



Pine Gate

Newsletter of the Pine Gate Sangha

Vol. 10 Issue 3: Fall 2011

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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 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-Shanga/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.

Food for Thought

Ian Prattis

For the most part, the food we eat is driven by internal desires that have disastrous consequences, particularly for our connection to all living beings. Awareness about changing our consciousness around food consumption has yet to filter through to the North American mainstream, as the vast consumption of meat and alcohol constitutes an excessive ecological footprint, which is costly and damaging. Furthermore it is not good for our health – physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually.

Furthermore, the chronic degenerative diseases common in western civilization find their origins in the toxic food we eat. Yet if we know how to eat mindfully, then we also know how to take care of ourselves, of others, and the environment. Mindful eating creates celebration as an alternate to violence. Before eating, simply look at what is there on the table, where it has come from, how it has been prepared, and whether it will truly nourish you, and at the same time protect the environment and future generations from harm. I make a special effort to prepare and consume meals mindfully. I have an assistant – a delightful and goofy standard poodle named Moksha. I tell her that this is a mindful meal and I cannot talk to her after the bell. I set a bowl of treats on the floor for her and begin my meal. My dharma pet always sits quietly until the bell brings the silence to an end. Then she will want her ears scratched and a game of frisbee on the lawn.

This advocacy around food consumption keeps compassion alive and creates the basis for joy and happiness. It means reducing as much as possible the violence, destruction and suffering brought to living creatures and to the planet, because if we bring violence into our own biological system and consciousness, then we inevitably bring violence to the other systems – political, economic, planetary – that we engage with through our thoughts, speech, actions and senses. The steps to prevent this arise

from being fully present with the consequences of our consumption.

We consume much more than edible food. We consume with our senses, desires and cravings. This consumption feeds our consciousness, which “eats” everything we put into it. If we fill it full of toxins, violence and other negative energies, it will be this accumulation in our consciousness that drives us. Yet, if we choose a mindful approach to consumption then a different energy will occupy the driving seat of our life, one that guides us to live a life full of voluntary simplicity, understanding and insight into the reality of the moment we presently occupy. Each of our sensory doorways is bombarded with toxins that feed our consciousness. The advertising on billboards and through the media flood our eyes and minds with desire, greed and lust. Our children take in violence through videogames and movies of wanton destruction and cruelty. The often vulgar and demeaning lyrics sounding through sectors of modern music create homophobia and hate. The taste and smells of fast food create such greed that obesity in young people is now a serious medical issue – and not only in young people. Eating disorders are promoted by the unrealistic norms for women artificially set by the fashion industry. Manufacturers’ cleverly design built-in obsolescence for the products we are encouraged to buy, solicited through vigorous advertising - now targeting small children as well as the rest of the population to create a disposable society that has forgotten to re-use, recycle and even question the need to buy. If we do not guard each sensory doorway we get sick. We must warn the six senses to consume mindfully, discipline them to avoid self-intoxication and guide them to scrutinize what energies are allowed to penetrate our consciousness.

Then there are the deepest desires and cravings that so often possess and overwhelm us. If vengeance and absolute power over others are our deepest desires, then terrorists are created; if rampant consumption is the deepest desire then we have a

degraded planet. Instead of lust, greed, vengeance and fame - we foster the desire to awaken at the highest level, to experience joy and happiness in the here and now, the desire to bring loving kindness to everything we connect with and the desire to alleviate all suffering. Just as addictive consumption provides food for our consciousness, the desire to awaken and be present is also food for our consciousness.

It is easy to understand how our consciousness is reinforced by our patterns of consumption. This shapes our lives because we feed off it. It is the ground of definition for how our body, mind and spirit manifest and furthermore creates the environment we occupy. Mindfulness is our protector. We must use it to distinguish consumption patterns that nourish our organism and spiritual well being, from those which do not. By eliminating toxins from our sensory diet we begin cultivating an alternative consumption based on wholesome nutriment – patterns of consumption that enhance mindfulness and compassion. But we cannot see deeply into the interconnection between consumption and consciousness until we first of all come to a STOP. That is the first meditative step – to stop running - before deep looking and insight help us to recognize the toxic nutriment that pollute our bodies and mind. We then cultivate the foods that nourish us in a positive and wholesome way. We resist by waking up, by knowing what to do and what to refrain from.

The Five Contemplations

At Pine Gate Sangha the Five Contemplations are recited prior to pot lucks and formal meals. The version used replaces the word “reverse” with “mitigate” with respect to global warming, as the notion of reversing global warming is scientifically incorrect. Also a bit of “love in abundance” is added. We use English and French versions

THIS FOOD THIS DAY, AND THIS SANGHA ARE GIFTS OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE – THE EARTH, THE SKY, THE STARS, NUMEROUS LIVING BEINGS AND MUCH HARD WORK

MAY WE RECEIVE THEM WITH STABILITY, JOY, AND FREEDOM, AND SO BE WORTHY OF THEM

MAY WE TRANSFORM OUR UNSKILLFUL STATES OF MIND, ESPECIALLY OUR GREED, AND LEARN TO EAT IN MODERATION, AND LOVE IN ABUNDANCE

MAY WE KEEP OUR COMPASSION ALIVE BY EATING IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE REDUCE THE SUFFERING OF LIVING BEINGS, PRESERVE OUR PLANET AND MITIGATE THE PROCESS OF GLOBAL WARMING

WE ACCEPT THIS FOOD, THIS DAY, THESE FRIENDS, SO WE MAY NOURISH OUR SISTERHOOD AND BROTHERHOOD, STRENGTHEN OUR SANGHA AND NOURISH OUR IDEAL OF SERVING ALL BEINGS

Les cinq contemplations

Cette nourriture, cette journée, et ce sangha sont les cadeaux de l’univers tout entier – la Terre, le ciel, les étoiles, les nombreux êtres vivants et le travail laborieux

Que nous les recevions avec stabilité, joie, liberté, et soyons-en dignes

Que nous transformions nos états d’esprit inhabiles, tout particulièrement notre avarice, et apprenons à se nourrir avec modération, et aimons avec abondance.

Que nous puissions garder notre compassion en vie en nous nourrissant de façon à ce que nous puissions réduire la souffrance d’êtres vivants,

préservier notre planète et atténuer le processus de réchauffement de la planète.

Nous acceptons cette nourriture, en cette journée, ces amis, afin que nous puissions nourrir notre sororité et fraternité, renforcer notre sangha et soigner notre idéal de servir tous les êtres.

