runaway global warming. Our best climate scientist, NASA’s James Hansen, states that if this project alone goes ahead, it will be “game over” for the Earth’s climate. This is a challenge we cannot evade. It is crucial for Buddhists to join forces with other concerned people in creative and resolute opposition to this potentially fatal new folly.

As the Buddha's enlightenment reminds us, our awakening too is linked to the Earth. The Earth bore witness to the Buddha, and now the Earth needs us to bear witness – to its *dhyana*, its steadfastness, the matrix of support it continually provides for living beings. New types of bodhisattvas – “ecosattvas” – are needed, who combine the practice of self-transformation with devotion to social and ecological transformation. Yes, we need to write letters and emails to the President, hopefully to influence his decision. But we may also need to consider other strategies if such appeals are ignored, such as nonviolent civil disobedience. That's because this decision isn't just about a financial debt ceiling. This is about the Earth's carbon ceiling. This is about humanity's survival ceiling. As the Earth is our witness.

John Stanley & David Loy are part of the Ecobuddhism Project.



articles on the future of buddhism	<div>articles on the future of buddhism</div> <div>9</div> <div><div>A Sustainable Enlightenment</div><div>John Stanley & David Loy</div></div> <div><div>“ It may seem impossible to imagine that a technologically advanced society could choose, in essence, to destroy itself, but that is what we are now in the process of doing. ”</div><div>Elizabeth Kolbert, Field Notes from a Catastrophe</div></div> <div><div>“ Looking again and again at that which cannot be looked at, Unseeable reality is seen just as it is. ”</div><div>Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, Mahamudra Aspiration Prayer</div></div> <div><p>The first of these statements describes the apparent death wish of industrial civilization, while the second describes the deep meditative experience of a thirteenth century Buddhist master. We in the <i>Ecobuddhism Project</i> understand the present as an historical period of existential and spiritual crisis, when such apparent opposites have something crucial to say to each other.</p><p>The rise and fall of western enlightenment</p><p>The “enlightenment” recognized by mainstream Western culture was a cultural shift in the seventeenth century—from religious belief to trust in mechanistic science and secular humanism. Since then we have understood Nature and ourselves to be machine-like. The industrial growth society is a product of that Cartesian worldview. Over the last sixty years, the fetish of limitless economic growth has driven us faster and further than ever before. This is a society that cannot stop to ask sincerely where it is going.</p><p>At the end of the hottest decade on record, we are surrounded by unprecedented droughts, floods, crop losses and technological accidents. The mainstream media, still peddling “classical” economics, ignores either climate science or clean energy as legitimate subjects of interest. It fails to join up the dots for people on the most important issue of our time: the survival of life on Earth. Scientific findings and warnings are relentlessly subverted by fossil fuel corporations, who have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to manufacture doubt about global warming, distort the democratic process and safeguard the very energy infrastructure that caused the crisis. It is beginning to look as if western enlightenment has run its course—that it will fail to prevent the collapse of civilization.</p></div>	<div>articles on the future of buddhism</div> <div>The Future of Buddhism : From Personal Awakening to Global Transformation</div> <div><div>A Great Awakening</div><div>In the 20th century the Western world became aware of another type of enlightenment, the “great awakening” of the Buddha. Starting with one person, its sustainability became evident in methods of training, wisdom and trans-cultural influence that have endured for 2500 years. Many men and women across a variety of cultures have used this path and experienced their own awakening. Might they be able to help us overcome our collective malaise in the face of ecological chaos?</div><div>The Buddha had a deeply-felt understanding of limits. Happiness, he found, isn’t gained by trying to satisfy all our desires. In fact, a minimalist approach to possessions positively enhances long-term contentment. Meditation can sustain the process of personal transformation. The practitioner uncovers a deep interdependence between the self, the other and the context.</div><div>And now?</div><div>The Buddha developed a culture of awakening from self-centered conditioning. But we are living in the midst of social-engineering technologies that persuade us to base our identity on consumption. My consumer-self is dogged by dissatisfaction, so I spend more and more to resolve the conditioned anxiety. And I will resist the truth of ecological crisis, because consumption has compelling psychological meaning for me.</div><div>If Buddhist meditation is to have comprehensive relevance now, it must be able to cut through such social conditioning. And that must take place in a context that is vastly different from the Indian Bronze Age, when the Buddha first set forth his noble path to awakening.</div><div>If I hold beliefs that conflict with each other, I will experience “cognitive dissonance”—a subliminal anxiety resulting from inconsistency. I could try to eliminate this by changing one of the beliefs. I might resort to denial, or find someone else to blame. If my meditation can’t show up these dysfunctional habits of mind for what they are, it could create what Joanna Macy calls “premature equanimity”.</div><div>But the great windstorms, fires, droughts, floods and snowstorms of the last decade will not cease to impose a radically new world on us. This is why the eminent Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hanh says: “Every Buddhist practitioner should be a protector of the environment. We have the power to decide the destiny of our planet. If we awaken to our true situation, there will be a change in our collective consciousness.”</div><div>A sustaining myth</div><div>Resource depletion, ecological disasters, over-population and climate chaos are indicators of spiritual as well as ecological collapse. They demonstrate also how much we need a story that renews our love for the mystery of the Earth—a story that can integrate the world’s wisdom traditions with the sciences of cosmology and evolution. Thomas Berry pointed out that the Universe itself is our new sacred story. Everything in the Universe had a common origin in the mysterious Big Bang some 13.7 billion years ago. We ourselves are participants in its awesome physical and spiritual dimensions, which are an authentic source of joy, celebration and support.</div><div>Undoubtedly there is a profound challenge to self-realization in the midst of ecological crisis. The process may require us to pass through what Macy calls “uncertainty and positive disintegration”—experiences that stretch, ground and strengthen meditation. If, on all levels, we look “again and again at that which cannot be looked at”, we can nourish our capacity to respond fearlessly and appropriately to the big picture. We can take refuge in the Sacred Universe process.</div><div>John Stanley is a Buddhist scientist who edits & maintains the website Ecological Buddhism (www.ecobuddhism.org), where Zen Buddhist teacher & author. David Loy is a board member & advisor. They co-edited the book ‘A Buddhist Response to the Climate Emergency (2009).’</div></div>	<div>p.66</div> <div>p.67</div>
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articles on the future of buddhism



