

Eat in Moderation for a Healthy Body and Mind

by Nichiko Niwano

At present in Japan, food equivalent to sixty meals (about fifteen kilograms) per person is discarded annually. So many of us are now obese or overweight, or suffering from illnesses caused by our lifestyle habits, that it seems we are paying a heavy price for our wasteful overconsumption when ample supplies of food are available.

I am reminded of the old story about a king of a certain country. Having eaten until his stomach felt completely full, he experienced some discomfort and heaved a great sigh. Seeing this, a wise man gave him these words of advice:

“People who always keep their hearts and minds calm and know the right amount to eat experience few pains, age gracefully, and live long lives.”

The king, who was concerned about physical decline and poor health, deeply reflected on the words of the wise man, and by repeating them to himself at meal-times gradually reduced the amount he ate and soon enjoyed robust health.

In fact, this was a legendary exchange between Shakyamuni and the king of Kosala some twenty-five hundred years ago, but it teaches us something important that is equally true for people today. Above all, it is the tragedy of human beings at the mercy of their desires. Our hearts and minds leap when we see an “All you can eat” sign in front of a restaurant, so we are just like the king. In fact, we should learn the amount to eat that is appropriate to our age and condition, and at each and every meal should be careful not to overeat. In this story, Shakyamuni is teaching us the fundamental way to live. Recent medical research indicates

clearly that following a light diet has definite health benefits. Some experts say the perfect amount to eat in one’s fifties is just enough so that the stomach feels about 60 percent full, and in one’s sixties to feel about 50 percent full.

While regularly eating less and keeping to a simple diet are considered to be healthy, doing so too strictly could lead to malnutrition, so people in their mid-seventies and older should exercise caution.

Give Thanks Before Meals

I have quoted above the phrase of Shakyamuni as a wise man, “always keep . . . hearts and minds calm.” This involves seeing things correctly based on wisdom and accepting them from a broad perspective.

What, then, do we see with such eyes when we look at the food placed before us?

We see first of all the reality of receiving the lives of animals and plants. And then we see the hard work of the people who have cultivated nature’s bounty, processed it, and delivered it to us, as well as the thoughtfulness of the people who have prepared it as food. Some people might now feel, in seeing a bowl of miso soup, the thoughtfulness of a mother who carefully made soup stock for the miso soup every day, despite her impoverished circumstances, in order to provide her children with nourishment for their growing bodies.

Some people might think, when seeing a bowl of rice placed before them,

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of their gratitude for the good health implied by a naturally strong appetite. And there may be other people whose thoughts turn to those who cannot obtain even one meal a day, and feel anew the happiness of their current circumstances. They may then think of what they can do to help those in need.

When we do not gobble down our food by force of habit, but instead face a meal with a calm heart and mind, we can awaken to a sense of gratitude.

Then, as we become aware of the ill effects from eating more than we need of the things we like, we naturally will start to eat in moderation, helping us maintain a healthy condition. Of course, it goes beyond saying that gratitude fosters a heart and mind that respect the sanctity of life and are the starting point for developing a healthy heart and mind.

In Rissho Kosei-kai, before beginning to eat we recite the “Grace Before Meals,” which gives us as human beings, who are easy prey for our desires, the opportunity to call to mind what is important.

Let’s recite aloud, “For what we are about to eat and drink, we are grateful to the Buddha, to nature, and to many people,” put our hearts and minds in good order, and enjoy our meals. Because eating is something we naturally do every day, developing healthy habits is of great importance. □

DHARMA WORLD

FOR LIVING BUDDHISM AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

APR.—JUNE 2016 VOL. 43

FEATURES: Buddhism and Food

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

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Layout and Design: Abinitio Design

Cover:

Photo: Shutterstock.com

Photoshop work by Abinitio Design

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The Karma of Food

by David R. Loy

If we don't need to worry about disrupting genetic "essences" such as the original and natural DNA of a plant or animal species, doesn't that liberate us to do whatever we want technologically?

What does Buddhism have to say about genetically modified food? As far as we know, the Buddha didn't know anything about DNA, much less the possibilities of modifying it technologically. So it is not surprising that I've been unable to find references to genetically modified organisms (GMO) in any Buddhist text—though I admit that my search has not been very thorough.

An alternative approach is to consider whether traditional Buddhist teachings might give us some insight into our new situation.

Because of the way it spread, and the diversity of Buddhist cultures that resulted, Buddhism has tended to adapt to local dietary customs rather than export and impose food restrictions. Given the difficult climate of Tibet, for example, it is not surprising that Tibetan Buddhists have usually eaten a lot of meat. Another factor is that, in general, Buddhism has been less concerned about what we eat than how we eat it, since our *dukkha*, "suffering," is rooted in our craving—and food is the second-most-popular example of human craving. How mindful are we when we are eating? Am I so eager for the next spoonful that I don't appreciate the one already in my mouth?

Nevertheless, some important distinctions within Buddhism and among

Buddhists have had important implications for food practices—especially the difference between monastics and laypeople, and the difference between Theravada (traditionally South Asian) and Mahayana (traditionally Central and East Asian) Buddhism. Monastics are expected to live a simple life largely unconcerned about mundane matters such as food. In many Buddhist cultures they eat only before noon. According to the Patimokkha, which regulates daily life for Theravada monks, "There are many fine foods such as ghee, butter, oil, honey, molasses, fish, meat, milk, and curds. If any monastic who is not sick should ask for them and consume them, it is an offense entailing expiation." Notice the careful wording. Evidently the problem is not with these foods themselves, but that seeking and indulging in them is a distraction from what monastics should be concentrating on. There is no suggestion that lay followers should also avoid them, and the qualification "any monastic who is not sick" is a good example of Buddhist pragmatism. There are times when such "fine foods" may be important for one's health.

Historically, the main food issue for Buddhists is whether one should be vegetarian. This has been somewhat complicated by the fact that, according to the

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earliest accounts we have, Shakyamuni Buddha died of a stomach ailment apparently caused or aggravated by eating pork. Buddhist vegetarians have sometimes considered this fact scandalous and denied it, but it is consistent with what we know about the early Buddhist community.

According to the Vinaya rules established and followed by the Buddha himself, Theravada monastics are mendicant. Being dependent on what is donated to them, they are not required to be vegetarian—with an important restriction often followed by devout laypeople as well: "If a monastic sees, hears or suspects that [meat or fish] has been killed for his sake, he may not eat it."

It seems a compassionate policy, given Buddhist emphasis on not harming living beings. Nevertheless, the issue of animal suffering is cited in Buddhist texts less often than the consequences for one's own karma. Even when those texts mention the importance of compassion, the main concern is often the negative effects of meat eating on one's own capacity to cultivate compassion.

climate of India) to become more vegetarian. This development is consistent with a general Mahayana emphasis on vegetarianism, a concern especially strong in China and textually supported by well-known Mahayana scriptures such as the Lankavatara Sutra, the Surangama Sutra, and the Brahma's Net Sutra. In the sixth century Chinese Buddhism (unlike Theravadan Buddhism) began to emphasize vegetarianism. Chinese and Korean monastics today usually abstain from all meat and fish (often milk products and fertilized eggs as well). Curiously, it seems to have been the laity that played a leading role in this transformation: laypeople came to expect monastics to uphold higher standards of purity and renunciation. By the tenth century, vegetarianism had become a minimum standard to be followed by all monks and nuns in China. As in South Asia, monastics are dependent upon lay support, so the concerns of an increasing number of vegetarian laymen and laywomen could not be ignored.

The other important dietary prohibition in Mahayana is to avoid the five "pungent odors," usually translated as garlic, onions, scallions, shallots, and leeks (sometimes chilies and other spices are added to this list). In addition to the often-objectionable smells associated with them—perhaps the main concern in a crowded monastic situation?—the Surangama Sutra claims that they are stimulants to anger if eaten raw and stimulate sexual desire when cooked.

Two points should be kept in mind regarding these dietary restrictions. First, although devout monastics in principle may have no choice, laypeople choosing to follow them make a personal decision, in the sense that such practices are not required in order to be a Buddhist or follow the Buddhist path. Not observing them may create bad karma and make one's spiritual path more difficult to follow, but that is one's own decision. Second, as mentioned earlier, often the

key to Buddhist self-cultivation is less the outer practice of what one does than the inner path of how one does it. This is especially emphasized in Mahayana, which has a somewhat more relaxed attitude toward observances and regulations generally.

Genetically Modified Food

What does all of this imply, if anything, about genetically modified food?

There is a problem with any absolute claim that genetically modified food does not accord with Buddhist teachings, for there is little if any support for the position that "unnatural is bad" in any early Buddhist text. That's because Buddhism does not romanticize nature or "being natural." Our modern (originally Western) ambivalence between infatuation with technological progress and nostalgia for a return to nature is not characteristic of traditional Buddhism.

There are, however, other Buddhist perspectives that are more helpful, such as the three "basic facts": *dukkha* (suffering or dis-ease), impermanence, and not-self.

Impermanence means that everything arises and passes away according to conditions, including us. Socially, this implies an openness to change, including progress—if it really is progress, that is, a genuine improvement. New technologies are not in themselves a problem, for the important issue is their effects on our *dukkha*. Buddhism is not nostalgic for some prehistoric time when life was "natural," because there never was such a golden age in the past.

Not-self involves realizing that nothing self-exists—not only because there is no permanence but also because everything is interdependent on everything else. This "interpermeation" is well expressed by Thich Nhat Hanh in a famous passage from his book *The Heart of Understanding* that every Buddhist should know:

I once heard a Buddhist teacher say that it is okay to eat meat, provided that it has passed through three pairs of hands before it gets to you—as if, somehow, the karma has "worn off" by then. This seems a rather self-centered attitude, taking advantage of the unfortunate situation of others who willingly or unwillingly have the unsavory job of butchering and processing meat for the rest of us to consume. Today the mechanics of the meat industry assure us that many hands have had a role in preparing our meat, but I think that does not necessarily resolve the important issue, from a Buddhist perspective. One might conclude that none of those plastic-wrapped chickens in the supermarket has been slaughtered for me, yet—given the way the food industry functions—one can just as well argue that any I might purchase has been slaughtered for me, because all of them have been raised and killed for any and all of us consumers.

Today there is a movement among expatriate Tibetan Buddhists (most of whom now live in the more tropical

If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without tree, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. . . .

If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. If the sunshine is not there, the forest cannot grow. In fact, nothing can grow. Even we cannot grow without sunshine. And so, we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are. And if we continue to look, we can see the logger who cut the tree and brought it to the mill to be transformed into paper. And we see the wheat. We know that the logger cannot exist without his daily bread, and therefore the wheat that became his bread is also in this sheet of paper. And the logger's father and mother are in it too. . . .

You cannot point out one thing that is not here—time, space, the earth, the rain, the minerals in the soil, the sunshine, the cloud, the river, the heat. Everything co-exists with this sheet of paper. . . . As thin as this sheet of paper is, it contains everything in the universe in it. ([Parallax Press, 1988], 17–19)

Notice that this does not distinguish between natural phenomena (sun, rain, trees) and more technological ones (such as the chainsaw that the logger uses or the paper mill that processes the wood pulp). In short, nothing has any reality of its own, because nothing is on its own. Everything is part of everything else.

What does that imply about the food we eat? If we don't need to worry about disrupting genetic "essences" such as the original and natural DNA of a plant or animal species, doesn't that liberate

us to do whatever we want technologically? It's not that simple, because the most important criterion for Buddhism remains the consequences of any GMO for *dukkha*, "suffering": does that particular genetic alteration tend to reduce *dukkha* or increase it?

In general, the genetic modifications that I am aware of seem designed more for the convenience of the food industry than for the benefit of consumers. The focus has been on growing and processing food more efficiently and profitably, rather than on taste or nutrition. Prominent examples are sterile "terminator seeds" and Roundup Ready crops engineered to be resistant to Monsanto's own brand of herbicide. In a controversial 1998 British experiment, Árpád Pusztai reported that genetically modified potatoes caused immune system damage to rats; his results have been criticized but have also been defended by other scientists. In 2000 StarLink corn, with a built-in insecticide and a protein indigestible to humans, was accidentally released into the human food chain, leading to thirty-seven reports of serious allergic reactions.

These and many other incidents are discussed in Kathleen Hart's book *Eating in the Dark: America's Experiment with Genetically Engineered Food* (Vintage, 2003). Such issues suggest what Buddhist emphasis on interdependence implies: that altering the genome of food plants (and no doubt that of food animals as well) is an extraordinarily challenging process with many consequences that are very difficult to anticipate and evaluate exhaustively. Producing safe and nutritious food seems to be more complicated than providing most other consumer products.

Perhaps this helps to explain why the European Union does not allow most

GMO foodstuffs to be sold in Europe. The technological modification of plant and animal species, without a much better understanding of how all the genomes of living creatures affect each other, is an especially important example of how our technical ambitions can outrun our wisdom.

In short, the genetic engineering of food, as presently practiced, may be incompatible with basic Buddhist teachings, insofar as it is more likely to increase *dukkha* than reduce it.

This does not necessarily mean that genetic modification of food is always a bad thing. From a Buddhist point of view, most technologies are neither good nor bad in themselves. Nor are they neutral. That is because technologies cannot be separated from the larger social, economic, and ecological contexts within which they are devised and applied. Since Buddhism does not privilege "being natural," including the natural selection that drives the evolutionary process, there is the possibility that in the future some GMO might actually serve to reduce *dukkha*. For that to happen, however, it's essential that the evaluation process not be distorted by other, more problematic concerns. When it comes to our food supply, it is important that the profit motive be subordinated to human health and well-being. □

Overcoming Ignorance about Food by Eating Spiritually

by Yi Chan Su

Eating is a yardstick that measures the depth of one's sensibility about human nature, religion, and life. Similarly, the processes of getting food and gaining spiritual enlightenment are like the two sides of a coin; spiritual enlightenment is parallel to awakening to the meaning of food.

Not only humans but all living things must eat to stay alive. They drink water, breathe air, and eat food. People used to sacrifice food to God or the gods as if God or the gods also had to eat. This may suggest that eating is one of the most fundamental and important human behaviors.

For people to eat, there must be food, and food sources preexisted human beings. Fruits were growing and grains ripening. Everything humans needed for survival preexisted them, such as air, water, and grains.

Even the sun in the sky, rain, wind, and sources of nutrition in the soil all preexisted humans. All of the given elements worked together to create rice seeds. Cosmic energies then collaborated to create grains of rice. Humans have always depended on the earth's energy resources.

“Being in Food”

Martin Heidegger defines humans as “*in-der-Welt-sein*” (being-in-the-world). The “world” is neither just a physical place surrounding people nor a perceivable object. It is a fundamental structure that includes human beings and configures human perceptions. The “world” serves as the epistemological horizon that supports human perception. Therefore, humans always exist by “*being in the world*.” In a broad sense, this means that humans are part of cosmic life, receive cosmic energies, and continue to live in harmony with their input.

A similar understanding can be applied to food. Humans cannot live without food, which is the cosmic energy that keeps them alive. Food is not only life's starting point, but part of its fundamental process. Food can require work. For example, someone makes dough, adding various ingredients, and bakes it to create a tasty snack. But all the ingredients, including wheat for flour, existed before baking.

Food Is Never Profane

Religion developed with reverence for life as well as an understanding of the world of food. Religious believers recognize the origins of life and the world as “grace” and are thankful for the pre-existing sources of food that they made no effort to create.

People who are mindful of the preexistence of food sources do not monopolize them. They respect other people and other living things. They avoid unnecessary consumption. Instead of monopolizing food sources, they sympathize with the starving and want to share. They encourage people to share with one another. They also promote movements for social change. They present fundamental and religious ways of understanding food. They appreciate the food consumed and continue to be thankful and humble. For them it is more important to be grateful for food than to judge it as sacred or profane.

Some people believe that Buddhists do not eat meat, but the Buddha never explicitly forbade it. Instead, he believed

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that people should be thankful for any food. Since he forbade the taking of life, he taught that meat should be eaten humbly and only when "one saw, heard, or is certain that the taking of life was not done specifically for the sake of Buddhist priests or monks" (Jivaka Sutta, Majjhima-nikāya; Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya, vol. 32). In other words, he believed that eating meat or any other food could be enjoyed with gratitude as long as it was done unselfishly and that a life was not taken only for one's own use. Eating any food thankfully was considered more important than enforcing rules about food. This suggests that people should be honest, with pure hearts before eating, since food is the source of life.

That teaching is similar to the teaching of Saint Paul, one of the early Christian missionaries. He taught that it was all right to eat food offered on the altar of another religion but that this might mislead "weak believers" who felt guilty for willingly sharing that food. Paul preached that food itself should not be a religious obstacle (1 Cor. 8:7–8). In other words, he meant that food should not be a criterion for judging someone's faith in God. According to Paul, no food is sacred or profane in itself, but it is people's attitude toward it that is important. He taught that it is all right to eat any food as long as it is eaten thankfully, without harming anyone. In essence, Paul's teaching parallels the Buddha's teachings against gluttony

but in favor of cultivating a pure and honest heart. Following these teachings and sharing food with those who starve can be one of the highest forms of religious behavior with food, whose sources have long preexisted human beings.

Present Ignorance about Food

There are problems with food today, and to address them it is not enough for people to eat thankfully and humbly. Not just Buddhists but everyone should not only eat thankfully with a pure and humble heart but also reflect on where the food came from and the problems involved in supplying it. It is not enough just to be grateful for food in societies where food has become the core of business and capital. It is necessary to know that some food is unsafe and how to make it safe.

However, many people are unaware of the sociopolitical significance and proper uses of food. Even religious believers, who prepare and consume food daily, may have little interest in where it comes from, and few may know how to cook properly. Few know much about ingredients. Most are unaware of what goes into a bag of potato chips, how soy sauce and miso (fermented soybean paste) are made, or how all of the countless prepared foods arrive at the dinner table. To them, meat is simply something displayed and easily bought at a supermarket. They are blind to what happened to the meat before it arrived at the store. All they

uses of food and what it means to eat, yet they are conclusively subjected to a vastly evolving food industry. Growing expertise led to the development of the food production and distribution industries. People who buy prepared foods rarely have the opportunity themselves to grow and harvest vegetables or cook. Nuclear physicists may not know the proper uses of food, and Internet experts may have little or no interest in the processes that prepare beef for consumption. Religious experts may not be interested in how much workers must sweat to produce a cup of coffee or how many artificial additives are in a bag of potato chips. Numerous issues of food distribution are forgotten. Meanwhile, when foods packaged for sale look nice and clean, competition among producers intensifies. In the process, human lives are threatened by unsafe processing. Humans have created civilizations, but it is no exaggeration to say civilizations debase themselves as vast powers for human exploitation.