Sister of the Buddha Lisa Fancott

Lisa received the dharma name “Gentle Karuna Radiating of the Source” from Dharmacharya Ian and will be ordained into the Tiep Hien at Blue Cliff Monastery by Thay in October 2011

The image and the narratives of the Buddha are so peaceful, in spite of what life was like all around him. Siddharta lived in times where his fellow citizens faced severe social oppression and violence. His land was conquered by a neighbouring warlord and was on the brink of genocide as the Buddha was dying. If we embrace the Buddha as our spiritual mentor, we have the opportunity to look at how he lived his life in this context.

In this context, the Buddha abandoned his comfortable life as a prince and visibly established himself and his followers as outcasts. Going against the stream involved taking brown and saffron robes, the colors of the rejected castes, a contrast to the elite white cloth of the Brahmins. These very robes were at times recycled from scraps taken from charnel grounds and waste picking sites. Once a member of the community was ordained, it was forbidden for them to remind others of the social class they were born into. The Vinaya talks of Venerable Ananda going forth deliberately *after* his lower caste barber, making the barber Ananda’s *elder* brother in the Sangha. The Sangha was known to come from the four directions, meaning, from any land or region, without discrimination. Thousands of women abandoned their household lives and the deeply entrenched social contract regarding *what women should do*, to join the

Buddha’s community. Women shaved their heads, men shaved their heads and beards and both men and women wore the same style and colour of robe. When they walked the dusty roads for alms, people could not tell whether they were men or women from a distance. A poignant and visible call to close the eyes of discrimination and see our common humanity.

The mere physical presence of the Buddha’s community challenged the very fabric of class, caste and gender in the society they lived and moved in. This bold display of inclusiveness is the public extension of the Buddha’s core teachings on suffering and how to end it. Discrimination begins with the delusion of self and extends outwards from self to anyone “other than self”. “Other than self” depends of course on how we identify our “selves”: Me/You, Man/Woman, Student/Teacher, white/Asian, left wing/right wing, French/English, Buddhist/Christian, “us” and “them”. As practitioners we must understand the chain of harm this leads to in the world. When we see it, it becomes easy to understand how this world is mind made.

Putting it into practice is not so easy. To start with, some of the most revered Dhamma teachers and communities of our “advanced” times have found themselves challenged in living up to the Buddha’s precedent of inclusiveness.

Faith traditions can reinforce the very identity delusion the Buddha warns us against. In many traditions, including some schools of Buddhism, men may go forth and women may not. In some places it is seen as dangerous for a monk to hold a baby girl or touch the hand of an elderly woman. In parts of the world, concepts of higher and lower rebirth are used to justify the trafficking of millions of girls and women into prostitution and leads to infanticide of millions of babies. Faith reinforced identity delusions lead to genocide and environmental annihilation. In Buddhist communities as in many other faith traditions, the

letter and the spirit of the teachings have allowed the gnarly roots of social exclusion to penetrate their foundations. In Western Buddhist communities, we see few people of colour – few people who are disabled or elderly – or from poorer classes, which has led to the occasional reference to Western Buddhism as the “Upper Middle Path.” Elders from the Parliament of World Religions have written: “So ingrained are many of these attitudes in our societies, that their roots are often forgotten. But the abuse of culture and religion to subjugate women and to protect power and influence must be exposed and challenged.” For our part, we must acknowledge that Buddhism – including our love and compassion - is for all. Just as all of us are equally morally responsible.

At the level of personal practice it is not so easy to forge the steps between the Zafu, the cushion, and real life. But this is the very craft of engaged Buddhism. Not just to say the path applies to the whole of life, public and private– but to *show us how*: to show us the path between practice on the meditation cushion and off the cushion into our family lives, our livelihood, the real life fire dilemmas of climate change, oppression and conflicts. It is not to show the one and the other separately but their *interbeing*.

That there is a single teacher in our age who does this simply, beautifully and effectively as Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, is something to celebrate. Thay speaks and teaches and lives the way of non-discrimination, the spirit of the Buddha’s radical path of inclusiveness, in a way that is so gentle, you would hardly notice how radical it is. Thay reminds us that the path begins with non-discrimination. Thay shows us how to use the language of non-discrimination in every story he shares, in every teaching. The term *interbeing* itself cuts through dualistic language in a way that had not been done before. Thay’s story about the left and the right hand is a precious example. The right hand never says to the left hand, “you are slow and stupid, while I am skilled and I do most of the work.” And

when the right hand is impatiently hammering a nail into the wall and accidentally hits the left hand, the left hand never says to the right hand, “you are so skilled and you do all the work yet you can be so careless and stupid.”

I worked for most of my career with governments and businesses around the world to reduce discrimination in trade and economic systems and discrimination against women. It was an insight blessing to see the links between decisions that a handful of individuals make and how they ripple out in all directions to affect millions of people. By the same token, when this same handful of people come to understand *interbeing*, it is also an insight to see how willing they are to reconsider and how the world can change for the better.

At my first retreat nine years ago I immediately wished to go forth and have been moving towards it ever since. I confess I somehow found myself in the absurd position of practicing in a community that does not ordain women at all let alone according to the Buddha’s radical principle of non-discrimination. It was then that the wake-up call came. How serious am I about the Buddha’s teaching and message? How did I arrive at this disconnect between my work in the world, to reduce discrimination – and my spiritual practice, which is discriminating against me because I took birth in female form? Is it more important to take the robes or is it more important to practice and be rooted in right view?

A deeper understanding is unfolding since I have taken refuge through Pine Gate and Thay’s beautiful teachings. I may have studied several languages and worked in different parts of the world to reduce discrimination. I may even call myself a Buddhist. On the day I learn to speak Thay’s language of inclusiveness, and truly live according to the way of non-discrimination please call me by my true name: Sister of the Buddha.