A Different Kind of Pilgrimage

Matteo Pistono



Tertön Sogyal 1856 - 1926

When I first journeyed to Tibet in the late 1990s, I was on a pilgrimage in the footsteps of a nineteenth-century Tibetan mystic named Tertön Sogyal. A horse-riding bandit turned meditation master, Tertön Sogyal eventually became the teacher of the XIII Dalai Lama, the predecessor to the current Dalai Lama. Such was the prevailing belief that Tertön Sogyal’s mantras and prayers could protect Tibet from foreign armies that the Dalai Lama summoned him to Lhasa to serve the nation. Tertön Sogyal essentially became Tibet’s Tantric Defense Minister. Not unlike the Dalai Lama today, Tertön Sogyal was a master at integrating his political duties with spiritual practice, while the never losing the pure motivation that holds others well-being as the priority.

I first learned of Tertön Sogyal in 1996 when I met his reincarnation, Sogyal Rinpoche. I was in graduate school in London studying Indian philosophy. I was drawn to Tertön Sogyal’s life story because I know politics matter. My parents had instilled in me an awareness that social action is not so much a choice as a responsibility—to ourselves and to our community. There was something in Tertön Sogyal—the way that he pursued the path of spiritual enlightenment even while in the unsavory theater of politics—that I wanted to understand more deeply.

The two years before coming to London I had lived in extreme contrasts—on the one hand meditating in Nepal and on the other involving myself in partisan environmental politics in the Rocky Mountain states of America. In Nepal, I had spent months meditating under the guidance of a Tibetan lama in the foothills outside Kathmandu. I was introduced to methods of meditation and yoga that are meant to uncover the indwelling potential of spiritual awakening that each and every one of us possesses. After six months of meditation retreats, I returned to Wyoming and began working in environmental politics, battling oil and gas lobbyists in legislative hearings in Cheyenne. I continued to practice meditation in Wyoming, but it did not take long before the meditative serenity that I had experienced in Nepal was but a memory. In the face of my political adversaries, a vindictive mind would arise with ferocity. The divide between my social activism and spiritual practice was vast because I didn’t know how to take the insights and peace I experienced on the meditation cushion into the world.