High-Quality Food Cannot Be Cheap

Food is the foundation of civilization. As capitalism expanded, food became one of its pillars. Cities are based on markets, and civilizations are based on producing and exchanging surplus food. In the process, food ceases to be sacred, and capitalist values are all that remain. For example, cattle used to be worshipped as symbols of the god of creation, reproduction, masculinity, and abundance. However, cattle have been devalued as a disposable medium of exchange and property. In recent years, it has been

clearly recognized that the livestock industry has come to dominate the global food industry. Humans have degenerated into becoming slaves of food, although they started out as traders of food in early civilizations.

Now people want cheap, high-quality food. In fact, this consumer desire is contradictory and is actually close to a form of inhumane greed. This greed demands that suppliers manipulate the ingredients in grains, vegetables, meat, and milk. To produce beef that is cheap and of high quality, numerous cattle are kept inhumanely in factory-based barns. These and other large-scale food factories can never produce cheap food that is also of high quality. For instance, for a supermarket to sell an item more cheaply, it must ask suppliers to cut distribution costs. To achieve lower unit prices, suppliers look for cheaper raw materials and production methods, creating an inhumane production and distribution system. For example, Peter Singer criticizes Wal-Mart as follows: “The bargains hide costs to taxpayers, the community, animals, and the environment. That is why, despite the undoubted benefits of Wal-Mart’s low prices, a very large ethical question-mark hangs over buying our food at Wal-Mart” (Peter Singer and Jim Mason, *The Ethics of What We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter* [Rodale, 2006], 80). Similarly, greed for cheap, high-quality food ignores the inhumane

do is purchase food produced in factories or restaurants. They tend to forget the mass slaughter of cattle, pigs, and chickens to make money. Schools teach mathematical formulas and reading vocabulary but hardly ever teach the proper uses of food or how to cook.

Since buying cheap, high-quality food is common, a contradictory focus of greed takes over the human mind. As this process goes on, people are further isolated from the realities of food production. While the proper uses and original meaning of food are forgotten, such as universality, grace, and sharing, people today are growing more ignorant about food. Just eating thankfully is not enough to overcome the commercialization and lack of safety in today’s complex food industry.

Just as illiterate people have trouble reading and writing, people who are ignorant about food do not know, or even try to know, about the evils of food production. In fact, many people today cannot comprehend the proper

treatment of animals and makes people suffer directly or indirectly. This logic of trying to acquire a life more cheaply is a combination of contradictory forms of greed and inhumanity.

Acquiring Food Insight

Humans may have reduced illiteracy, but they are exploited by civilization. Amid the turmoil of capitalist reasoning, food is a tool for raising capital, while humans are becoming more and more ignorant about the origin of their food. They delude themselves into thinking that they can choose what they eat, yet they distance themselves from the realities of production and forget reverence for life. This is happening because people focus on spending and overlook the value, meaning, production, and distribution of food.

People do not intend to be ignorant about food. While modern civilization has worked hard to reduce poverty and improve food quality, ignorance about food has always been uncivilized, as if civilization were one side of a coin and ignorance about food the other. That is also why ignorance about food cannot be remedied only by individual effort in moral reflections and decisions. Fundamentally, capitalism is to blame for exchanging money for food, and it is also a problem of regulated civilization. Bold changes in food policies may help; this is a complicated structural problem, however, that is difficult to solve by policies alone.

Nonetheless, it is clear that individuals' ethical and moral reflective actions toward food and eating must be part of overcoming ignorance about food. To use Ivan Illich's ideas, ignorance about food begins to disappear when people who are currently governed by society can happily govern themselves. As Ulrich Beck believes that only "consumer" consciousness can change the vertical commercial structure, food consumers must exert more influence over food production.

Eating is not the mere ability to consume and digest food. From the perspective of nature, people should reflect on the fact that all things, including a grain of rice and the human body, are composed of universal elements and are organically interconnected. Then people should cultivate a healthy organic relationship between themselves and what they eat. From sociopolitical perspectives, industrial systems that compete in capital gains in the stock market using food as a "weapon" to exploit the world economy should be critically examined. City dwellers should not only be food consumers but also be coproducers with rural communities. Consumers and suppliers, ultimately humans and nature, must cooperate to form a win-win relationship that invigorates one another. This is specifically how food insight can be awakened.

Food Insight and Spiritual Enlightenment

The process of awakening food insight is not much different from spiritual enlightenment. People's thoughts about food and eating reflect their human nature, religiosity, and political and

economic situations. This means that those who ignore the unfairness of eating may not be fully enlightened, even if they are experienced priests or monks.

Food insight will not be acquired only through individual satisfaction and personal happiness. If there is no examination of the political, social, and economical meanings of food, followed by a reduction in the inhumanity that exploits humans with food and neglects reverence for life, food insight will not be acquired. It can be acquired only by reflecting on the proper uses of food and by movements that revive humanness and encourage reverence for life. Eating is a yardstick that measures the depth of one's sensibility about human nature, religion, and life. Similarly, the processes of getting food and gaining spiritual enlightenment are like the two sides of a coin; spiritual enlightenment is parallel to awakening to the meaning of food. People's thoughts about food and eating reflect their spirituality and level of political understanding. Thus, eating is the most fundamental, natural, human, and cosmic kind of behavior that leads to peace. When it comes to eating, no religion is unrelated, including Buddhism and Christianity. □

Shojin Cuisine: Cooking from the Heart

by Mari Fujii

Preparing food that combines [the] five tastes, five colors, and five ways of preparation [the basic concepts of shojin cuisine] results in a well-balanced meal. . . . Shojin cuisine is an art of cooking with these concepts in mind, and that is why people who partake of it say it brings them peace of mind.

It is now thirty-three years since my husband, Sotetsu Fujii (1941–2006), and I started the *shojin* cuisine learning community, Zenmi-kai (Taste of Zen group). *Shojin* means “earnest application” or “devotion” and comes from the Sanskrit *virya*, a Buddhist term commonly translated as “energy,” “diligence,” “enthusiasm,” or “effort,” which reached Japan by way of China.

Zenmi-kai was set up in response to requests for lessons in *shojin* cooking

from people who had read my husband’s book *Shojin ryori jiten* (Dictionary of Japanese vegetarian cuisine) (Tokyodo Publishing, 1985). My husband did a great deal of work related to Buddhism and *shojin* cuisine, writing books, giving lectures, appearing on television, and so on. This was when Japan’s rapid economic-growth period was starting to wind down and society was beginning to return to normal. The television program *Ryori no tetsujin* (Iron chef) was very popular and even broadcast outside Japan; my husband also appeared on this show.

Before we were married, from the time my husband was twenty-two until he was thirty-two, he lived and practiced at Zen temples. During these years he served as *tenzo*, or temple cook, at three different Zen temples. The experience he gained during these years he later shared in the form of several books. He had since

his youth written poetry and studied writing, so he was able to express himself through the written word.

After his ten years of Zen training, he joined a publishing company as an editor, and later became a freelance writer. It was at this time that we married. The last temple where my husband lived and practiced was Kenchoji, in Kamakura, and when he left the temple he settled down in Kamakura.

After we were married we acquired a house in Inamuragasaki, a seaside neighborhood in Kamakura; we call the house Fushiki-an (The hermitage of not knowing). It’s a small house, but it was our base of operations for the *shojin* cuisine cooking school Zenmi-kai and the studio where photographs of the cuisine were taken for books and magazines. Sometimes we welcomed foreign guests there as well.

My husband would often say, “Cooking should be from the heart.” What he meant was, “Think carefully about the person who is going to eat when you prepare food.” I have continued to convey this message to everyone whenever I cook and teach cooking.

Japan has four distinct seasons: spring, summer, fall, and winter. What we try to do is put locally grown ingredients in season to the best possible use while keeping in mind the person who will eat the food and whether the occasion is a festival, a ceremonial meal, or an everyday meal, in order to create dishes that will be easy on the body and mind. We clasp our hands in prayer to express our appreciation for the people

Mari Fujii is a specialist in shojin ryori (Japanese vegetarian cuisine) and teaches and popularizes it internationally. She has studied Chinese food therapy in Beijing and is the author of The Enlightened Kitchen: Fresh Vegetable Dishes from the Temples of Japan (Kodansha America, 2005) and several books in Japanese on shojin cuisine.

who created the ingredients and for the fields where they were grown. We try to prepare each dish on the menu painstakingly, giving heed to what my husband used to say: “Preparing food means taking good care of the mind and heart; that is what I hope to convey.”

On days when cooking classes are being held at Zenmi-kai, students come to Fushiki-an, and everyone joins in to cook and taste the various dishes. At these times, both younger and older students unanimously share the same expression, seeming to feel relaxed.

Shojin cuisine comes from the Buddhist precepts against taking life. Neither meat nor fish, nor even eggs that give rise to new life are used. Strong-smelling vegetables such as green onions, leeks, and garlic are not used either. The original purpose of *shojin* cuisine was to sustain people undergoing religious training at temples. It offers neither too much nor too little, and I think it is very pleasant to eat.

The basic concepts of *shojin* cuisine include five tastes, five colors, and five ways of preparation. The five

tastes are salty, sweet, spicy, sour, and bitter. The five colors are black, white, red, yellow, and green. The five ways of preparation are raw, boiled, grilled, steamed, and sautéed. Preparing food that combines these five tastes, five colors, and five ways of preparation results in a well-balanced meal. There is also the unique notion of *awai* flavoring (sometimes translated as “fleeting” or “delicate”), which involves avoiding strong flavoring in

order to bring out the native goodness of the ingredients. *Shojin* cuisine is an art of cooking with these concepts in mind, and that is why people who partake of it say it brings them peace of mind.

The flavorings used in *shojin* cuisine are the fermented products typical of

The author with Julian Daizan Skinner, a British Zen master and the founder of the Zenways Sangha, when he interviewed her on shojin cuisine at the Yugagyo Dojo in London, in August 2015.

Japan, which include soy sauce, miso (soybean paste), mirin (sweet sake), vinegar, and salt.

Stock is made with dried kombu seaweed and dried shiitake mushrooms. These are traditional Japanese ingredients. The kombu is soaked in cold water for about an hour and then brought to a boil. Dried shiitake mushrooms are also soaked in cold water, imparting umami, or savor. The softened mushrooms are used as ingredients in the cooking.

Sometimes people who are used to eating hurriedly and negligently or eat and drink so much that they feel unwell come to our Zenmi-kai lessons. These are people who realize the importance of what they eat only when their health has become compromised.

During the last ten years or so, I have had a growing number of opportunities to lecture on *shojin* cuisine abroad. The first time I did so was after Jipango—an organization set up in Paris to introduce Japanese culture to people in France—invited me to take part in eight cooking sessions in Paris. A group of young chefs in London also took the opportunity of my visits to Paris to set up a venue for me to give a talk in London. Six years ago the Japan Foundation, an independent administrative institution in Japan, gave me an opportunity to visit the Nordic countries. In all of these countries, people expressed an interest in *shojin* cuisine as a branch of Japanese food culture, and our cooking classes and tasting events were very well received. So far, I have cooked in the United States, Italy, Portugal, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Myanmar, Uzbekistan, China, Taiwan, South Korea, and elsewhere. At a cultural-exchange event in India, however, the Indian matrons found the black color of the *norimaki* (vinegared rice rolled in laver seaweed) so frightening they would not try it.

Some participants at the cooking lessons in Paris and London were vegetarians. Their interest arose from various

standpoints, such as their religious backgrounds or considerations of animal welfare.

A person who attended my lecture in Singapore was Danny Chu, author of the book *Shojin Ryori: The Art of Japanese Vegetarian Cuisine*. In Danny's hometown of Singapore there are Indian and Chinese vegetarian restaurants, but he says Japanese *shojin* cuisine uses less oil and is healthier. After attending *shojin* cuisine classes in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, June Ka Lim, manager of a macrobiotic restaurant there, brought out the book *Macrobiotics for Life*.

Thus it seems that more people outside Japan have come to notice that Japanese *shojin* cuisine is healthy and has a background of Zen philosophy. Notably, in May 2015 I helped prepare *shojin* cuisine meals for forty attendees at a tasting-experience event at a Zen center in Paris. The organizer, Valerie Duvauchelle, had practiced and studied cooking at Sojiji, one of the head temples of Soto Zen Buddhism, in Yokohama. The people practicing at the Zen center experienced eating in silence for the first time in conformity with Japanese Zen temple etiquette. After this experience, the participants shared their impressions. They said they found something fresh and new in earnestly conforming to ceremonial etiquette and eating in silence as a Zen practice. The Soto Zen sect was founded by the Zen master Dogen (1200–1253), who studied in China from 1223 to 1227, during the Song dynasty. After returning to Japan he drew on his experiences at a Zen temple there to write *Tenzo kyokun* (Instructions for the Zen cook). It describes the proper attitude and etiquette for preparing meals. Thanks to this work, its precepts continue to be followed to this day.

Sen no Rikyu (1522–91), the founder of Japan's Way of Tea, was also a Zen practitioner and incorporated Zen temple dining etiquette into the tea ceremony. Today there are a growing

number of people around the world who enjoy the Japanese tea ceremony. As long as there is a peaceful atmosphere, people can enjoy a leisurely bowl of tea.

I also met tea ceremony teachers in Finland and Denmark. The Japanese words for the arts of tea ceremony and flower arrangement, as well as for Japanese martial arts, often use the Chinese character 道, pronounced *dō*, meaning “way” or “road,” as in judo (Jpn., *jūdō*; *jū* meaning “soft” or “pliant”). These arts with their Japanese cultural background also have a philosophical rather than religious basis and teach right conduct and thoughtfulness. These things form the foundation of the Japanese heart and mind.

Every year over the last ten years, I have been making and taste testing *shojin* cuisine with people from other countries, exchanging opinions, and answering questions. Several years ago I participated in a workshop with about a hundred students studying the Japanese language at the University of Manchester in England, at which we made *norimaki* and miso soup. It was the first time for many of them to try

Japanese food. Food is an extremely comprehensible form of cultural experience, and everyone seemed to enjoy it. They were second-year students and were looking forward to studying in Japan the following year. I am sure they had a variety of dining experiences during that time.

Three years ago, our daughter opened a casual *shojin* cuisine restaurant in Tokyo's Akihabara district called Komaki Shokudo. Akihabara is in central Tokyo and is mainly known for its numerous electronics stores, which attract many tourists, including people from overseas. About 40 percent of the restaurant's customers are foreigners. They have included a businessman from India who came every day for lunch during his stay in Tokyo and vegetarians from Taiwan and Singapore, with whom I had some conversation. Vegetarians coming to Japan often have a hard time finding somewhere to eat.

My work enables me to communicate with people from other countries through the medium of food. I enjoy this kind of communication and am always grateful for it. □

Mindful Eating: How North Americans Use Buddhist Meditation to Heal the Body, Mind, and World

by Jeff Wilson

Faced with . . . widespread suffering in relation to food, many people are turning to Buddhism in search of possible solutions. After all, Buddhism is, at its root, a set of practices and insights designed to eliminate suffering.

Eating and drinking are universal activities, and yet they are deeply personal as well. In a world population of seven billion human beings, every single one has his or her own unique preferences around favorite and least-favorite foods, times and ways they like to eat, where and with whom they wish to take their meals; and everyone has a set of associations and memories around food and drink. The smell of a certain food can instantly send your imagination back to your childhood, or transport you to a faraway vacation spot. What you eat and how you eat it communicate

information about age, class, origins, and much more without speaking a word.

There is another way in which food and drink are both universal and extremely individual in nature: All people, from the richest celebrity to the poorest homeless person, experience eating- and drinking-related suffering. Every day, each human being experiences hunger and thirst multiple times. Some are lucky enough to have their needs immediately taken care of for them; many labor to acquire their food, whether through farming, hunting, or earning money; far too many have

difficulty accessing nutritious food or clean water. But regardless of their location or station in life, everyone knows that food and drink are a source of pain as well as pleasure.

But beyond the timeless problems related to getting enough food and drink on a regular basis, there are forms of suffering around eating and drinking that have become particular manifestations of modern-day living in North America. Obesity and weight-related health problems are now a major health crisis for Americans and Canadians, as well as shame, fear, and depression that arise in the midst of poor body image and self-hatred over appearance. North Americans spend tens of billions of dollars annually on diets and weight-control programs, to say nothing of the money that goes to treating diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, and other diseases linked to weight issues. Yet year after year the crisis seems to worsen rather than improve.

Faced with this widespread suffering in relation to food, many people are turning to Buddhism in search of possible solutions. After all, Buddhism is, at its root, a set of practices and insights designed to eliminate suffering. The applications of Buddhism's practices and ideas change and adapt as the forms of suffering in each society evolve. And as food-related suffering has become ever-more pervasive, Buddhist teachers have responded by applying age-old Buddhist tools to healing newly prominent eating-related disorders and unwise behaviors.

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Out of this encounter has come the tremendous popularity of “mindful eating,” which especially draws on two forms of Buddhist meditation: insight (*vipassana*) and loving-kindness (*metta*). These are used to cultivate or complement mindfulness (*sati*), a form of clear, nonjudgmental awareness that observes without reacting. In traditional monastic settings, *sati* has been crucial for achieving penetrating insight into the transience and impermanence of the self and all things, which releases clinging and assists in the attainment of nirvana. In mindful eating the goals are more modest—better health, weight loss, improved body image, greater self-control. But the techniques are similar, and many argue that the reduction

of suffering can be truly life changing.

Mindfulness is part of various Buddhist traditions, but it especially reaches the United States through the Theravada tradition, where it is a key part of insight meditation practice. Since the 1970s, insight meditation has been growing in popularity, and mindfulness is now a common part of stress-reduction clinics and psychotherapeutic practices. The efforts of two men in particular have been important and demonstrate the range of the mindfulness movement. On the one hand is Thich Nhat Hanh, a world-renowned monk who lives in France and travels often to North America. He is part of the Vietnamese Zen lineage but has been influenced by Southeast Asian forms of

Theravada Buddhism. His simple but profound teachings about everyday mindfulness have found a large audience among Buddhists and meditators in the West. On the other hand is Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, who has sought to develop a medical model for Buddhist mindfulness so that it can be used by doctors and patients. Many studies suggest that mindfulness has positive health effects, and Kabat-Zinn’s Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program has trained tens of thousands of people in nonreligious settings. We might say that Thich Nhat Hanh’s approach to mindfulness is clearly Buddhist but light on dogma and traditional cosmology, making it accessible as spirituality for many people regardless of their own religious background. Kabat-Zinn’s approach downplays the connection to Buddhism in order to bring mindfulness into secular and medical realms otherwise hostile to religion. Together these two approaches—Buddhist meditation as spirituality or as medicine—have allowed millions of non-Buddhists to begin exploring the benefits to be gained from Buddhist meditation. Given that so many people find eating to be a source of suffering, the rise of mindful eating was probably inevitable.

Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food, she lays out a clear explanation of the ethos behind mindful eating:

Mindfulness addresses our disorder at its source. The problem is not in our food. Food is just food. It is neither good nor bad. The problem is not in our fat cells or stomach or small intestine. . . . The source of the problem lies in the thinking mind and the feeling heart. Mindfulness is the perfect tool for the delicate operation of laying open the inner workings of these two most essential organs. . . . When mindful eating is ignored, it causes pervasive and unnecessary suffering. When mindfulness is applied to eating, a world of discovery and delight opens. ([Shambhala Publications, 2009], xix–xx)

With a focus on the mind as the source of our suffering, the connection to Buddhism is clear, even before the application of Buddhist-based meditation techniques. Actual mindful eating is both simple and difficult. It means paying close attention to the act of eating, not allowing oneself to be caught in daydreaming, worrying, or distraction. One's attention is focused on observing the food; mindfully lifting one's fork; intentionally taking appropriate-sized bites; chewing slowly and attentively; contemplating the tastes, smells, textures, and temperatures of one's meal; and so on. It is the opposite of the rushed cramming of meals amid a multitasking whirlwind of activities or absent-mindedly chomping on snacks while watching television that so often characterize North American eating patterns. Thus in some ways it is very easy: it's just eating with more awareness that one is eating in the first place. Yet at the same time it is quite difficult: precisely because eating and drinking are such routine parts of every day, we rarely

give them our full attention, and we are habituated to doing almost anything else other than paying attention as we eat, even when consuming our favorite foods. It thus takes practice and discipline to develop an ongoing mindful style of eating and drinking, and therefore many people who manage to establish long-lasting mindful eating practices do so under the tutelage of an instructor and in a supportive group. Perhaps the most interesting thing is that this typically happens not at a Buddhist temple or retreat center but in a supposedly secular setting, such as at a hospital, a therapist's office, or at school.

But how exactly does mindful eating work? In her book *Eating with Fierce Kindness: A Mindful and Compassionate Guide to Losing Weight*, psychotherapist Sasha Loring provides a succinct description of the process: "Mindful eating allows you to make a stronger connection between your mind and your body, creating more of a partnership. Mindfulness allows you to slow down and pay attention in a way that will interrupt the momentum of stress-driven eating and bring outdated or harmful beliefs and habits into greater awareness. In the process, you will have opportunities to take more pleasure in eating and to feel more satisfied with healthy portions of food" ([New Harbinger Publications, 2010], 162–63). So the first part of the process is noticing how eating is often driven by stress, negative past conditioning, or other problematic forces that have little to do with actual hunger and thirst. With mindfulness of one's body and mind, the eater comes to recognize whether she is actually hungry or is simply eating because of boredom, depression, anger, fear, anxiety, or some other reason. She thus becomes aware of her "eating triggers." At the same time, because she is paying better attention to her eating, the acts of eating and drinking become more pleasurable. One actually tastes food instead of wolfing it down, and thus

The theory behind mindful eating is that weight gain and other negative effects associated with poor eating practices are rooted not in the eating itself but in the untreated psychological issues and detrimental social habits that drive poor eating. Essentially, the problem is "mindlessness," that is, failure to understand what we are doing and why we are doing it, and thus feeling powerless to break the karmic cycle of bad causes leading to bad effects that become further bad causes, on and on. The Zen teacher and pediatrician Dr. Jan Bays is one of the most important promoters of applying Buddhist mindfulness techniques to eating. In her practice as a doctor she has long seen the effects of mindless eating on individuals' health, and as a Buddhist priest she is also concerned for the larger social and environmental effects of Americans' eating habits. In her book *Mindful Eating: A*

needs less to reach a point of satisfaction. And you can actually tell when you are full, rather than continuing to eat merely because there is more food on your plate or chips left in the bag.

Loring continues with her explanation: “Slowing down will also make you more likely to recognize and redirect the urge to eat when it is for emotional reasons” (ibid., 163). In other words, mindful eating returns power over the eating process to the eater. He can now perceive the way in which his eating is driven by emotions, and most crucially he can make better choices about his eating habits. He can remind himself that eating will not in fact solve the emotional distress that has driven him to the refrigerator, and he can choose to put the fork down, or at least eat a very sensible portion. It is here that mindfulness has its greatest application, in the choice to break the chain of reactivity owing to blind karma, and in the moment-by-moment decision to act in wiser, healthier ways.

A key part of Loring’s understanding of mindful eating is the use of loving-kindness practices from the Buddhist tradition, which she refers to as “fierce kindness.” As she explains:

With the application of the fierce kindness approaches you have learned, food no longer has to be the primary antidote to distress. With practice, you will learn when to stop eating before you become overly full. Integrating mindfulness into your life will make it more apparent when you are “eating without really eating”—those times when you eat standing in the pantry, taste enough of the food you are preparing to equal a meal, eat while dashing somewhere, or eat off other people’s plates. These kinds of eating patterns tend to keep the amount of food you actually consume out of your conscious awareness. Over time, as you continue to practice mindful eating,

you will increasingly become capable of eating and being satisfied by appropriate portions of food. You will engage in less self-criticism and judgment, and you will offer yourself self-kindness, motivating you toward health. (Ibid.)

Loving-kindness meditation involves wishing health and happiness for oneself as an intentional practice; traditionally, such thoughts are also offered to your loved ones, neighbors, and the whole world. Since Loring and other psychotherapists see self-loathing at the root of many destructive behaviors—including mindless eating—they use Buddhist meditation practices of intentional well-wishing to redirect patients toward positive, cherishing attitudes. The improved self-regard reinforces the mindful awareness of one’s eating choices and hopefully leads to better habits that have psychological and spiritual effects as well as physical ones.

On one level, mindful eating is a very personal undertaking, designed to stop the practitioner’s own mindless eating and bring her closer to a state of health. But many people involved in the mindful-eating movement understand their goal to be much larger than healing one person at a time. With a Buddhist view of interdependence, these teachers emphasize that eating practices are not simply private actions but are knit into a wider network of beings, things, and processes. Our actions impact others; our choices affect our environments; and of course we are affected by others and our environment. In their book *Savor: Mindful Eating, Mindful Life*, Thich Nhat Hanh and Dr. Lilian Cheung recommend that people rely on five contemplations as they prepare to eat:

1. This food is the gift of the whole universe: the earth, the sky, numerous living beings, and much hard, loving work.
2. May we eat with mindfulness and

gratitude so as to be worthy to receive it.

3. May we recognize and transform our unwholesome mental formations, especially our greed, and learn to eat with moderation.
4. May we keep our compassion alive by eating in such a way that we reduce the suffering of living beings, preserve our planet, and reverse the process of global warming.
5. We accept this food so that we may nurture our sisterhood and brotherhood, strengthen our community, and nourish our ideal of serving all living beings. ([HarperCollins Publishers, 2010], 124)

There are two things to note about these contemplations. First, they teach the practitioner that internal efforts to transform mental defilements and external work to save the environment and make peace are connected. One’s mindful eating becomes imbued with meaning and value well beyond the simple desire to lose weight or look better. Second, to the extent that eating with this form of mindfulness continually demonstrates the truth of emptiness and interconnection, eating is transformed from a mundane activity into a practice that could lead to genuine Buddhist forms of awakening. So while the goal may no longer seem to be nirvana, mindful eating that begins with anxiety over obesity could still end up contributing to progress on the Buddhist path.

Even if few North Americans are reaching buddhahood through partially secularized mindful-eating practices, the impact of the mindfulness movement on Western culture is already significant. Mindfulness gives harried and depressed people a powerful tool for approaching their minds and changing their bodies. It is the latest evolution in the twenty-five-hundred-year story of Buddhism’s transformation of—and by—the many cultures of the world. □

Why Not One Grain of Rice Should Be Wasted

by Kenichi Furuyama

If our current food wastage continues unchecked, it will undermine the global environment and may even in time threaten the survival of the human race.

I believe that we live in an age in which we must seriously rethink our approach to food. In Zen parlance, we need to “shine a light where we stand” (*kyakka shōko*).

Food waste, or the discarding of food that is still fit for human consumption, is a worrying problem, and I was astounded to see the statistics on the amount of food that is wasted annually in Japan. According to estimates for 2010, 17 million tons of food waste were produced in the space of one year, of which approximately 5 to 8 million tons were thrown out despite still being edible. Japan might be aptly described as

one of the world’s biggest food wasters.

Japan’s food self-sufficiency in 2014 was 39 percent on a calorie basis, and 64 percent in terms of the value of output. What this means is that people in Japan buy a large proportion of their food from abroad, but they also throw much of it away uneaten.

When I was a child, my parents scolded me and told me not to waste my food if I left even just one grain of rice in my bowl. Human existence has been a long battle against hunger, and the moral principle that we should not waste our food grew out of this fierce struggle to survive and was handed down to us by our forebears. Given our contemporary food profligacy, however, one would have to conclude that this principle has been lost or become devoid of any substance. The Japanese word *mottainai*, which has entered the international lexicon to express the concept of waste avoidance, seems to have been abandoned in the very country of its birth, just like the food that is thrown out while still edible.

According to a report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, one in nine people even now suffers from chronic malnutrition. They are, in a word, starving, and this despite the fact that human beings can now produce practically enough to feed the entire population

of the world. Most of the world’s starving live in “developing” countries. Starvation in developing countries is caused by a variety of factors that are simple neither to solve nor to address. However, the possibility that the massive wastage of food in developed countries might be among the causes is something that all of those living in a country that wastes so much food, ought to seriously consider.

Food waste is a problem in other ways too. Throwing away large quantities of food means that this food has to be processed or disposed of in some way, which creates not only a refuse problem but also an environmental one owing to the emission of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide. According to statistics produced by the United Nations, 28 percent of the world’s agricultural land is used to produce food that is never eaten, and the carbon footprint of wasted food comes to annually

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3.3 billion tons carbon dioxide equivalent, making it a significant contributor to climate change. If our current food wastage continues unchecked, it will undermine the global environment and may even in time threaten the survival of the human race. This must be taken even more seriously than the decline in food morals. At any rate we should reduce food wastage, and that at the moment is my fervent wish.

I am a Zen priest who believes in and studies the teachings of Dōgen (1200–1253), founder of the Sōtō school of Zen in Japan. Dōgen left us two writings on the subject of food. These are *Tenzo kyōkun* (Instructions for the Zen cook) and *Fushukuhanpō* (Procedures for taking food). *Tenzo kyōkun* (written in 1237) is a set of instructions for the head cooks at Zen monasteries, while *Fushukuhanpō* (probably written sometime after 1246) explains the etiquette of eating for ascetic monks at Zen temples. The former explains how food should be cooked, and the latter explains how food should be eaten. Both belong to the monastic regulations for purity (*shingi*) for monks living at Zen temples.

In the two works, Dōgen says that not a single grain of rice must be wasted, either when preparing food (according to *Tenzo kyōkun*) or when eating (according to *Fushukuhanpō*). If we try not to waste even a single grain of rice when preparing and eating food, we might be able to make some contribution, however small, toward solving the problem of food waste. But why does Dōgen say that not a single

grain of rice should be wasted? He was, of course, unaware of the food shortages, hunger, and environmental challenges that the modern world now faces and was not directly addressing the problem of food wastage outlined above. Rather, he was simply applying the framework of the Buddha Way (*butsudō*) that he had wholly absorbed and continued to practice as a lifelong priest and renunciant. That is to say, his precept embodied the attainment of Buddhist enlightenment (*shō*) and the practice of a life rooted in enlightenment (*shū*), which he regarded as complementary to each other. Incidentally, in *Bendōwa* (Discourse on the practice of the Way; written in 1231), Dōgen stated that the Buddha Way was open to anyone, layperson or renunciant, who aspired to follow it. He thus did not exclude anyone living in ordinary society from his teachings.

So what exactly is the Buddha Way propounded by Dōgen? The clearest answer is to be found in his 1233 essay “Genjōkōan” (Actualizing the fundamental point) in *Shōbōgenzō* (Treasury of the true Dharma eye), in which he writes that practicing—in other words, imitating—the Buddha Way means forgetting the self; and forgetting the self, he explains, means dissolving and fusing the self with myriad individual *dharma* (sensed, perceived, and cognized phenomena) and eliminating the boundary between self and the self of other. This discourse is rooted in the practice of not-self (*higa*) or nonself (*muga* in Japanese and *anātman* in Sanskrit)

recommended since the days of pre-sectarian Buddhism, and the practice of emptiness (*kūgan*) inherited from it by Mahayana Buddhism.

In Buddhist thought, the self is simply one of many phenomena that together constitute the universe of all things. However, our awareness of the self seeks to comprehend the “self” in isolation from the universe. The self thus comes to be perceived as somehow not bound by the laws of the universe, despite simply being another phenomenon. This gives rise to two incompatible selves: the self as conceived by us in our thought, and the true self. In Buddhism, this is

regarded as the root cause that pits us against birth, old age, sickness, death, and the nonfulfillment of desires, and so creates suffering. Buddhism believes that the only way to be liberated from suffering is to restore the divorced self to—and make it one with—the universe, and so recover the true state of being. What Dōgen calls “forgetting the self” is the restoration of the self to this true nature.

Thus the approach to food that Dōgen expounds for following the Buddha Way does not propose that food or meals are simply a composite of completely discrete elements: the “I” (subject) who eats, the thing (object) that is eaten, the act of eating, and the various matters incidental to them. The same applies to the preparation of food. To practice the Buddha Way in our approach to food, Dōgen instead argues that the “I” here and now should completely dissolve into and become one with what is eaten here and now, with the act of eating here and now, and with the utensils used to eat here and now, so that the whole is perceived to constitute a single *dharma*. This is the state in which everything present becomes equal and is perceived as a single *dharma* that retains a sensory echo of the “here and now.” It is precisely this perception that is the state of forgetting the self. In *Fushukuhānpō*,

Dōgen expresses this state of perception thus: “*Dharma* is food and eating, and food and eating are *dharma*.”

When placing the emphasis on the unified sensory echo of the “here and now,” Dōgen describes this state in terms such as *nikon* (right now) or, more simply, *ima* (now). When placing the emphasis on the *dharma*, he uses terms such as *shohō jissō* (the true aspect of all phenomena; Dōgen interpreted the phrase as “the true aspect is itself all phenomena”) and *jissō* (true aspect), or alternatively terms such as *hosshō* (literally, *dharma* nature, which

Dōgen interpreted to mean that all phenomena themselves embody truth) and *shinnyo* (suchness, or *tathātā* in Sanskrit). And when focusing more on the perceiver, he uses terms such as *isshin* (one mind). Terms such as these, along with their synonyms, pervade *Tenzo kyōkun* and *Fushukuhānpō*.

Returning to our original subject, why should we not waste even a single grain of rice? Because if anything is left over, intentionally or by accident, when we are preparing or eating food, it becomes *dharma* into which the self has failed to dissolve. Forgetting the self is achieved precisely when the self has dissolved into all the *dharma* of the here and now. Thus, if the self has been unable to dissolve into even a single grain of rice, the self remains apart from it and cannot be forgotten. One is thus left with a self that cannot be completely reabsorbed into the universe of all things. Every day that we leave a grain of rice in our bowls, the self will remain unabsorbed and life will remain bound to suffering.

It may just be one grain of rice, but that one grain of rice weighs enough to change our lives. Hence I believe that there is an urgency to Dōgen’s advice to us, founded in the Buddha Way, not to waste even one grain of rice. □

Old Insights for a Hectic World: What Can an Eighteenth-Century Zen Master Teach Us Today?

by Masaki Matsubara

Hakuin's voice in his Yassenkanna still resonates today, but with purposeful and intelligible transformations, in a larger context of the healing and awareness practices of meditations.

On October 31, 2015, Halloween, more than a hundred people participated in a two-day seminar on mindfulness offered by Search Inside Yourself (hereafter, SIY) in Marunouchi, a leading district for business in the heart of Tokyo.

SIY is a program originally born at Google from Chade-Meng Tan's dream to bring peace to the world. Recently retired, Mr. Tan is one of Google's earliest engineers, who helped build Google's first mobile search service. He launched the SIY program with other fellows with the purposes of improving the quality of leadership performance by practicing mindfulness meditation and by training in the practice's essential elements, or emotional intelligence skills: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and communication, in an approach supported by neuroscience and psychology. SIY has developed a program that focuses on the links between meditation, brain function, and emotional well-being, or in other words, between mindfulness, neuroscience, and emotional intelligence.

It is a very popular program that has successfully increased the number of its clients in a variety of business fields that include Google; LinkedIn; Ford; Danone; American Express; Genentech; SAP; Comcast; Scotiabank;

Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley; the Institute for Transformational Leadership at the School of Continuing Studies at Georgetown University; and others. Offering retreats, seminars, public talks, and coaching, the program has expanded its development worldwide—North America, Europe, Asia and Australia, the Middle East, and Africa.

At 8:00 on a quiet, chilly morning in Marunouchi, many participants were waiting for the opening of the seminar. With a cup of coffee or tea in their hands, some people were introducing one another, some were looking at the textbook for the seminar that had been handed out at the reception, and some were checking their e-mails and reading online news on their smartphones. What caught my eye was that the participants' ratio of men to women was six to four and that they were mostly young professionals, business executives, and business elites in their thirties and forties in a wide range of work fields, such as restaurants and food, management consultation, IT, media, government, and yoga. The surprising thing is that they came not only from all corners of Japan but also from all over the world, for example, the Philippines, France, and the United States.

After Zen monastic training with the Rinzai sect in Japan, Masaki Matsubara earned a PhD in Asian Religions from Cornell University. He taught Buddhist Studies and East Asian Languages and Cultures as well as Religious Studies at UC Berkeley (2009–13) and was the BDK Fellow at the Ho Center for Buddhist Studies at Stanford University (2013–14). He is now a Visiting Scholar in the East Asia Program at Cornell University and is a Research Associate for the Contemplative Studies Initiative at Brown University. He is the head priest of the Butsumoji Zen temple in Chiba Prefecture, Japan; supervises the nearby affiliated International Zen Center; and travels between the United States and Japan to lead retreats and seminars.