This article was inspired by an article by Richard Reoch, President of Shambhala, formerly with Amnesty International and a keynote address by Richard Gombrich, Founder-President of the [Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies](http://www.oxfordcentre.org/) and my limited understanding of Thay's wonderful talks available at pvom.org

Pine Gate Meditations CD on iTunes

Click and download at:

<http://itunes.apple.com/ca/album/pine-gate-meditations/id453540157>

The meditations spoken by Ian and chants sung by Carolyn are from the rich tradition of Plum Village, a monastery and practice centre in France established by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh in 1982. The So Hum meditation is drawn from Ian's experience as a dharma teacher in India:

1. Opening Chant – Invitation to Meditation
3.58
2. Four Brahmaviharas Meditation
15.20
3. Five Remembrances Meditation
12.25
4. So Hum Healing Meditation
12.59
5. Earth Meditation
12.11
6. Closing Chant
3.51

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Cover Design: Mark Stokes

Cover Photograph: Lotus at Plum Village by Carolyn Hill

Recorded live in Pine Gate Meditation Hall

The gentle offerings on this hour long CD nurture the heart so that love and understanding are nourished. Sit quietly and be with your in-breath as it comes in and with your out-breath as it goes out. Be still and open; allow the meditations to take you



deeply inside to touch your true nature. As mindfulness deepens from continued practice there arises the internal strength and awareness to be truly present and act in everyday life with compassion and lucidity. There are many ways to embrace the meditations and chants, so be creative as you share with friends, sangha and family. Adapt and use the contents of this CD in whatever way suits your practice. The door is wide open.

Mindful Development

Thay

“In which way should our society develop, economically and socially, so that we can touch interbeing, the interconnectedness of all the planet – cultures and government, continents and nations, earth and sky, plants and animals, students and teachers, and fathers and sons? How can we guide the next generation of young people to a world that is more sane and healthy – bodily, emotionally and spiritually? What teachings and practices of the Buddha can help us find true happiness and

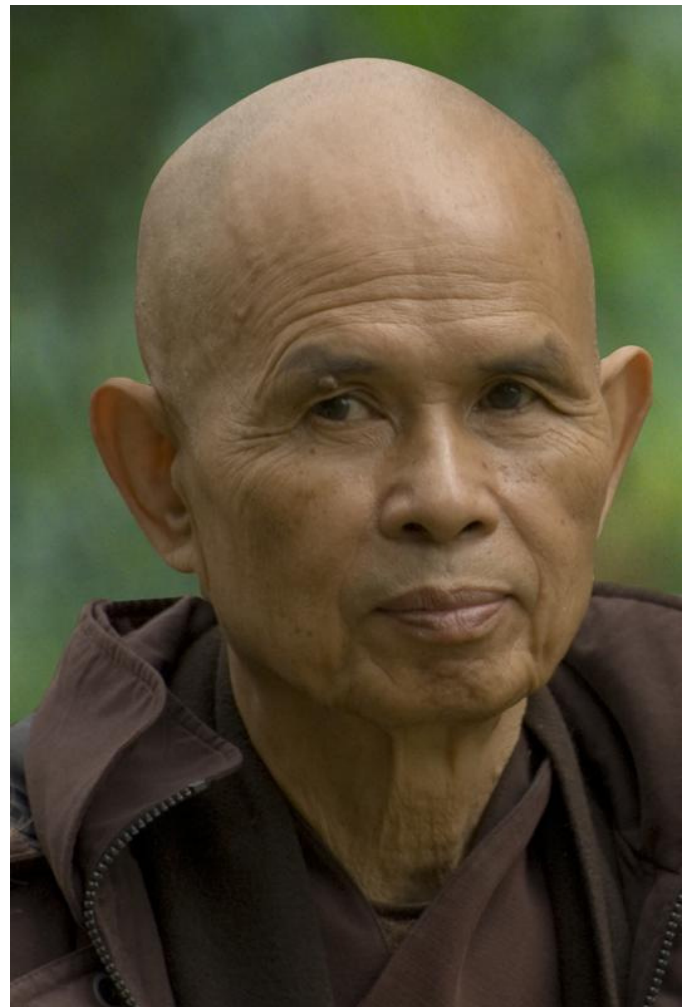
freedom, and handle and deal with our current social and economical state?"

With the various crises we are witnessing in different parts of the world, it is clear that the era of independent nations with borders and separate interests is gradually coming to a close, that the suffering and pain of one nation is fundamentally linked to and is shared by the hearts of people of all nations; that the instability and depression of another nation affects the prosperity and security of peoples all over the planet. In our present time and space, it is clear that social and economic development and all the challenges that come with it are no longer individual matters.

But we are not without hope. The problems that confront our planet and our humanity – environmental tension, social and family dysfunction, economic instability, and political unrest – give us an opportunity to pause, recognize, re-examine the sources of our suffering, and find a path that can lead us to towards a brighter future and to an even brighter present. This is the basic formula that the Buddha used during his own lifetime to guide his fellow beings to tend to their suffering. This basic formula can help guide us now, to our own salvation. The three distinctively Buddhist virtues of mindfulness, concentration, and insight can lead to this salvation. Applied appropriately and skillfully, they can help us discover a global ethic and a mindful way of living that can guide the development of our society towards a more sane and healthy direction.

We must find ways to apply the Buddhist teachings – namely the practice of mindfulness, the teachings on suffering and well-being, the wisdom of inter-being and non-discrimination, the Five Mindfulness Trainings, and the teachings on the Four Nutriment – so that our society can become more mindful in its production and consumption; so that companies and individuals can produce less toxic waste that harms our collective minds and the environment, and can consume less and in a way that nourishes

our body and heart. We as individuals and as nations should apply the Buddhist teachings of moderation, of knowing that we already have enough.



In the intimacy of our homes, fathers and sons apply the teachings so they can have more time and be present for one another (rather than for their computer screens), and can restore communication by learning to listen deeply and speak more lovingly.

In the sterile classrooms and cold halls of our institutions, teachers and students can learn ways to support one another as in the warm atmosphere of the family, to be less stressful, to relax and handle

their feelings and emotions, and to apply themselves in a direction that is meaningful and wholesome – graduating young people not just for the work-force of a capitalist machine, but for a kinder and freer generation who co-operate more than compete.

In power oriented offices and companies and government workplaces, colleagues and fellow workers can serve more mindfully, building brotherhood and sisterhood, nourishing their compassion and generosity, and guiding our society in the direction of true happiness and reconciliation. In our modern times, as we look for models of development in the ten directions, freedom to develop is hugely prized and sought after, but at what price to our young ones and our fragile environment and at what cost to our individual and collective body and consciousness.

It is never too late to pause and reflect and to find practices that can bring responsibility and ethical behaviors back into our society, our governments, into our families and our lives.

A message from Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh at the International Vesak 2011

Letter to The Nation Jack Layton

Jack Layton's family released the letter the federal NDP leader wrote just two days prior to his death at the age of 61, August 20 2011.

