



# Pine Gate

Newsletter of the Pine Gate Sangha

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Facebook.....	1
The Territory of Suffering Ian Prattis...	2
The Merchant and the Diamond .....	2
Child Blessing Ceremony Barbara Mueller.....	3
The Art of Disappearing Naomi Shihab Nye .	5
Earth My Body, Water My Blood .....	5
Dialog with Inner Child.....	6
Martin Luther King Bob Allen .....	7
Thich Nhat Hanh In Vancouver Douglas Todd.....	8
Thay's Message .....	9
Yuka Saionji's blog from Japan March 18, 2011 .	10
Haiku from Japan Compiled by Julie Makinen	10
Inner Child Meditations.....	11
Mindfulness with Youth Gina Biegel.....	12
6 <sup>th</sup> Mindfulness Training Yves Desnoyers .....	13
Costa Rica Cornerstones Margery Street.....	14
Costa Rica Haiku 2011 Ian Prattis.....	15
Beaver Pond Forest Robert Lovelace .....	15
The End of Growth Richard Heinberg.....	16
Quotes and Jokes .....	16
Stillness and Grace Michael McCulloch .....	17
Personal Journey To Sangha Leonard Poole .....	17
Greening Award 2011 Kathryn Guindon .....	18
Pine Gate Sangha.....	19
The Wounded Inner Child Ian Prattis.....	20
Japan Relief Concert.....	21

also contribute to the newsletter. Submissions are invited, articles of 500-700 words, poems and insights that reflect engaged practice and personal experience are appreciated. The Pine Gate Sangha has many leaders and the newsletter is an organic outcome of sangha insight. Effortlessly it appears.

Ian Prattis provides dharma talks and teachings that encourage practice through deep non-action, so that engaged practice (action) emerges from understanding and compassion. Carolyn Hill teaches a regular Qi-Gong class at Pine Gate Meditation Hall as an introduction to mindfulness practice. The Pine Gate Sangha welcomes old and new members to its regular and special activities.

## Facebook

A conspiracy headed up by Brother Yves – *Resounding Expansion of the Source* - has been successful – Pine Gate Sangha now has a Facebook Page. Looks very interesting too - with videos of Thay, book reviews, discussions, sangha activities, posts and some gentle humour.

Check it out:

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Pine-Gate-Sangha/166759323357079> - click the “Like” button if you wish to make Yves and Co happy! Ian has done so and contributed a few things. His grandchildren will never believe that he has graduated to Techno-Peasant Level II.

Pine Gate is the voice of Ottawa's Pine Gate Sangha, who practice engaged Buddhism in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. Friends of the sangha

**The Territory of Suffering****Ian Prattis**

I turn to my teacher Thich Nhat Hanh (*Reconciliation*: 2010: 64) to open this essay on Healing the Inner Child.

“Dealing with suffering is like handling a poisonous snake. We have to learn about the snake, and we ourselves have to grow stronger and more stable in order to handle it without hurting ourselves. At the end of this process, we will be ready to confront the snake. If we never confront it, one day it will surprise us and we will die of a snake bite. The pain we carry in the deep levels of our consciousness is similar. When it grows big and confronts us, there’s nothing we can do if we haven’t practiced becoming strong and stable in mindfulness. We should only invite our suffering up when we’re ready. Then, when it comes we can handle it. To transform our suffering, we don’t struggle with it or try to get rid of it. We simply bathe it in the light of our mindfulness.”

First we have to develop and nurture our mindfulness, which means waking up to the reality of our suffering that we would rather avoid. There are clear warning signals if we choose to pay attention. We get caught in our dramas and find ourselves telling and retelling our stories to whomever will listen. We also court our suffering and keep it alive. We often engage in a competitive aspect – my suffering is bigger than yours. The courtship of suffering can be an ugly romance for we enter into a co-dependent relationship, which has to be called by its true name – Addiction. Physiologically and emotionally we become so tightly tied into our suffering that we cannot be without it even though it is destroying our well being. We grasp at brief insights that “Yes – this is suffering” – but deal only with surface appearances. Yet the surface exposure has a long history of gathering momentum and energy until it actually surfaces. The small snake has become a monster. The addiction to suffering is now embedded in our

mental state. We respond to any glimpse of suffering with such destructive emotion that we reinforce the causes and conditions that created the suffering in the first place. And so we continue shooting ourselves in the foot, torpedoing our lives – over and over again.

Our suffering is caused by abuse – emotional, physical and sexual – and it becomes an organizing template in our mind. We then create an abusive relationship with that template’s qualities – addiction; fear; co-dependency. To stop the cycle of harm we need an OMG moment. The insight that: **OH MY GOD THIS IS WHAT I HAVE BEEN DOING ALL MY LIFE. HOW DO I STOP IT?** That insight has to arrive in the mind before we can apply ourselves to developing mindfulness as an antidote to the abusive relationship established with our suffering. It is an awesome realization to penetrate the darkness and realize that the abuse you have suffered has created an abusive relationship with yourself. Mindfulness practice can bring the abusive relationship to a halt. This is the required OMG moment that propels you to get to work. To go backwards from the surface and investigate the causes and conditions that placed you in such suffering. And so we learn the practices, tools and concentrations that support this journey of understanding suffering and taking care of it. We break the cycle through re-training and mindfulness practice. We equip ourselves for a journey to be well that requires our determination to practice mindfulness daily and ensure that we take refuge in wise support.

**The Merchant and the Diamond**

There was a merchant who lived in a far away land. He was very wealthy and had built a trading empire that brought him great riches. He was respected throughout the land for his fairness and astuteness, yet in the midst of all his wealth and fame he felt a lack, that there was something he did not have. He did not know what it was. One night he had a dream, and remembered it very clearly. He dreamt

that there was a monk sitting under a tree at the forest's edge, and that this monk had something special to give him. He was not accustomed to dreaming, so he felt this dream held a special portent. At sunrise the next day he left his house and walked to the edge of the town where he lived. He saw the monk, just as in his dream, wearing a saffron robe, sitting quietly under the shade of a tree. He looked so peaceful as the morning sun cast light on his face. As the merchant approached, the monk opened his eyes and smiled gently. The merchant stopped, bowing respectfully, and said:

*Dear monk, I had a dream about you last night, that you would be sitting here at the edge of the forest and that you had something for me. What is it that you have for me?*

The monk paused for a moment then slowly reached into his canvas bag. He brought out a huge diamond, as big as a man's fist. It sparkled and shone in the sunlight, dazzling the eyes and senses of the merchant. It was the most beautiful and valuable diamond the merchant had ever seen. The monk said:

*Have you come for this?*

The merchant without hesitating replied:

*Oh yes, thank you so much, this is wonderful. I have always wanted to possess such a magnificent diamond.*

He thanked the monk profusely for this unexpected and magnificent gift, wrapped the diamond inside his jacket and returned home. Once there he placed the diamond on the table in his front room. He closed the shutters and locked the doors to his house, and stayed with the diamond, mesmerized and entranced by its beauty and purity. He did not go to work that day, nor did he eat or drink. He thought that this gift was the missing part of his life and he wanted to bask in the glory of it. When he went to sleep that night, he placed the diamond on a small pedestal by his bedside, so that he could have it close by. Yet he could not sleep. He felt a

strange disturbance within himself that he did not understand. He tossed and turned, not knowing what to do about the growing restlessness. Just before sunrise he rose, got dressed and carefully wrapped the diamond in a cloth, before setting off, once more, for the forest.