I have tried to interpret positively this remarkable tendency among the younger generations to show their strong interest in meditation. In a larger context, it simultaneously reflects a fledgling movement of mindfulness in Japan, while mindfulness has become a popular buzzword in Silicon Valley today. To be sure, the meaning of this interest, depending as it does on use and context, is not always as clear as it would appear at first glance. Numerous questions arise when I try to put it down on paper. Why are these young people interested in mindfulness, and how do they make use of mindfulness practice in their work and life? Given the fact that incorporating meditation into business

is certainly not a new approach, why has this particular field become important today? What is the motivation that leads the participants to take this seminar? How does meditation work for self-cultivation and for the building of the team, the organization, and the community? Buddhism is essentially a discourse on salvation, liberation, and holiness, and to what extent is this discourse purposefully (or without purpose) neutralized? Given that mindfulness meditation is essentially a Buddhist practice, how do the models for Zen, life, and business differ? Does this differentiation, if any, confirm the secularization of meditation, or does it tend to indicate that a religious, or spiritual, distinction is no longer truly significant? Is meditation a mere technique, or the main objective?

The SIY program is a leadership program supported by mindfulness meditation practice, neuroscience, and emotional intelligence. Indeed, the subtitle of the SIY program that was held in San Francisco on December 10–11, 2015, was “Mindfulness-Based Emotional Intelligence for Leaders.” One of the primary questions informing this program is how one uses his or her mind and interacts with others. On this point, the program helps cultivate the elements of flexibility, purpose, balance, insight, and inspiration in the face of complexity, difficulty, and busyness.

The program also helps nurture wisdom and compassion. According to Mr. Tan at the Wisdom 2.0, organized by its founder, Soren Gordhamer, which is an international conference on looking at the relationship between meditation and business in today’s networked, digital age with incredible technologies in Singapore in June 2015, wisdom is cultivated by the elements of calmness of mind, self-awareness, and seeing beyond self; compassion is cultivated by beautiful intentions, loving-kindness, and compassionate action.

The program as its main practice teaches concentrating on counting one’s breaths, paying full attention to each inhalation and exhalation, and cultivating the awareness of being in the moment. I argue that by cultivating the awareness of being here and now, sharpening attention and connectivity, and nurturing empathy and compassion, mindfulness meditation that engages body-focused attention brings about calm union with fellow human beings. This argument can answer the question of how and in what ways this meditation practice works in mutual relationships at four levels: individual, team, organization, and community.

Whether the meditation practice is a mere technicality or the main objective in the leadership programs conducted by SIY and others, the practice

itself is essentially a contemplative technique and method widely accessible and beneficial for issues of the body/mind problem, which is an issue of the interrelations between mental states and physical states in the human body, and which is essentially unavoidable in our lives. The Clinical and Affective Neuroscience Laboratory in the Contemplative Studies program at Brown University conducts research on “the link between contemplative practices, brain function, and affective disturbances, such [as] anxiety, depression and substance abuse” (<http://www.brown.edu/academics/contemplative-studies/research>; last modified November 3, 2015). The Translational Neuroscience Laboratory in the same Brown program looks at how contemplative practices that engage body-focused attention cause “specific changes in brain synchrony and corticomuscular coherence.” The lab also focuses on how meditation practices like mindfulness “bring about changes at multiple levels in the brain and body,” and indicates that “this knowledge is directly relevant to treatments for chronic pain and depression and disorders related to aging” (ibid.).

Weill Cornell Medical College reports, “A newly developed meditation-based program significantly improves quality of life for breast cancer survivors from minority and underserved populations.” They continue, “The technique, tested by Weill Cornell Medical College scientists, helps survivors cope with the threat of recurrence, a prospect that can lead to chronic and severe stress” (“Meditation Program Increases Quality of Life for Breast Cancer Survivors,” <http://weill.cornell.edu/news/news/2014/11/meditation-program-increases-quality-of-life-for-breast-cancer-survivors-mary-charlson.html>; last modified December 8, 2015). The effects of meditation practice on the body/mind problem have been an important area of study in medical science, and the study has given scientific

evidence that meditation is essentially a physical and mental technology that actively modulates issues of the body/mind problem.

In his *Yasenkanna*, or “Idle Talk on a Night Boat,” and other writings, the Japanese Zen master Hakuin Ekaku (1686–1769), a seminal figure who occupies a prominent place in the history of Japanese Buddhism, relates the dramatic account of his struggle against the body/mind problem. *Yasenkanna*, one of his autobiographies, specifically focuses on his *zenbyō*, or “Zen sickness,” which Hakuin developed in his youth, and on the ways in which the meditation techniques that engage body-focused attention, which he learned from a cave-dwelling hermit, brought him to a complete recovery over time. This writing is particularly unique, not because it talks about meditation as a tool for religious exercise toward enlightenment, but because it considers the meditation to be a means of health, or therapeutic hygiene. Perhaps most important, the principal question asked by Hakuin in this writing is consistently relevant to some of the crises of our own times, in the larger context of our everyday lives today.

Exactly what Hakuin means by *zenbyō* is uncertain because he didn’t mention what it was. However, it has been proposed by scholars and physicians for the last decades that this malady was possibly either tuberculosis or some neurotic disorder, or something from both of these causes. I think that it could be very difficult with tuberculosis to conduct the itinerant life Hakuin had at this time. Hakuin relates:

Afterwards, as I began reflecting over my everyday behavior, I could see that the two aspects of my life—the active and the meditative—were totally out of balance. No matter what I was doing, I never felt free or completely at ease. I realized I would have to rekindle a fearless resolve

and once again throw myself life and limb together into the Dharma struggle. With my teeth clenched tightly and eyes focused straight ahead, I began devoting myself singlemindedly to my practice, forsaking food and sleep altogether.

Before the month was out, my heart-fire began to rise upward against the natural course, parching my lungs of their essential fluid. My feet and legs were ice-cold; they felt as though they were immersed in tubs of snow. There was a continuous thrumming in my ears, as though I was walking beside a raging mountain torrent. I became abnormally weak and timid, shrinking and fearful in whatever I did. I felt totally drained, physically and mentally exhausted. Strange visions appeared to me during walking and sleeping hours alike. My armpits were always wet with perspiration. My eyes watered constantly. I traveled far and wide, visiting wise Zen teachers and seeking out noted physicians, but none of the remedies they offered brought me any relief. (Norman Waddell, ed. and trans., *Hakuin’s Precious Mirror Cave* [Counterpoint, 2009], 96–97)

Hakuin was physically and mentally exhausted from the rigors of Zen training, so the hermit instructed him in some of the introspective meditation techniques (*naikan no hō*). Some of the techniques emphasize the practices that engage breath-focused attention, explaining, “Begin exhaling and inhaling, counting your breaths from ten to a hundred, from a hundred to a thousand,” which is called *susoku kan*. Some techniques instruct, “Close your eyes and confine all the *ki* [energy] in your mind within your breast. Place a goose feather on your nose. When your breathing does not disturb the feather, count three hundred breaths” (ibid., 107). However, all the techniques emphasize

that the essential point is concentrating *ki* in the lower body in general and, more specifically, in the *tanden*, or “cinabar field,” located below the navel. Furthermore, Hakuin recounts a technique called “butter method” (*nanso no hō*):

Imagine that a lump of soft butter, pure in color and fragrance and the size and shape of a duck egg, is suddenly placed on the top of your head. Slowly it begins to melt, imparting an exquisite sensation as your head becomes moistened and saturated both within and without. It continues oozing down, moistening your shoulders, elbows, and chest, permeating your lungs, diaphragm, liver, stomach, and bowels, then continuing down the spine through the hips, pelvis, and buttocks.

At that point, all the congestions that have accumulated within the five organs and six viscera, all the aches and pains in the abdomen and other affected parts, will follow the mind as it sinks down into the lower body. You will hear this distinctly—like water trickling from a higher to a lower place. It will continue to flow down through the body, suffusing the legs with beneficial warmth, until it reaches the arches of the feet, where it stops.

The student should then repeat the contemplation. As the flow continues downward, it will slowly fill the lower region of the body and suffuse it with penetrating warmth, making him feel as if he is sitting immersed to his navel in a hot bath filled with a decoction of rare and fragrant medicinal herbs that have been gathered and infused by a skilled physician.

Inasmuch as all things are created by the mind, when you engage in this contemplation your nose will actually smell the marvelous scent of pure soft butter, your body will feel the exquisite sensation of its melting

touch. Body and mind will be in perfect peace and harmony. You will feel better and enjoy greater health than you did as a youth of twenty or thirty. All the undesirable accumulations in your vital organs and viscera will melt away. Stomach and bowels will function perfectly. If you continue to practice this contemplation unflinchingly, there is no illness that cannot be cured, no virtue that cannot be acquired, no level of sagehood that cannot be reached, no religious practice that cannot be mastered. Whether such results appear swiftly or appear slowly depends only upon how scrupulously you apply yourself. (Ibid., 108–9)

Yasenkanna ends with Hakuin's notes, which describe how, after receiving these meditation techniques from the hermit, Hakuin started to practice them, which brought about a successful recovery from his malady over time. He adds that he became very healthy even in his later life, and he became energetic not only in devoting himself to his everyday training but also in leading and training his students.

What I find most fascinating is Hakuin's claim to be a timeless voice for any of those who have struggled against the body/mind problem—physically and mentally. People are living in this fast-paced everyday life and society as well as under longtime, hardworking circumstances, with multitasking and a lot of pressure from the work/life balance besides. It is normal to have many kinds of worries about family, work, human relationships, as well as about life, illness, and death. If I think about the SIY programs (and others), I can say that the participants (at least those I've talked with) are looking not only for ways to learn the best possible leadership qualities and abilities but also for ways to search inside themselves, which cultivates self-awareness and self-recognition.

What is crucial here is the very essential question, "Who am I?" In other words, they are looking not only for how to be successful but also for how to be happy. On this very point, recognizing that SIY is a leadership program, I have even realized that one needs to find one's own leader inside oneself. Hakuin's meditation techniques certainly work for these purposes in a larger context. They are not exactly the same as the mindfulness meditation approaches taught by SIY, but there are a lot of shared points between them. It is significant that Hakuin had already been asking the same questions as those we are asking today.

On November 21, 2015, at Butsumoji, a Rinzai Zen temple located in the city of Futtsu, Chiba Prefecture, in Japan, there was a one-day seminar titled "Mindfulness" offered by Morning University of Marunouchi (MUM). MUM is a public educational institute that offers regular courses on weekday mornings, targeting businesspeople working in the areas of Marunouchi and its neighboring districts in Tokyo. That day, forty-five people (including the staff members) attended the seminar. The ratio of men to women was approximately three to seven. Only a few were over fifty, and the rest were in their thirties, on average. Starting at 10:00 a.m. and ending at 5:30 p.m., this seminar offered a tea ceremony, walking meditation, mindfulness eating, and sitting meditations inside and outside the building. A woman asked an interesting question:

I heard that mindfulness is currently very hot in the United States, and a bit of its influence has arrived in Japan. It is certainly not a major movement yet, but certainly it has been gradually accepted among young people. Usually when we hear the term *religion*, we try to avoid it. Mindfulness is not an exception. Why has mindfulness, which

is essentially a Buddhist practice, been accepted in the United States? Why are they not bothered about religion or Buddhism?

Her question immediately brought me some reminders of the shared tendencies in the face of the term *religion* among Japanese today and at a well-known insight meditation center called Spirit Rock, located in California. The name of Spirit Rock doesn't include any Buddhist terms. Names are very interesting. Whatever the reason is, I have observed that the current popularity of mindfulness in the United States shows an important process in the establishment of American Buddhism, which in my mind is more accurate than calling it Buddhism in America.

Here I define the expression "Buddhism in America" as creating a clear divide between Buddhism as a peripheral religion and Christianity as the main religion in the United States. Buddhism, which was born almost twenty-five hundred years ago in India, has established a series of Buddhisms in its long history of transmission—Chinese Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, Sri Lankan Buddhism, Thai Buddhism, Korean Buddhism,

Japanese Buddhism, and so forth. I think that American Buddhism has certainly established itself. It should have its own unique style, as having been born, digested, and developed in the United States. One might say that this digestion means “Americanized,” as Buddhism has been “Japanized.” But I would like to contend that Buddhism is a religion that has been transformed from the periphery to the center within the sphere of American culture and spirituality. This process and/or its influence represents the current mindfulness movement in the United States.

Yet this very same process has also simultaneously provided the opportunity to develop many types of mindfulness practices indeed—both practices that are manifestations of Buddhism and those that are more secular. From this point of view, when I often hear and am asked the question of how the traditional Buddhist establishment should understand American Buddhism and the current popular movement of mindfulness, I also often hear many critical voices saying that it is not Buddhism and that mindfulness lacks Buddhist concepts. I contend that this is a collective voice of conservative essentialists within the traditional Buddhist establishment, which has completely forgotten the important question of how Buddhism has become Buddhisms in its history.

It has been the aim of this article to show that Hakuin’s voice in his *Yasenkanna* still resonates today, but with purposeful and intelligible transformations, in a larger context of the healing and awareness practices of meditations. There are many types of mindfulness practices. What we have seen in this article is the meditation provided by the SIY programs and MUM, that is to say, the meditation that conducts more scientific-evidence-based practices in psychology and neuroscience, or, simply speaking, secular meditation practices. In a sense, explicitly avoiding any overt connections to Buddhist values,

ethical systems, and aesthetics, meditation has been secularized by substituting scientific terminology for Buddhist concepts that have no place in an emerging worldview. Meditation practices offered by SIY and MUM are linked to a creed of social, business, and secular values and to social networks that provide powerful incentives for the perpetuation of healing and awareness, actively supported by younger generations. The links created in those organizations distinguish their mindfulness meditation practices from those of Buddhist traditions in the past and from their survival in the present. Where is the authenticity of the current popular mindfulness movement? Authenticity is generated from within what people need.

One of the issues of “secular meditation” and “corporate meditation” is whether doing mindfulness itself, with no connections to all the positive Buddhist ethical values such as compassion, loving-kindness, and so on, is being faithful to the teachings of Buddhism or not.

In addition, people easily believe that they have learned mindfulness meditation practices after attending a few seminars or retreats. And as one can expect, they go back to take seminars and retreats again after noticing a symptom of the *zenbyō* kind, confessing as Hakuin did: “Afterwards, as I began reflecting over my everyday behavior, I could see that the two aspects of my life—the active and the meditative—were totally out of balance.” They usually repeat this. I argue that one of the most important things is not what we learn at the seminars and retreats but, perhaps more important, how we can use and maintain in our everyday life what we learned at the seminars and retreats. On this point, Hakuin tells us in his calligraphy that practice concentrated in activity is a hundred, a thousand, even a million times superior in a state of inactivity. In fact, Shakyamuni Buddha had the achievement of his enlightenment

when he saw the morning star; Master Xiangyan Zhixian was suddenly enlightened when he was cleaning outside, hearing the sound of a bamboo stem being hit by a piece of tile that he had accidentally knocked over; Master Lingyun Zhiqin reached his enlightenment when peach blossoms were blooming; Hakuin reached his decisive experience when hearing the shrilling of a cricket as he was reading the chapter “A Parable” of the Lotus Sutra. We rarely hear of anyone who has achieved enlightenment while sitting in a meditation hall. Indeed, it is in the very midst of everyday life that one reaches enlightenment. We are living in this world, and it is in this very life itself that we have to see the real meaning of meditation and its effects. Meditation is not just sitting. Meditation is everywhere. I flatter myself that cooking and cleaning are good meditations. I am not saying that retreats are not a good meditation opportunity. Retreats are good. What I want to stress here is that the meaning of meditation lies in making use of it in our everyday life.

The body/mind problem that Hakuin discusses in *Yasenkanna* is a timeless, eternal issue for us humans. In a larger context, it involves the many violations of human bodies and spirits that we see around us every day. To delimit the current movement of mindfulness meditation practice with essentialist Buddhist aesthetics is to diminish its connection to *Yasenkanna* today. This text provides basic principles of Chinese medical theory from Chinese medical literature and Taoist and Buddhist sources. It is a writing on meditation with the “science-based evidence” available in eighteenth-century Japan. Learning that *Yasenkanna* is primarily aimed at nurturing life but that it also helped Hakuin to lead himself as well as his students, we can see that it has something in common with SIY. It is remarkable to consider that *Yasenkanna* still contains much of what we can learn today in the twenty-first century, worldwide. □

Buddhism and Social Engagement (4) Toward Transnational Movements

by Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya

Buddhist social movements are . . . becoming global, gradually going beyond specific regional and cultural contexts and developing into transnational movements addressing common issues such as world peace, human rights, and environmental destruction.

While modern Buddhist social engagement has been local, rooted in particular regions, it also has a global outlook, as in the case of the movements headed by the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Ghosananda. These movements began as responses to issues in their own countries but now have a worldwide following and have developed into movements that are multinational, multicultural, and multireligious. Other Buddhist social movements are similarly becoming global, gradually going beyond specific regional and cultural contexts and developing into transnational movements

addressing common issues such as world peace, human rights, and environmental destruction. This trend is an important aspect of Engaged Buddhism.

Many people from Buddhist countries and regions in Asia (Tibet, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, among others) have been forced to flee their homelands as a result of war and political oppression. Their diasporas have brought about the growth of Buddhist movements, particularly in the West. It has been one of the factors in the internationalization of Engaged Buddhism, along with the Western societies' adoption of Buddhist ideas and application of Buddhist doctrine to social work, and the development of international networks of Buddhists involved in social work around the world.

The International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) consists of socially engaged Buddhists and Buddhist organizations. It started as an international Buddhist conference held in Bangkok in 1989 by Sulak Sivaraksa, a Thai Buddhist activist; Teruo Maruyama, a Japanese Nichiren-sect priest; and others. Its activities are centered principally in South and Southeast Asia, with one of its main undertakings being an international conference held every two

years. It has grown from thirty-six members (Buddhist clergy and laypeople) in eleven countries to a global organization, with many members from Western as well as Asian countries. INEB conferences provide, through workshops and reports by Buddhists from various countries, forums for the exchange of information and for mutual encouragement and support. Proposals are made concerning various social and political issues analyzed from a Buddhist point of view. The conferences fulfill an important role in providing a network that links Buddhist activists and their movements operating at a local level in various places around the world with the international Buddhist movement (Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya, *Nihon no shakai sankai bukkyō: Hōonji to Risshō Kōsei-kai no shakai katsudō to shakai rinri* [Engaged Buddhism in Japan: Social activities and social ethics of Hōonji and Risshō Kōsei-kai] [Tōshindō, 2005], 7–8).