*My friends, love is better than anger.
Hope is better than fear. Optimism is
better than despair. So let us be loving,
hopeful and optimistic. And we'll
change the world.*

Dear Friends,
Tens of thousands of Canadians have written to me in recent weeks to wish me well. I want to thank each and every one of you for your thoughtful, inspiring and often beautiful notes, cards and gifts.

Your spirit and love have lit up my home, my spirit, and my determination. Unfortunately my treatment has not worked out as I hoped. So I am giving this letter to my partner Olivia to share with you in the circumstance in which I cannot continue.

To other Canadians who are on journeys to defeat cancer and to live their lives, I say this: please don't be discouraged that my own journey hasn't gone as well as I had hoped. You must not lose your own hope. Treatments and therapies have never been better in the face of this disease. You have every reason to be optimistic, determined, and focused on the future. My only other advice is to cherish every moment with those you love at every stage of your journey, as I have done this summer.

To the members of my party: we've done remarkable things together in the past eight years. It has been a privilege to lead the New Democratic Party and I am most grateful for your confidence, your support, and the endless hours of volunteer commitment you have devoted to our cause. There will be those who will try to persuade you to give up our cause. But that cause is much bigger than any one leader. Answer them by recommitting with energy and determination to our work. Remember our proud history of social justice, universal health care, public pensions and making sure no one is left behind. Let's continue to move forward. Let's demonstrate in everything we do in the four years before us that we are ready to serve our beloved Canada as its next government.

To the members of our parliamentary caucus: I have been privileged to work with each and every one of you. Our caucus meetings were always the highlight of my week. It has been my role to ask a great deal from you. And now I am going to do so again. Canadians will be closely watching you in the months to come. Colleagues, I know you will make the tens of thousands of members of our party proud of you by demonstrating the same seamless teamwork and solidarity that has earned us the confidence of millions of Canadians in the recent election.

To my fellow Quebecers: On May 2nd, you made an historic decision. You decided that the way to replace Canada's Conservative federal government with something better was by working together in partnership with progressive-minded Canadians across the country. You made the right decision then; it is still the right decision today; and it will be the right decision right through to the next election, when we will succeed, together. You have elected a superb team of New Democrats to Parliament. They are going to be doing remarkable things in the years to come to make this country better for us all.

To young Canadians: All my life I have worked to make things better. Hope and optimism have defined my political career, and I continue to be hopeful and optimistic about Canada. Young people have been a great source of inspiration for me. I have met and talked with so many of you about your dreams, your frustrations, and your ideas for change. More and more, you are engaging in politics because you want to change things for the better. Many of you have placed your trust in our party. As my time in political life draws to a close I want to share with you my belief in your power to change this country and this world. There are great challenges before you, from the overwhelming nature of climate change to the unfairness of an economy that excludes so many from our collective wealth, and the changes necessary to build a more inclusive and generous Canada. I believe in you. Your energy, your vision, your passion for justice are exactly what this country needs today. You need to be at the heart of our economy, our political life, and our plans for the present and the future.

And finally, to all Canadians: Canada is a great country, one of the hopes of the world. We can be a better one — a country of greater equality, justice, and opportunity. We can build a prosperous economy and a society that shares its benefits more fairly. We can look after our seniors. We can offer better futures for our children. We can do our part to save the world's environment. We can restore our good name in the world. We can do all of these things because we finally have a party system at the national

level where there are real choices; where your vote matters; where working for change can actually bring about change. In the months and years to come, New Democrats will put a compelling new alternative to you. My colleagues in our party are an impressive, committed team. Give them a careful hearing; consider the alternatives; and consider that we can be a better, fairer, more equal country by working together. Don't let them tell you it can't be done.

*My friends, love is better than anger.
Hope is better than fear. Optimism is
better than despair. So let us be loving,
hopeful and optimistic. And we'll
change the world.*

All my very best,

Jack Layton

The Invitation Oriah Mountain Dreamer

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing. It doesn't interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon. I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain. I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it or fade it or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own, if you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful, to be realistic, to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself; if you can bear the accusation

of betrayal and not betray your own soul; if you can be faithless and therefore trustworthy. I want to know if you can see beauty, even when it's not pretty, every day, and if you can source your own life from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine, and still stand on the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the full moon, "Yes!"

It doesn't interest me where you live or how much money you have. I want to know if you can get up, after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done to feed the children. It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where and what or with whom you have studied. I want to know what sustains you from the inside, when all else falls away. I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.

Friends for Peace

***Max Keeping, International Peace Walker
Jean Beliveau and Recording Artist
Bradfield at 2011 Friends for Peace Day.***

***Saturday October 1, 2011, Ottawa City
Hall, Jean Pigott Place
10.00am – 4.30pm***

A parade of embassy flag bearers will accompany the Path of Peace Walk from the Women's Monument in Minto Park, arriving at Ottawa City Hall Friends for Peace Day at 12 noon. Max Keeping will be the Grand Marshall. This welcomes **Jean Beliveau** – the Terry Fox of global peace walks. For the past decade Jean has been walking

for peace and children's rights across many countries throughout the world. Jean will receive a Peace Award from Friends for Peace presented by Mayor Jim Watson at 1.30pm. The other award recipients are Peter Stockdale, Tina Fedeski and Bill Bhaneja.



FRIENDSforPEACE.ca

Friends for Peace is a nonprofit organization that works for peace, planetary care and social justice. We set aside a day each year to celebrate what we can do rather than bemoan the obstacles. The day long festivity is located in the magnificent Jean Pigott Place on the ground floor of City Hall. Come out and support the 9th annual Celebrate Friends for Peace Day on October 1. It is a partner in this year's Ottawa Peace Festival.

The diversity of Ottawa comes out for this day. Mayor Jim Watson will be presenting Peace Awards to four worthy citizens. The onstage program in the morning starts with Pipers for Peace, followed by Minwaashin drum circle, Big Soul Project, Journey Dance with Dodie Sobretodo and Sophie Terrace's Laughter Yoga. OrKidstra, David Finkle, Jody Marsolais, recording artist Bradfield, meditation with Bhuvanewari and Amaeil - all in the afternoon program. The day is closed by the terrific Rhythm & Blues Band from Holy Trinity High School.