When I arrived in London for graduate school and began studying meditation with Sogyal Rinpoche, as well as the history and the works of the mystic Tertön Sogyal, I realized that here was an example of what I aspired toward. Tertön Sogyal possessed an endless reservoir of wisdom and strength to draw from while working in the volatile political realm of late nineteenth-century Tibet. This reservoir was something that I needed to tap into. So after I graduated, I decided to see where Tertön Sogyal’s saintly life had played out—and deepen my own meditation practice—in hallowed caves and hermitages high on the roof of the world and among Tibet’s sacred temples and shrines. I set up a base in Kathmandu as a freelance journalist to fund my travels and began making frequent trips to Tibet.

The road map for my pilgrimage was Tertön Sogyal’s own far-ranging travels across the plateau; his life was not bound to isolated mountain retreats. Soon I was meditating among hermits in remote sanctuaries and cliffside grottoes. I slept in the caves where Tertön Sogyal had experienced spiritual visions and revelations. On foot, horseback, and dilapidated buses, I crossed the same glacier-covered passes that he used to travel from eastern Tibet to Lhasa. And I sought out the masters and yogis still alive who uphold Tertön Sogyal’s spiritual lineage and could tell me the oral history of his life and teachings.

But the pilgrimage took an unexpected turn.

The more time I spent in Tibet delving into the nineteenth-century spiritual teachings of Tertsn Sogyal, the more often I met Tibetans who wanted to tell me their story of frustration and pain, and about their never-ending hope that one day the exiled Dalai Lama would return to Tibet. Traveling as a Buddhist pilgrim, I gained Tibetans’ trust. Political prisoners who had experienced abuse and torture in Chinese prisons showed me scars. Monks and nuns who had been kicked out of their monastery gave me their expulsion notices from the local security bureau. I was taken to meet a Buddhist leader who had been scalded with boiling water and then jailed for five years for publicly praying to the Dalai Lama.



Tibetans not only told me their stories, but early into my pilgrimage they asked me to spirit such firsthand accounts of human rights abuses out of Tibet and into the hands of Western governments and advocacy groups. While I still wanted to search out Tertön Sogyal’s meditation techniques, I became a courier of often graphic accounts of torture and abuse. This required evading China’s vast security network of plain clothed security agents, undercover cops in monk’s robes, and the sophisticated cyber police. And, during my more than fifteen trips to Tibet over the course of a decade, I photographed Chinese secret prisons where Tibetan monks and nuns are incarcerated for their Buddhist beliefs.

The journey in Tertön Sogyal’s footsteps became a different kind of pilgrimage.

While I do not claim to have benefited anyone from my human rights work, I can say that I have tried to apply what my teachers have taught me about acting for the benefit of others. I have given voice to what I have witnessed. I know in politics, ultimately, there are no winners, for every politician will die and every government will eventually fall—the wise, durable question is not if a political system will survive, but when will it fail? Because everything is impermanent, including politicians and their governments, we have a responsibility to affect change that will bring about the conditions RIGHT NOW for others to find contentment and happiness.

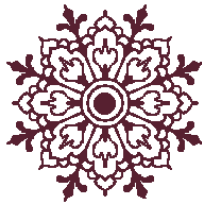
articles on the future of buddhism

This is why I, and many others like me who have been so profoundly affected by Tibet’s unique wisdom culture, cannot let the world forget about Tibet. Chinese leaders want the governments and the people around the world to forget about Tibet, to turn their backs on monks, nuns, musicians and bloggers who languish in prison for their religious beliefs and their peaceful expression of political views. It is the responsibility of those of us who have the freedom to travel, to write and express our opinions, to talk to our own and others’ governments, to not only bear witness but to act to change injustice. This is why I documented China’s human rights abuses in Tibet and why I wrote *In the Shadow of the Buddha*. I do not expect everyone to take up the Tibet issue. That is not my intention for why I write. But wherever we find ourselves in the world, I hope my writings encourage readers never to lose hope and faith and a sense of responsibility to those who are suffering in their family, in their community, or in other countries.