The international growth of Buddhism, particularly its spread to the West, has exerted considerable influence on Buddhist social engagement. The extent may be inferred through the establishment of the English Buddhist group Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO; now known as the Triratna Buddhist Community) and its support for the inauguration of the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayaka Gana (TBMSG) in India, based on the ideas of B. R. Ambedkar.

FWBO was founded by the English monk Sangharakshita in London in 1968. He had been ordained as a *bhikkhu*

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in the Theravada tradition in India in 1950. He returned to England in 1966 and founded FWBO with the purpose of disseminating Buddhism in the West. Sangharakshita did not, however, try to import Asian Buddhism unchanged into English society; rather, he introduced a Buddhism that was adapted to Western culture and lifestyles. FWBO was to contribute greatly to the expansion of Buddhism in many Western countries, not just England. Besides teaching Buddhist doctrine and meditation, Sangharakshita was concerned with putting Buddhist ideas into practice in society, and members took part in environmental-protection movements, visited hospitals and prisons, and worked with delinquent youths (Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King, eds., *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia* [State University of New York Press, 1996], 73–111).

Sangharakshita next looked to the restoration of Buddhism in India. During his time there, he had been acquainted with Ambedkar, and founded TBMSG in 1978 to continue Ambedkar's ideas and work. TBMSG encouraged untouchables and other lower-caste members to convert to Buddhism, and it provided them with educational projects, vocational training, and activities supporting the protection of human rights after their conversion. FWBO set up the Karuna Trust to support these activities by raising money in Western countries. Thus Ambedkar's work not only continued—even after his death—through

TBMSG but was also expanded into the large-scale restoration of Buddhism and a liberation movement for lower-caste members. Similar organizations of Buddhists in the West include the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and the Engaged Zen Foundation in the United States; the Amida Trust in the United Kingdom; and BODHI (Benevolent Organisation of Development, Health and Insight) in Australia. Their engagement encompasses Buddhist spiritual practices such as meditation, social service, and volunteer activities. They have devised ways of solving various social issues facing Western society through volunteer work and community service based on Buddhist ideas. They also contribute financially to the social activities and liberation movements of Asian Buddhists (Christopher S. Queen, ed., *Engaged Buddhism in the West* [Wisdom Publications, 2000]; Kenneth Kraft, "Practicing Peace: Social Engagement in Western Buddhism," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 2, [1995]).

A globalizing Japanese Buddhism has also seen a new growth in international cooperation, especially in terms of support given to Buddhist movements in the developing countries of Asia. As we have already mentioned, one aspect of peace activities by Japanese Buddhism has been increased international aid efforts by Buddhists and Buddhist organizations. Even before World War II, Japanese Buddhist groups were active overseas, for example, in social work in the Japanese colonies. Such activities expanded greatly after the war, spurred

on first by the ideals of internationalism and peace and then backed by financial support generated through Japan's high economic growth. The international situation, marked by civil wars, conflicts, nuclear proliferation, and environmental destruction, also prompted international volunteer activities by Buddhist organizations.

Aid efforts for the relief of Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees in the latter part of the 1970s and during the 1980s triggered international volunteer activities by Japanese Buddhists. The Shanti Volunteer Association (formerly known as the Japan Sotoshu Relief Committee), the Rinzaï Asia Center Kobe, the Association for Rengein Tanjoji International Cooperation, and the Hanazono-kai of the Myōshinji branch of Rinzaï Zen Buddhism are all Buddhist volunteer groups that were originally set up to assist Cambodian refugees in Thailand. Later, more Buddhist NGOs and NPOs (nonprofit organizations)

were founded to promote international cooperation. They include two organizations established by Nichiren Buddhists, the Buddhist Aid Center and the T. M. Ryoyaku Center, as well as the multisectarian Ayus (Network of Buddhist Volunteers on International Cooperation). These groups engage in many kinds of humanitarian work, including refugee relief, poverty relief, disaster relief, education, medical treatment, and development.

Overseas aid undertakings by Japanese Buddhist-affiliated new religious organizations occupy an important place in the international cooperation work carried out by Japanese Buddhists. They include interreligious cooperation movements, antiwar movements, international support for development, and aid for UN projects. At the international level, Rissho Kosei-kai, for example, has taken part in numerous and varied aid activities, beginning with the reception center for Indochinese refugees it set up at Amatsu Kominato in Chiba Prefecture during the 1970s. Since that time it has extended development aid to developing countries, engaged in disaster relief, and provided facilities abroad for medical treatment and education.

Since 1984, it has been collecting blankets in Japan to send to drought-stricken countries in Africa as a member organization of the Japan Blankets for Africa Campaign. Its Dream Bag Project, launched in 1999, collects school supplies, toys, and small necessities, puts these in little bags, and sends them to children in the former Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland, and other places who have suffered psychologically from civil wars and conflicts. A mainstay of Rissho Kosei-kai's peace activities has been the Donate-a-Meal Movement, which started in 1974. The money saved by missing a meal is contributed to Rissho Kosei-kai's Donate-a-Meal Fund for Peace, and the money raised provides financial support for the organization's peace movement and overseas aid activities

(Mukhopadhyaya, *Nihon no shakai sanka bukkyō*, 195–202).

Social Engagement by Nuns and Buddhist Laywomen

Though Buddhism regards all living beings as equal, in reality there is considerable inequality between men and women within Buddhist organizations and sanghas. Even monks and nuns are not on an equal footing in terms of their social and religious position. Nuns are ranked considerably lower than monks, and they are not permitted to receive the precepts in the same way as men. Local cultural customs also influence their position. Even though they are ordained, in many cases they do not receive the same opportunities as monks for education and religious training and are little more than the servants of monks and unpaid laborers of temples. This social and religious gender inequality is also reflected in their social engagement. Far more monks than nuns are able to take a leadership role in social movements and activities, given that they already have a guiding role in their communities.

In recent years, with the ever-growing interest in the issue of gender in Buddhism, nuns and laywomen have been working in various ways to bring about an improvement in the situation of nuns. For example, in 1996, Tsering Palmo, a nun and a doctor of Tibetan medicine, set up the Ladakh Nuns Association (LNA, <http://www.ladakhnunsassociation.com>) to improve the education and living situation of nuns in the Ladakh region of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India, where Tibetan Buddhism holds sway. Since there are no temples for nuns in Ladakh, the nuns have to continue to live with their families even after they become ordained. They receive no Buddhist education and their labor is exploited in the fields or for domestic work. LNA

is building temples for nuns in various places around Ladakh, providing them with the opportunity to undertake Buddhist training, become literate, and study traditional Tibetan medicine, and so nurture them that they may become teachers, doctors, and social workers in their communities.

Of all the Buddhist countries, social engagement by nuns is particularly strong in Taiwan. The Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation, the world's largest Buddhist NGO, was founded by Dharma Master Cheng Yen, a Buddhist nun. She was a disciple of Dharma Master Yin Shun, who introduced the idea of Humanistic Buddhism to Taiwanese Buddhist circles. Cheng Yen formed the foundation to carry on the teachings of her mentor about acting out the principles of Buddhism within society. One of its principal activities is health care. In Taiwan it runs general hospitals (including the Hualien Tzu Chi Medical Center) and other medical facilities and provides medical volunteers through the Tzu Chi International Medical Association. Its medical relief activities (providing doctors, medical materials, medical technology) are being extended overseas through global aid programs.

Tzu Chi's social contribution is based on what it calls its Four Major Missions, which are charity, medicine, education, and culture. These four missions and four

other ongoing efforts, in international relief, the bone marrow donor registry, environmental protection, and enlisting community volunteers, are collectively called Tzu Chi's Eight Footprints (Akira Kaneko, *Kyōi no bukkuyō borantia: Taiwan no shakai sankaku bukkuyō, Jizaikai* [Wondrous Buddhist volunteers: Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation—a socially engaged Buddhism in Taiwan] [Hakubasha, 2005]). A feature of Tzu Chi is that its social work is carried out through active volunteer and service activities by both its lay and ordained members.

In Japan, few relief efforts are carried out by nuns and female Buddhists. But one such effort is Street Workers Co-Op Potalaka (<http://www.interq.or.jp/great/potalaka/index.htm>), an organization that supports the homeless and was set up by a former Ji sect nun, Kōshū Hirao, in the Sumida Ward of Tokyo. It provides temporary shelters for homeless people and those discharged from hospitals and institutions who have nowhere to go. It also runs seminars to train care workers and introduces care workers to those who need them to provide counseling and assistance. It also conducts funerals for those who have no family (see Kōshū Hirao, *Nisō ga iku!* [There goes a Buddhist nun!] [Shinsensha, 2001]).

In 2003, a Nichiren-sect nun, Sōjū Tozawa, opened a temple called Sangha Amagi on the Izu Peninsula in Shizuoka Prefecture as a refuge for women suffering abuse or domestic violence to give them the strength to go on living. From her own experiences of pain and anxiety and based on the wisdom of Buddhism, she is able to solace those who flee to the temple, and to give spiritual counseling to women in trouble by e-mail and other means. Well over five hundred women have visited the temple (Sōjū Tozawa, *Hitori de nayamanaide! Gendai no "kakekomi-dera" funtōki* [Don't keep your worries to yourself! Struggles of a present-day *kakekomi-dera* (a type of Buddhist temple that gave refuge

to abused wives in Edo-period [1603–1867] Japan]) [Kosei Publishing, 2008]).

Another Nichiren-sect nun, Jōkei Majima, from Nagoya, gives support to refugees and illegal immigrants in Japan. In almost all cases, social engagement by nuns in Japan centers on the activities of individual charismatic women who receive little understanding of and support for their activities from their sects and temples.

Additional Remarks

As Buddhism moved from its cradle in India across Asia and then to the West, it underwent many cultural and intellectual developments. In the twentieth century, and ongoing into the twenty-first, the most striking aspect of Buddhism is undoubtedly the Buddhists' active participation in various kinds of social work and social movements. Of particular note is the Buddhist social engagement that looks for an alternative response to issues confronting humankind, such as war, environmental destruction, and discrimination. The greatest concerns of the twenty-first century will be maintaining world peace and protecting the environment. Peace movements based on the Buddhist principle of nonviolence, along with grassroots social development and environmental-protection activities by Buddhist clergy that emphasize people's spiritual improvement, epitomize Buddhism's contribution in this field.

In Japan, from ancient times, monks such as Gyōki (668–749) and Ninshō (1217–1303) have undertaken charitable works for the good of the people. However, as the term *funeral Buddhism* suggests, there has been the impression that Buddhism in Japan concerns itself only with memorial rites for the dead and is passive about social engagement. This image has taken shape against a backdrop of certain historical and social factors. Before World War II, Buddhist groups were actively involved in social activities,

but their work took place within the context of militarism and colonial rule by the Japanese state. As a result, after the war, people became wary of Buddhist social and political involvement, and Buddhist groups themselves were reluctant to engage with society.

One aspect of postwar activity by all the Buddhist sects, though, was their contribution in the fields of welfare and education, as they set up orphanages and childcare facilities and established schools and universities. Also, as we have seen above, Buddhist new religious organizations were highly active in social movements on a global scale, taking part in international cooperation and projects promoting peace.

The social engagement of Buddhism has not been simply in charitable work and volunteer activities by Buddhists and Buddhist groups but also in putting Buddhist ideas into practice in the society. Social work by religious groups has long been one aspect of their dissemination activities. However, as a result of the secularization and rationalization of Japanese society that has come with modernization, and of the separation of religion and the state, religions have receded from the public arena, restricting themselves to the private realm of daily life, focusing on individual faith and the family.

Buddhism's participation in society in the modern period has occurred within a secularized social environment that stresses the separation of religion and the state and of the public and private. To ensure their smooth running, Buddhist groups and organizations engaged in social work tend to operate as social welfare corporations, NPOs, and NGOs. However, this has meant that they are increasingly losing their religious character. An important question for the future of Buddhist social engagement is how Buddhists can express the social ideals of Buddhism and also preserve their religious identity in the public sphere. □

Kanenuiakea: A Living Faith and Practice

by Glen Kila and George Williams

Because Hawaiian culture has been reconstructed from myths and stories that represent a child's level of understanding, the depth of its spirituality has not been seen or appreciated.

Hawaiian religion is about aloha, a word so sacred and profound that it was one of the least used words in ancient times. That is not true in tourist Hawai'i, where everyone is taught to shout "Ah-low-HA." (Queen Lili'uokalani regretted composing the song "Aloha 'Oe" because it became so popular that it encouraged people to misuse its sacred words.) However, the very heart of an article about Hawaiian indigenous spirituality will be about aloha: *aloha 'āina* (love of the land, environment), *aloha 'ōhana* (family, people), *aloha keiki* (children, future generations), and a hundred more. It is about caring, *malāma* (caring for

others, including plants and all living and nonliving beings), and about *ka'ānānīau*, a way of "managing" the community's natural resources.

These principles can be called the "religion of the canoe"—derived from the long open-ocean voyages that required the maximum of cooperation, sharing, effort, peacefulness, conflict resolution, and expertise—an acquired appreciation and understanding of nature, a "native science." (For more on Kanenuiakea values, see <http://kanenuiakea.org/values>.) This indigenous religion is several millennia old with a variety of expressions across Polynesia.

Western Contact and Cultural Survival

As Professor Charles Long famously said, Western contact was not innocent (*Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religions* [Fortress Press, 1986]). It brought negative consequences of Western colonizers: diseases, foreign religion, economics, governance, and almost cultural genocide—plus alcohol and modern weapons.

To pay for this "progress," sandalwood forests were clear-cut; less valuable wood was turned into coke for steamers; an abundant food supply for perhaps four hundred thousand was diminished due to Hawaiians being forced to work for the sandalwood trade while not tending their gardens, and finally arable land was turned into foreign-owned plantations. Death for nine out of ten Hawaiians reduced the population to approximately forty thousand in five decades.

Western arms aided a minor chief, Kamehameha the Great, to "unify" seven of the eight major islands (Kauai would later be acquired by treaty) and install his war god, Ku, as the state religion, subordinating other Hawaiian religions and "consecrating" their temples with blood sacrifices. (Ku religion came from Tahiti in the twelfth century CE and brought with it a hierarchy of rulers [*ali'i*]; a modified form of patriarchy; and constant war, with blood sacrifice to its war god.)

When Kamehameha I died, his queens persuaded Kamehameha II to end the establishment of the Ku religion

Kumu Glen Kila, a former school principal, was selected from birth to carry on the Hawaiian religion, Kanenuiakea, being taught its ancient beliefs and values. He has reinstituted the traditional Hawaiian Learning Center, Marae Ha'a Koa, as a public means for preservation of Hawaiian faith and practice.

George M. Williams is Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at California State University, Chico. He has lectured widely on world and indigenous religions; among his published works are Handbook of Hindu Mythology and Shinto. Williams now works with Hawaiians for the restoration of their faith and nation.

in 1819. Christian missionaries arrived a year later and would eventually bring about the establishment of Christianity as the state religion. Later plantation-era governments were less tolerant of indigenous religion, language, and culture. Further, under the United States, the Hawaiian language was intentionally kept from being used, children had to be given a Christian name, and the supposed nonexistent indigenous religion was persecuted as sorcery and superstitious healing practices until the 1970s.

Surviving Persecution

Some indigenous religions survive by hiding themselves in the conquering religion, as was done so often in

South and Central America. Their symbols and manifestations of the sacred (often called gods) were merged into the Catholic saints and angels. Many of the local faiths of Africa survived in sacred music and dance—and even in secret societies practiced by communicants of a conquering religion.

While other Hawaiian indigenous religions may have been extinguished by persecution and ridicule during the remaining nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Kanenuiakea survived, hidden (*huna*) on the Waianae coast of Oahu island, its *wahipana* (sacred homeland). (Alleged knowledge of lost Hawaiian spirituality as secret [*huna*] is now sold as magical powers by supposed masters in their commercial

workshops and retreats. Again, inappropriate use, misappropriation, and commercialization of indigenous traditions are a common story in Europe and America.) Kanenuiakea was taught and practiced traditionally in Waianae by *kupuna* (elders), and many Hawaiians continued living the values and concepts of Kanenuiakea such as *aloha*, *malāma ʻāina*, and respect for *ʻaumakua* (“ancestors,” described further below).

Religious discrimination and prevention of the right to worship occur even today in the Waianae *wahipana* in numerous ways. Here are some examples:

Not one of the thirty-plus *heiau* (temples) on the Waianae coast is owned, or even administered, by Kanenuiakea worshippers.

Currently Hawaiians are limited access from entering and praying at Kaneaki Heiau by a homeowners' association. Further, the entire Makua Valley, the Garden of Eden in Kanenuiakea-origin stories, was confiscated by the US military, and entrance and worship there is regulated by the military. The entire valley, with its more than a thousand historic sites, has been used as an active firing range until recently, without regard to its cultural and religious value (<http://www.returnourheiau.org>).

And Mauna Kea, Hawai'i's highest volcano, which is as sacred to Hawaiians as Mount Fuji is to Shintoists (and almost all other Japanese), rises to Kane, a heavenly symbol of the divine, the sun. Mauna Kea is *akua* (mistranslated in English as "God"; see below for further discussion), a manifestation of the *ohana* relationship of all creation, the interconnectedness of all of life.

The use of Mauna Kea for commercial, military, and outdated scientific purposes (reputedly for the US Air Force Space Command) is a desecration of its sacredness and a violation of Hawaiian values of *aloha* and *lōkahi*. Worshippers have just regained the right to pray on Mauna Kea, largely because of the support coming from the recognition of Kanenuiakea's existence by the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF).

Silenced, but Speaking Again

Modern academic disciplines have "discovered" many voices that were ignored or silenced, especially those of women. Conquered or oppressed people, especially indigenous groups around the planet, have similar histories to ours in Hawai'i. Although the facts of occupation might have bred hatred, Kanenuiakea's values, derived from the cooperation needed for long open-ocean voyages, have made ours among the most peaceful—and religious—of cultures.

According to Professor John Charlot, ancient Hawaiians had more than ninety different kinds of *heiau*—temples that were also healing centers, craft guilds, and learning centers (*Classical Hawaiian Education: Generations of Hawaiian Culture* [Pacific Institute, 2005], CD-ROM). They found nature "alive" with manifestations of the holy (*akua*), resulting in the false charge of animism.