The monk was sitting in the same place, deep in meditation. The peace that emanated from him calmed the restlessness that so disturbed the merchant. On hearing the merchant's footsteps come closer, and then stop before him, the monk opened his eyes and once more smiled very gently to the merchant.

*Good morning my friend, are you not happy with the diamond?*

The merchant bowed and placed the diamond at the feet of the monk and said:

*Good monk, it is not the diamond that I want. I would like to have the heart that can give away such a diamond.*

The monk very quietly stood up and bowed to the merchant:

*Good sir, as that is your wish, I will teach you to meditate.*

**Child Blessing Ceremony      Barbara Mueller**

*Prepared by Venerable Thubten Chodron with additions by Geshe Gelek. Blessing Ceremony at Pine Gate for baby Sophia, summer of 2010 in Pine Gate Meditation Hall*

Parents Welcome Baby Sophia

My Dear Child,

As your parents, we welcome you to this new life and wish you everything good in it. Even though we were strangers not long ago--we do not know who you were just two years ago--we love you. We will do our best to provide for you materially, give you a

good education, and care for you in all circumstances.

As your parents, we will have a caring relationship and communicate well with each other, for we know that is the best way to let you know that this world is a loving place. We will live ethically so that you will learn good habits from observing how we live. We will work to subdue our anger and to learn good skills for resolving conflicts so that you will have good role models for this. We will smile, laugh, and share our affection so that you will feel comfortable doing the same. You do not belong to us. You belong to all yourself. We support whatever you want to become. We want to enable you to share your love and talents with others and with the world. Similarly, we also belong to the world, and we will take the love we have for you and spread it to all living beings everywhere, because love is not something that is limited in quantity. By loving you and loving each other, we will learn how to love all other beings as well.

You have come into this world with your own karma. We will do our best not to control you, and we cannot control everything that happens to you. We will do our best to nurture your positive predispositions and help subdue your negative ones. We will do our best to protect you, knowing that as much as we would like to, we cannot prevent you from ever experiencing suffering. You will learn through your own life experiences, and we will do our best to give you the skills to make wise decisions and to handle situations creatively and with kindness. We will do our best to raise you so that you will be aware of your own nature--the basic purity of your mind that is your potential to become a fully enlightened being. The seeds of love, compassion, generosity, ethical discipline, patience, joyous effort, concentration, wisdom, and other wonderful qualities already exist in your mind. We will help you to cultivate this aspect of your Buddha nature too. We want you to have a self-confidence that is based not on transient,

superficial factors, but on a deep awareness of your own inner goodness.

We know that we and you will make mistakes in life and that sometimes we will be in conflict. But realizing that all of us have unlimited potential, we will still respect each other and do what we can to help each other. We have given you this human body and pray that you will have a precious human life, one in which you will meet the Dharma, fully qualified spiritual masters, learn about various philosophies and religions, and choose your spiritual path. We are very grateful to have been blessed with this healthy child. Thank you Sophia Kunsang for bringing so much joy and happiness into our lives. Thank you for the lessons you teach us daily. We love you so much.



### CHILD BLESSING CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that

**SOPHIA KUNSANG MULLER**

daughter of

Pema Namgyal and Barbara Muller  
has received the nectar of compassion through the

CHILD BLESSING CEREMONY  
 INVOKING  
 THE BODHISATTVA AVALOKITESHVARA

by

Dharmacharya Ian Prattis  
 Chan Tue Than, True Body of Wisdom  
 43rd generation of the Lam Te Dhyana School  
 at  
 Pine Gate Meditation Hall, Ottawa, Canada  
 on Thursday, July 15<sup>th</sup> in the year 2010

Ordination Teacher: Dharmacharya Ian Prattis

**The Art of Disappearing**      **Naomi Shihab Nye**

*Nye is well known for poems that emphasize interbeing, so there is a special poignant texture to this expression of renunciation featured in Shambhala Sun March 2011. From her anthology: Words Under Words.*

When they say Don't I know you?  
 Say no.

When they invite you to the party  
 Remember what parties are like  
 before answering.  
 Someone telling you in a loud voice  
 they once wrote a poem.  
 Greasy sausage balls on a paper plate.  
 Then reply.

If they say We should get together  
 Say why?

It's not that you don't love them anymore.  
 You're trying to remember something  
 too important to forget.  
 Trees. The monastery bell at twilight.  
 Tell them you have a new project.  
 It will never be finished.

When someone recognizes you in a grocery store  
 Nod briefly and become a cabbage.  
 When someone you haven't seen in ten years

appears at the door,  
 Don't start singing him all your new songs.  
 You will never catch up.

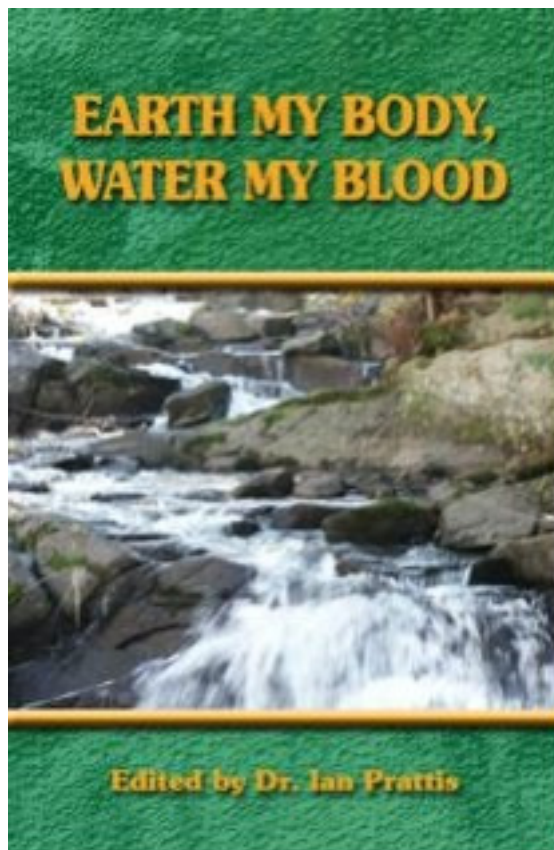
Walk around feeling like a leaf.  
 Know you could tumble any second.  
 Then decide what to do with your time.

**Earth My Body, Water My Blood**

*New book by Dr. Ian Prattis. Knowledge about ecosystems, globalization, environmental ethics and the direct threat of Global Warming is applied to a proposed urban eco-community in Ottawa, Canada. The insights, diligence and brilliance of a senior ecology class at Carleton University in Ottawa provide the foundation for this collection – garnished with further contributions from consultants and elders. The book is unique in its construction, as it is based on the foundation of students writing with their professor's guidance. The substance is how to start and sustain an eco-community using Ottawa as an initial platform. A bunch of students and their professor took the initiative to focus on the new social form of "eco-community." The student briefs present a clear template for the successful creation of any eco-community, enabling the construction of this valuable contribution to re-thinking how we may live in harmony with the Earth.*

The book is organized around the great elements – Earth, Water, Air and Fire. The fifth great element – Space – will penetrate humanity's consciousness about a better way to live with Mother Earth. This adventure into establishing eco-communities reflects the shift in mindset required to salvage the global ecosystem for human habitation. Our present values and patterns of consumption are the architects of the present global ecological emergency. We are our environment. Whether we live in a rural or urban locale, in the industrial or developing worlds, our mindset has to be focused on living as one component of Gaia's ecosystem.