I believe progressing on our spiritual path means doing what each of us needs to do to for ourselves to bring about true and lasting contentment, beyond suffering. And accomplishing the path of social engagement means creating the conditions for others to find that same lasting satisfaction. These commitments I’ve learned from my venerable teachers and one that I continue to take with me. Following in the footsteps of past saints, I have learned that we return to the place before the journey begins—to that space of infinite possibility where the saints of the past have made the commitment:

*For as long as space exists
And sentient beings endure,
May I, too, remain,
To dispel the misery of the world.*

Bio: Matteo Pistono is the author of *In the Shadow of the Buddha: One Man’s Pursuit of Freedom and Peace in Tibet*, and sits on the Executive Committee of International Network of Engaged Buddhists. Matteo lived and traveled throughout the Himalayas for a decade, bringing to the West first-hand accounts and photos of China’s human rights abuses in Tibet. He is the founder of Nekorpa (www.nekorpa.org), a foundation working to protect sacred pilgrimage sites around the world. Pistono and his wife, Monica, divide their time between Wyoming, Washington DC, and Asia. www.matteopistono.com



overview of INEB



overview of INEB	<div>overview of INEB</div>			overview of INEB	
	Establishment	<p>In 1989, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) was established in Siam (Thailand) by Sulak Sivaraksa and a group of other Buddhist and non-Buddhist thinkers and social activists. INEB operates as an autonomous organization under the Bangkok-based Sathirakoses-Nagapradeepa Foundation. Over the years the network has expanded to include members, both individuals and organizations, from more than 20 countries across Asia, Europe, North America and Australia. From this diversity, an understanding of socially engaged Buddhism has emerged which integrates the practice of Buddhism with social action for a healthy, just, and peaceful world.</p>	Nature of the Organization		
	Vision and Objectives		<p>INEB is comprised of distinguished activists, spiritual leaders, and academics representing the major schools of Buddhism, as well as non-Buddhists with shared concerns. INEB’s member activities address a variety of issues to serve their own communities. The members also support one another through collaborating on common projects and joint strategic planning for advancing INEB’s vision and activities. The Secretariat’s office initiates a flow of information and support by offering programs to fortify members’ capacity through joint activities and shared resources. INEB welcomes new partners that will complement and expand the existing network.</p>		
		<p>INEB’s comprehensive vision is to develop the perspective and practice of socially engaged Buddhism that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Promotes understanding, coopertion, and networking among inter-Buddhist and inter-religious social action groups2. Acts as an information resource related to areas of social concern3. Facilitates conferences, education,and training that supports and strengthens socially active individuals and groups based in Buddhist values and practices	Socially Engaged Buddhism		<p>INEB members and partners are exploring the ways in which Buddhism and social analysis can enrich one another toward solving social problems together. This exploration seeks to develop new social paradigms based on Buddhist concepts and values such as the interdependency and interconnectedness of all beings to create more self-reliant and harmonious communities. This process has been taking place through linking regional and international groups with grassroots realities from which the social issues of concern and engagement have emerged.</p>

The International Network of Engaged Buddhists

INEB Patrons, Advisory Board and Executive Committee

Patrons

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. His Holiness the Dalai Lama | <i>Tibet/India</i> |
| 2. Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh | <i>France/Vietnam</i> |
| 3. Venerable Phra Rajpanyamedhi | <i>Siam/Thailand</i> |
| 4. Venerable Bhikshuni Chao Hwei | <i>Taiwan</i> |