There is a Servery for great lunches and snacks, a Silent Auction with exquisite bargains, and community tables. A Connection Centre is also part of the celebration to connect people to projects. The funds raised provide Peace Grants to causes that

make a difference in the City of Ottawa and internationally. A Welcome Team at the entrance to Jean Pigott Place is there to greet you with information and guidance.

www.friendsforpeace.ca Contact: iprattis@bell.net
613 726 0881

Peace Awards and Peace Grants

Each year Friends for Peace presents Peace Awards to Canadian citizens who have devoted their lives to securing peace, planetary care and social justice.

That's the mandate at www.friendsforpeace.ca Past recipients include Grandfather William Commanda, Michael Monner and Tone Magazine, Marion Dewar, Max Keeping, David Smith, Irwin Cotler, Pandit Madhu, Elizabeth May, Bruce Cockburn and many others since our first Celebrate Peace Day nine years ago.

This year in Ottawa City Hall on Saturday October 1, Mayor Jim Watson will present four peace awards in Jean Pigott Place at City Hall (1.30pm). At 12 noon, prior to that ceremony, the Path of Peace parade will arrive at the Lisgar St Entrance of City Hall with Max Keeping as the Grand Marshall. Three of the award recipients will be marching in this parade – Jean Beliveau, Peter Stockdale and Bill Bhaneja; while the fourth – Tina Fedeski - will be preparing her children's orchestra to open the afternoon proceedings at 1.00pm. The parade will be piped in by two magnificent pipers in kilts, as embassy flagbearers march into City Hall, up to the podium and we give them all a rousing cheer!

This welcomes award recipient Jean Beliveau – the Terry Fox of global peace walks. For the past decade Jean has been walking for peace and children's rights across many countries throughout the world. Other award recipients are Peter Stockdale – co-sponsor of the Ottawa Peace Festival. Peter teamed up with Bill Bhaneja to create a Canadian Department of Peace (CDPI). Bill Bhaneja, a peaceful tiger, leapt into the

Canadian peace and non-violence movement, becoming a co-founder and the first National Co-Chair of the Canadian Department of Peace Initiative, initiating the Ottawa Peace Festival. He and Peter have in a very unique way brought together Ottawa civil society groups to celebrate their work to bring peace, unity and harmony, highlighting Ottawa as a City of Peace. In pursuit of her belief in the power of youth music, Tina Fedeski co-created The Leading Note Foundation and *OrKidstra* - a proud community building program through music – and very Canadian – with 24 languages spoken amongst 150 children!

The funds raised from the day are used to issue Peace Grants to organizations, in the City and Internationally, that are making a difference. Current projects in the city supported by Friends for Peace are the Multi-Faith Housing Initiative of Ottawa's Interfaith Council, the Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre, Child Haven International, and Peace Camp Ottawa, which brings Palestinian and Israeli teens together. This is in addition to supporting the Physicians for Global Survival initiative to expand the mandate of the Canadian War Museum to include the creation of a culture of peace. In Africa, the Nelson Mandela Children's Foundation, the Congo Education and Schools project plus the Morungatuny Resettlement Program in Northern Uganda are also supported. In India a school, orphanage and medical centre is supported at the Ram Yoga Centre north of New Delhi. The major planetary care project was the campaign to make the Dumoine River watershed a protected conservation park. Friends for Peace also co-operates with other groups in Ottawa for the annual Ottawa River clean-up. In 2010 Peace Grants were awarded to Pakistan Flood Relief, Peace Camp Ottawa and the Healing Art Project of Minwaashin Lodge – an aboriginal women's centre in Ottawa.

This day – Saturday October 1 in City Hall - starts at 10 am with Pipers for Peace and closes at 4.30pm with the Holy Trinity High School Rhythm and

Blues band. There is a terrific onstage program with local talent, a Silent Auction, community and activist tables and a Servery with great food supplied by retail outlets throughout the city. The day builds confidence, hope, connections and fellowship. Yes we can get the job done!! Come out and support this noble adventure.

How Things Are, I Figger Bob Allen

Bob is the teacher at Fish Lake Sangha and sought to bring the Heart Sutra across to the Sangha with a Tennessee flavor! (The Heart of the Prajna Paramita in Kincade Holler)

Now, that feller Jabo - the one who lived out in the woods all by hisself and didn't say much - well it turns out he was really a smart un and not havin a lot to do out there, he thought and thought about most everything and after a while, he came up with something he liked. He wandered down to Harlan's camp where the boys had just finished a new batch of Branch Water and was tryin it out to make sure it was all right to sell, and he sat down right next to Big Sonny who'd just come in from runnin trot lines.

"Well" Jabo started, "there I was on the porch just a-ponderin my corn crop and what I figgered out is that everything's all made of everything else." Sonny swallowed a shot of shine and looked at him like he was a ghost.

"Now Sonny, It don't matter if it's a thing like, say, a catfish, or a feeling you have like maybe how happy you are when your best pig-dog limps home just when you thought he was kilt in the woods by a bad hog, or something moanin you might hear at night that gives you chills, or an important thought you have like how much 2 cycle oil to mix in with yer outboard gas to keep her runnin just a little lean in the winter so the carburetor don't gum-up, or even if its your own mind itself ...Don't matter!" Jabo said. "Each one is made outa all the other uns

and can't nobody find anything that's just all by itself."

"You listening to me Sonny?" Jabo said, "cause this here's where it gets good. So here's the first thing. No matter what it is, you can't really make something from nothing-I mean you SAY your gonna make biscuits but you gotta start with flour and buttermilk and lard and all that , and before that, somebody had to grind that flour and feed the cow who gave that buttermilk so them biscuits was really there already just not all put together. Sonny was real quiet so Jabo went on, "And you can't never destroy nothing either - I mean make it go away to where you can't find even a little tiny bit of it. Just take these hot coals here. They used to be hickory wood that Harlan used to fire up the still, but now that wood is changed into these coals and that smoke goin up, and the heat keepin us warm outside and the shine keepin us warm inside. That hickory wood, is right here even though we can't see it! Now listen, since you can't make something from nothing and since you can't destroy it either, and since everything is part of everything else why then it just goes d'rectly that the things we think is good or the things we think is bad, they're all made of the same thing too! "

Now the whisky was workin on Jabo and so he got up from the stump he was a sittin on and commenced to pace so's he looked kinda like Sister Jackson down at the Black Mountain Three Seeds Primitive Gospel Baptist Church and then he went on all excited. "I mean this here shine we're a-drinkin USED to be corn and that corn was partly growed in cow manure -now you don't like to think about drinking cow manure Sonny, but I'm right' here to tell ya without that manure we wouldn't be able to have us a drink *at all* so there it is and you know I'm right about that! So Sonny, your eyes and everything you ever seed with em, your ears and everything you ever heard with em your nose, your tongue all your skin and your mind and everything you smell or taste or touch or think, are

all made outta each other and its always been like that and it always will be!”