Earth contributions are on Community Supported Agriculture and Green Building Standards. Adaptation, fluidity and cohesion are in the detailed report on Water Management. Air, as ideology, is about the ideological basis of a successful eco-community; plus Marketing Ecologically Sound Behaviour and Modes of Living to sustain community. The illumination and clarity of Fire introduces the Global Ecological Village network (GEN); the Carbon Credit Market; followed by Ecological Education in Schools; and Eco-tourism. Space has the aboriginal voice of Grandfather William Commanda and his exquisite vision for an aboriginal healing and peace centre in Ottawa. This is preceded by Wisdom of the Elders to provide a template about sacred ecology. Each section has a “Note From The Editor” to provide wider context. A continuation of the editor’s ground breaking best seller – *Failsafe: Saving The Earth From Ourselves*.



The book was released on Earth Day 2011 – April 22. Retail Price: \$18.

To order go to:

<http://www.baico.ca/html/store/shop/index.cfm> or [www.chapters.ca](http://www.chapters.ca) and place title - Earth My Body - in Product Search box. Discount copies are available at Pine Gate.

### Dialog with Inner Child

Start a diary or log book for you and the inner child to write to one another. The adult you will write using the hand that you normally write with. You begin by saying “hello” to Little John, to Little Allison. Then go on to say how sorry you are for having been away and neglectful; that you are grown up now and strong, and that you are going to do everything to make it safe for Little John, for Little Allison. They will be safe, loved and cherished. Write in your own words along these lines.

Then with your other hand, the one you do not write with, allow the inner child to express herself. Do not edit. Just write down whatever comes out. It may well be angry, blaming and abusive words that come out, and it is your job not to be shocked or defensive but to provide constant re-assurance, love and guidance. You bring to this communication with the wounded inner child all the qualities of love, compassion and wisdom you can muster. These are the seeds of mindfulness you consciously bring to support the wounded child inside you. The energy of these seeds works on the energy of the traumatized inner child to reduce his pain and suffering. Talk to him through writing in this way – with total love and acute mindfulness. Then read your diary entries out loud – placing yourself in your adult shoes and then in your inner child’s shoes. This simple act of reading out loud is a way for both of you to be heard. On a daily basis register with how deeply your understanding and love is getting through to the wounded child, for she is

listening carefully to every word and knows that you are now listening to her. You draw closer – the adult and the inner child – as you bring awareness, love and healing to the suffering and pain of the child.

Details of trauma may be revealed that you did not know about, which is why you need the help and guidance of a trusted therapist, shaman or spiritual teacher. This is to support you being a wise and loving parent to your wounded child. And with time you will notice shifts and changes in patterns of expression as the child becomes trusting and starts to grow, eventually merging fully with you as an adult. (You also learn to write very well with your other hand!) In your letters tell your inner child about yourself and your life, take him on outings, treats and give to that child all the care, attention and love you feel you did not receive when you were a little boy, a little girl. The suffering will diminish and you will experience such a transformation, for you discover that your relationships with co-workers, friends and family start to change, and your fears of the past and anxieties about the future do not have the same driving force. When you notice things like this tell your inner child: “Thank you for being with me. That makes me so happy.” The experience of being with the inner child in the healing journey is a stimulus for this kind of happiness. There are times you may cry, or feel total joy and also suffer despair, which is why guidance and support is necessary on this beginning journey of reclaiming yourself. You need that wise spiritual friend and teacher to keep you steady and mindful. Ultimately there is only one pair of shoes!

To support this journey there are other practices and meditations that are valuable for the steady process of healing. We have brought mindfulness, concentration and insight to our inner child and constantly enveloped him in the refreshing energy of transformation. We have worked diligently to nurture seeds of happiness, joy and safety in the consciousness of the inner child – the same seeds

that are also in us, our ancestors and descendants. When despair and fear arise from the child we have the presence of mind to listen deeply and surround the fear with the stronger energy field of mindfulness. This is a deep and beautiful process because we are no longer running away or hiding from afflictions that have rendered us dysfunctional. Thich Nhat Hanh in his book *Reconciliation* tells us: “The capacity to be aware – that is, to be a human being who is mindful – is what will save us” (2010: 114).

**Martin Luther King**

**Bob Allen**

*Bob and his wife Pam facilitate the Fish Lake Sangha in Orlando, Florida*

Martin Luther King Jr. is iconic for so many reasons. They are, to me, layered like an onion. At the top is the public figure, the courageous ambassador of nonviolence and American *ahimsa* - a word that comes from Sanskrit that means “non-harming”. Without his courage and leadership, the civil rights movement, which is really a *human* rights movement as it continues to this day, would have been diminished and very likely have taken far longer and a far greater human cost to gain acceptance.

Looking more deeply, we see a spiritual teacher. One face of this dimension of Dr. King’s is that of an ordained and practicing Baptist minister really *ministering* to his church family and working to live not the dogma but the practice of Jesus, his teacher. Another is the unqualified face of a true master. A master of the perils of taking birth--ego, grasping, aversion and delusion.

Even more deeply we see a visionary social scientist who was able to so clearly see and paint a picture of a future in which the ignorance and hatred of bigotry was overcome by the wisdom, intelligence and power of a rich and diverse world that he was able to make it real for millions. We see at his core a father, a son, a husband and a neighbor

who suffered so deeply at the injustice, cruelty and insanity of segregation and prejudice that it literally broke his heart open and propelled him past revenge to healing saying *“We will wear you down with our capacity to suffer, winning our freedom and your freedom in the bargain.”*

Martin Luther King was the finest example of a Servant Leader that our country has produced in modern times. For me, although we are of different traditions, he has always been a spiritual elder brother. More poignantly, it is Martin Luther King who nominated my teacher Thich Nhat Hanh—a Vietnamese monk—for the Nobel peace prize and brought him to America in the heat of the Vietnam war to build a case for peace. Dr. King’s “I Have A Dream” speech is so often quoted out of context that it is worth your time to revisit it in whole—there are several versions on YouTube. One of my favorite quotes of his however, echoes every great spiritual teacher from every tradition. It goes like this:

*“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction....The chain reaction of evil--hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars--must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.”*

Dr. King’s work, OUR work, is not done. It is not nearly begun. In this time of violent speech, violent actions and violent thinking, you and I could join James Taylor who has made the following excellent suggestion in a song:

“Let us turn our thoughts today to Martin Luther King  
And recognize that there are ties between us  
All men and women, living on the earth  
Ties of hope and love of sister and brotherhood  
That we are bound together  
In our desire to see the world become

A place in which our children can grow free and strong

We are bound together by the task that stands before us

And the road that lies ahead we are bound and we are bound”

### **Thich Nhat Hanh In Vancouver Douglas Todd**

***The retreat is now full with a long waiting list!  
This article first appeared in the Vancouver Sun,  
January 18, 2011***

Thich Nhat Hanh, who first came to prominence for his civil disobedience against the Vietnam War, will arrive in Vancouver in August to lead a five day residential retreat (August 8 – 13) at UBC and give a public talk. Hanh is among the world’s most respected meditation teachers and peace activists. He was banished from Vietnam in 1966 and not allowed to return until 2005. He is now based in France.