Advisory Board



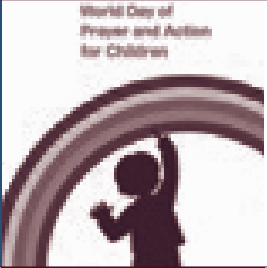


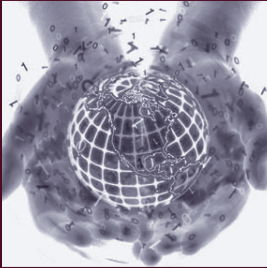
1. Sulak Sivaraksa, Chairperson (*Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute, Thailand*)
2. Rev. Alan Senauke (*Clear View Project, USA*)
3. Frans Goetghebeur (*European Buddhist Union, Belgium*)
4. Hisashi Nakamura (*Ryukoku University, Japan*)
5. Jill Jameson (*Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Australia*)
6. Dharmachari Lokamitra (*Jambudvipa Trust, India*)
7. Rev. Masazumi Okano (*International Buddhist Exchange Center, Japan*)
8. Raja Dharmapala (*Dharmavedi Institute, Sri Lanka*)
9. Swee-hin Toh (*University for Peace, Costa Rica*)
10. Venetia Walkey (*Dhamma Park Foundation, Thailand*)
11. Ven. Bhikkhuni Dhammananda (*Songdhammakalyani Monastery, Thailand*)
12. Ven. Phra Maha Boonchuay (*Mahachulalongkorn University, Thailand*)
13. Ven. Phra Paisal Visalo (*Buddhika, Thailand*)
14. Ven. Pomnyun Sunim (*Jungto Society, South Korea*)
15. Ven. Sanghasena (*Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre Ladakh, India*)
16. Ven. Sumanalankar Maha Thero (*Parbatya Bouddha Mission, Bangladesh*)
17. Ven. Tsering Palmo (*Ladakh Nuns Association, India*)

Executive Committee

1. Harsha Navaratne, Chairperson (*Sewalanka Foundation, Sri Lanka*)
2. Hans van Willenswaard, Vice Chairperson (*School for Wellbeing, Thailand/ The Netherlands*)
3. Amanda Kiessel (*Sewalanka Foundation, Sri Lanka*)
4. Anchalee Kurutach (*Buddhist Peace Fellowship, USA/Thailand*)
5. Bobo Lwin (*Young Buddhists Empowerment Program, Burma*)
6. Douangdeuane Bounyavong (*Buddhism for Development, Laos PDR*)
7. Eddy Setiawan (*HIKMAHBUDHI, Indonesia*)
8. Jennifer Yo (*Deer Park Institute, India*)
9. Jonathan Watts (*Think Sangha, Japan/USA*)
10. Mangesh Dahiwale (*Jambudvipa Trust, India*)
11. Matteo Pistono (*Nekorpa and RIGPA Fellowship, USA*)
12. Minyong Lee (*Buddhist Solidarity for Reform, Korea*)
13. Pipob Udomittipong (*Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, Thailand*)
14. Poolchawee Ruangwichatorn (*Spirit in Education Movement, Thailand*)
15. Prashant Varma (*Deer Park Institute, India*)
16. Ros Sotha (*Buddhists and Khmer Society Network, Cambodia*)
17. Sai Leng Wan (*Alternative Education for Social Engagement, Burma*)
18. Suresh Bouddha (*Youth Buddhist Society of India, India*)
19. Tashi Zangmo (*Bhutan Nuns’ Foundation, Bhutan*)
20. Vidyanda (*Buddhist Missionary Society, Malaysia*)
21. Wallapa van Willenswaard (*Garden of Fruition, Thailand*)
22. Yo Hsiang-chou (*Lay Buddhist Association, Taiwan*)
23. Ven. Geshe Dorje Damdul (*Tibet House New Delhi, India*)