Hawai'i changed after "discovery" and Christianization. After Kamehameha the Great lost almost his entire invasion fleet when attempting to conquer Kauai, he seemed to have lost faith in Ku, his war god. He declared, "Ua kapu ke ola na Kane" (all life is sacred to Kane). After his death Queen Kaahumanu ended the tradition of men worshipping and eating alone; men and women could eat together, and the food taboos were broken. The old warrior religion of Ku as the state religion was dead in 1819. The Hawaiian Kingdom joined the Family of Nations as a Christian kingdom, and then it became the first nation in history to declare itself as peaceful and forever neutral. No ships of war or their supplies would be provided a base in the Hawaiian Kingdom. However, the United States wanted to extend Manifest Destiny into the Pacific and sought to annex Hawai'i, especially as a naval station. It took two attempts to acquire Pearl Harbor, but annexation was never completed ([\[.org/political-history.shtml\]\(http://political-history.shtml\), and <http://hawaiiankingdom.org/us-occupation.shtml>\). Two presidents, Grover Cleveland and Bill Clinton, would apologize for these illegal actions and for the imprisonment of Queen Lili'uokalani.](http://hawaiiankingdom</p>
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Hawai'i's Last Monarch

Queen Lili'uokalani was the last Christian monarch of the first nation to declare itself a neutral nation, having seven treaties with the United States. Yet in 1893 Marines from the USS *Boston* aided proxies to take the "pearl of the Pacific" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overthrow_of_the_Kingdom_of_Hawaii). The queen's protest to President Cleveland blended two traditions of nonviolence: "Sermon on the Mount" Christianity (Matthew 5) and Hawai'i's indigenous "open-ocean canoe ethics" of Kanenuiakea. (This is almost the same combination of values that Gandhi utilized as he developed

satyagraha nearly three decades later—his second aspect being indigenous Indian values.) Although Cleveland apologized and Hawai'i was never annexed, the war party in Washington won out, and the Hawaiian Kingdom would be occupied as a territory until after World War II, when it “became” a state.

Hawaiians still wait for a just resolution to what they believe is an illegal occupation. (As of December 2015, Hawaiians are facing a vote to become “tribal citizens” under the US Department of the Interior, with the privileges of Native Americans if they finally renounce the rights as sovereign and neutral nation.)

Even peaceful cultures usually revert to violence when violence and injustice are inflicted on them. Queen Lili'uokalani believed completely that “all life is sacred to Kane.” She worked until the end of her life for justice and an end to the American occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom, whose treaties of nonbelligerence with as many as eighty nations, including the United States, could have been an example for peaceful coexistence before the world wars.

The *kupuna* (elders) in Waianae remembered Queen Lili'uokalani's coming to specific Kane *heiau* (temples) to pray near the end of her life. She had seen her kingdom destroyed and none of the treaties of nonaggression honored. Yet she still believed in the indigenous values of her ancestors, whose skills at solving conflict had survived on this isolated and lonely coast—the values of *aloha* and *lōkahi* (peaceful coexistence).

Indigenous Hawaiian Religion and Inherited Values

Indigenous religions often do not have the word *religion* in their native languages, as they are inclusive of all aspects of life. They are local and sometimes ethnic, with the axis of the world

centering in their land (Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* [Harper & Brothers, 1961]). Thus, they love and care for their home and maintain its resources. Most are erroneously called pantheistic (Greek: all or everything is God), because they experience manifestations of the sacred in every aspect of the natural universe. And that leads to the notion that they are either polytheistic or animistic, although the manifold nature of reality, its polarities, its paradoxes, its mystery, are simplified only in stories or myths for children as their earliest understanding of indigenous wisdom. There is depth to these myths and complexities of interpreted natural experience unknown when the stories are literalized in English. The Hawaiian language, like Chinese, has a metapoetic quality that points beyond the literal to something “more.” Translations into English were often deliberately “mythologized”—made self-contradictory and nonscientific.

Scholars have written that the Hawaiian religions were primitive, animistic, or polytheistic. They did not study the living tradition but worked with texts composed as Hawaiian spirituality became more and more secretive (*huna*). As oral Hawaiian was converted into a written language, few of the deeper meanings of words were recorded. Hawaiian is a contextual language with organizing concepts situated in processes of nature—in the air, on land, at sea, among plants, and so forth. So, for instance, the same word *koa* means coral in the sea, a special hardwood tree among plants, a protector among humans, and so on—each

a shelter or guardian from harm or aggression.

Lexicographers have trouble with languages of oral traditions and special difficulties with contextual languages. How many meanings ancient Hawaiians knew indicated their level of education, understanding, and mastery of cultural values. Because Hawaiian culture has been reconstructed from myths and stories that represent a child's level of understanding, the depth of its spirituality has not been seen or appreciated.

One difficulty of discussing Hawaiian religion and culture arises because Western languages and concepts about “religion” and “God” are privileged. Note that a capital *G* means that this deity is the one true God and a lowercase *g* means that god is false. This binary logic applies to both religion and God—they are either true or false. There is nothing like that in ancient Hawaiian. There are nuances and aspects and levels of understanding in human knowledge and wisdom.

Western ideas of God/god do not adequately find an equivalence in Hawaiian indigenous religion, as the manifestations are immanent, in this world, and not transcendent, in a heavenly realm (with an exception

is another word in Hawaiian for the “God beyond God” (Paul Tillich was not the first to coin this phrase) that is known but not said.

‘Aumakua is another notion among the reminders of the sacred. Kumu Glen Kila recalls:

My ancestors still live in me [*kupuna* as *‘aumakua*]. Plants, fish [sharks], birds, even insects, are able to symbolize them; they too are *‘aumakua*. I do not worry about or fear death, because I trust life. We have no developed idea of an afterlife, so we focus on living better and doing our *kuleana* [task, responsibility] in this lifetime. We are all-encompassing. Consciousness doesn’t die.

Our worldview demands careful observation. In a sense, nature talks to us. We listen to plants and winds; we observe subtle colors of the ocean and the motion of waves, tides, clouds, stars. We can smell the seasons and see beyond the islands. Nature is our home. We love it and care for it [*malāma ‘aina*]. Nature is our bible that records our history, beliefs, and values. We see ourselves as nature, not nature by our image. That is, we describe our children as baby chicks, as baby banana stalks or taro shoots—not the other way around.

Our cultural consciousness understands nature and its powers, even troubling ones, as *akua*, representing them in the wisdom stories of Kanenuiakea. These powers are also within each human and must be responded to appropriately. Consciousness is changed as one encounters such natural phenomena.

***Ka‘ananiau*—Managing the Rolling Beauty of Time**

During traditional times, the concept of *ka‘ananiau* emphasized the

significance of the cycles and relationships of nature. When humans were in harmony (*lōkahi*) with nature’s movements, the rolling beauty of the seasons, then life was right (*pono*). It entailed all the “values of the canoe.” Properly managing and sharing all the natural resources of the air, land, and sea ensured prosperity.

Most indigenous people, and especially in island cultures, tend to evolve a sustainable use of resources. This was especially true on the “rock canoe” of Hawai‘i, where common resources such as fresh water, forest products, and a common fish pond made life almost a paradise. Consequently, there was no notion of hell and just a vague notion of an afterlife.

Kanenuiakea—a Primal Religion Shared

Kanenuiakea’s faith and practice was shared publicly for the first time in 2012 at the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu and internationally at the Birmingham (UK) International Association for Religious Freedom Congress in 2014.

Kanenuiakea’s agrarian values* have been kept alive and are now being shared with anyone interested in learning about how indigenous peoples sustained their part of the planet. Reviving indigenous spiritualities that stress love, sharing, and harmony with others and nature might just help humanity survive. □

* Another example of an ancient agrarian stratum dominated by a warrior culture is “rice or village Shinto” (peaceful, agrarian, welcoming, and international) as different from samurai or warrior Shinto (powerful, allied with the state, closed, and ethnic) (cf. *Shinto* by George M. Williams [Chelsea House Publishers, 2005], 143; a book Rishso Kosei-kai’s founder Nikkyo Niwano asked Williams to write—on their first meeting). These values are lived—values of cooperation, of sharing, and love of family, of community, of culture, of language, of land.

for Hawaiian mystical experience of that which should not be symbolized). Naturalistic and indigenous religion can function spiritually both with and without any theistic or polytheistic conception of what is sacred and meaningful. *Akua* is experienced in the natural order; it is seen or heard as a symbol or manifestation of the sacred. *Akua* is both singular (Kane) and plural (the thousands of divine manifestations).

What might be naturalistic manifestations of the holy, the sacred (*akua*, the plural)? First, rocks, animals, fish, lizards, mountains, might be *akua* if they are “experienceable” as such. Second, they must be experienced as *akua* by *kahuna* (religious specialists, masters) and, more important, by the worshipping community. It is a social or cultural experience. Third, the experience of *akua* is accompanied by a phenomenon called *mana* (usually translated as “power,” but inadequately).

Akua as the old highest manifestation of the holy was worshipped as Kane, Kanaloa, Ku, and Lono. However, the symbols of Kane (the sun), the rain, and the four hundred thousand elements in nature were understood metaphorically as manifestations of divinity in the Kanenuiakea tradition. The concept contains both an affirmation and a denial. It is said by the *kupuna*: “God [Kane] creates/needs man [*kane*]; man [*kane*] creates/needs God [Kane].” There

Making Women Use Their Influence for Good, and Their Power for Good

Interview with Pastor Esther Abimiku Ibanga,
Recipient of the Thirty-Second Niwano Peace Prize

The Niwano Peace Foundation awarded the thirty-second Niwano Peace Prize on May 14, 2015, to Pastor Esther Ibanga of Nigeria for her courageous efforts to promote women's empowerment and peaceful coexistence. On May 15, Dr. Hiroshi M. Niwano, chair of the foundation, interviewed Pastor Ibanga at Rissho Kosei-kai headquarters in Tokyo. The interview highlighted the importance of promoting peace activities based on a maternal way of thinking.

Niwano: Pastor Ibanga, my first impression is that your work is down-to-earth and comes from the type of thinking that is characteristic of women. My impression is that your activities are based on a maternal way of thinking, on maternal love, if you will. You are doing concrete things on a large scale in the context of an unspeakably harsh environment that is unimaginable to us, with its terrible fighting and drugs, and yet when I see you here I am relieved, and I get the impression that perhaps all the people

working with you go about their work with a sense of security.

Ibanga: I am so thankful to God for receiving the award. We have worked so hard and in very difficult terrains for the past four years. We did not receive any support from our state government, our federal government, or any other organization. We as women used the little resources we had because we believed in what we were doing. When the announcement of this award came,

I felt it was God using the Niwano Peace Foundation to reward us. It was very encouraging for us, and the women working with us were so excited. Now they believe that if you keep on doing good and what you believe in, someday God will reward you. That's how I felt about the award.

Second, let me add this bit. As I mentioned in my commemorative

Pastor Esther Abimiku Ibanga was born in 1961 in the Nassarama State of Nigeria. She graduated from Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria, and received her master's degree in business administration at the University of Jos, Nigeria. She worked for sixteen years in the Central Bank of Nigeria, as a senior supervisor of its headquarters' Branch Operations Department; as an assistant manager of the Foreign Operations Department; and as a manager of banking operations in Jos. She voluntarily retired in 2001. In 1995, while serving as the Jos city manager, she founded Jos Christian Missions International, pioneering Nigeria's first church with a woman pastor. As its senior pastor she worked to take care of the poor and underprivileged, reaching out to young people, widows, and orphans.

speech, I didn't believe at first that the award was real because I didn't even know my name was nominated. When I saw the award announcement with its offered prize money I felt it was a scam, and I didn't answer the e-mail to me about it until the foundation sent me a second e-mail, which mentioned the name of a person I know in the United States. But I still didn't answer the foundation. I got in touch with that person first and asked her, "Do you know these people from whom I just got the e-mail? Is it true?" She said, "Oh, yes, I gave them your e-mail address. They are okay, and it's true." It was only then that I responded to the foundation.

who make sure there is food in the house. They go to the farms, they come back home, they sweep, they cook. They have pregnancies. Most families are sustained by women. They do petty trading to keep house. They sell vegetables in the market, or bread or other food, or sweep the streets to have money to support their families. So they run the economy of Nigeria. But when it comes to politics or job appointments, they are hardly considered. It's all men. Men have political differences as well as religious and tribal differences, and these cause people to fight. When they fight, the poor women have no political voices, which are in their hearts. They look after their children at home, trying to make ends meet.

When conflicts break out, women and children become the targets. Women are the ones who are attacked and killed, with their children. So that was what made me act in February 2010. Five hundred and thirty women and children were killed in a village close to where I lived, so I had to go into the street. I led a protest rally directed at the government, and a hundred thousand women came out. We were dressed in black because we were in mourning, and we told the government that these killings had to stop and that women and children should not be targeted in a conflict they had no part of.

Nigeria's conflicts are caused by economics, politics, lack of social services, and so many other things. But now that we have had fresh elections and have a new president, we are hopeful that things will change. If they don't change, we will go back into the streets.

Niwano: You just mentioned that a new president has been elected. Did the activities of your organization influence this?

Ibanga: Yes, we were definitely part of the pressure, along with other organizations. But we have been very vocal in demanding good government, in

demanding that the government rescue the Chibok girls kidnapped by Boko Haram. I know that when the election came, many people did not vote for the incumbent president because of these Chibok girls.

You know he lost. We also had a rally for the release of the Chibok girls. We sent a communiqué to the government, although there was no reply. We marched to the State House of Assembly, and twice we marched to the governor's office. Even though they received us, they don't like us. They think we are troublesome.

Niwano: Are you thinking of applying such pressure again?

Ibanga: If the new government doesn't bring about the visible changes that we want to see, we are going to make sure they hear from us again. Because the government hasn't cared for the people, and people are suffering too much in Nigeria, especially the poor, and the young, who have no jobs, no schools, and no money. What do you expect us to do? That is why we have violence and crime.

Niwano: Would you please tell us again specifically what you wanted to accomplish with the founding of WOWWI, particularly from a woman's perspective?

Ibanga: Number one is to stop politicians from using religion to divide us. Number two is to stop politicians from using tribal and ethnic differences to divide us. Number three is to contribute to stopping violence. That's why we are involved in conflict resolution, reconciling warring groups, warring tribes, warring communities.

Also, we want to show Nigeria and the rest of the world that it doesn't matter what tribe you belong to or what religion you believe in. We are one people. We are Nigerians. And we will make demands on the government to look

Niwano: Pastor Ibanga, since women and children, the most vulnerable members of society, were being killed in Nigeria as a result of long-running conflicts and violence, you felt a strong sense of crisis. Under those circumstances, in 2010 you founded Women Without Walls Initiative [WOWWI]. Would you please, although I know you have done so many times, comment once again about the condition of society in Nigeria and the present situation for women and children there?

Ibanga: Nigeria is a country of so many mixtures. We have the very rich and the very poor, and this unequal distribution of wealth is because of bad government. We have a population of about 170 million people, and out of that, 60 million of our young people are unemployed. So you can imagine the social problems that will be present. That's why the rate of poverty is high, crime is high, corruption is high, and disease is high, because there are no social services.

Our roads are bad. We don't have electricity all the time. Civil servants in my state, for example, work nine months and are not paid any salaries. So the situation is very bad.

Women are marginalized, but they are very hardworking. They are the ones who go to the farms. They are the ones

out for the interests of all Nigerians, not just people in the government.

Another thing is to see how we can stop young people in our communities from becoming radicalized. We have a Mothers Schools program, which teaches mothers how to detect signs of radicalization in their children and how to love them enough to spare them trauma.

Young people themselves are prone to violence, both men and women. We tell them that because politicians give them money to buy guns and let them go into the streets, they cause trouble. In turn, we ask the politicians where their children are. The answer would be that most of their children are at schools in the United Kingdom or the United States, or other places abroad. Then we say to politicians, if you believe in what you are doing, let your children come back here and lead other young people in the struggle against violence. Because of this kind of advocacy, violence has gone down a lot, and young people are no longer receiving guns with which to go into the streets and fight.

We have also encouraged dialogue between the police and their communities. Police can come together and work with local communities. Everywhere you go, people don't like the police. Even in Nigeria people don't like the police. They believe police officers are corrupt and that some are criminals themselves, and that politicians use them. But WOWWI has been able to get the police and members of local communities to sit down together, talk about their differences, and see how they can work together.

These have been some of our goals and objectives in forming our organization.

Niwano: What you have just said is wonderfully specific, and listening to you, I am sure that what you say is true. But I'm wondering why men, including us here, have difficulty thinking in that same way?

Ibanga: Men are more concerned with power. Even politics is all about power, because through power they control resources. I am sorry to say it, but most men are selfish. They only think about themselves. But not all of them. But a woman is a builder by nature. She will build the home, she will build the lives of her children, and if her husband allows her to do so, she will also build his life. Women know the pain of childbirth, and there is something that pain produces in you that makes you appreciate the value of a thing. I think that's what makes the difference between men and women.

Niwano: Pastor Ibanga, you have two children. Do you think that getting married and having two children changed you?

Ibanga: Before I got married I was also selfish. But when I got married and I had children, my life changed, and it was all about my children. I am ready to die for my children. I can deny myself something, but I will do everything I can to give my children what they want. So childbearing actually cures you of selfishness. When I look at other young people, I also feel as if they are my children. That's why I feel passionate about changing their lives.

One day a Muslim boy in one of the communities we walked in sent me a text in which he called me "Mother" and said, "I love you." That brought tears to my eyes, because these were Muslims we'd never had anything to do with before, because we were enemies. That showed me that WOWWI had made an impact.

Niwano: This is why so many people were truly moved by your speech yesterday at the award ceremony. I felt it was because of the maternal love that you show everyone. I heard from many of the people there that they had wept during your speech. I was one of them. It's not just your words, it's the love that

you convey and that pours out of you, Pastor Ibanga, that comes across so wonderfully.

I have a wife, and we have four children. When she became a mother, I felt that her personality had changed. Her way of thinking about children shows a quality that I don't seem to have, an unmatched maternal love, a maternal love for her children, which she doesn't show for her husband. It's something I can't imitate myself. That is why when I observe my wife's love for our children, I think that is what it is to love human beings, and I resolve to love our children as much as possible in the same way she does.

Ibanga: That's so wonderful.