At age 86, he continues to travel the world to advocate the principles of “engaged Buddhism”, which rejects self-absorbed, individualistic spirituality. Engaged Buddhism combines

meditation practice with social action and the struggle for justice and peace. Hanh's wisdom has been hard earned since he became a monk at age 16 in Vietnam. As a scholar he began teaching world religions at Princeton University in the 60's. But when the Vietnam War broke out, he returned to Vietnam and founded a peace magazine and lobbied world leaders to stop the war. He convinced Martin Luther King to oppose the Vietnam War. After his forced exile from Vietnam, Hanh organized rescue missions for Vietnamese trying to escape political persecution.

Hanh has been the subject of many books and film documentaries, as well as children's books. He is the author of bestsellers such as the Art of Power, Living Buddha, Living Christ and Touching the Earth. "Meditation is not to get out of society, escape from society, but to prepare for re-entry into society. We call this Engaged Buddhism," Hanh writes in Being Peace. "When we go to a meditation centre, we may have the impression that we leave everything behind – family, society and the complications involved in them – and come as an individual in order to practice and search for peace. This is already an illusion, because in Buddhism there is no such thing as an individual."

The famous monk will offer a retreat (August 8 – 13) which will have programs for children and teens. He will also give a public address at the Orpheum Theatre in Vancouver, at 3.00pm on Sunday, August 14 – titled: "Open Mind Open Heart. Touching the Wonder of Now"

### Thay's Message

Dear friends in Japan,

As we contemplate the great number of people who have died in this tragedy, we may feel very strongly that we ourselves, in some part or manner, have also died. The pain of one part of humankind is the pain of the whole of humankind. And the human species and the planet Earth are one body. What

happens to one part of the body happens to the whole body. An event such as this reminds us of the impermanent nature of our lives. It helps us remember that what's most important is to love each other, to be there for each other, and to treasure each moment we have that we are alive. This is the best that we can do for those who have died: we can live in such a way that they can continue, beautifully, in us. Here in France and at our practice centres, all over the world, our brothers and sisters will continue to chant for you, sending you the energy of peace, healing and protection. Our prayers are with you.

Thich Nhat Hanh, March 14, 2011, Plum Village, France.

### A TEACHING FROM THICH NHAT HANH

The Sutra on Knowing the Better Way to Live Alone teaches us how to live each moment of our daily life very deeply. When we can live our daily life deeply, we begin to have concentration and wisdom; we can see the true nature of life, and we arrive at a great freedom, and freedom is the essence of happiness. If we are suffering, it is because we are not free, and therefore to practice is to recover our freedom. When we have freedom, we will become solid. Freedom and solidity are the two characteristics of nirvana, so we need a program of freedom and solidity. If somebody is suffering, we know that person is not free; because they are not free, they are suffering, they are being imprisoned by the past, or they are being oppressed by the present, or they are being carried away by the future, and that is why they are suffering. The practice is to re-establish our freedom, and then we will no longer suffer, and our happiness will increase.

For the complete talk please click on <http://www.plumvillage.org/dharma-talks/transcribe/12-the-sutra-on-knowing-the-better-way-to-live-alone.html>

From "Being Peace"

Many of us worry about the situation of the world. We don't know when the bombs will explode. We feel that we are on the edge of time. As individuals, we feel helpless, despairing. The situation is so dangerous, injustice is so widespread, the danger is

close. In this kind of situation, if we panic, things will only become worse. We need to remain calm, to see clearly. Meditation is to be aware, and to try to help....

Our world is something like a small boat. Compared with the cosmos, our planet is a very small boat. We are about to panic because our situation is no better than the situation of the small boat in the sea. You know that we have more than 50,000 nuclear weapons. Humankind has become a very dangerous species. We need people who can sit still and be able to smile, who can walk peacefully. We need people like that in order to save us. Mahayana Buddhism says that you are that person, that each of you is that person.

#### **Yuka Saionji's blog from Japan March 18, 2011**

Yuka saw a little flower and thought "All of us can now try to run away from radiation, but what of this flower?" I bent down to the flower and just felt moved to say, "I'm sorry little flower." This is the act of a true flamingseed – one who uses difficult conditions to blossom into awareness and compassion. Yuka reports on many others using this time of deep suffering as fuel to open their hearts and serve others in whatever way they can.

- I saw an old lady at a bakery shop. It was totally past their closing time, but she was giving out free bread.
- There was a lady holding a sign that said, "Please use our toilet." They were opening their house for people to go to the restroom.
- My co-worker wanted to help somehow, even if it was just one person. So he wrote a sign: "If you're OK with a motor cycle, I will drive you to your house." He stood in the cold with that sign. And then I saw him take a gentleman home, all the way to Tokurozawa.

- When I was waiting at the platform, so tired and exhausted, a homeless person came to us and gave us a cardboard to sit on. Even though we usually ignore them in our daily life, they were ready to serve us.
- An old man at the evacuation centre said, "What's going to happen now?" And then a young high school boy sitting next to him said: "Don't worry! When we grow up, we promise to fix it back!" While saying this, he was rubbing the old man's back.

Yuka and the everyday people of Japan have been using this tragedy of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear breakdown to join with others and find a way to live that honors and cares for us all. Not just those living now, but also those to come. Not just the humans, but the animals, the flowers.

May we learn from Yuka and be given far less to fix – and far more to build on.

Source:

<http://flamingseed.com/2011/03/bl:ossoming-through-shared-suffering/>

*The merits of Pine Gate Sangha's practice are offered to the people of Japan. Also to the whole world – to wake up to the fact that we are all interconnected as components in the ecosystem of Gaia. Japan's suffering is a wake up call. Surely we have learned by now that economy cannot over-ride ecology without disastrous consequences. Severe forces of nature have crippled a powerful economy with sophisticated technology and advanced culture. Let us heed this wake up cry from Japan's experience and make our economic and political laws consistent with ecological laws.*

#### **Haiku from Japan Compiled by Julie Makenin**

*It's safe, but  
they say over and over  
that's worrisome*

*We earnestly make donations  
but the bank says  
don't use our system*

*It's cold and wet  
camping outdoors  
aftershocks multiplying the misery*

*Day of disaster  
I can never forget  
the cold and wet*

*The big tsunami  
scattering as far as here  
a cloud of seabirds*

*Boats cars  
houses and people in flow  
western wind*

*Daddy I'm fine  
time stopping and starting  
email from Tokyo*

*Bosho's road  
throughout Tohoku  
hope remains*

*Mother's pain  
into the spring sea  
her last sleep.*

*Zen spine radiates Japan  
not nuclear fission  
Dharma rain penetrating*

### **Inner Child Meditations**

In Plum Village, Thich Nhat Hanh's practice center in France, he has provided a much loved practice *gatha* for the meditation community, which begins with "I have arrived, I am home." This is used in walking and other meditations as an instrument to concentrate on breath and be present. In this way the fears and traumas of the past and anxieties about

the future do not crowd in and overwhelm the mind. The *gatha* with walking meditation, connected to in-breath and out-breath, provides an essential tool to take care of the many mental formations that flood our waking consciousness with fear, pain and suffering. With daily diligent practice we can examine these same mental formations but from a place centered in mindfulness. This simple *gatha* has become the dharma seal of Plum Village.