Executive Secretary

Somboon Chungprampee

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	INEB's Future Activities 2012 -2013			
	2011	 <p>October 2011</p>	<p>Right Livelihood Fund Launch – A “revolving dana” social investment fund is being launched at the 2011 INEB conference. The Right Livelihood Fund brings people together to build more mindful and compassionate economic systems. For more information: vidyananda@samma-ajiva.net</p>	<p>time to be announced</p> <p>Young Bodhisattvas – Promoting leadership for spiritual resurgence, as well as social innovation among young people from Buddhist communities throughout Asia is another primary focus which will help revive Buddhism. This is one of INEB's ongoing programmes from year to year. For more information, please contact youth@inebnetwork.org</p>
	19 November 2011	 <p>19 November 2011</p>	<p>New York City Gala – an exhibition of Buddhist art that was created during the International Buddhist Art Gathering in Bodhgaya, India, (October 19 - 25, 2011) will be shown at Tibet House in New York City. In addition to the art exhibition there will be speakers, performances and a silent auction.</p>	<p>December 2012</p> <p>INEB Executive Committee Meeting – place to be announced</p>
	20 November 2011	 <p>20 November 2011</p>	<p>INEB joint with World Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC) celebrated each year on or around November 20, to coincide with Universal Children's Day. The DPAC's theme for the period 2011-2013 is to Stop Violence against Children.</p>	2013
	2012	<p>1-2 January 2012</p>	<p>Buddhism in India – Kalayanamitra Council will convene a round table discussion in Bangkok, to share, discuss, explore, strategize the vision, and plan activities to strengthen the Buddhist movement in India.</p> 	<p>February 2013</p>  <p>The 2nd International Buddhist Arts Gathering -Thailand – A new focus on Buddhist Art is being initiated through the 2011 International Buddhist Art Gathering. The focus is to rediscover historic, artistic roots and relationships and to stimulate an intellectual exchange among Buddhist artists from different countries.</p>
	In the planning proces for early 2012	<p>Gender & Women's' Empowerment – INEB plans to hold an international gathering in 2012 to facilitate stronger network connections of women throughout South and Southeast Asia</p>		<p>November 2013</p> <p>2013 INEB's Biannual Conference in Malaysia will examine provocative and challenging issues within our groups and countries. The conference will provide more opportunities for country exposure and dialogue between various groups to address these challenges.</p>
	September 2012	 <p>September 2012</p>	<p>International Conference on Religions and Climate Change, Sri Lanka. The International Conference will explore the issues and approaches for reversing the destructive cycle of greed and excessive consumerism that can create space for a new way of co-existing in peace and harmony with the Earth to emerge.</p>	
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Right Livelihood Fund Executive Summary

We Are All Connected

We live in an interconnected and interdependent world. The decisions we make affect our fellow human beings and our natural ecosystems, not only in the present, but also for generations to come. This means that each of us has the potential and the ability to make decisions that make the world a better place.

We make choices about how we acquire the resources we need to sustain ourselves, we make choices between different products and services, we make choices about how we work with others, and we make choices about how we use surplus earnings. A Right Livelihood means considering the impact of these choices on oneself, on other people and on the planet. It means living mindfully and ethically. **The Right Livelihood Fund brings people together to build more mindful and compassionate economic systems.**

By connecting individuals and organizations that are trying to work according to Right Livelihood principles, the Right Livelihood Fund:

- * Provides **ethical entrepreneurs** with the resources and services they need to address explicit social and environmental issues through self-financing business models, and
- * Gives **ethical investors** the opportunity to use their resources to generate ever- expanding social and environmental returns

Depending on future requirements, programs may be expanded to include Right Livelihood certification, product lines and consulting services to help established businesses mainstream Right Livelihood principles.

Operational Framework: How It Works

The Right Livelihood Fund draws on a network of Global Partners. The Global Partners help identify ethical investors and ethical entrepreneurs in the country where they are based.

Ethical entrepreneurs are welcome to submit a business plan for seed capital or expansion capital. The enterprise must adhere to Right Livelihood principles. Global Partners coordinate the site visit and due diligence process. A thorough enterprise and opportunity analysis is conducted that includes both economic and ethical factors. A Right Livelihood investment should consider short term and the long term implications for people and the planet.

The Global Partner works with the entrepreneur to define the terms, conditions, and exit strategy for the proposed investment. The business plan and technical assessment are submitted to the Investment Committee, which either recommends or rejects the proposal.

Right Livelihood Principles

- * Do no harm
- * Maintain honesty, integrity, fairness, transparency and accountability in all interactions
- * Do not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, class, caste or any other social distinction
- * Provide a living wage and time for leisure, family, community, and spiritual development
- * Maintain a healthy and participatory working environment
- * Work efficiently and minimize resource use
- * Reduce and mitigate environmental impact
- * Provide a useful service to society and contribute to wellbeing
- * Assume responsibility for the consequences of your actions
- * Continuously improve and adapt to changing circumstances

The Right Livelihood Fund provides capital and advisory services to approved ethical enterprises. The advisory services depend on the needs of the business and can range from general financial management training to consulting on specific issues like governance structures, legal agreements, graphic design, and marketing. The costs of these advisory services are incorporated into the business plan and investment agreement. The Right Livelihood Fund Global Partner coordinates service provision by drawing on a pool of technical specialists in the relevant geographical area.