Niwano: That is why when I was listening to you, Pastor Ibanga, I thought that if we men were willing to learn from women who have children what it means to truly love others, perhaps we would have a better society.

Ibanga: Absolutely. I believe that is why God created women to bring forth life. A woman is a life giver. She doesn't take lives. That's why it is hard to find women that will take lives. It's because by the nature of her creation she is a life giver. You give a woman a seed, just a seed, and she brings forth a child. You give her a

house and she turns it into a womb. I think it's a gift from God. Women are very powerful and influential. That's why we are trying to make women use their influence for good, and their power for good.

I remember once when we went into a very violent community. We were about eight or ten women from WOWWI, and we wanted to meet with the youth of that community. About two hundred of them came with all the religious leaders, traditional leaders—village heads and chiefs. We asked the young people, "What is your problem? Why are you going around the streets killing and becoming violent extremists?" One of the women on my team got up and spoke to all the young people. Many of them had red eyes and were drunk or high at two o'clock in the afternoon.

She said to them, "My children, next time you want to go and make trouble, remember your mothers." That was all she said. The young people melted. They could not talk anymore. By the time we were leaving they were hanging on to us, and they said it was the first time anybody bothered to find out how they felt. That was, I think, in 2012. From that time to today there has not been any violence in that community. That's the power of mothers' love. It is God-given. That's why it's so impactful.

Niwano: You have said many times in your talks that a woman's maternal love is God-given. Would I be right in thinking that your parents fostered your religious faith?

Ibanga: I had very wonderful parents, especially my father. My father loved us absolutely. We were eight girls and two boys born to my parents, and my father loved and believed in us girls so much that he sent us to school even when it was not popular to send girls to school. When we were in school, my father would ride his bicycle to the school to see if anyone might be bothering his daughters.

He taught us that we are the best. He taught us never to think less of ourselves because we were female. So we grew up with that confidence in ourselves, in our abilities secured by our father's love and the feeling that he would always protect us. He was also a very godly man. He taught us about God, and we saw God in him, so it was not difficult for us to follow his God. My mother was a disciplinarian; when she slaps, you see the mark on your cheek. But she taught us the value of hard work. She was a very hardworking woman. I think I was blessed to have that kind of parents in my life.

Niwano: I think that this balance between maternal nature and paternal nature is very important, but my impression, according to what you have said, is that you were raised with maternal love from your father and paternal love from your mother.

Ibanga: Yes, through discipline. My given name is Esther, but my father called me Baban Meche, which means "great woman." All of his life he never ever called me Esther. He always called me Baban Meche. So I think he prophesied about my life and what I would become. All the girls in the family have gone on to become really great women by the grace of God.

Niwano: You spoke about Boko Haram in your speech yesterday. Because you are doing your work as a Christian leader, I would think you are an easy target for Boko Haram. Would you please tell us specifically, from your own point of view, what the religious issues in Nigeria are, and the problems that arise from the fact that there are many religions in Nigeria?

Ibanga: Okay. Let me start by saying that my life is in God's hands, and he is my protector, so I have no fear. Second, the campaign against Boko Haram is just one of the least of the things we do. We

are not anti-Boko Haram activists. We are Women Without Walls Initiative. This has happened because we want to stop violence in our communities. We don't know who the Boko Haram people are, but we want to stop them from using young people. That's what we have been doing. When Boko Haram is no more in Nigeria—and that is our prayer—WOWWI will still continue with its work.

However, talking about Nigeria, the truth of the matter is we are a secular state—I don't know how to explain it. Our constitution does not force any religion on anybody. You are free to believe what you like, but you cannot force somebody to embrace your religion. That is the situation in Nigeria. We have Christians, Muslims, and other traditional worshippers, and even those who don't believe in God.

But we must learn to coexist. I personally believe that religion is based on personal revelation. The best way to tell people about your God is to let them see him in you.

Niwano: Do you mean that you pursue the activities of WOWWI with an awareness of such things, and at the same time with an awareness of religious things?

Ibanga: Yes, I do. I cannot speak for my members because some of them belong to other religions. But my faith is in Jesus Christ, because my Bible tells me that we are the light of the world. What is the use of light in a place where there is already light? But it's when you step into the dark that you need light, and light is only effective in darkness. I believe God has sent us to step into every dark area and bring his light.

Niwano: I would like to confirm one thing. Would it be safe to say that when you started WOWWI, it was to resolve conflict and a variety of other problems, and not particularly for the purpose of

interreligious cooperation, but that your work gradually came to include working with people of various faiths other than Christians?

Ibanga: Yes, you are right. Let me make something else clear. I found out that working only with Christians was not going to solve our problems and that I would have to engage with people of other faiths to understand their thinking, why they do the things they do, and to tell Muslims that if Islam is a religion of peace, we can walk together toward peace. I may not have started with interreligious dialogue, but I saw the need along the way to engage with people of other faiths.

Niwano: What you are saying is so clear and easy to understand that I am mystified as to why so far this has not happened very often in human history, promoting such simple things.

Ibanga: Of course, it is the grace of God that is leading us. It's God's mercy. What we do is actually very simple. It's nothing complicated.

Niwano: We men tend to make things complicated, because we try to hold our ground. I have learned so much from you today and, through the award ceremony, about the special characteristics of women.

I understand that you have been putting a lot of effort into conflict-resolution workshops. Please tell us some of the specifics of these.

Ibanga: Our members have been just ordinary women from different walks of life, so we have not been professionally trained to handle conflicts. But I believe that a woman is a natural conflict manager. In homes sometimes, when there is a problem between the father and the children, you will hear the father tell the mother, "Go and talk to your children." Sometimes when children have

a problem with daddy, they will not go to him. They will go to mommy.

Women can bring reconciliation and peace to the world. When we came together as WOWWI, we had to hire a consultant on how to brush up this natural skill and to teach us skills in conflict resolution and how to mediate between one warring community and another, between one tribe and another, and between people of one faith and another when there was religious conflict.

We were taught, number one, that when you go to resolve a conflict you must be neutral. Number two, you must bring the two parties together. Number three, you must not tell them what to do; let them say what they will do as a result of dialogue. Number four, if you go to a Muslim community, don't dress in a way that will offend them, or when you come to a Christian community, don't argue with them. These are some of the things we were taught. We even had to be trained to use the right tone of voice. That's the kind of training and workshops that our women experienced.

Then, even among ourselves, we had to learn conflict resolution, because we were sometimes quarreling with each other. One woman would say, "She didn't greet me"; another woman would say, "She talks too much." Even some of my vice presidents needed to be reconciled. I had to learn how to swallow everything. You know it's not easy to keep women together. We also had to learn how to deal with internal conflicts, and members were also trained in how to mediate between communities or warring factions.

Niwano: That consultant had a skill, and it was an important one, wasn't it? I think I'd love to learn that skill and use it in my own home. You have been so generous with your talk, and we have gone on quite a bit longer than planned, but do you have any questions for us, Pastor Ibanga?

Ibanga: Yes. I am very grateful for the award. My people are very grateful and excited. My husband's state is celebrating it. And even the whole of Nigeria is celebrating this award. So we are very happy about it. But I am curious about what made you do this.

Niwano: The members of the Peace Prize Committee take seriously the task of finding persons who are active in the service of world peace, and they put a great deal of thought into identifying and selecting them. The committee members are themselves religious leaders in their own parts of the world, who put all of their efforts into leading and peace building. They had lists of a variety of candidates and deliberated diligently for two days on who to select for this year. As far as we are concerned, you were likely selected by the Buddha, Pastor Ibanga.

Finally, although you were kind enough to deliver a message to us today at the headquarters of Rishso Kosei-kai, there are millions of other Rishso Kosei-kai members in Japan and throughout the world, so we would appreciate it very much if you would deliver a final message to all of our members, if you have one.

Ibanga: Thank you. I would like to remind all of your members of something that I learned from the founder of your movement. I am sure they know that nothing they do for others will be unrewarded for them someday. What you do for others is a like a seed dropped in the soil and covered by it, where it stays hidden for a long time. But eventually a sapling will grow from that seed. It will grow branches and bear fruit, and each piece of fruit may produce hundreds of seeds, which you are now receiving. You always get back more seeds from the one you sowed. My message to your members and your organization is to keep on sowing; you never know what you will reap. Thank you. □

Sent by the Gods and the Buddhas

by Nikkyo Niwano

In March 1999 an autobiography by Rev. Nikkyo Niwano (1906–99), the founder of Rissho Koseikai, was published in Japanese under the title Kono michi: Ichibutsujo no sekai o mezashite (The path that we have walked: Aspiring to the world of the One Buddha Vehicle). The book is a lively account of the life of Founder Niwano as a leader of an international lay Buddhist association and a pioneer of interreligious cooperation who dedicated himself to liberating all people from suffering with firm faith in the Lotus Sutra. Dharma World will continue to publish excerpts from the book in installments.

“Do we have the green light?”

“No, not yet. We still don’t have a clear passage.”

“Will we even be able to hold the second conference next year?”

These were typical of the exchanges between the members of the executive committee of Religions for Peace when they met.

Eventually, it was decided to hold an international conference every four years when I was in New York in November 1971, attending the preparatory meetings of the executive committee of Religions for Peace for the Second World Assembly, which was held in Europe in 1974.

We immediately began the preliminary groundwork. In 1972 Dr. Dana McLean Greeley and I traveled around meeting religious leaders in Europe, particularly those in what was then West Germany.

Accompanied by Dr. Maria A. Lucker, who had been a member of the executive committee for the Kyoto conference, we visited Gustav Heinemann, the president of West Germany, and described to him the achievements of the Kyoto conference, explaining in detail how approximately three hundred religious leaders

from around the world had gathered in one place and seriously discussed how to contribute to world peace. President Heinemann, a devout Protestant, listened attentively, and when we asked for his support for the second assembly, he told us, “I am full of admiration for the efforts you are all making. From a personal point of view, I think that Berlin would be a most suitable place for you to hold a meeting where

religious leaders can discuss peace.” We talked for an hour, and our meeting was widely reported in the newspapers and on television.

In West Germany both Catholics and Protestants were fairly equal in number, which seemed to make it representative of European Christianity, while Berlin, divided between the communist bloc on the one hand and the community of free nations on the other, represented in

Nikkyo Niwano, the founder of Rissho Kosei-kai, was an honorary president of Religions for Peace and honorary chairman of Shinshuren (Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan) at the time of his death in October 1999. He was awarded the 1979 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

miniature the actual structure of the contemporary world. Truly West Germany was a fitting place to hold a world assembly and we were confident that the second one would be held there.

We continued to visit religious leaders, reporting on the Kyoto conference and seeking their support for the second assembly. They included Bishop Hermann Kunst, who was the first authorized representative of the Evangelical Church in Germany to the West German government; Metropolitan Irinaios, the highest leader of the Greek Orthodox Church in western Europe; Metropolitan Nikodim of the Russian Orthodox Church; Professor Richard von Weizsäcker, later president of West Germany; and Dr. Joseph J. Spae, general secretary of SODEPAX, the Committee on Society, Development, and Peace, headquartered in Geneva and run jointly by the World Council of Churches and the Vatican.

Perhaps my most memorable meeting was with Bishop Kunst, who asked me out of the blue what my qualifications were to be making such a visit. It was a completely unexpected question. I had certainly been traveling the world calling for participation in the world assembly, but what actually were my qualifications for involving myself in this way? I replied, "I am the president of a lay Buddhist organization called Rissho Kosei-kai. I believe that we can contribute to peace if we can unite the strength of people of religion from around the world. This is why I am visiting religious leaders to ask for their support."

When I thought more deeply about what had brought me to where I was then, it seemed that in all that had happened—my founding of Rissho Kosei-kai, my role in the establishment of Shinshuren (Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan)—I thought I had simply done what was needed to promote interreligious cooperation. Because I realized the necessity that someone as a volunteer had to be assigned to achieve that goal, I decided to be that "someone." This I explained to Bishop Kunst, and spoke to him frankly about Religions for Peace's progress down to the present. The bishop then threw me another pointed question, "Do you believe in God?" Perhaps he was under the impression that Buddhists held atheistic ideas. He was uncompromising. "If you don't recognize an absolute God, how can your organization be called a religion?"

Because I knew that the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* describes "Buddhism" as not recognizing any supreme deity or first cause, I thought it was likely that Bishop Kunst's questions were based on this idea. Furthermore, since there was another view in European thought that monotheism is a more advanced form of religion than polytheism, I thought his uncompromising question was natural.

I responded: "In Buddhism we call the fundamental great life that sustains everything in the universe and causes all phenomena to appear the Eternal Buddha. The historical Buddha Shakyamuni was an incarnation of the unborn and undying Eternal Buddha, who was born human to propagate his teachings. I think there is

a lot of similarity here with the relationship between your God and Jesus Christ, whom he gave to the world. I am here today at the command of the Eternal Buddha. Hasn't your God in heaven made similar demands of you? Don't you hear the voice of God also?"

For the first time, Bishop Kunst nodded his approval. "I understand. Yes, I understand very well. Meeting with you today has indeed been deeply meaningful and valuable." He clasped my hand tightly, almost as if he were going to embrace me, and then himself telephoned a number of Protestant church leaders and, his face beaming, told me to be sure to go and visit them.

Dr. Lücker, who was with me, was enthusiastic about how the meeting had

gone and told me gladly, “Today’s talk was very good, very philosophical.” I had heard that many Germans receive books as birthday presents and seem to like this kind of discussion.

All the religious leaders that I visited expressed great interest in the activities of Religions for Peace and promised their support.

A Way Will Be Found

Despite all we had achieved so far, we still did not have the green light to hold the second assembly in Germany. In fact, it seemed as if the wind had started to blow in the opposite direction, with an unexpected tragedy. In 1972 an Arab terrorist group took nine members of the Israeli team at the Munich Olympics hostage and eventually killed them. In the end, seventeen people died. It was not too surprising therefore that West German religious leaders felt apprehensive about holding a large assembly in their country. Another element that would affect the decision was the plan for a large meeting of Protestants in West Germany in 1974, and it was felt that it would be difficult to hold another large, similar conference in the same year. We eventually came to the reluctant decision that it would be impossible to hold the Second World Assembly in West Germany and so faced the urgent task of finding another venue.

Brussels was then proposed. The Belgian capital was geographically in the center of western Europe and was also the headquarters of the European Communities. However, we could not expect a quick decision from Belgian religious circles after being so abruptly asked to organize an international assembly like the one in Kyoto in 1970.

As the days went by, Religions for Peace officials became more and more anxious, wondering whether the assembly could be held at all, and it showed on their faces. Despite their growing apprehension and the prevailing feeling of

helplessness, I was not particularly worried. The more gloomy the expressions of those around me, the more cheerful I tried to be. “There’s no reason to think,” I told them, “that we shall fail, precisely because people of religion from around the world will gather together and do good. If our hearts are acceptable to the gods and the buddhas, then we will receive their protection, without any doubt at all.”

This is how I invariably think. People often say to me, “You are always so optimistic,” but actually my way of thinking is very simple. If we continue to do our utmost to follow the Buddha’s teachings, we cannot but receive the protection of the gods and the buddhas, and we will find our way as a matter of course. I have faith in this. In other words, if we entrust ourselves to the Buddha, all we can do is strive to do our utmost and believe completely that whatever results in the end is the Buddha’s reply. We don’t need to worry or connive. By leaving everything to the Buddha, we can devote our whole effort to the task in hand without being sidetracked.

I once had my palm read at a temple fair at Arai Yakushi Temple in Nakano,

Tokyo. I still remember what the fortuneteller told me. “If you have the impetus, it will steadily lead you to success. If you are put in situations where you can lead your daily life uneventfully, you will not achieve anything. Your positive attitude, which lets you clear obstacles, will make you grow as a person.” I just listened, neither believing nor disbelieving, but since then I have come to agree with what was said.

Intrinsically optimistic, I tend to think that most things will turn out well in time. Therefore, leading my daily life quietly and in peace, without doing anything, would make me too complacent. But if I am faced with an unavoidable problem, I cannot relax, and telling myself I have to do something, I give the problem my full attention. Since the time I realized this, whenever I face difficulties, I make it a rule to tell myself that things have only gotten more interesting.

Many people who draw fortune lots at temples and shrines immediately feel happy or unhappy depending whether they draw a good or a bad one. Even if we draw an unlucky lot, we should receive it with gratitude as the Buddha’s message—teaching us that we should

determine to rid ourselves of all conceit and accumulate merit by giving thanks for everything. We can say that this is the basis of the idea of turning adversity into good fortune.

So even when it seemed that preparations for the second assembly had hit a snag, I did not hold back, and told myself that this was the just beginning. And then in February 1974 there came a message from Dr. Homer Jack, secretary general of Religions for Peace, beginning, "Dear Friend, good news." He passed on the text of a decision reached by an extraordinary subcommittee of Religions for Peace held in Amsterdam at the end of January: "WCRP II [the Second World Assembly of Religions for Peace] will be held at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium from August 28."

Thus after many twists and turns, more than four hundred religious leaders from fifty-three countries gathered in Leuven for the second assembly. The city, surrounded by fields and woods, is some twenty-five kilometers east of Brussels, about an hour's journey by train. It is the site of one of Europe's oldest universities, and about half of its population of some forty thousand was students. Gothic spires dot the landscape, reminding us that its history is closely interwoven with Christianity. Many of the old buildings bear scars of the assaults made on the city during the Second World War, and I learned that they have been left as memorials to past sufferings.

The very fact that at the first assembly in Kyoto religious leaders from around the world had been able to sit together in one place and exchange ideas for the sake of peace was a matter of enormous significance. Here at Leuven we went one step further. With "Religion and the Quality of Life" as the key theme, our discussion concentrated on the ways religious people could work together for peace.

Today the expression "quality of life" is closely related to concern for the

environment, but during the conference I was greatly impressed over and over again by the trailblazing understanding that European people of faith had of the time we were living in. Let me give an example. Even I knew how important breast milk is for infants' health, but I thought that manufactured substitutes also provided nutrition and could not be bad. However, because large quantities of powdered milk were being sent as aid to developing countries, mothers there had changed from breastfeeding their babies to using formula, resulting in a rising percentage of infant deaths because it lowered their immunity. The smaller numbers of doctors in those countries only exacerbated the problem. People of faith from Europe and the United States insisted vehemently that there should be a boycott of dairy products from companies that produced this powdered milk. This surprised me very much. Apart from their proposal of organizing a boycott campaign, I was much inspired by their energy and ideas directly connected with social issues.