### **I: Inner Child Has Arrived Meditation**

The Vietnamese origin of the *gatha* provides a penetrating tool to touch our inner child who suffers from trauma and abuse experienced in childhood. It does not translate as: "I have arrived, I am home." It translates as: "Your child has arrived, your child is home." This is so beautiful to say to yourself as you breathe in and out whenever you do walking meditation, for each step welcomes your wounded child to be well and to come home to you. When you walk to your car or your office, by a river or in a park, you can be more specific and recite to yourself:

In-breath      "My inner child has arrived"  
Out-breath     "My inner child is home."

This is good practice, for with intelligence you use your conscious breath and concentration to heal, simply by welcoming your wounded inner child home through the practice of being present. We are capable of arriving in every moment of practice, whether it is sitting meditation, walking meditation, having a mindful meal, taking a shower or doing laundry. Being present in each moment is a way of practice that welcomes home the injured, frightened inner child harmed by abuse.

In order to heal it is necessary to cultivate the internal energy of mindfulness before stopping and looking deeply into what caused the fears and traumas of abuse. The practice of arriving in each moment nurtures that strength. From the space of clarity provided by locating yourself in the present

moment, not only is your inner child welcomed home, there is also the lucidity of mindfulness practice to deal with the ghosts of the past and at the same time put the ghosts of future anxiety to rest.

In-Breath: My inner child has arrived  
 Out Breath: My inner child is home

II: Love Meditation for the Inner Child

Another tool is to adapt the Four Brahmaviharas meditation to focus on the injured inner child and is based on the Buddha’s teachings on Love. Prepare for meditation by sitting comfortably with the spine erect. Bring your concentration and focus to breath on the In-breath and breath on the Out-breath. After ten or twenty breaths, whenever you feel calm and stable, begin by bringing each of the components – Love, Compassion, Joy, Equanimity – into yourself, the adult you. The next sequence now provides a focus and concentration to water the seeds of Love, Compassion, Joy and Equanimity within your inner child.

In-breath I bring Love  
 Out-breath to my inner child.

You can say a loving name for your inner child if you wish. Say silently “Dear Mary” or “Darling Joseph.” Feel the energy of love fill you from top to toe and register with the energy for several breaths. Then continue in the same way with:

In-breath I bring Compassion  
 Out-breath to my inner child  
 In-breath I bring Joy  
 Out-breath to my inner child  
 In-breath I bring Equanimity  
 Out-breath to my inner child

Then conclude the meditation by once more bringing Love, Compassion, Joy and Equanimity to the adult you. This meditation nurtures the wounded inner child wonderfully and at the same

time nurtures the adult you. The Buddha’s teachings on Love provide the foundation for this Love meditation to the wounded inner child. The concentration on these four qualities is an incredibly powerful instrument for healing.

*The Buddha says if we gather together all the virtuous actions we have realized in this world, they are not equal to practicing love meditations.....If we collect together all the light from the stars, it will not be as bright as the light of the moon. In the same way, practicing love meditation is greater than all other virtuous actions combined.*

**Mindfulness with Youth** **Gina Biegel**

***Join leading scholars and teachers for a weekend of learning, rejuvenation and community as we explore and share means of bringing the practice of mindfulness and its benefits to our youth today. Banff Centre, Alberta, Canada July 15-17, 2011***

This professional training conference offers skills to doctors, educators, therapists, parents and other care-providers working with children and adolescents. Time in the conference will be committed to fostering the attendees own mindfulness practice and self-inquiry while learning to apply mindfulness-based interventions with youth. This training will focus on integrating mindfulness-based programs in youth populations. Mindfulness interventions are evidenced-based in cultivating empathy, attention, presence, emotion-regulation, inner clarity, and other necessary life skills. Mindfulness interventions with adults have become a popular researched modality, but work with child and adolescent populations is more in the nascent stages. This training synthesizes the techniques and modalities being currently offered for youth by top scholars in the field to extend what is currently used and known to those in attendance.

Integrated throughout this conference is a seamless interlay of both personal meditative practices as well as those exercises appropriate to youth.

Participants will:

1. Gain experience with a variety of mindfulness-based interventions for children and adolescents through experiential techniques, didactic conversations, role-playing, and a dissemination of information for attendees to use in their work with youth.
2. Review adapted mindfulness-based interventions for children and adolescents and be able to demonstrate how to use these materials.
3. Develop awareness of the developmental, cultural and social issues faced by children and adolescents today.
4. Become familiar with, through discussion, the challenges and rewards of working with youth.
5. Review the research to date on applications and outcomes of mindfulness with children and adolescents.
6. Have a direct, personal experience of mindfulness practice through introduction of exercises suitable to both personal practice, and to working with youth.

Speakers Include:

Daniel J. Siegel  
 Catherine L. Phillips  
 Gina M. Biegel  
 Randy J. Semple  
 Susan Kaiser-Greenland  
 Laurie Grossman  
 Amy Saltzman  
 Wynne Kinder  
 Jennifer M. Cohen

**Registration Fee** includes workshops Friday evening through noon on Sunday and a special booking signing reception on Saturday evening.

Fee: \$395.00 (US) booking accommodation and meal plan is done directly with The Banff Centre. **On-line Registration is now available at:** (credit cards accepted)

<http://mindfulnessinstitute.ticketleap.com/international-conference-on-mindfulness-with-youth/>

**To Learn More:**

<http://mindfulnessinstitute.ca/MindfulnessPrograms/WorkshopsSeminars/InternationalConferenceOnMindfulnessWithYouth.aspx>

### 6<sup>th</sup> Mindfulness Training Yves Desnoyers

*Part of my training with Dharmacharya Ian for ordination into the Order of Interbeing is to make each of the 14 Trainings a personal journey of contemplation. I am doing this through photography and reflection.*

#### The Sixth Mindfulness Training Dealing with Anger

Aware that anger blocks communication and creates suffering, we are determined to take care of the energy of anger when it arises and to recognize and transform the seeds of anger that lie deep in our consciousness. When anger comes up, we are determined not to do or say anything, but to practice mindful breathing or mindful walking and acknowledge, embrace, and look deeply into our anger. We will learn to look with the eyes of compassion at ourselves and at those we think are the cause of our anger.

My commentary:

Being stuck in traffic. Cars stuck on the highway with no end in sight. Exhaust fumes of idling cars all around me, bringing further havoc to our planet. Brilliant red brake lights tempting my anger as a toreador's red cape tempts a bull during La Corrida. How easy it would be for me to fall into the trap of getting angry, sowing destructive seeds within my store consciousness and further propagating manas within myself and in those around me...