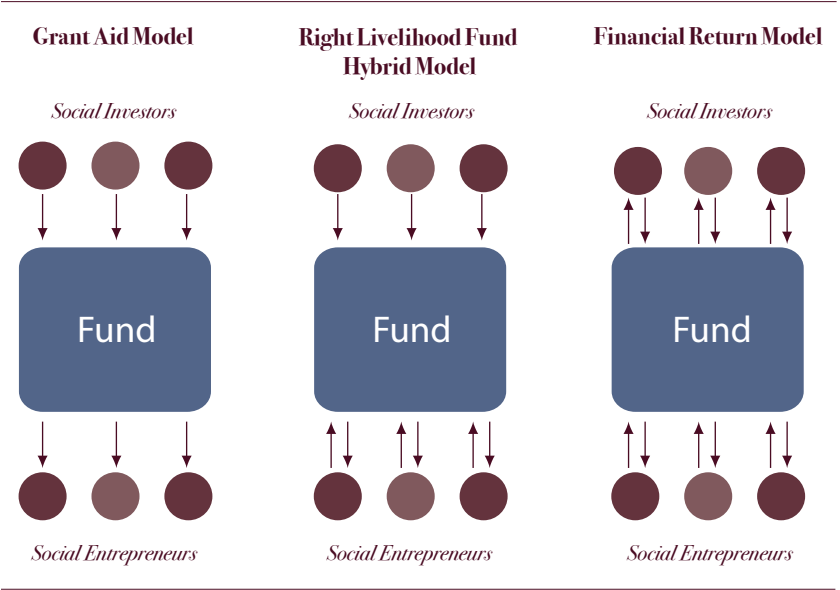
The Right Livelihood Fund uses the financial return on investment to invest in additional ethical enterprises. In this revolving fund model, entrepreneurs know that the money they repay goes towards supporting other Right Livelihood businesses. Individuals, religious communities, foundations, development agencies, and companies that contribute to the Right Livelihood Fund may be eligible for tax benefits, but they will not receive dividends. Instead of receiving a financial return, these ethical investors will be able to track the multiplying social and environmental returns on their initial investment. They will have the opportunity to share their wealth in a way that maximizes impact and explicitly addresses social and environmental issues.

Differentiation Strategy: How the Right Livelihood Fund Is Unique

There are other funds that support social entrepreneurs on the basis of ethical criteria. The Right Livelihood Fund is different in three main ways.

1) Hybrid model allows for greater flexibility, support services, and sustainability

Under a grant aid model, social enterprises are not expected to return resources to the fund. While this approach may be necessary for some types of social services, it is not financially sustainable. The services of the fund and the social entrepreneurs are dependent on the availability of additional grant aid in the future.



The financial return model has a strong emphasis on economic viability and sustainable service provision, but the types of enterprises it can invest in are more restricted. In order to provide a financial return to investors, assessment and service provision costs have to be kept as low as possible. Microfinance institutions do this by supporting well-established individual livelihood strategies that do not necessarily have a social mandate. Socially responsible mutual funds do this by investing in an approved list of well-established publicly traded companies. Social venture funds or ‘impact investment’ funds reduce transaction costs by investing only in large businesses in a particular sector or region. Only large-scale accredited investors have the opportunity to invest in this type of fund.

The Right Livelihood Fund offers a special hybrid model that incorporates the sustainability benefits of investing in self-financing ethical enterprises and the flexibility benefits of not

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promising financial dividends to ethical investors. There are no restrictions on who is permitted to invest. The Right Livelihood Fund is open to small scale and large scale investments from individuals, religious organizations, foundations, and company.