On their side, the European delegates were very impressed to see sixty Japanese delegates at the assembly, representing various sects and denominations of Japanese religious circles.

There is no doubt that the appeals for peace by the delegates from Japan, a country with a peace constitution, resonated deeply among delegates from other countries. However, the Japanese also faced the harsh question "Isn't Japan preaching peace after running to safety?" Europe, we must remember, was a region that was directly experiencing a confrontation between two worlds.

The English Nobel Peace Prize laureate and campaigner for disarmament Philip Noel-Baker (Baron Noel-Baker) also took part in the Leuven assembly. He said to me that since the Japanese had experienced two atomic bombings, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they had a special responsibility to work for peace. In today's world, he said, there isn't a

single technical difficulty regarding disarmament that cannot be addressed, but peace could be achieved only with people's strong will to abolish nuclear weapons and demand peace. Baron Noel-Baker knew very well the insanity of military expansion, having been Britain's secretary of state for air.

I think it was about four years earlier that Japan had signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, but it had yet to be ratified [and was in June 1976]. For people of faith who prayed for the day when nuclear armament reduction at last became complete abolition, this had to be the first step in containing nuclear weapons.

Earth has been around for six billion years. Surely there is importance in the fact that each and every one of us happens to have been born together at this time and in this place. The phrase "One time, one meeting" means we should cherish every occasion we first meet someone, since it might be only once in a lifetime. We must be grateful for a single meeting in six billion years and understand the inherent stupidity of the threat that we all face.

To be continued

The Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law

Chapter 25

The All-Sidedness of the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World (3)

*This is the 124th installment of a detailed commentary on the Threefold Lotus Sutra
by the founder of Rissho Kosei-kai, Rev. Nikkyo Niwano.*

TEXT Even if the three-thousand-great-thousandfold world were full of *yakshas* and *rakshasas* seeking to afflict people, these wicked demons, hearing them call upon the name of the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, would not be able to see them with [their] wicked eyes, much less hurt them.

COMMENTARY *Yakshas*. Along with *rakshasas*, these are reputed to be ferocious demons. It is held that if they are converted, they become guardian spirits of Buddhism. • *See them with [their] wicked eyes.* This means to look at people with the evil intent of possessing them and bringing them misfortune.

Misfortune of demons. People who suffer misfortune of demons are possessed by something vicious and lose sight of who they are. Some people actually lose their minds from

being possessed by so-called evil spirits, others fall into mistaken religious faith and stray from the Middle Way, and others are infected with perverse ideas and go to extremes. In any case, misfortune of demons means the threat of being possessed and deceived by something or someone.

If a demon trying to possess someone hears that person invoke the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, the demon will be unable to deceive and harm them. This is what is meant by demons being unable to see “with [their] wicked eyes” those who invoke that bodhisattva.

• *Much less hurt them.* Because demons with malicious intent cannot confront people, they are all the less able to harm or ruin them.

In this sense, escaping the misfortune of demons by invoking the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World means that evil like that of a demon cannot possess anyone who knows and steadfastly embraces the truth.

TEXT If, moreover, there be anyone, whether guilty of a crime or not, who, loaded with manacles, fetters, cangues, or chains, calls the name of the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, these shall all be snapped and broken off and he shall be freed.

COMMENTARY *Cangues.* A cangue is restraint similar to a pillory, without being fixed to a base.

Misfortune of imprisonment. If we take this literally, we are talking about something terrible. It would mean that the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World assists in prison escapes. Setting aside the possible case of false charges and false imprisonment, if real criminals could escape from prison by invoking the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, there would be an end to public order.

The terms “manacles, fetters, cangues, and chains” are used figuratively as symbols of mental restraints. People’s greatest hope is for freedom. They may want many things, but surely they want nothing as much as freedom. People desire money because it frees them from poverty. They want status in order to be free of the inconveniences of restrictions imposed by pressure and commands from above.

Unfortunately, although almost all people simply desire to be free of material restraints, they are not in the least desirous of perfect freedom of mind, and cannot but perpetually live lives that are restrained and not free. This must be considered carefully.

One cannot, and should not, sever all restraints. What would happen if one were not restrained from stealing? Similarly, what would happen if one were freed from the law against driving on the sidewalk?

Even in an ideal society there should not be a complete absence of restrictions. On the contrary, there should be even more restrictions. However, in an ideal society the restrictions would not be felt as restraints. For example, people walking on a sidewalk feel no inconvenience from confining themselves to the sidewalk, and do not even think about it, because they are used to sidewalks. They do not even think about whether they are walking in the street or on the sidewalk.

Even if our minds are free, we agree that people should walk on the sidewalk rather than in the street, and we do not think of the sidewalk as a constraint. Conversely, if we insist on complete freedom of action by walking in the street where there is a continuous stream of cars, what will happen? We will anxiously watch each approaching car, and turn incessantly this way and that. In short, exercising freedom of action alone can deprive us of freedom of mind.

Freedom of mind is important, but most people have forgotten about seeking it. They impose restraints on themselves.

People with money are bound by money; those with status are bound by status; those with reputation are bound by reputation; those with scholarships are bound by scholarships. Thus, by restraining themselves, they are interfering with acquiring what they really want. Without being aware of it, on their own they suppress actions that are truly human.

It is all right to have any amount of money. It is fine to have social standing, however high. Reputation is perfectly all right. Certainly the more learning one has, the better. The person who possesses such things without being constrained by them and maintains freedom of mind can be said to lead a truly human life. Furthermore, that person can put those things to excellent use and work for the benefit of society.

Freedom of mind brings happiness both to oneself and others and is a human being’s greatest joy. Completely achieving such a state of mind is the ultimate goal of humankind. The person who attains it perfectly is called a buddha.

- *Whether guilty of a crime or not.* It is said that the Japanese word *tsumi*, which means “crime” or “sin,” derives from the word for wrapper (*tsutsumi*). The purity that is the true nature of a human being—whether we call it sincerity, the higher self, or the Buddhist term buddha-nature—may be obscured by delusion, and that is called *tsumi*. That is, crime or sin (*tsumi*) can veil and hide our inherent buddha-nature and keep it from being revealed and thus calling forth our potential capabilities.

The passage in the text “If . . . there be anyone, whether guilty of a crime or not” should be interpreted as follows: people who are “guilty” hide, or “wrap up,” their buddha-nature so that it cannot be revealed. People who are “not guilty” do not “wrap up” their buddha-nature on their own, but are prevented from revealing it by circumstances beyond their control. Whether guilty of a crime or not, if one is “wrapping up” one’s buddha-nature, it means voluntarily binding oneself or involuntarily being bound by circumstances outside the self.

Whatever the case may be, if we just invoke the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, we are immediately freed from restraints and gain complete freedom of mind. This is because, as we have noted repeatedly, the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World symbolizes true wisdom (the Wonderful Dharma). It stands to reason that if we just take refuge in true wisdom, all the delusions that have bound us internally, and all the unfavorable social conditions that have bound us externally, will immediately disappear.

TEXT If the three-thousand-great-thousandfold world were full of enemies and robbers, and there were a merchant chief who led many merchants having charge of costly jewels along a perilous road, and among them one man speaks

forth: “Good sons! Be not afraid. With one mind do you invoke the title of the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, for this bodhisattva is able to give courage to all the living? If you invoke his name, you will be delivered from these enemies and robbers.” On hearing this, if all the traders together with one voice cry, “*Namah! Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World!*” then, by invoking his name, they will be delivered.

COMMENTARY *Merchant chief.* As we pointed out earlier, this refers not to the head of a merchant household, but to the leader of a caravan. In places like India and the Middle East, traders traveled in large caravans to avoid getting lost in the deserts and dense forests and to protect themselves from bandits. The merchant chief was the caravan leader.

This merchant chief symbolizes the religious leaders, mentors, and writers whose mission is to guide the hearts and minds of the public.

- *Having charge of costly jewels along a perilous road.* The costly jewels are buddha-nature, humankind’s most valuable treasure. They symbolize sincerity, or true human nature.

“Having charge of” means to carefully preserve the precious treasure and approach the destination. The destination is the state of mind that fully manifests one’s buddha-nature.

Passage along the “perilous road” signifies making one’s way along the perilous journey of life, filled with hardships and temptations, to which one might give way and fall into a ravine.

- *Able to give courage to all the living.* Earlier we learned that there are three kinds of donation: donation of material goods or money, donation of the Dharma, and donation of the self. But there is another extremely important kind of donation: the donation of fearlessness. This means ridding people of all their fears and leading them to an ideal state of peace of mind. The Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World gives all people this donation of fearlessness.

Misfortune of robbery. “Enemies and robbers” are the tribulations occurring in the course of human life. However virtuously we may live, there is nothing we can do to fend off “robbers.” All people, however respectable or spiritually awakened, are afflicted by tribulations. But a person of noble character will not fear them.

The brave do not share other people’s view of tribulations. Even death, which is the greatest human calamity, is nothing to the brave. They die serenely in the belief that they are merely returning to where they ought to return.

But this is beyond ordinary people who have not fully matured through their religious practice. When something terrible happens, they immediately panic, trembling with fear and having no idea what to do.

Suppose something frightening happens and a great leader says, “Do not be afraid. If you invoke the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World wholeheartedly, he will make you fearless.” If the multitude obeys, each will immediately overcome fear and confusion, and regain peace of mind.

Invoking the name of the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World means focusing on things in light of the truth of the Middle. That means no longer feeling uneasy about phenomenal tribulations and trying to turn one’s eyes to the reality of this world. When you do this, you will naturally see that your tribulations are only waves on the surface of the great ocean of life.

Waves have originally no substance or entity. They are merely the temporary movement of the surface of the water caused by wind and other agents. Without these agents, there are no waves. However turbulent the waves are, the bottom of the sea is always calm and silent.

Tribulations seem real and can make people tremble with fear, but like the waves of the sea, they are unsubstantial.

The view of dependent origination determines how we see things. Since all things are only a phenomenal appearance produced by the unity between causes and conditions, when the causes and conditions change, we see things differently. Similarly, if we view apparent tribulations philosophically, in light of the truth of the Middle, our tribulations will vanish before we know it.

Therefore, if one wholeheartedly invokes the name of the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World (focusing on the view of the truth of the Middle), then one will surely be delivered from sufferings caused by “enemies and robbers,” that is, the fear of tribulations.

TEXT Infinite Thought! Such is the awe-inspiring supernatural power of the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World.

COMMENTARY *Awe-inspiring supernatural power.* “Awe-inspiring” here refers to what may be called a force of character that moves and inspires people.

This concludes the section on the awe-inspiring supernatural powers of the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World to liberate living beings from the seven misfortunes.

TEXT If any living beings much given to carnal passion [constantly] keep in mind and revere the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, they will be set free from their passions.

COMMENTARY

Greed. The phrase “much given to carnal passion” refers to greed, one of the three poisons. As the passage says, it is

only natural that if one always seeks and values true wisdom, the mind will naturally grow impartial and virtuous and sexual desire will be curbed.

Sexual desire is essential for preservation of the species and is neither good nor bad. However, unbridled sexual desire causes worries, brings misfortune to others, and wreaks havoc on public order. Therefore, if one keeps in mind the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, whose spirit embodies the truth of the Middle, one is bound to exercise moderation.

Actually, the phrase “any living beings much given to carnal passion” does not refer to sexual desire alone, but to all human desires.

Since desires are originally instinctual, they are neither good nor evil. If a desire is given a good direction, it will be good; if it is given a bad direction, it will turn into evil.

Furthermore, if a desire is kept within natural bounds, it will not bring unhappiness to anyone. However, if it grows unnaturally, the excesses will bring about various torments.

In any case, all natural desires are not bad, but when one becomes covetous, and desires grow unnaturally, and when willfulness leads one in an unnatural direction, the result is suffering and misfortune for oneself and others.

Therefore, if we always keep in mind the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, who embodies the truth of the Middle, our desires will always remain natural, and we will lead virtuous and decent lives untroubled by desires.

TEXT If any much given to irascibility [constantly] keep in mind and revere the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, they will be set free from their irascibility.

COMMENTARY

Anger. Indignation over great wrongs is important, and on behalf of a nation or humankind, it transcends the self. It is born of great compassion, and not narrow wrath over individual concerns.

“Irascibility” in the passage above means anger over small matters, on behalf of one’s “lesser” self. It means being angry over not having one’s own way, over things not turning out as one hoped, over insults, or someone else getting the upper hand. This is anger caused by being caught up in the self.

This kind of anger first of all torments oneself. An American physiologist, Walter B. Cannon (1871–1945), verified this through research on cats. When cats in his experiments became angry, their heartbeat increased, their blood pressure and blood sugar rose, their red blood cells increased, their adrenal gland secreted more adrenalin, and their stomach and intestines stopped functioning normally.

This is why, when people lose their temper, their faces turn red and their extremities may tremble. It is why deep

anger may cause headaches or loss of appetite. This is also why people who are always angry do not live long.

Physical harm is one thing, but feelings themselves are also very unpleasant. Long after a provocative incident, anger can leave traces. If someone apologizes and you get your way, the cause of the anger should be completely gone. You realize this in rational terms, but you still feel throughout your being the “fuel” that gave rise to the anger, and you recognize that it would not take much of a spark to set that anger off again. In Buddhism, such a state of mind is called “the residue of defilements (*vasana*),” and as long as this state remains, the feeling of unpleasantness will continue unabated.

Thus, anger caused by focusing on the “lesser” self will torment above all the person who gets angry. There may be meaning in this if, despite your own suffering, the target of your anger is made happier. But that does not happen with the kind of anger that springs from the “lesser” self. The other person also feels bad. Consequently, your anger never causes things to take a favorable turn and nine times out of ten it makes things worse.

In summary, anger brings suffering to oneself and others and worsens the situation, so it causes great misfortune. For this reason, Shakyamuni strongly admonishes against anger as the second of the three poisons, along with greed and folly (or foolishness).

If one constantly keeps this in mind and reveres the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, who embodies true wisdom and is the symbol of great benevolence and great compassion, the selfish anger of the “lesser” self will no longer erupt. Anger is nipped in the bud by an awareness of the great difference between the boundless truth of the Middle and the narrowness of willful anger.

I know many people who, although they tried in vain to morally cultivate their character by admonishing themselves not to get angry, learned to instinctively control their anger only after they accepted the teachings of Buddhism. It is perfectly natural for this to happen.

In the first place, just seeing the compassionate face of the Buddha in the morning and evening makes a considerable difference. The same is true of the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, for he is a manifestation of the Buddha and his messenger. Our minds are calmed simply by looking upon his beautiful, gentle, compassionate visage.

Dr. Hideki Yukawa (1907–81), a theoretical physicist and Japan’s first Nobel Prize winner, edited *Ningen no Kagaku* [Human sciences], volume 6 of the series *Ningen to Kagaku* [People and science (Tokyo: Nakayama Shoten, 1956)]. For the frontispiece he presented a photograph of an image of the Eleven-faced Kannon with a Thousand Arms, with the following description:

Although this image of Kannon has eleven faces and a thousand arms, it seems to lose nothing of the harmony of the whole body and peace of mind. It may not suit the taste of modern people, and its perfect features may instead dissatisfy them somewhat. People today possess many faces and arms as a result of the remarkable progress of science and technology. They now have new eyes for their work, such as the microscope and telescope. They have produced magic hands in order to avoid the danger of radioactivity. Electronic computers have even begun to assist people's mental labor. All of these aid human advances in science. People today, however, live in a world surrounded by machinery, and have become rigid and willful. They seem to be finding more beauty in streamlined shapes and angular forms. A peaceful and compassionate expression like that of Kannon is not to be seen in the faces of people today. Someone showing not the least sign of neurosis seems to be considered abnormal. But is it not true that the more marked this tendency becomes, the more deeply and keenly do people seek peace of mind and world peace?

Together with his intention in selecting a picture of an image of Kannon for the frontispiece of a volume on science, this passage is one of great significance.

TEXT If any much given to foolishness [constantly] keep in mind and revere the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World, they will be set free from their infatuation.

COMMENTARY

Folly (foolishness). Foolishness does not mean being slow-witted, but rather not possessing true wisdom. We would assume that a high government official who graduated from a first-rate university must have a sharp intellect. Yet many high officials have been sent to prison for taking only moderate bribes and have therefore wasted their lives.

Similarly, we would not think that a student who overcame great competitive odds to be admitted to a first-rate university is stupid. Yet there are cases of such students embracing revolutionary ideologies, which may be acceptable, but then these radical students break up into mutually hostile factions. They use violence against one another, and react to punishment by their university by committing such aberrant acts as confining the university chancellor and members of the faculty. This is what is meant by foolishness.

Folly in the Buddhist sense means not knowing or attempting to learn the truth. It means acting instinctively, whether an act is right or wrong, good or evil.

Foolish people give no thought to the consequences of their actions or how their actions might influence their surroundings. They essentially have no idea what place they occupy in the world or indeed what their own role in it is. They do not know the delight of loving others and living in harmony with others, a joy that belongs to a higher dimension.

A wise person is just the opposite. Suppose someone who could not finish elementary school is capable only of tending cows. However, he does his work with complete sincerity. As a result, he can communicate so well with the cows that they thrive and give abundant milk.

He is always kind and genial, never arguing with anyone. Because his employer trusts him completely, he is given complete responsibility for the cows. He gets along well with everyone around him.

He knows that tending cows is what suits him best, so if agents from factories in town offer to double his wages, he turns down their offers. When some unscrupulous person entices him to steal and sell milk for his own profit, he ignores that person.

Behind his back, others may call him stupid or feeble-minded, but he is certainly neither stupid nor ignorant. He is truly wise. This is because only upright people, who do their work wholeheartedly, are fully human. Those who lead admirable lives, working for the good of others, also possess true human wisdom.

That is why it is preached that shortsighted people who tend to act entirely by instinct should always remember and revere wholeheartedly the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World. He embodies true wisdom, so if they constantly keep him in mind, they will receive and live with true wisdom and naturally come to act harmoniously.

TEXT Infinite Thought! Such are the abundant benefits conferred by the supernatural power of the Bodhisattva Regarder of the Cries of the World. Consequently, let all the living ever keep him in mind.

COMMENTARY The previous three sections preach the merits of the Regarder of the Cries of the World, who delivers living beings from the three poisons of greed, anger, and folly (foolishness).

To be continued

In this series, passages in the **TEXT** sections are quoted from *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 1975, with slight revisions. The diacritical marks originally used for several Sanskrit terms in the **TEXT** sections are omitted here for easier reading.