Yet, in those times, I am reminded of a monk, visiting the Province of Quebec for a Dharma Talk; he arrived late because he was stuck in traffic, and many asked him if he felt anger and frustration because of this. “On the contrary”, he said with a radiant smile on his face, because on the Quebec license plates it’s written “Je me souviens” in French, which means “I remember”, so every time he saw a license plate, he remembered to breathe mindfully, and in doing so, he diffused the whole situation by changing his perspective--what was originally a traffic jam suddenly became an opportunity for meditation.

Je me souviens...

### **Costa Rica Cornerstones    Margery Street**

Ian, Carolyn and I recently travelled to Costa Rica to attend a sacred chanting retreat with Snatam Kaur and Guru Ganesha. The event was held at Blue Spirit Retreat on the Pacific coast near Nosara. We had the retreat centre to ourselves and there were approximately 80 people at the retreat. The setting was private and beautifully landscaped, surrounding us with a lush rainforest of trees, plants, butterflies, birds and monkeys. I had attended a retreat in Death Valley, CA back in the 80's. The retreat was fantastic, but the re-entry to

my former life was a disaster. There was no support system in place. Initially, a few of us from Toronto met to meditate and share, but after a few months that fell apart. There was no structure to sustain us and I gave up on the process for many years. I continued to search for a spiritual practice, not finding any which felt like home.

I have been a member of Pine Gate for the last two years. One of the first things that Ian said to me was “you can't meditate alone.” and he was right, but it took me a long time to appreciate the depth of that guidance. We arrived in Costa Rica a few days before the retreat and planned to stay for several days after it was over. This scheduling was essential to allow time to process the experience. We did a couple of rainforest hikes before the retreat, one of which was a lot more difficult than advertised. We had to walk for several hours in mindfulness just to get back safely. But what an experience of accomplishment! The mutual support on the trail and periodic rests to ensure we would get home in one piece were just one aspect of a process that solidified the three of us as a “cornerstone” for Pine Gate and mindfulness. I could experience directly the implications of a talk Ian gave about creating Sangha cornerstones – where three or more friends would meet and enjoy their harmony just for the sake of meeting and enjoying harmony. The freshness that emerged from cornerstones was like a neuron charge for the rest of the Sangha. Pine Gate has many such cornerstones, though this was the first time for me to experience the significance.

The retreat started Sunday night after dinner and we experienced our first concert with Snatam. She consolidated and lifted the energy of the whole group that night. They encouraged a get together afterwards with tea and cookies but we floated off to sleep instead. This allowed all three of us to hold our focus and build on it the next day. I got up for prayers the next morning and watched a beautiful sun rise. We had free time after breakfast and then a two hour session of yoga and singing lessons

before lunch. When Guru Ganesha led this, there was much singing, dancing and laughing. There was a meet & greet session that encouraged people to bare their souls with disastrous consequences. Ian was very concerned with the facilitator's lack of psychological responsibility in this process, as it lacked mindfulness. I was grateful for my practice because I didn't get caught up in it. Each evening concluded with a concert with Snam: each night better than the previous one. Each day became easier to stay open and receptive. I was reminded that the only thing which makes practice easier is more practice; especially with supportive friends around me.

I have had an opportunity to reflect on my experience over the last few weeks. My appreciation for the dharma and the sangha has greatly deepened. I don't have to go it alone. The intention which I set for the retreat was to forgive myself for events in my past. I remind myself of that when I lose my equanimity. I had an opportunity to experience the Sikh tradition and enjoy the power of sacred chant. Most of all I gained a new appreciation for my practice with the three jewels at Pine Gate.

**Costa Rica Haiku 2011****Ian Prattis**

Day One – April 1

Nine mist laden guardians  
geothermal travel  
volcanic rim Las Pailas

Day Two – April 2

Strangler vines holding aloft  
dead trees still screaming  
rainforest rhythm

Day Three – April 3

Waterfall La Cangrela  
high mountain goddess  
pacific casas sustain

Day Four – April 4: Sacred Chant Retreat  
Sacred chant awakes our world  
Snam's swift arrow  
tranquil hearts break wide open

Day Five – April 5: Sacred Chant Retreat  
Fierce sound currents freely roar  
silence breaks the dawn  
howler monkeys disagree

Day Six – April 6: Sacred Chant Retreat  
Chant alive primal ocean  
vortex spiral turns  
stillness harvests timeless waves

Day Seven – April 7: Sacred Chant Retreat  
Zen archer draws the great bow  
arrow tipped with joy  
striking his stillpoint of heart

Day Eight – April 8: Sacred Chant Finale  
Peaks of ecstasy abound  
universal gift  
now cook scrub floors do laundry

**Beaver Pond Forest****Robert Lovelace**

*Robert, a retired Algonquin Chief, read this letter at the closing ceremony of the Sacred Fire at Queen's Park in Toronto February 13 2011.*

It is hard to see the clear-cutting of the Beaver Pond Forest in Ottawa. It is hard because so many good people have tried their best to prevent it. It is hard because this forest has a spirit. The Life in the Forest called out to these good people to help save the trees, the forest life, and the ancestral connection that it has with the Algonquin people. But it is being clear-cut. Men, for wages, are felling the trees with dispassionate machines, piling the trees for processing, insuring that every last morsel is committed to profit. And then the ground itself will be pushed into piles, scraped into roads, excavated for foundations and sewers. This old

growth forest, the archeological story it holds and the serenity it offered will soon be gone. But we have not lost this struggle.

We have not lost this struggle. The struggle to save the Beaver Pond Forest has united heroic people who understand their common concerns for mother earth. The struggle has educated us to the complexities of the battle to save the Earth and as we learn we become stronger. Now is the time to renew and extend our efforts to change the culture of greed and exploitation to a culture of mutual respect for human needs and non-interference with the replenishing mechanisms and cycles of the earth.

Those who opposed us in this struggle did so out of greed, arrogance and political cowardice. Too many times, single minded developers have taken our common heritage and turned it into market commodities, killed the natural spirit of the land, and created landscapes of self-interest, conspicuous consumption and unsustainable depreciation. Too many times, politicians promise to extend the power of the people but simply acquiesce to the power of money. Throughout this battle the real heroic people have stood together against this kind of tyranny and they will continue to work together to create real change and real democracy. It is time to take back the commons from those who have corrupted both our lands and governance. As we watch the destruction of this beautiful forest, we owe it to each other to continue to fight for every piece of mother earth. Refuse to surrender another inch.

Restore the land, its natural functions and the creatures that abide by its natural laws. Restore your own relationship with the land in how you live, what you eat, how you use your energy and in your relationships with one another. And when we struggle together in the face of greed, arrogance and cowardice; heal yourselves from the harm, heal others in a good way, and pick yourself up and struggle again. We shall overcome.

## **The End of Growth**

**Richard Heinberg**

*Richard's new book is set for publication in July 2011. Very timely given the urgency and fragility of the global economic crisis.*

The central assertion of this book is both simple and startling. Economic growth as we have known it is over and done with. The “growth” we are talking about consists of the expansion of the overall size of the economy (with more people being served and more money changing hands) and of the quantities of energy and material goods flowing through it.

The economic crisis that began in 2007 – 2008 was both foreseeable and inevitable, and it marks a permanent, fundamental break from past decades – a period during which most economists adopted the unrealistic view that perpetual economic growth is necessary and also possible to achieve. There are now fundamental barriers to ongoing economic expansion, and the world is colliding with those barriers.