Jabo sat back down and they each took a pull from the jug and then he said “Now, Sonny you might be getting a mite worried about this but I’m telling you, it all works out. What’s the good in it you might be askin? Well, the good is that once you get to thinkin this way, why you can relax more and not worry yerself and fret so much. And, when you stop all that frettin, you’re free to pay attention to fishin and huntin and to the taste of a good watermelon on a hot day and how nice it feels to take your boots off or go skinny dippin in a cold creek and other things like ‘at that’re important!”

Sonny was real quiet then but allowed as how he might be willing to try it but it sounded like a lot to remember so Jabo gave him something to help him out. He said, “Just say this everyday when you start up to worryin. Look square at that fretful thing on yer mind and say:

Its gone, its really gone, its so gone I can’t even remember it. Things is real clear now!

Whooooooweee!”

Everybody in the holler heard that yell from Jabo and ever since then, folks kinda treated him special. Anyway, ‘ats what I heard.

First Mindfulness Training: Openness Yves Desnoyers

Aware of the suffering created by fanaticism and intolerance, we are determined not to be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. Buddhist teachings are guiding means to help us learn to look deeply and to develop our understanding and compassion. They are not doctrines to fight, kill, or die for.

Commentary:

Fanaticism and intolerance close the mind and the heart. The tightly wound rosebud is often pale in colour and bears no fragrance—it is only when it

fully opens up that we can truly appreciate its undescrivable scent.



Contemplative Photography Yves Desnoyers

“The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera.” –Dorothea Lange

It’s Sunday morning. You wake up and notice the grey clouds and your bedroom window speckled with raindrops. What’s your first thought? What’s your internal dialogue? Some may say, “Oh, this is going to be a dreary day.” or “Fantastic! I won’t need to water the plants!” or “I guess Tommy’s soccer game will be cancelled today,” “I hate rain,” and so on. The point is, it’s so easy to get caught up with these internal dialogues that we often forget

to clearly see what our sight consciousness perceives. The art of contemplative photography is an exercise for the photographer to practice clearly seeing instead of paying attention to the projection of his or her own thoughts.

And so, when I embarked on the journey of contemplative photography of the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings, I had to pay attention to the objects of my perception—was I clearly seeing objects as they were through my camera, or was I seeing them through the lens of the mind? Luckily, my good friend Lucy Lu shared a document with me called “PhotoTherapy Techniques”, which has helped me with the discernment process. To help others interested in this art, the following are my personal favorite questions that allowed me to delve deeply into this practice:

1. When you look at a picture, explore its shadows, highlights, and less obvious backgrounds. Often a picture is not necessarily about its focused subject, but more about the background. What message is the background conveying to you?
2. What’s the most noticeable thing about this picture? What makes it so striking to you?
3. If you could summarize the entire picture with just one word, what would it be? Why is it so? If you have a hard time with this, ask the photo what it has to tell you, its name, its identity.
4. Pretend that you *are* the photo. Try to imagine how it feels to be that photo, and then emulate it by speaking and acting like you were that photo. You could say, for example, “I am that tree, from which a family is having a picnic, and I am feeling _____, and I am seeing _____”, and so on.
5. Finally, does this photo have a question to ask you? If so, what is your answer? Pictures often speak to us, and they’re not

always statements, but sometimes, questions too. In the latter case, what’s your answer?

These questions are not meant to be followed sequentially, but rather be chosen according to every picture. What I found most important was to set aside time with a picture, and just allow it to gradually imprint my consciousnesses, and have these pictures speak to me.

Lastly, I would like to offer my gratitude to Lucy for sharing the PhotoTherapy resource with me, and to the entire sangha in making the publication of my photo essay possible. I encourage everyone to try contemplative photography; it is truly a meditative experience in itself, which will inevitably reveal facets of yourself and of the world around you.

Quotes from Master LinJi

From Thich Nhat Hanh’s “Nothing To Do, Nowhere To Go” Parallax Press 2007

“In these times whoever studies the Buddhadharma needs right view. Once there is right view, birth and death can no longer touch you. At that point, whether you stay or go, you do so as a free person. You do not need to go in search of the transcendent, but the transcendent will seek you out.”

“Right view is the ability to see the nature of becoming, abiding, ceasing, and emptiness in all phenomena whether you are entering the sacred or the profane, the pure or defiled, when you are entering the lands of Buddhas anywhere..... Right view is to see the mark of no coming, no going, unborn and undying in the Buddha’s arising in the world, becoming enlightened, turning the wheel of the Dharma, and entering nirvana.”

“If you are able to put an end to the thinking that chases after external objects, you will see that there is no difference between you yourselves and our teacher, the Buddha. Do you want to know who our

teacher, the Buddha, is? The Buddha is you yourselves who are standing before me, listening to me teach the Dharma. The practitioner who does not have enough self-confidence will always direct his attention to what is external and wander around and around looking for something... Good monks, do not make this mistake."

"Most of those who study the path of Buddhism in our own time do not understand the Dharma. They are like goats who will eat whatever is given to them; they cannot distinguish master from servant, guest or host."

"At every point you should assume sovereignty of yourself. Wherever you stand you should be your true person. You do not allow yourself to be influenced by those who come to you. Just a moment of doubt is Mara who has entered you."

"Friends, young monks and nuns have to study and practice. I myself when young devoted myself to studying the vinaya and fine manners every day. I researched, sought to understand, and consulted countless sutras and commentaries. After a while I realized that they were just expedients to help people, presented in theoretical terms. So once and for all I threw them all away in order to go and consult great teachers and practice meditation. Fortunately, I met superior spiritual friends, so I had the eyes of the Dharma which allowed me to see clearly and recognize the great teachers on this Earth and those that were fake. The insight was not with me from the time my mother gave me birth, but came about through polishing, refining, training, experience and investigation and then one day I broke through to the truth."

In The Year 2525 Rick Evans

This 1960's song by Rick Evans is eerily prophetic and profound.