It is also free to invest in a broader range of enterprises as long as they adhere to the Right Livelihood principles and financial viability criteria. Instead of paying dividends to shareholders, the Right Livelihood Fund can provide additional capacity building services to ensure the success and sustainability of each social enterprise. The hybrid model enables the Right Livelihood Fund to function as a business incubator for new business models or enterprises in underserved areas.

2) *'Right Livelihood' principles apply to all participants*

Many institutions have developed metrics to assess the ethical impact of an enterprise. These range from company specific ‘triple bottom line’ or ‘people, planet, profit’ reporting systems to new comparative metrics like the Global Impact Investing Rating System. The Right Livelihood Fund draws on these established standards to select enterprises and measure success.

What makes the Right Livelihood Fund different is that ‘Right Livelihood’ refers to the ethics of how resources are acquired and also the ethics of how those resources are used. This links together the investors, the entrepreneurs, the Global Partners and the fund management team in a special way. It removes the judgment and social dynamics that can arise between those who have wealth and those who need it. Everyone participating in the Right Livelihood Fund is trying to live according to Right Livelihood principles. These personal efforts are linked together to create a more mindful and compassionate society.

3) Network of Global Partners expands outreach

Most ethical investment funds target investors in North America and Europe, and most support businesses in these developed markets. The Right Livelihood Fund works with a network of individuals and organizations in 23 countries across 6 continents. This network of Global Partners is particularly strong in South, Southeast, and East Asia and is well positioned to reach out to Asian investors and entrepreneurs and promote Right Livelihood principles. More than 60 percent of the world population lives in Asia. How resources are acquired and used in this region will have a major impact on future wellbeing.

Governance and Legal Framework: How It's Structured

The Right Livelihood Fund is an international initiative. The core team of founding members is from India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Europe, and the United States. Together they bring experience in NGO and social enterprise management, corporate finance, private equity, information technology, community development, and environmental conservation.

In order to expand outreach, the Right Livelihood Fund works with **Global Partners** that can apply the international standards and principles of the Fund to their own specific local context. Global Partners function as members and assume responsibility for field operations in a particular region. They identify and build relationships with ethical entrepreneurs and investors, coordinate assessments and support services, and assist with reporting, communications, and in-country logistics. The costs of these services are covered by the Fund. Each qualified Global Partner can choose a representative to sit on the international Governance Committee.

The **Governance Committee** ensures that the Right Livelihood Fund and all of the Global Partners adhere to Right Livelihood principles and the articles of incorporation.

The **Investment Committee** is an independent and neutral body of qualified specialists that reviews and assesses all business plans that have made it through the screening process.

The Right Livelihood Fund has a streamlined **Management Team** that is responsible for Global Partner coordination, international operations and logistics, legal and financial compliance, financial management and reporting, and international communications and marketing materials. The Management Team also helps Global Partners to identify technical specialists to provide advisory services as needed.

The Right Livelihood Fund is being established in the United States under a 501c3 registration, but it will be legally registered in additional countries as needed to facilitate financial transfers and provide tax benefits to ethical investors. The US 501c3 registration is tax exempt and enables the Fund to reach out to not-for-profit organizations and foundations. Instead of disbursing dividends to investors, profits will be reinvested in additional Right Livelihood enterprises.

Origination Pipeline: Right Livelihood Enterprises Seeking Support

Publishing House for Myanmar Writers

Myanmar's strong literary culture has been disrupted by the social and political changes over the past 40 years. Current publication rates for translated and new literary works are very low. A group of Burmese publishers and writers is seeking seed capital to establish a new publishing house in Myanmar with the support of two established publishing social enterprises in Thailand.

Sri Lankan Forest Garden Products

A Sri Lankan social enterprise producing high-quality coffee from small-scale forest gardens is seeking expansion capital to develop new product lines of organic coffee and forest garden chocolate and spices. This will enable them to expand their network of small-scale farmers and provide additional incentives for environmentally sustainable production techniques.

Solar Lighting Systems in Bihar, India

Approximately 64,000,000 unelectrified Indian homes depend on dangerous, polluting kerosene oil lamps for household lighting. An Indian social enterprise has developed a self-financing model to install and service solar home lighting systems and is seeking capital to expand to the Bihar region.