## **Quotes and Jokes**

The Buddha had a sense of humor. He told jokes – which were profound teachings about practice. One joke is about a foolish person dying of thirst right next to a swiftly flowing river. He did not have a cup – the right instrument – to dip into the river and so died. The joke directs us to acquire appropriate instruments of practice so we can fill them from the river of the Sangha.

Thay – from Transformation At The Base

Transformation at the base means transformation in the depths of the store consciousness, because it is the base of all other consciousnesses and ultimately of the entire universe.” (p 224).....Our sense bases – our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind – are all deep oceans filled with danger..... A practitioner who does not light the lamp of mindfulness to guard his or her six senses is not really able to practice.” (p 220)

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Dalai Lama

The more you think about your own self, the more self-centered you are, the more trouble even small problems can create in your mind. The stronger your sense of “I” the narrower the scope of your thinking becomes; then even small obstacles become unbearable. On the other hand if you concern yourself mainly with the other, the broader your thinking becomes, and life’s inevitable difficulties disturb you less.

Joseph Goldstein

There are many descriptions of awakening, but all Buddhist traditions converge on one understanding of what liberates the mind. The Buddha expressed it clearly and unequivocally: “Nothing whatsoever is to be clung to as “I” or “mine.” Whoever has realized this truth has realized all the Teachings.” This is the essential unifying experience of freedom – the heart of the One Dharma of liberation.

**Stillness and Grace**

**Michael McCulloch**

*Pine Gate Sangha supported the refugee camp  
Michael refers to, with a grant to assist families to  
relocate on their original farms*

Visiting friends in a refugee camp  
in Northern Uganda  
where 1,000 children had gathered  
in silence beneath the shade  
of a large mango tree  
the elders spoke of courage and hope  
We sat with the children  
and listened  
Our hearts touched by the words  
of a woman  
who began a women’s cooperative  
so that their girls could stay in school  
and maybe, just maybe  
take a small step towards  
a better future  
Can you imagine the stories  
this tree has heard

the dreams which are now part of its leaves  
the tears which have watered its roots

In a hospital for stroke survivors  
Sasha, my Portuguese water dog  
who is afraid of the water, cats  
and the full moon,  
works his magic  
by walking over to people  
whose lives have been forever changed  
Some are surrounded by family  
while for others  
their journeys are more solitary  
The other day  
I spent time with a woman  
whose smile in the presence of illness  
stayed with me for many days  
In letting go of the things  
she could no longer control  
Laughter had returned to her life

While I often stumble  
in attempting to define grace  
I am humbled in its presence  
and filled by the desire to be still

Sometimes grace arrives through struggle  
and suffering  
Other times through an abundance of love,  
beauty and joy  
Sometimes it arrives unexpectedly and  
quietly  
by the courageous act of simply finding and  
being  
who we were meant to be

May your 2011 be painted with splashes of  
stillness and grace

**Personal Journey To Sangha Leonard Poole**

Born in 1951, I was part of the leading charge of  
baby boomers growing into the sixties. It was  
nothing if not turbulent. I entered that ten year  
stretch of my life a starry eyed child of the fifties,

filled with my parents' ambitions for me. I left it a dark, surly, aging teenager, desperately searching for meaning in life. I knew that my heart was not inspired by the Middle American dream that surrounded me.

University introduced me to many new ideas. Whether it was studying Marxism, reading Nietzsche, Sartre, or a host of others, I felt challenged by new perspectives of being. I also at times felt very confused and disconnected. There was, however, one corner of my intellectual universe that calmed me. I developed an interest in Buddhist philosophy. There were many guides, such as Shunryu Suzuki, Daisetz Suzuki and Allan Watts who were lighting the way for Westerners. Until this time I had harshly judged all organized religion. I could not abide the bible-thumping guilt that I heard coming out of so many pulpits. I felt it was adding fuel to our societal discord, splitting us into "*us versus them - we are the chosen ones you are not*" camps. Uncritical adherence to religious dogma, in my analysis, was part of the problem.

I heard no words in Buddhism, however, that spoke in such disrespectful tones. It didn't ask us to consider what divided us, but rather, what brought us together. I loved Allan Watts' explanation that: "*As the ocean waves, the universe peoples.*" We were but points of exquisite light of universal consciousness. This spoke to my sense of uniqueness in experiencing "*my*" consciousness, whilst simultaneously breathing life and meaning into what was beyond. I began to see that I was intimately connected with all that surrounded me. I was embarking, ever so slowly, on a path of appreciation of non-duality. I knew though, that something was missing. Over the years I articulated to myself and close friends my recognition that a religious or spiritual community was greater than its "dogma". It provided community, a sense of connection with others. This was something I did not have in my life.

Recently, I have met another one of those precious guides I spoke of earlier - Ian Prattis. He was giving a talk at a local community meeting hosted by Interfaith Sandy Hill in the fall of 2010. In response to a question I posed about the "how" of becoming more engaged in social change he invited me to the [Pine Gate Sangha](#). "*Become engaged!*" he urged. I really had no idea what to expect, but I followed up on his suggestion, and am very glad that I did.

What I am now discovering is that missing link of "community", or, in Buddhist terms, the Sangha. For me, I feel like I am coming home. Don't get me wrong. It is not that Pine Gate, per se, is home. Community is home, or, in Buddhist term, Sangha is home. Home is a place to nurture the seeds of life. Home is where you garden. Yes, I can garden on my own, without others, but I am finding it so much more enriching as I garden with those in my community, in Sangha. Home is where you make it, and, Pine Gate is becoming part of my home.

### **Greening Award 2011                      Kathryn Guindon**

Congratulations to Pine Gate Sangha on being the Greening Sacred Space award recipient in Ottawa this year! The GSS awards are given out each year by Faith & the Common Good to faith communities across Canada who have demonstrated a commitment to caring for the planet through their spirituality and worship, within their building and grounds, and within the wider community. This year Pine Gate received the award. The nomination for Pine Gate was especially impressive because of the extensive changes that have been made to the building, the efforts of Ian & Carolyn to grow sustainable food and share it with others, and the amazing advocacy work done by the whole community through Peace Prayer Day and Friends for Peace Canada, which has Pine Gate Sangha as its nucleus. The successful campaign to save the Dumoine River from development and gain provincial park status for the watershed was an

example of Pine Gate working in coalition with environmental groups like CPAWS. The present campaign to preserve the South March Highlands is an ongoing effort. Pine Gate truly is an example of a community that lives up to its name – reaching out to others for the good of the planet and all who live on it, and doing it in a genuine and joyful way. This year Greening Sacred Spaces is lucky enough to be able to partner with Earth Day Ottawa to present this award. April 22<sup>nd</sup> is Earth Day, and the award ceremony was held at the Canadian Museum of Nature. The ceremony coincided with the release of Ian's new book – *Earth My Body, Water My Blood*.

From everyone at Greening Sacred Spaces, congratulations to Pine Gate Sangha - keep up the great work!