In the year 2525, if man is still alive
If woman can survive, they may find

In the year 3535

Ain't gonna need to tell the truth, tell no lie
Everything you think, do and say
Is in the pill you took today

In the year 4545

You ain't gonna need your teeth, wont need your eyes
You won't find a thing to chew
Nobody's gonna look at you

In the year 5555

Your arms hangin' limp at your sides
Your legs got nothin' to do
Some machine's doin' that for you

In the year 6565

You won't need no husband, won't need no wife
You'll pick your son, pick your daughter too
From the bottom of a long glass tube

In the year 7510

If God's a-coming, He oughta make it by then
Maybe He'll look around Himself and say
"Guess it's time for the Judgement Day"

In the year 8510

God is gonna shake His mighty head
He'll either say "I'm pleased where man has been"
Or tear it down, and start again

In the year 9595

I'm kinda wonderin' if man is going to be alive
He's taken everything this old earth can give
And he ain't put back nothing

Now it's been ten thousand years, man has cried a billion tears
For what, he never knew, now man's reign is through
But through eternal night, the twinkling of starlight
So very far away, maybe it's only yesterday

Interdependence

Thomas Berry

We cannot have well humans on a sick planet.
We cannot have a viable human economy by
devastating the earth's economy.
We cannot survive if the conditions of life itself are
not protected.

Not only our physical being, but our souls, our
minds. imagination and emotions
Depend on our immediate experience of the natural
world.

There is in the industrial process no poetry,
No elevation or fulfillment of mind or emotion
Comparable to that experience of the magnificence
of the sea,
The mountains, the sky, the stars at night, the
flowers blooming in the meadows,
The flight and song of birds.

As the natural world diminishes in its splendour
So human life diminishes in its fulfillment
Of both the physical and spiritual aspects of our
being.

Not only is it the case with humans, but with every
mode of being.

The wellbeing of each member of the Earth
Community is dependent
On the well being of the Earth Herself.

Beginning Anew-Anew

Marvin Schwartz

Maybe you have had this experience. You joined a
Sangha that practices engaged Buddhism and you
felt very much at home. The meditation practices
and Thay's writings were meaningful and
energizing. And then you heard about Beginning
Anew, a practice for resolving conflicts. Everything
else worked so well, you couldn't imagine that this
would be any different. But it was different! Instead
of resolving the issue that you brought to the

practice, the issue was still there and everybody felt
worse. If this has happened to you, you should
know that you are not alone.

When I am talking about the Beginning Anew
practice, I am talking about the practice as it can be
found on the Plum Village web site.

(<http://plumvillage.org/practice.html?start=1>). The
practice as set out on the site has four elements.

1. Flower Watering
2. Expressing Regrets
3. Sharing a Hurt
4. Sharing Long Term Difficulties.

Many practitioners, and especially new
practitioners, view Beginning Anew as an
opportunity to deal with a hurt. Let me say a few
nice things, express a regret or two and then I can
launch into whatever is really eating me up and who
is responsible. Once done, I can share some long
time difficulties and pass the talking stick. When I
first learned the practice we added a fifth element,
another Flower Watering at the end.

So what goes wrong? Actually the main problem is
the conflating of two different practices. Flower
Watering, Expressing Regrets and Sharing Long
Term Difficulties belong together as elements of
our individual internal practice of arriving at peace
within. Practicing these three elements in a group
setting is an opportunity to publicly practice radical
honesty. This provides a forum for presenting how
we are experiencing ourselves at that moment and
we experience ourselves being received by other
serious practitioners. Sometimes we can heal just by
expressing ourselves publicly.

Sharing a hurt is a very different kettle of fish.
Imagine that you have come to a Beginning Anew
and that, while you like most struggle with your
practice, life feels pretty good. As the practice
unfolds, you take your turn sharing flower watering,
regrets and difficulties. No reason to bring up hurts.
Then, someone else starts and all of a sudden the

way you greeted her or him is the source of their hurt for today. Your peaceful life has now been upset. You now have a hurt. You have been ambushed. You want to respond. And the person who raised the hurt, has their issue been resolved? More than likely it has not.

Without willingness no technique will work, with willingness almost any technique will work. Eli Jaxon-Bear

I would like to suggest a different practice that could be called **Beginning Anew for Hurts**. The practice would be based on the Four Bramaviharas that Thay describes in *Teachings on Love*. To make this practice real we would use the framework from *The Enchantment of Opposites: How to Create Great Relationships*. In that book, Patti Taylor suggests the use of a matrix.

You

		Win	Lose
Me	Win	I Win/ You Win	I Win/You Lose
	Lose	I Lose/You Win	I Lose/You Lose

I assume that if both parties truly want to address a hurt they are willing to come to fully participate in finding a resolution; and, both parties recognize that there is only one box to play in: I win/you win. Without willingness from both sides, hurts will only multiply. This willingness would be expressed through a joint reading of the bramviharas and the desire to use the awareness of them to reach resolution. We would understand that winning does not necessarily look the same for both parties. If we come to the process with a view to both of us winning then we are coming from a place that does not accept that losing is an option for either party. And yet, we have to keep in mind that sometimes, even though both parties win, the resolution is sad. Some hurts are intractable in some way. In these cases, as long as we have both come from a place of love, compassion, joy and equanimity, we can come away at peace, with the hurt attended to, if not fully resolved we can walk away with our hearts open.

Remembering Grandfather William Commanda Denise Deby

GWC was the first recipient of the Friends for Peace Peace Award in 2003

A bright light has gone out in Ottawa. The ‘Morning Star,’ though, continues to illuminate our way. On August 3, Algonquin Elder William Commanda – whose name, Ojigkwanong, means Morning Star – passed away at the age of 97 at his home in Kitigan Zibi near Maniwaki. Commanda, also called “Grandfather,” was a spiritual leader, teacher, former chief and much more – a trapper, guide and expert canoe maker, and a spokesperson for the environment and for peace among cultures. He was active internationally, but his efforts to promote respect for the earth often centred on Ottawa. He spoke out against pollution of the **Ottawa River** and destruction of the South March Highlands. He described the South March Highlands as a site of irreplaceable biodiversity and archaeological heritage, and “a most sacred landscape.” I heard him speak eloquently in January about the need to preserve the Beaver Pond Forest.

Grandfather Commanda was also working toward the establishment of an indigenous centre, **Asinabka**, on Victoria Island and at Chaudière Falls to serve as a national historic site and a peace-building and environmental centre. He was given the key to the City of Ottawa in 2006, named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2008, and received a lifetime achievement award from the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards Foundation in 2010. He greeted the Dalai Lama and Nelson Mandela during their respective visits to Ottawa in 1990 and 1998, received numerous other awards and honours for conservation and peace, and featured in several documentaries including the National Film Board’s **Ojigkwanong: Encounter with an Algonquin Sage**.

Grandfather was also keeper of three sacred wampum belts, which he said documented and guided relationships among people and between

people and nature. He founded the **Circle of All Nations**, a group “committed to respect for Mother Earth, promotion of racial harmony, advancement of social justice, recognition and honouring of indigenous wisdom and peace building.” He advised on ecological issues and appeared at several United Nations conferences.

His messages of reconciliation and environmental stewardship inspired many people. Earlier this year, after he said that the Beaver Pond Forest was sacred, Daniel Bernard Amikwabe **kept a Sacred Fire burning** at the Forest to protest its destruction. Others have spoken of the importance of carrying on his work.

In a **letter** dated January 6, 2011 to Ottawa’s Mayor and City Councillors about the South March Highlands, Grandfather wrote: “...in the final analysis, we are all connected – with the water we drink, the air we breathe, with the food, medicines and gifts the earth provides us, with the animal teachers, with the larger universe, and with each other.” Words that ought to continue to guide our decisions and choices.

Leonard’s Bread

At the September formal meal together, Pine Gate followed the protocols of the Buddha. Leonard Poole arrived with delicious home baked bread and everyone requested the recipe. Here it is.

Rye Bread

From page 223 of “**Salt Spring Island Cooking**”, by Rodney Polden & Pamela Thornley, published by MacMillan Canada, 1993.

A simple, tasty, sandwich rye loaf. When making a toasted rye sandwich, slice the bread thinly so that the toasting fully enhances the rye flavour. Makes two good-sized loaves.

3 cups (720 mL) **warm water or warm potato water**

1 Tbsp (15 mL) **active dry yeast**
1 Tbsp (15 mL) **sugar or honey**
1 Tbsp (15 mL) **Inka (or other coffee substitute)**
¼ cup (60 mL) **molasses**
4 cups (960 mL) **whole-wheat flour**
3 ½ cups (840 mL) **rye flour**
1 Tbsp (15 mL) **salt**

Optional: **grated rind from one orange**
1 Tbsp (15 mL) **fennel seeds OR caraway seeds**

Dissolve the yeast and sugar in the warm water and allow it to stand for 10 minutes or so until the yeast foams up.

Add the Inka, molasses and the 3 cups (720 mL) or wheat flour.

Make a “sponge” by beating this mixture at least 300 strokes, until the gluten forms in strands. *(I haven't found those “strands” yet. I just beat it for 3-4 minutes with a wooden spoon. LP)*

Allow the sponge to stand in a warm, draught-free place for one hour or more. The sponge needs to double in size.

In another bowl, combine the rye flour with the salt and any optional ingredients you want.

Stir down the sponge and add the rye flour mixture. Knead this dough for 10-20 minutes, adding as little additional whole-wheat flour as possible to keep it from sticking to the kneading surface.

The dough should become smooth and elastic.

Divide the dough into two pieces and form them into oblong loaves.

Place on a greased baking sheet, cover with a tea towel and allow to rise in a warm place for an hour or so. The loaves should double in size.

Bake at 350F (180C) for 35-40 minutes.

With fennel or caraway seeds added, this bread makes a fine “wry” comment of its own!

“WITHOUT BREAD, EVEN A PALACE IS SAD, BUT WITH IT, A PINE TREE IS PARADISE.”
Slavic Proverb

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.

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. The first Saturday of every month has a Mindfulness Gathering from 5.00pm – 8.00pm for dharma and a mindful meal. 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 now on Facebook – search Pine Gate Sangha. It is also 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

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: 613 726 0881 Contacts iprattis@bell.net ; chill.Carolyn@gmail.ca

Hummingbird

Ian Prattis

I related this story to the retreat that They gave in Vancouver “Awakening The Heart.” The story is on Pg 86-7 of Earth My Body, Water My Blood.

The non-human land and air creatures of the world were alarmed and frightened by the world being on fire. Each species and form sent a representative to gather in a secluded valley visited by rain, with a river running into the ocean. This location was chosen so that the ocean and river creatures could also be represented. At the gathering of the non-humans there was a huge cacophony of sound, laments, blaming, cries of anguish that the world was coming to an end - and much desperation. Beyond this verdant valley the world was on fire. Then all the creatures gradually grew quiet and lapsed into silence as they observed Hummingbird. Hummingbird flew to the river and took a drop of water in her beak. He flew to the fire and dropped it on the flames. Back to the water, picking up a drop of water, flying to the fire and dropping it. On she went, relentless and unstoppable - flying to the river for a drop of water then flying to the fire and dropping it on the flames. All the creatures were astounded. Finally Bear shouted "Hummingbird, what do you think you are doing?" Hummingbird flew to the river for another drop of water and dropped it onto the flames. As she flew back to the river, he hovered for a moment in front of Bear and said - "The Best I Can."

What is the best that you can do dear reader?

What is the best that I can do?

What is the best that our political and corporate



leaders can do?

For the latter to emerge requires that we hold our leaders to account, and citizen activism on an unprecedented scale is necessary for that. This is essential for the younger generation just coming into maturity and responsibility. My generation has not left a healthy and viable planetary eco-niche for them to live in. I offer a deep and humble apology to them for that neglect. I ask of my generation of environmentalists, activist and organizers that they transfer their skills and knowledge to the younger generation. To be mentors for the generation that has to do the heavy lifting to put things right on planet earth. I will not be around to see the changes. Yet I do possess a modicum of confidence. I feel that the younger generation will modify the "Yes We Can" mantra that got Barack Obama into the White House. In twenty years time my hope is that the mantra will have been changed to "Yes We Did" with respect to Mother Earth.

When I look at young people, I see beyond the ipods, electronic gadgetry and attitude to the deep intelligence that yearns for something better. I love their in-your-face attitude, as that is the energy of determination that will drive them to put things into balance on Gaia. They are not caught so readily by the identities and trade-offs my generation is so good at entertaining. They are breaking down the barriers of discrimination, storming the barricades of separation. I have only one thing to ask of them. That they slow down for a moment and hold out their hand. For as long as I have a spark in this mind and a breath in this body - Wait for me because I am going with you!

Photo by Duncan Berry.