### **Pine Gate Sangha**

Pine Gate is a meditation community practicing Engaged Buddhism in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. It has created an engaged expression for peace, social justice and planetary care, as the community is the nucleus of Friends for Peace. The coalition, with Pine Gate at the core, has created annual events to celebrate peace, social justice and planetary care. Fierce Light of Engaged Buddhism in practice. Pine Gate is also on Facebook - check it out and click "Like" if it appeals:

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Pine-Gate-Sangha/166759323357079>

At Pine Gate the resident teacher is Dharmacharya Ian Prattis - True Body of Wisdom. Ian is a poet, scholar, peace and environmental activist. As a professor at Carleton University he taught courses on Ecology, Symbols, Globalization and Consciousness – reflected in his 2008 book: *Failsafe: Saving The Earth From Ourselves*. As an ordained meditation teacher he encourages people to find their true nature so that humanity and the world may be renewed. He has trained with

masters in Buddhist, Vedic and Shamanic traditions.

The sangha, located in the west end of Ottawa, had very modest beginnings. Inaugurated in 1997 following Ian's return from teaching meditation in India, early gatherings featured Ian, his wife Carolyn, and their pets – Nikki the dog and Lady the cat. Since then the sangha has grown, and presently has over 250 members on the e-mail list. In the summer of 2001 major renovations took place to the lower level of Ian and Carolyn's home. A new meditation hall emerged from the dust and knocked down walls - the Pine Gate Meditation Hall - named after Thich Nhat Hanh's story in the book: *The Stone Boy and Other Stories*. Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh provided a gift of calligraphy, naming The Pine Gate Meditation Hall. This now hangs on the wall for all to see. The new meditation hall has become a source of sanctuary for many friends,

There are regular meetings for meditation and study every Thursday evening from 7.00pm – 9.00pm. Duong Sinh - Bamboo Stick Qi-gong classes, known as the Life Sustaining Way of the Heart, are offered in addition to regular qi-gong classes throughout the year. Potluck vegetarian suppers, Hikes, Sweat Lodges, Pilgrimages, Days of Mindfulness, and Meditation Retreats are organized on a regular basis. The voice of the sangha is heard through the sangha journal Pine Gate - available online at: <http://www.ianprattis.com/pinegate.htm>

*“Our engagement with society and the environment rests on our quality of being. When that quality is rooted in stillness there is a different ground for subsequent actions and so events take a different course. We simply go home to our true nature. We are very active in this way and bring harmony to those we interact with. The most significant interaction is with our true nature. To connect to its boundless quality in daily life, and then to connect to others and the world in the same way is surely the ticket to ride!”*

**DIRECTIONS TO THE PINE GATE  
MEDITATION HALL:**

In Ottawa, take Queensway to Woodroffe South exit; go to Baseline Rd; RT on Baseline; RT on Highgate (2nd lights) RT on Westbury; LT on Rideout and follow the Crescent round to 1252, which is always lit up with Christmas lights in the winter and full of flowers in the summer. Tel: 726 0881 Contacts [iprattis@cyberus.ca](mailto:iprattis@cyberus.ca) ; [chill.Carolyn@gmail.ca](mailto:chill.Carolyn@gmail.ca)

**The Wounded Inner Child                      Ian Prattis**

Emotional, physical and sexual abuse during childhood creates a lost, frightened and frozen child within us. If we are unable to reach this lost and wounded child then we may never heal ourselves. We prefer not to remember the sufferings of childhood, so we bury them and hide. We run away from seeing deeply into the causes of our suffering. Whenever the memories arise, however fleetingly, we think we cannot handle them and deflect them into the deepest realms of our unconsciousness mind. This results in the wounded child not being seen for a long time simply because we are terrified of further suffering. Yet we have to find a way to reach the hurt child and make her safe. This means we have to get past the fear and address the suffering, realizing that it is suffering which provides the way through to awakening.

Although we may now be adult, there is also a little boy in us, a little girl in us, who is so afraid and suffers deeply. This suffering child within our adult frame colors everything we do, generating our fears, insecurities and self loathing, wounding us in our relationships and life. That wounded child *is* you, is me, and we must extend a different energy to him so that the energy of childhood suffering can be understood, defused and transformed. Mindfulness is the way through to the inner child. We have to embrace him, embrace her exactly

where they are caught by the past – in fear and with anger at being neglected for so long. Moreover we have to be very skilful.

This means touching the seeds of childhood suffering from an adult state of being mindful and aware, knowing that we must make it safe for that child to come out from hiding behind the closed doors of suffering and pain. It is we as adults who must no longer run away. We must have the courage and awareness to bring healing to our hurt inner child and thereby produce a transformation for ourselves. The steps we take are not only to heal ourselves, we somehow connect to all wounded children – those in our ancestors and descendants and elsewhere in the world. For once we cultivate the seeds of mindful healing in ourselves, the energy of these seeds continues on into all that we interconnect with. A quantum leap from our cellular memories to everyone else's throughout time and space. With awareness we take our inner child into our daily life, on picnics, walks, sitting at the dining room table and doing the dishes together. Patiently realizing that we are on a splendid adventure to bring the cycle of suffering to a close, for it may have persisted over generations. Thus we are healing and transforming generations of ingrained patterns transmitted from our ancestors and continued through us to our descendants. Such patterns build up like corrosive rust through time and amplify the fears and suffering of the wounded inner child

Thich Nhat Hanh addressed the issue of child abuse in a Question and Answer session held in the Lower Hamlet of Plum Village, France on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 1998. Very gently he spoke about the ignorance and pain of the abuser as well as that of the abused, and stated clearly that understanding was the basis of recovery. Not blaming or feeling guilt and shame, but seeing deeply and understanding. First of all to understand that the person abusing must have lived under ignorant and deprived conditions

without support, guidance or a wise teacher. So much so that the power of ignorance was stronger than the person, and thus they were driven to do wrong things. If the person abused can begin to understand just a little bit of that, then their anger, shame and outrage can transform into a droplet of compassion and through mindfulness practice their suffering can diminish. When forgiveness and understanding are there, suffering decreases. The second step he suggested was to recommend that the person abused practice mindfulness, to transform herself into a Bodhisattva and engender the compassion to help and be of service to all children who need protection. By merit of understanding the experience and recovery from abuse, such a person can practice and use their talents to promote measures to protect children. This helps to eradicate the ignorance that generates abuse.

Directions (from downtown): Take Sussex Dr. East (becomes Rockliffe Parkway) and exit at Aviation Parkway. Alternatively, take the OCTranspo bus route 129 to the museum stop.

### **Japan Relief Concert**

Harmony for Japan, a group of local pianists and violinists, present the Japan Relief Concert to help the victims of the Japan Earthquake. The event will open with remarks by the Ambassador of Japan to Canada. The concert will feature works by Bach, Debussy, Shostakovich, Piazzolla, and more.

WHEN: Sunday, June 5, 2011, 2pm-4pm

WHERE: Canada Aviation and Space Museum Theatre, 11 Aviation Parkway, Ottawa.

Seating is limited. Suggested donation is \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. All donations will go to the Canadian Red Cross's Japan Earthquake/Asia-Pacific Tsunami Appeal. The event is sponsored by Lauzon Music and Carleton University's Sprott School of Business, Carleton International, and the School of Linguistics and Language Studies. For more information, or to reserve seating, contact: [harmonyforjapan@gmail.com](mailto:harmonyforjapan@gmail.com).